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GENDER APPROACHES IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



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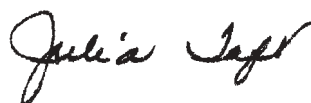


The purpose of this manual is to support and strengthen the capacity of UNDP staff working on recovery and rehabilitation activities in crisis and post-conflict situations to mainstream gender equality objectives. While the traditional perception of women in crisis and post-conflict situations is that of victims of war, the active role women in fact play in such situations is being increasingly recognized. Crises can break down social barriers and traditional patriarchal patterns, thus providing windows of opportunity for the reconstruction of a more just and equitable society where women's human rights will be protected and gender equality will become the norm in institutional and social frameworks.

Arising opportunities must be seized not only to promote the social rehabilitation of a country, but to encourage and support new institutional structures, legislation and its enforcement for the protection of women's political, economic, social and cultural rights. The transitional recovery phase can thus prove to be a particularly critical period for positive transformation of gender relations, providing opportunities to increase women's skills and income-earning opportunities and their overall empowerment.

UNDP's mandate in crisis and post-conflict situations offers the organization a unique opportunity to contribute to this positive change. In countries undergoing a transition phase, UNDP can foster the nascent dynamism for social change, engage national stakeholders in the planning and execution of institutional reforms to empower women and promote gender equality. This is best done by mainstreaming gender into all phases of UNDP interventions – from vulnerability assessments, mission planning, programme implementation and policy advice to monitoring and evaluation of impact on gender relations.

It is hoped that these guidelines manual will serve as an important tool to assist staff in ensuring the incorporation of an effective gender perspective in the planning and implementation process of recovery programmes. The manual was made possible through substantial support from the Emergency Office of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and benefitted from the valuable input of Augusta Angelucci, Gender and Vulnerable Groups Specialist, UNDP Rome Liaison Office and the UNDP Bureau of Development Policy's Gender in Development Advisors.



Julia Taft
Assistant Administrator and Director
Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
United Nations Development Programme

“Peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men in development. Armed and other types of conflicts, wars of aggression, foreign occupation, colonial or other alien domination, as well as terrorism, continue to cause serious obstacles to the advancement of women.”

– Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly

This manual was compiled during a seminar entitled **“Approccio di genere in situazioni di emergenza, conflitto e post-conflitto”** (Gender approach in emergency, conflict, and post-conflict situations), which was held in Rome on 2-6 April 2001. The seminar was organized by the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in Rome and the Emergency division of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and included participants from various Italian non governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies directly involved in emergency, crisis response and recovery operations.

During the seminar, a needs assessment session was held and participants expressed their interest in having a “how to” manual that could help them better integrate a gender approach during humanitarian, recovery and development activities. The manual is divided into three chapters:

First chapter

The first chapter contains information on the approaches to women and gender issues over the last 20 years. It provides the basic concepts necessary to understand how to address gender issues and improve the impact of humanitarian assistance.

Second chapter

In the second chapter, the relevant international instruments protecting the rights of people affected by war and other emergency situations are presented. Relevant passages are quoted and explained. The full text of these instruments can be found in the annexed CD-ROM.

Third chapter

The third chapter contains information that can be used as reference in programming and organizing humanitarian interventions with a gender perspective.

CD-ROM

The annexed CD-ROM contains case studies, exercises, legal instruments, a bibliography and a list of Web sites to help expand your knowledge of the integration of a gender approach in emergency situations.

“In war-torn societies, women often keep societies going. They maintain the social fabric. They replace destroyed social services and tend to the sick and wounded. As a result, women are the prime advocates of peace”

– UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

The purpose of the manual is to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian and recovery interventions through the integration of a gender perspective.

We believe that this manual will help readers to:

- appreciate the concept and scope of gender;
- appreciate the evolution of approaches to gender equality issues over the years;
- recognize that interventions can be more effective if they integrate a gender perspective;
- identify the underlying principles and corresponding international instruments which establish the human rights of people involved in emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations, and give particular attention to those issues that directly address women's rights;
- ensure that the legal rights of women are understood and that adequate measures are taken to respond;
- identify the particular elements that characterize a gender approach at all levels of humanitarian and recovery assistance;
- use specific tools and frameworks to conduct a gender analysis and data collection in order to have a more accurate representation of the context in which women are operating;
- develop mechanisms to ensure that the resources and needs of both women and men are addressed in all stages of programme (protection and assistance) planning, management and evaluation systems;
- develop strategies to protect and assist women, recognizing that most of them are facing new situations (single household, single motherhood, widow);
- incorporate a gender perspective in all programming phases;
- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of protection and assistance programmes by ensuring that adequate attention is given to the needs and resources of all members of the target population;
- encourage each staff member of each team to ensure that the integration of a gender dimension takes place in their area of competence.



The traditional perception of women in conflict and post-conflict situations is as victims of war. However, the active role women play in such situations is slowly starting to be recognized.¹

Before outlining the strategies to integrate a gender perspective in emergency and transition situations, it is necessary to review some basic concepts related to gender and conflict.

When discussing gender, we generally refer to the social differences and relations between men and women, which are learned and transformed. The term gender does not replace the term sex, which refers exclusively to biological differences between men and women.²

Gender

- Socially constructed
- Difference between and within cultures
- Includes variables identifying differences in roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints

Sex

- Biologically defined
- Determined by birth
- Universal
- Unchanging

Changes in gender relations due to crisis situation

- Demographic profile changes: in armed conflict situations, more women than men survive
- Changes in division of labour between men and women that can be long term or even permanent
- Increased political participation and organization: women in particular learn to gain greater confidence and see benefits of working with other women³

Gender roles:

- Define what is considered appropriate for men and women within the society, social roles and division of labour;
- Involve the relation to power (how it is used, by whom and how it is shared);
- Vary greatly from one culture to another and change over time;
- Vary from one social group to another within the same culture;
- Race, class, religion, ethnicity, economic circumstances and age influence gender roles;
- Sudden crisis, like war or famine, can radically and rapidly change gender roles.

For example, understanding gender differentiation and gender discrimination helps us to understand gender on various grounds. After a crisis, women ex-combatants who have engaged in liberation struggles have discovered old attitudes may return and the changes that occurred during the crisis, such as loss of property or death of a spouse, may also have a permanent impact.⁴

Gender and Culture

Culture is part of the fabric of every society. It shapes the way things are done and our understanding of why this should be.⁵ Gender identities and gender relations are essential facets of culture as they determine the way daily life is lived not only within the family, but also in society as a whole. Gender influences economics, politics, social interactions and individual needs. It undergoes variations over time and across culture. It is an active force in the formation of the family, the community and the nation.

¹ Cammack D., *Promoting Gender Sensitive Operations*, WFP Nairobi, 2000.

² ILO, *ABC of Women Workers' Rights and Gender Equality*, ILO Geneva, 2000.

³ Morrison P.T., in *Weaving Gender in Disaster and Refugee Assistance*, InterAction, USA, 1998.

⁴ Oxfam, *The Oxfam Training Manual*, Oxfam UK and Ireland, 1994.

⁵ www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/equality

The following table highlights ways in which gender differences and inequalities may be relevant in conflict situations. It is not a complete list, but it provides suggestions for further reflection.⁶

Elements of conflict situations and possible gender dimensions	
<i>Elements of conflict situations</i>	Pre-conflict situations
	<i>Possible gender dimensions</i>
Increased mobilization of soldiers	Increased commercial sex trade (including child prostitution) around military bases and army camps.
Nationalist propaganda used to increase support for military action	Gender stereotypes and specific definitions of masculinity and femininity are often promoted. There may be increased pressure on men to 'defend the nation.'
Mobilization of pro-peace activists and organizations	Women have been active in peace movements – both generally and in women-specific organizations. Women have often drawn moral authority from their role as mothers, but they have also been able to step outside traditional roles during conflict situations, taking up public roles in relief and political organizations.
Increasing human rights violations	Women's rights are not always recognized as human rights. Gender-based violence may increase.
During conflict situations	
Psychological trauma, physical violence, casualties and death	Men tend to be the primary soldiers/combatants. Yet, in various conflicts, women have made up significant numbers of combatants. Women and girls are often victims of sexual violence (including rape, sexual mutilation, sexual humiliation, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy) during armed conflict.
Social networks disrupted and destroyed – changes in family structures and composition	Gender relations can be subject to stress and change. The traditional division of labour within a family may be under pressure. Survival strategies often necessitate changes in the gender division of labour. Women may become responsible for an increased number of dependents.
Mobilization of people for conflict. Every day life and work disrupted.	The gender division of labour in workplaces can change. With men's mobilization for combat, women have often taken over traditionally male occupations and responsibilities. Women have challenged traditional gender stereotypes and roles by becoming combatants and taking on other non-traditional roles.
Material shortages (shortages of food, health care, water, fuel, etc)	Women's role as provider of the everyday needs of the family may mean increased stress and work as basic goods are more difficult to locate. Girls may also face an increased workload. Non-combatant men may also experience stress related to their domestic gender roles if they are expected, but unable, to provide for their families.
Creation of refugees and displaced people	People's ability to respond to an emergency situation is influenced by whether they are male or female. Women and men refugees (as well as boys and girls) often have different needs and priorities.
Dialogue and peace negotiations	Women are often excluded from formal discussions given their lack of participation and access in pre-conflict decision-making organizations and institutions.

⁶ Woroniuk B. *Gender Equality & Peace-building Operations: An Operational framework*, Cida, Canada, 2000.

Elements of conflict situations and possible gender dimensions (cont.)	
<i>Elements of conflict situations</i>	<i>During reconstruction and rehabilitation Possible gender dimensions</i>
Political negotiations and planning to implement peace accords	Men and women's participation in these processes tends to vary, with women often playing only minor roles in formal negotiations or policy making.
Media used to communicate messages	Women's unequal access to media may mean that their interests, needs and perspectives are not represented and discussed.
Use of outside investigators, peacekeepers, etc.	Officials are not generally trained in gender equality issues (women's rights as human rights, how to recognize and deal with gender-specific violence). Women and girls have been harassed and sexually assaulted by peacekeepers.
Holding of elections	Women face specific obstacles in voting, in standing for election and in having gender equality issues discussed as election issues.
Internal investments in employment creation, health care, etc.	Reconstruction programmes may not recognize or give priority to supporting women's and girls' health needs, domestic responsibilities or needs for skills training and credit.
Demobilization of combatants	Combatants are often assumed to be all male. If priority is granted to young men, women do not benefit from land allocations, credit schemes, etc.
Measures to increase the capacity of and confidence in civil society	Women's participation in community organizations and NGOs is generally uneven. These organizations often lack the capacity and interest in granting priority to equality issues.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Through **gender analysis** we can identify the differences between women and men regarding their specific activities, conditions, needs, access and control over resources, and access to development benefits

It is important to have a clear understanding of “who does what” within the society. Often women are relegated to reproductive tasks, but in conflict and emergency situations, they may also play an important

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