



## **Gender and Peacebuilding**

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### **Abstract**

*Gender and Peacebuilding* is an exploration of how gender and peacebuilding interface both conceptually and practically. This study comes at a time when many organizations working in post-conflict settings are attempting to understand how to plan projects so that they facilitate peace and human security while redressing deep-rooted inequities, including gender-based inequality. The goal of gender equality has been established in the peacebuilding policies and programs of many donor agencies and organizations yet there has not been adequate analysis of *how* gender equality can be realized in a post-conflict setting while promoting social and political stability. There is increasing literature on *why* women's issues are integral to peacebuilding, less so on the gender dimensions of peacebuilding, and some suggestions on how to operationalize gender equality and peacebuilding (CIDA framework and SIDA framework). However, what is lacking is a recognition of the potential contradictions and barriers to linking gender equality with peacebuilding and how these can be dealt with. The objective of this article is to support organizations working in peacebuilding to recognize the linkages (and possible contradictions) of gender and peacebuilding in order to improve programming.

Based on a review of various bodies of literature, it is suggested that Gender and Peacebuilding can be viewed as an approach, an analytical tool, and a goal. These various perspectives have influenced policy and programming in different ways. Four peacebuilding projects in Rwanda and South Africa are studied to illustrate the different approaches and degrees to which gender can be integrated in peacebuilding projects. Highlighted are the linkages between peacebuilding and gender as well as the potential contradictions; in the concepts (or agendas), in practice, and in policies.

It is argued that linking gender and peacebuilding together can positively influence peacebuilding, both in theory and in practice. However, the approach needs to be carefully constructed in light of the current situation of the state, the change in gender roles before, during and after war, the political and cultural openness to change, the capacity of the organizations, and the conflicts and tensions which may occur because of the two agendas.

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*Gender and Peacebuilding* is an exploration of how gender and peacebuilding interface both conceptually and practically. This study comes at a time when many organizations working in post-conflict settings are attempting to understand how to plan projects so that they facilitate peace and human security while redressing deep-rooted inequities, including gender-based inequality. The goal of gender equality has been established in the policies and programs of many donor agencies and organizations yet there has not been adequate analysis of *how* gender equality can be realized in a post-conflict setting while promoting social and political stability. There is increasing literature on *why* women's issues are integral to peacebuilding, less so on the gender dimensions of peacebuilding, and some suggestions on how to operationalize gender equality and peacebuilding (CIDA framework and SIDA framework). However, what is lacking is a recognition of the potential contradictions and barriers to linking gender equality with peacebuilding and how these can be dealt with. The objective of this article is to support organizations working in peacebuilding to recognize the linkages, as well as the potential contradictions of Gender and Peacebuilding in order to improve programming.

The information for this study was collected while attending two conferences in Africa and while visiting organizations in Uganda, Rwanda, and South Africa. The first conference was the UNESCO sponsored *Women Organize for a Culture of Peace* held in Zanzibar, Tanzania in May of 1999 and the second conference was entitled *The Aftermath: Women in Post-War Reconstruction* held in Johannesburg, South Africa in July, 1999. Interviews were conducted with academics and practitioners in the areas of gender equality, peacebuilding, and women's rights while visiting each country. The four case studies are described in-depth in section two.

The first section of this paper is a review of what is *known* about the concepts of peacebuilding and of gender. Together, the concepts are broken down into three areas; an approach, an analytical tool, and a goal. In the second section, four case studies are analysed and compared drawing out the differences in approaches and the linking factors of gender and peacebuilding. The third section outlines the factors which support effective programming as well as some of the barriers which impede programming including contradictions at the practical and theoretical level. The challenges faced by organizations in this realm of development are discussed in the fourth section and in the final section it is argued that linking gender and peacebuilding together can positively influence peacebuilding, both in theory and in practice.

## **Gender and Peacebuilding Perspectives**

The term peacebuilding is relatively new in the development lexicon, having emerged from UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report *Agenda for Peace* to the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN in 1992. According to Boutros-Ghali, peacebuilding is "...action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (1992, 11). For the purpose of this paper, the term peacebuilding will be used as stated

above.

Gender is a term which refers “to the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. In most societies, men and women differ in the activities they undertake, in access and control of resources, and in participation in decision-making” (Woroniuk, Thomas and Schalkwyk, 1997, 2). The term is also used to describe a relational concept, implying a relationship between men and women and among men and women. According to Singh, “it refers to a structural relationship between men and women which is linked to the state, the economy, and to other macro- and micro-processes and institutions.” (1998, 11).

### **Unpacking of Terms**

When gender is combined with peacebuilding, there are three uses or perceptions which emerge. These connotations are not exclusive but the emphasis of the term is put on different elements of the concepts. It can be viewed as an approach (e.g. (en)gendering peacebuilding or a gendered approach to development in a post-conflict country), an analytical tool (e.g. gender, peace and conflict analysis of causes of war, end of war, a situation, tool, program etc..), or a goal (e.g. gender equality, improved status of women, and peace).

### ***Approach: Gendered Approaches to Peacebuilding***

It is argued that peacebuilding is gendered, meaning that perceptions of peace and approaches to peace differ based on one's gender. A gendered approach is guided by the process of gender equity<sup>1</sup>.

Men tend to dominate the formal roles in a peacebuilding process; there are mainly male peacekeepers, male peace negotiators, and male politician and formal leaders. Power is unequally distributed between men and women and the majority of women do not have a voice in local and national decision making processes. This inequity is heightened during conflict as power becomes centralized and the male dominated military takes more control (Byrne, 1995).

However, women do play an important, if largely unrecognized role, in peacebuilding. Mazurana and McKay have recently published a report on examples of women's peacebuilding activities, illustrating that women play a very active and crucial role in peacebuilding and reconstruction at the local, regional, national, and international levels (1998).

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<sup>1</sup> Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality (Status of Women Canada, 1996).

There are two general categories of peace; positive peace and negative peace. The latter is defined as the absence of all kinds of violence while the former is described as the fulfillment of basic needs, freedom and equality at all levels of society. Reardon perceives men in general as focusing on negative peace; the absence of war and prevention of armed conflict (Reardon in Muthien, 1998, 18). Women, in contrast, address positive peace; conditions of social justice, economic equity, and ecological balance. Positive peace also includes addressing the spiritual process and reconciliation of human relations as part of peacebuilding. For many, violent conflict is not simply the physical destruction of a community but it is more the damage done to the spirit of people.

One of the reasons that men and women have different approaches is derived from the perception that men, in relation to women, are the *warriors*, while women, in relation to men, are the *peacemakers*. War and peace situations often enhance traditional perceptions of men and women where men are perceived as the aggressor, protector, killer, and women play the opposite role of pacifist, care giver, and the protected.

(En)gendering can be also viewed as a way of mainstreaming gender equality. According to CIDA, mainstreaming is a “strategy to support the goal of gender equality.”(1999, 1). This involves incorporating gender equality concerns in programming and policy making as well as supporting initiatives for men and women to participate in decision making at different levels. Because peacebuilding is currently a male dominated activity, engendering peacebuilding or mainstreaming means broadening the term peacebuilding to include notions of positive peace, and bringing the important voices and activities of women as well as men into the approach with the goal of sustainable peace and gender equality.

#### ***Analytical Tool: Gender Analysis and Peace and Conflict Analysis***

Many formal peacebuilding activities and policies are gender blind. Meaning, the policies and actions have been developed with little understanding or acknowledgment of the diverse communities in which they operate. Gender analysis can bring to light the experiences of men and women during conflict and peace, assess needs, and show how gender relations change during and due to conflict and peace.

Peace and conflict analysis provides insight into the impact of development and peacebuilding activities on the environment and security of a community. In terms of peacebuilding projects, peace and conflict analysis aids in the assessment of pre-project situations, and supports the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a project. This analysis can also benefit local communities to assess the impact of development initiatives in their areas.

Gender analysis, as defined in its broader sense to include diverse segments of society, is an important step in understanding what peace, as an objective could mean, and the possibilities of

methods and processes to achieve peace. Peace and peace processes, in order to be successful, need to be determined by those most affected. Addressing gender differences in violence and power can lead to prosperous and secure societies (CIDA, 1995).

Analysis of causes of war, war, peacebuilding activities and why/how conflict ends gives planners key information to develop comprehensive and effective projects.

### ***Goals: Gender Equality<sup>2</sup> and Peace***

Gender and Peacebuilding can also be viewed as goals. Ultimately, the use of the analytical tools and taking a gendered approach to peacebuilding could lead towards gender equality and peace. There are two general theories regarding this topic; the first is that the attainment of peace leads to greater gender equality, and the second is that the establishment of gender equality leads to peace.

#### ***Gender Equity or Equality Leads to Peace***

How peace is defined often determines the peacebuilding approach. For some, peace is equivalent with equal access to resources, opportunities, knowledge, and rights. According to Bush, peacebuilding does not mean a return to status quo preceding the conflict as it is often the status quo which leads to conflict (Bush, 1995).

For pacifists and ecofeminists, it is felt that the elimination of patriarchy is needed in order to stop war. Sustainable peace will be achieved once patriarchal social structures are transformed and oppression of women is terminated (Carroll and Hall in Byrne, 1995). While some feminists view the origin of conflict within men's inherent and socialized nature, others identify patriarchal structures as the main cause of conflict. "[C]onflicts are largely in defense of patriarchal interests, particularly as embodied by the nation state." (Byrne, 1995, 12).

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<sup>2</sup> "Gender equality requires 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 life chances are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment does not presume a particular model of gender equality for all societies and cultures, but reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it. Because of current disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Equal treatment in the context of inequalities can mean the perpetuation of disparities. Achieving gender equality will require changes in institutional practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained. It also requires a strong voice for women in shaping their societies." (DAC, 1997. *Draft DAC Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation*, Sixth Draft 19th August 1997, <http://www.oecd.org//dac/htm/guidelin1.htm>, as at 30/03/1999)

### *Peace Before Equality*

For the most part, mainstream peacebuilding literature does not address gender issues nor gender equity. If prompted and questioned, most people in the field would agree that a certain degree of peace and stability is needed before equity issues can be dealt with. One cannot attempt to address inequities until people have food and shelter and are safe from violence. As Wright states, “political participation is irrelevant without adequate access to food, services and shelter” (1998).

### **Case Studies**

In order to unpack the term Gender and Peacebuilding further, four case studies are presented to demonstrate *what* Gender and Peacebuilding can look like in practice. A brief introduction of each case study is given followed by a comparison and analysis of each program’s approach to Gender and Peacebuilding. These are only examples of the range of projects which could be considered Gender and Peacebuilding and are not conclusive. To select the case studies, requests were sent out to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Canada to see whether they were implementing or supporting a peacebuilding project which integrated a gendered approach. There were few positive replies although there was a general interest in learning more about how to plan and implement such projects. Of the few projects which had a gender component, most were primarily women focused and very few engaged both men and women. While in Rwanda, I found a local organization which was also selected as a case study. At the end of the study, I did come across male centred projects although these were not presented as ‘gender’ projects.<sup>3</sup> The case studies are projects or programs at varying degrees of completion. Three different types of institutes are exemplified; two NGOs, a collective, and a government agency.

The information from this study came primarily from project documents and interviews with a number of staff from each organization. Due to time constraints, I was not able to meet with project participants nor was I able to evaluate the impact, success, or effectiveness of each project or the Gender and Peacebuilding approach taken. The review of each case study was done based on the information made available and more time was spent with some organizations than with others.

Another limitation revolved around the terminology used in discussions. For many staff, both terms gender and peacebuilding are not used in common language and ‘Gender and

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<sup>3</sup> For information on some of these projects, see the *AGENDA* magazine, No. 37 (<http://oneworld.org/agenda> or email: [subs@agenda.org.za](mailto:subs@agenda.org.za))



Peacebuilding' as a term or subject had often never been heard of. The interpretations of the terms varied as well. The term *gender* was used as a goal (gender equality), as an approach (gender aware), as a method for understanding a situation (gender analysis), and to discuss issues (usually women specific). The other form of confusion is how the term is translated into French. In Rwanda, '*genre*' is not translated as 'gender' and 'gender equity' is translated as 'égalité entre les sexe'. However, in gender literature it is a *faux pas* to use the terms gender and sex interchangeably.

The term peacebuilding was also problematic. Many organizations involved in peacebuilding do not use the term. Instead, they use more specific terms such as conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reintegration. Due to the confusion in terms, time was spent at the beginning of each interview understanding how the person or NGO interpreted the terms.

### **Case Study 1**

**Project:** *Programme d'Appui a la Rehabilitation Physique et Morale des Populations des Communes Kanzenze et Gashora" (Support Program for the Physical and Moral Rehabilitation of the People of Kanzenze and Gashora Communities)*

The first case study is an example of a grass roots community development project in rural Rwanda. The project "Programme d'Appui a la Rehabilitation Physique et Morale des Populations des Communes Kanzenze et Gashora" is one of three in ACORD Rwanda's reconciliation program. ACORD Rwanda is a locally run NGO connected with British ACORD and partially funded and supported through InterPares in Canada.

The overall objective of the project is to reinforce the mechanisms of peaceful coexistence and contribute to the improvement of life conditions of the communities. This is done through supporting a credit and savings program, rebuilding the social fabric and improving the relations between the different communities, contributing to the resolution of problems of housing and rehabilitation of community infrastructures, and promoting agriculture and livestock production. When the project started in 1994, the focus was primarily emergency aid. As the situation stabilized, the focus shifted to basic community development, peacebuilding and some conflict resolution.

### **Case Study 2**

**Project:** *Campaign Action Pour la Paix (Action Campaign for Peace)*

The second case study is an example of a national collective which works with 35 local NGOs throughout Rwanda. Pro-femmes-Twese Hamwe (Pro-femmes) works for the promotion of women, peace and development. The main program of the collective is entitled *Campagne Action pour la Paix* (Action Campaign for Peace). The organization's activities involve 35 local

NGOs, local government departments, research institutes, and African peace networks.

The overall objectives of Pro-femmes are to contribute to the structural transformation of the Rwandan society and put in place the political, material, legal, economic and moral conditions to support the rehabilitation of social justice, and to build sustainable peace. The four goals are: 1) to mobilize and engage the Rwandan population for a culture of peace; 2) integrate the concept of gender in all the programs of the collective; 3) improve the basic life conditions of the Rwanda population; and 4) support the work of its members. The Action Campaign for Peace has two directions: to address the consequences of the genocide and to eliminate the root causes of the disintegration of the society.

### **Case Study 3**

**Project:**        *Program D'Appui au Developpment Democratique (PADD) (Support Program for Democratic Development )*

The *Program D'Appui au Developpment Democratique* (PADD) is implemented by Centre Canadien d'Etude et du Cooperation Internationale (CECI) in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi. CECI is a Canadian based NGO which supports international development by implementing projects and assigning cooperants to work with local partner organizations. This regional project is in its beginning stages. As the project is new, much of the information gathered is from project proposals and expectations from staff rather than from their analysis of practice.

The goal of the program is to support the ability of civil society groups to achieve five main objectives: 1) the promotion of tolerance and pluralism; 2) promotion and protection of human rights; 3) promotion and protection of women's rights; 4) prevention and resolution of conflict; and 5) democratic development. It is felt that the first four objectives will ultimately lead to the establishment of the fifth objective.

CECI will work with 20 civil society organizations; six from each country and two regional NGOs. They will support the NGOs to reflect on their strategy, their mission, and the implementation of the mission. Through the project, CECI will try to build synergy between the organizations on the five different themes (objectives) around the region. Based on the needs of the organizations, CECI will provide institutional support to the organizations in the areas of organizational development, conflict resolution, and gender and development. All the organizations involved in the project will continue to carry out their current programs and projects.

### **Case Study 4**

**Project:**        *Action Research on the Prevention of Sexual Violence*

The South Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC), in collaboration with the research institute CIETinternational is implementing a project entitled *Action Research on the Prevention of Sexual Violence* in South Africa. This is a two year project currently in its final year. SMLC is a local government institution responsible for a large portion of the Johannesburg municipality and surrounding municipalities. The Department of Community Health within SMLC is responsible for the implementation of the project. As a department, their focus is to establish an integrated community health program which promotes community self-responsibility for the health and welfare of the community and the individual.

The objectives of the project are to: 1) quantify the sexual violence, its risk and resilience factors in Johannesburg's South Metropolitan region through a community-based information stakeholder system; 2) develop community-led solutions against sexual violence, bench marking the impact of the actions taken, thus to create a positive feedback loop to reinforce positive achievements, increasing community-level confidence; 3) increase horizontal and vertical connectivity and information flows between communities about the nature and scale of sexual violence and preventative solutions, to contribute to an environment for empowerment and community-building focusing on prevention of sexual violence, and to motivate improvement in related service delivery; and 4) encourage equitable social participation by access to information on service delivery in all communities.

The activities used to achieve these objectives to date have been primarily research related; surveys, individual interviews, focus groups, analysis of data, feed-back of findings to communities, and informing media of findings. The implementation of the findings into actual projects includes interactive theater with youth, and working with police and health care workers to improve how they deal with victims of sexual violence. Changing male behavior and strengthening women's voice is dealt with in the interactive theater. The organizers wish to work more with the communities to develop other appropriate activities to continue work in this area, specifically looking at the resilient factors of men to commit rape.

### **Practical Linkages**

The chart below illustrates some of the gender dimensions considered within each project. The first three columns show whether gender analysis is used and if the analysis includes differences among men and women (such as class, ethnicity etc.) and whether the analysis considers relations between men and women. The fourth column examines the approach taken and the fifth illustrates if gender dimensions are part of the peacebuilding activity, or/and if gender is connected to the cause of the conflict. The last column demonstrates the main gender and peacebuilding linkages within each project.

Case Study	Gender Analysis of situation	Beyond male/female dichotomy in gender analysis	Gender Relations considered	Equal Participation of men and women sought	Gender Equality as goal	Gender connected to peacebuilding activity (pa), and/or cause of conflict (cc)	Main gender and peacebuilding linkage
CECI	yes	no	hard to determine	yes	no	pa	democratic development
ACORD	yes	no	yes	yes	no	pa	development, justice
SMLC	yes	no	yes	women favored	no	pa, cc	sexual violence
Pro-femmes	yes	yes	yes	women favored	yes	pa, cc	poverty reduction, power

In the ACORD project, community development and justice at a community and individual level are the linkages. For Pro-femmes, poverty reduction and power are the main linking concepts. In the CECI project, democratic development is the binding factor. The main link in the SMLC project is the elimination of sexual violence. These linkages are described in greater detail below.

### ***ACORD***

The ACORD project is an example of the close connection between peace and development. It is mainly through the development activities that peace within the communities is created. House construction and credit and savings programs are methods used to engage conflicting communities with one another on a daily bases. These development activities are complimented by sport activities where the different communities are given the opportunity to interact together. In addition, there are some seminars given on conflict resolution.

The main linkage between gender and peacebuilding within this case study is development. A Gender and Development paradigm is used drawing out the inequities between men and women in the public and private sphere. Programming does focus on gender inequities and engages both men and women to address them. According to staff, both empowering women and conflict resolution are done more implicitly; working for these changes through activities rather than words. An implicit gendered approach is taken and some gender analysis is used to identify community needs and concerns. However, gender equality is not an explicit goal.

### ***Pro-femmes***

Gender equality is fully emerged in Pro-femme's peacebuilding approach. Their definition of peace includes equality, equal access to resources to meet basic needs, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination; ethnic, regional, religious and gender. All uses of gender are integrated in the project: gender approach, gender analysis, and gender equality as a goal. Gender analysis

is used to understand the consequences of the genocide and causes of the war, training in gender analysis and gender and development is delivered to member NGOs, and research is done on women's experiences in the genocide. Educating women, putting women in political decision making positions, and increasing women's access to credit are all seen as activities which will lead to sustainable peace. Along with women focused activities are other activities focused on changing attitudes of men and boys, changing laws, and providing housing and health care for all families.

Examples of some Pro-femmes activities include such things as: action research on the root causes of the Rwandan conflict; dissemination of results to all collective members; establishment of a discussion group on the eradication of violence against women; radio programs which support non-violence, research on the role of women in traditional conflict resolution; support for theater on positive moral values in Rwandan society; and supporting member organizations in developing funding proposals and managing budgets. The activities are implemented by a women's collective although the goals are not focused solely on women.

The reasons for such an approach are numerous. According to Pro-femmes staff, women are the key to reconstruction, education, and to the orientation of a new society. Despite the fact that Rwandan women suffered enormously during the war, and continue to be in an inferior position to men in Rwandan society, they have organized themselves to rebuild the morals and values of the country and Pro-femmes provided the support to achieve these goals. The staff at Pro-femmes believe that as more women gain political power, and oppressive structures are eradicated, sustainable peace can be achieved.

According to Pro-femmes staff, improving the status of women within the Rwandan society is one of the key steps in achieving sustainable peace. There are two approaches; one is to directly support women and children, the other is to support women's involvement and approaches in reconstruction. Although all the activities involve women, men and children are also involved in some of the activities and within the collective itself.

It is implied that all women, regardless of ethnicity, religious affiliation, class, need to work together for the goals to be realized. The member organizations represent the needs of different of women and children<sup>4</sup>. However, the differences among men and among women are not

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<sup>4</sup> The NGO members of the collective support women who have been gravely affected by the genocide (Association for women headed households, Association for Widows of the Genocide), the well-being of the community and households (Association for the Well-being of the family, Ihumure), integrate women in formal reconstruction and reconciliation process (Benimpuhwe; Association for the Training and Legal Assistance for Rwandan Women; Haguruka; Seruka) and support children (Rwandan Women Helping Orphans). The names are mostly in French and have been translated.

brought out within the project documents.

### ***CECI***

In the CECI project, one of the guiding principles is an approach which favours the participation of women in projects, supports women's groups and strengthens women's position in civil society. Promoting the rights of women is seen as one dimension of achieving democratic development.

Gender equality is not an explicit goal of the project however gender sensitivity is encouraged. Half of the chosen NGO partners will be women's groups because these groups are very active and there are many. Each organisation will be given training in gender analysis.

In CECI's analysis of the situation, politics in the region is the greatest obstacle to peace and stability within the region. The recent past has shown that politics has contributed to racial hatred, put one community against another, and perpetuated conflict. According to CECI documents, much of the conflict is at a regional level or exacerbated by regional activity however there are no solutions from the international community which address the conflict at the regional level. The solutions proposed to date have been at the national level and have supported work with government and not with civil society groups. Therefore, CECI has focused on supporting civil society groups to find and implement solutions and to reconstruct the social fabric to contribute to the stability and sustainable development of the region. The specific activities which CECI will support are as yet undetermined.

### ***SMLC***

The term peacebuilding is not often used in South Africa, although it is obvious that South Africa is in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Understanding and eliminating the violence, particularly against women, is a pillar to this process. Whether the degree of violence is due to the apartheid era or not, it is obvious that the violence is hindering the healing of the country and disempowering women. Therefore, in this case, the linkage between gender and peacebuilding is the horrendous issue of sexual violence.

Gender analysis is an important aspect of the project and the cause of the conflict (sexual violence) is directly connected to gender relations. Gender equality and improving gender relations are not goals of the project nor is equal participation of men and women an important element of the project. However, because of the research topic, the activities are gender sensitive. The goals are community centered and sexual violence is viewed as a community problem dealt with through community solutions. Men's behavior is perceived as the primary

cause of sexual violence and therefore changing men's relations with women and attitude towards women is the solution. Understanding what makes some men 'resilient' to perpetrate sexual violence is one way which could inform preventative measures. The project is designed so that the solutions are community driven with both men and women focusing on primary prevention.

Systems within the police force, health sector, and education field have been targeted as processes which perpetuate aspects of sexual violence. Although all the recommendations have not been made, it seems that most will be towards improving systems and not reforming them.

## **Programming Factors**

As the case studies illustrate, there are various ways in which gender and peacebuilding interface and are played out. The variations are indeed due to the central activity of the project but also to many other factors; supportive elements, barriers, and contradictions. From discussions with staff, I would conclude that these factors influence whether gender is considered and, if so, to what extent they are addressed. Described below are the reasons given by project staff for addressing gender followed by the potential barriers to programming

## **Supportive Factors**

### ***Crisis Causes Change in Demographics***

After the Rwandan genocide in 1994, women made up the majority of the population; it is estimated women are 60 percent of the population in general (Byrne, 1995) and 80 percent in some regions (Turshen, 1998). Along with this shift emerged an increase in female headed houses. Although these women have the same responsibilities as men in male-headed houses, women have difficulties in responding as they do not have the same legal rights, experience in managing households, the social acceptance to do non-traditional activities, nor the same resources. This shift in demographics has demanded that the NGO community actively involve women in their programming and in some cases, focus specifically on women.

### ***Women are Natural Peace-makers***

Even though some Rwandan women were actively involved in the genocide killings, many practitioners felt that women are natural peace-makers. There was concern that if women are not allowed decision making power within government, that there is a risk of future violent conflict and war. Among the women's NGOs in Rwanda and South Africa, there is a strong belief that it is only through women that peace in a country can occur. This does not mean that men are excluded from activities, only that women should have greater say in the direction of the country. Although this is a contested belief, it is still a commonly held position which can influence project design.

### ***Gender Inequities Can Cause War***

Although not a commonly discussed idea, some people did theorize how gender inequity had a role in the Rwandan genocide. The oppression that women felt because of the patriarchal system evident throughout the society, caused women to openly engage in the killings as a way of fighting against the oppressive system. Even if some women were not directly involved in the genocide, they did not use their indirect power over their husbands and sons to prevent the violence. Possibly, if women had a higher status within society, they may have looked at other alternatives to change the system. Moreover, because there was supposed tension between Hutu and Tutsi women because of differential treatment and status in society (based on their relations with men), women, as a group, did not rally together to work at stopping the genocide. This reason for considering gender was not written about in project documents but was discussed with practitioners.

### ***Women Organize After Crisis***

Rwandan women organized themselves directly after the war to start dealing with its aftermath. Although they had relatively little experience in running NGOs, they saw a need and worked towards meeting it. Women's organization, drive and competence led some international NGOs to fund and work with women-run NGOs. Because these are often the chosen partner organizations, they address the needs of women and children equally or, at times, more than the needs of men.

### ***Violence***

Violence, either in the aftermath or during a war, hinders the reconstruction of a country, gender relations, and the actions and activities of women. Both South Africa and Rwanda exemplify this linkage. Sexual violence was a calculated weapon throughout the genocide and during apartheid. In Rwanda, the amount of systematic rape, forced sexual slavery, disfigurement, forced prostitution, sexual mutilation, and evisceration which occurred is horrifying. Some estimates suggest that as many as 250,000 women were raped or forced into sexual slavery (Goodwin, 1997). Although some NGOs do not recognize the trauma that women have endured in their programming, many local women NGOs have organized themselves to provide the support needed for these victims. Some feel that it is because women have gone through such horror that they have organized to ensure that such a war will not occur again.

Gender violence, fear of crime and sexual violence, and the legacy of violent actions limits the actions and activities of women. Gender relations are extremely volatile after a war and often disrupt in violence; sexual, emotional, psychological, physical, or economic. Because services such as health and education are targeted by military through violent conflict, the ability for the state to deal with gender violence is limited. As with the change in demographics because of war, this is another startling result of war which demands one to act.



### **Barriers and Supportive Factors**

Listed above are the factors which make it obvious to recognize gender aspects of a project. From discussions with project staff, other reasons are given which influence which aspect of gender is considered (goal, analysis, or approach), and the extent to which it is addressed. Depending on various factors, these can create barriers to implementation or they can be the support needed for implementation.

### ***Organization***

The organization which implements the project is guided by a mandate, political or apolitical status, position within the society, reliance on funding (and donor's agenda), and the individuals within the organization. All organizations reviewed have policies recognizing the importance of gender considerations in their programming. The CECI and Pro-femmes projects are similar in that they are supporting the capacities of NGOs however the approaches may differ because of the organization's status within the country. Pro-femmes is a nationally run organization compared to the foreign run CECI. The foreign status may be beneficial for CECI to manage a regional project while being a national NGO may allow Pro-femmes to build trust with and between members. Possibly, because of its position and its membership, Pro-femmes is able to be more radical in developing objectives regarding equality.

### ***Staff***

Interviews with project staff highlighted differences in reasons for adopting a gendered approach, different understandings of how gender is translated into practice, and how it relates to the mandate of the organization. In many cases, the term Gender and Peacebuilding had never been spoken or thought of.

An organization may employ people who are ready to move forward and who want to radically change institutions, social values and cultures as well as employees who want to keep the status quo and who gain much from the current culture. This variance in attitudes of staff may cause a discrepancy in what is written in project proposals compared with what occurs in the field.

The ability and competency of the staff may determine which aspects of peacebuilding will be addressed and what will be left aside. For example, violence against women may be left out of a community program if staff do not feel comfortable and capable of addressing it adequately.

### ***Need***

The amount of buy-in or push from the community and beneficiaries can determine the degree to which a gendered approach is taken and accepted. In three of the four projects, the impetus for a gendered approach came largely from above and not necessarily from the communities. The push for a gendered approach for the CECI project and ACORD project seem largely top-down although, CECI's analysis of the region illustrated a need to address the gender components of

their activities. The SMLC project is meeting the community's first priority of dealing with security in the area but the approach to address men's behaviors is coming from the project organizers and not the community.

### ***Donor Agenda***

The current development system is set up so that the NGO community is often forced to follow the direction of donors. Currently, most donors demand some element of gender sensitivity in project proposals. As each of the projects described above is dependent on external funding, they all, at a minimum, presumably had to state that they would use gender analysis or encourage equal participation of men and women in order to receive funding. Depending on how this policy or agenda is implemented and how this is viewed by the NGO and the project participants determines whether donor's gender agenda is a supportive factor or a barrier to gender equality and peacebuilding.

In the course of this study, some possible reasons why gender is not viewed as an integral part of peacebuilding projects emerged through interpretation of literature and informal conversations. A list of these reasons is given in Appendix 1.

Listed above are the supportive factors as well as the barriers to the implementation of a peacebuilding project and specifically a project with a gendered approach. These factors are found at one level, however what became evident throughout this study was how there are potential contradictions in both Gender and Peacebuilding agendas and practice which can be barriers as well.

### **Potential Contradictions**

The most obvious contradiction is found in the agendas of peacebuilding and gender equality. Peacebuilding is focused on attaining security and stability. In contrast, gender equality is ultimately about cultural and political changes which can cause instability and insecurity for some. Working towards these goals simultaneously could potentially undermine each goal.

Gender equality, is about, among other things, structural, behavioral, and attitudinal change. These transformations are challenging in times of peace and relative economic security. To address these challenges when people's main concerns are meeting primary needs can be interpreted as futile and inappropriate.

In addition, what is often described as an agenda or policy can often be vague and hold different meaning for people. For example, the term gender is often used throughout project documents but there is not a clear description of how to interpret it. The contradiction lies in the vagueness of terms.

There are a number of contradictions in the practice of peacebuilding itself. Peacebuilding in practice can often cause more or different conflict among people. According to Paris, peacebuilding is done through liberalizing politics and the economy. He suggests that this is inherently conflictual and has in fact continued or started up numerous wars (Paris, 1997, 56). He sites Rwanda, Angola, Bosnia, Mozambique, El Salvador, and Nicaragua as cases in point.

At another level of practice, other contradictions can be experienced when gender equality is part of the goal of peacebuilding. The majority of mainstream peacebuilding activities have a male bias; they are based on the male *reality* and they primarily engage men. Possibly due to this, projects with a goal of gender equality often do not address or include men in the project. However, equality between men and women cannot be achieved through the empowerment of women alone. There is a need to support men in times of reconstruction in order to achieve gender equality. This does not necessarily imply that men should be engaged more in projects but that both men and women should study how masculinity, femininity, and socialization of girls, boys, men, and women have a role in violent conflict and war.

Other contradictions arise in the shift from theory to practice. In theory, gender analysis can illuminate *connectors* and *dividers* (Anderson, 1999) within society and bring out nuances of relations. In practice, however, gender considerations have often only illustrated the “numbers” of women, not relations or even differences and similarities among women. Highlighted above are some potential contradictions however an understanding of the impact of the contradictions is weak and more research is needed in this area.

## Challenges for Organizations

The challenge for organizations is to recognize all the factors at play which both support and impede the linking of Gender and Peacebuilding. The supportive factors and the barriers shown above are context specific but they do illustrate the need for a thorough assessment of the compatibility, and supportiveness of combining goals, approaches and tools. A draft framework is illustrated below suggesting some of the main questions to ask in determining approach, tools, and goals as they relate to Gender and Peacebuilding. By addressing some or all of these elements, one can determine the supportive factors as well as the barriers at both the practical and conceptual level and develop a project which addresses these aspects.

Barriers/Contradictions	Questions to Ask	Supportive Factors
	Linkage between gender and peacebuilding?	

	What aspect of gender (relations, equity, equality, analysis etc...)?	
	Why are you addressing gender equality?	
	How are you addressing gender equality?	
	How to address barriers and build on support factors?	

These aspects need to be assessed in light of the project model in which projects are implemented, the political climate of the area, the strengths and weaknesses of organizations, staff, and institutional systems.

Politically, it is much easier to *do* gender analysis than to take a gendered approach and to work towards gender equality. The project model that we generally work within is a difficult structure with which to achieve equality as equality is ultimately about changing attitudes, systems, and structures. This model was designed to develop infrastructures. It is limited in that it operates within a time frame, focuses on outputs and not process, and follows a linear process. In addition, the model does not facilitate linkages with initiatives or other projects to create synergy and mass movements which is often needed for structural changes.

There is a need to recognize that all activities in a post-conflict context are gendered, meaning they have different impacts on women and men and the approach to implement the activity often varies because of gender. Causes of war, war, reasons why war ends also have gender dimensions. Understanding and recognizing these dimensions is one step in moving beyond barriers and contradictions.

Understanding what is meant by gender is another step. Most writing on Gender and Peacebuilding starts with a description of gender which reveals that gender does not connote simply women, nor women and men, but the economic, social, political and cultural factors which are part of being a man and a woman. However, the spectrum of differences which gender analysis should reveal is usually quickly simplified to describe men in general or women in general. Indeed, this is done throughout this report. Simplifying a situation is an efficient way of assessing needs, experiences and of designing projects and helps in our desire to *make sense* of situations.

The diverse spectrum of people and their experiences is obvious in the case of Rwanda. Some of

the determining factors of divisions in the society which relate specifically to the conflict are whether the individual was internally displaced or was a refugee, whether they spoke French or English, which country they fled to, whether they had married someone from the same ethnic group or not, whether they currently lived in rural or urban Rwanda, which ethnic group they belonged to, whether their spouse or children had died during the genocide, and which economic group they belonged to. This does not even take into considerations other factors such as age, sexuality, political affiliation, or religion. If one was to take gender to its true meaning, all these dimensions would be included in a gender analysis but because, in practice, gender has become synonymous with sex (female/male) these variables are often overlooked in a gender analysis.

In addition, there are valid arguments made on how the shift from a woman focused approach to gender equality and a gendered approach to gender equality has made the approach less political. It is facile to have gender in a proposal or to *do* gender analysis yet these actions do not necessarily move towards gender equality.

The literature has tended to harden perceptions of women and men and femininity and masculinity. The fluctuation in roles is not captured. In practice as well, the projects were not able to catch the shifting of roles. The case studies illustrate the difficulties of going beyond analyzing the male/female dichotomy. Although factors such as race, class, and ethnicity play a large role in determining a person's experience in South Africa and in Rwanda, these elements were not addressed in the case studies. This illustrates that both in peacebuilding practice and in theory it is difficult to address the full constructs of gender.

## **Conclusion**

As stated above, there are a number of difficulties involved with integrating a gender approach in peacebuilding, however, it is argued that the risks of *not* addressing gender inequalities far outweigh the potential contradictions and their effects. The key focus for program staff should be developing a Gender and Peacebuilding approach which results in limited conflict and positive change.

One way to do this, is to understand where gender and peacebuilding interface. This paper has demonstrated that this can occur at a theoretical or conceptual level, as illustrated by the three perceptions of Gender and Peacebuilding or at practical level as shown through the contextual linkages in the case studies such as elimination of sexual violence, democratic development, poverty reduction, and redistribution of power. At both the theoretical and practical level, the relationship between gender and peacebuilding can be mutually supportive or limiting and contradictory.

The case studies explored in this report highlight possible supportive factors to linking the

gender to peacebuilding; such as the demographic changes due to war, women's organizational capacity after crisis, and the impact of violent conflict. These factors force people to see that peacebuilding is gendered. However, organizations are also faced with potential barriers in integrating gender with peacebuilding because of the contradiction in agendas and in practice, the capacity and ideology of the organization and staff, the stated need for a gendered approach from the affected community, and the gender agenda of donors.

These possible risks, contradictions, and barriers to gender equality and peacebuilding are essential to recognize and address however, it is argued that they are not indicators to stop incorporating a gender aware agenda within peacebuilding activities. Instead, they are indicators of not simply using Gender and Peacebuilding as if it was a mantra. An understanding of these complexities will result in more effective project planning and implementation.

It is argued that linking Gender and Peacebuilding together can positively influence peacebuilding, both in theory and in practice. In theory, the various uses of gender can bring depth to an understanding of peacebuilding and illustrate the various approaches and goals that exist. In practice, the dimensions of gender can bring out the complexities of peacebuilding but keep the centre of focus on people and on relations and relationship building.

There is relatively little research in the area of Gender and Peacebuilding and although this paper has attempted to synthesize and analyze various approaches on the subject, there is a need for further research. Specifically, research is needed on the impact of the contradictions between gender equality and peacebuilding, men's involvement in gender equality and peacebuilding, and the effectiveness and impact of different gender approaches in peacebuilding activities.

## **Appendix 1: Reasons why Gender is not considered in Peacebuilding projects**

Although this question is not addressed in depth, in the course of this study some possible reasons why gender is *not* viewed as an integral part of peacebuilding projects emerged through interpretation of some literature and informal conversations. There is very little written (if anything) that states explicitly that peacebuilding is not gendered however, the majority of peacebuilding projects do not consider gender. Why is this so?

### ***Timing***

Peacebuilding activities can take place before, during and after a conflict. Post-conflict activities can sometimes be hastily planned in order to meet the needs of communities in emergency situations. Through haste, the gender dimensions of the situation may not be seen, or if recognized, viewed as important in terms of priorities. The gender dimensions of the emergency aid activities are lost because of haste .

As well, some may argue that the peacebuilding phase may not be the *right* time for a community or country to change gender relations. The need to feed, clothe, and provide housing and health care for those affected by the war far supersedes the luxury issue of gender. Moreover, attempting to bring about gender equality may cause more instability in an already fragile environment.

### ***Men and Women Experience Conflict and Peace Equally***

It is often believed that women's and men's needs, interests, and experiences are mutual. It is argued that because both men and women are capable of conducting the same vicious acts or because there are some women leaders who have led their countries to war, that there are no gender differences in conflict. Because there is no gender difference in experiences, it is justifiable to design a peacebuilding project based on the male *reality*.

### ***Peacebuilding is Not Gendered***

Definitions of peacebuilding can often determine the gender perspective. For some, peacebuilding is about the cessation of war. War in turn is defined as men fighting and therefore there is no gender concerns. Or, peacebuilding may be defined as the maintenance of state security. As the state is viewed as a political structure, no gender considerations need be made.

The managerial level of the development and peacebuilding sector is dominated by men and this is particularly so in post-conflict settings. The managers may come from a traditional military/security background where peacebuilding is limited to the definitions above.

### ***Addressing Gender is Not Culturally Appropriate***

For some, culture is viewed as static and sacred. Gender relations and the position of women

within a society or structure are part of culture and therefore *outsiders* and even *insiders* have no right to address gender and attempt to change culture.

In addition, peacebuilding is often perceived as an activity which takes place mainly in developing countries where women have few rights. Because of their low status, it is perceived as normal within the culture, that women not be actively and formally involved in the peacebuilding process.

### ***Gender is a Women's Issue***

Gender concerns are often perceived as women's issues. Organizations may choose to disregard gender because they are not a women's organization, they feel that their activities do not concern women, or that their activities only involve men.

### ***Perceptions of Women***

Women are often perceived as victims of war, a vulnerable group which needs to be taken care of, or as not being capable of understanding or participating in peacebuilding at any level (community, country or international). These views inhibit women's involvement in peacebuilding. In equating gender with misconceptions of women, project organizers often see no need to understand the gender dimensions of their activities.

### ***Gender is Personal***

The process of understanding and addressing gender inequities at a project level often can reveal inequities at a personal level. Addressing gender can make people insecure as power relations are questioned, and assumptions and perceptions of people and relations are drawn to the surface. The feeling of insecurity at the personal level, may inhibit project planners to question gender inequity at the project level.

### ***Men and Women are Not Equal***

Not to be overlooked is the unfortunately held view that men and women are not equal and there is no reason to attempt to create an even playing field. Moreover, some may feel that men should maintain a dominant position within society and peacebuilding projects could support this.

### ***Specialization of Gender***

According to El-Bushra, the field of Gender and Development has been hijacked by 'gender experts' who have made it a specialized field and turned simple concepts into complex equations (1999). This specialization of the field can inhibit organizations from addressing gender because they do not have an 'expert' or 'gender focal person' or because it seems too difficult. In practice, it is simple to 'encourage' a 50 percent turn out from women and say that *gender* was an important aspect of the project.



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