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INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN



How to Include a Gender Perspective into Security Sector Reform

Starting the Debate: Virtual Discussion with 170 Experts

Security is a crucial condition for ensuring human rights in conflict-affected, developing and transitional countries. Perceptions, risks and needs with respect to security differ between men, women, boys and girls.

The institutions and organizations responsible for ensuring the day-to-day security of people, such as the police, military, judiciary, border guards, rule of law agencies, policy-making institutions and non-statutory security actors as the media or armed militias, are commonly known as the security sector..

The role of the security sector has an active impact on peace and security and peoples' physical and psychological conditions.

Security sector reform (SSR) is increasingly recognized as an essential aspect of peace building and promotion of human rights. It is essential to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into all SSR initiatives in order to build and strengthen a democratic, transparent and effective security sector.

The security sector reforms need to frame efforts through assessment, monitoring and evaluation from a gender perspective. It is important to assess the condition and context of security before implementing SSR initiatives, to monitor the process of SSR and to evaluate the success or failure of reform efforts.

Moreover, it is fundamental to include a gender analysis (audits) in the Security Sector Institution in order to provide a means of analyzing gender issues at the level of policy, budget and personnel.

From the 4 to 29 June 2007, circa 170 experts from various areas of gender and the security sector worldwide discussed what a gender responsive audits, assessment, monitoring and evaluation process could reflect.

The results of the virtual discussion include the following 10 recommendations:

How to include a gender perspective in Assessments, Monitoring and Evaluation of SSR's programmes?

1) Involve female opinion leaders

Although being often less visible there are several actors and organizations that have a decisive impact on security. Female opinion leaders, school teachers, religious groups and women's organizations can

Assessment: Prior to programme development, an assessment analyses the context, determines programme objectives, and creates baselines for future monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring: Ongoing monitoring tracks progress according to defined programme indicators — qualitative and quantitative — and help the process of evaluation and review.

Evaluation: Evaluations take place at the end of a programme and identify broad lessons learned for the organisation. Evaluations should be used to inform the development of subsequent programming.

OECD, OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform (SSR) - Supporting Security and Justice, p. 71

give decisive input to SSR assessments. By interviewing female opinion leader before implementing a security programme, is possible to draw a complete picture of the situation.

2) Include gendered research questions

How many men and women are displaced? Is gender based violence an issue in the current context? How does the socio economic situation differ between men and women?

What you ask is what you get. By including a gender perspective into research questions a more complete data collection is possible.

3) Collect data disaggregated by sex

Men and women may suffer different forms of violence and are exposed to different types of risks and threats. It's crucial to collect quantitative data figures a distinction on the base of sex, age and ethnicity.

4) Form assessment teams that include both men and women

Who decides what will be analysed? Who manages the security sector?

Women are often outnumbered by their male counterparts in the security sector. Analysing the security sector and its reform as objectively as possible implies including men and women equally.

5) Use gender sensitive indicators

Indicators are means that measure and visualize performance. They are at risk to be one dimensional if they are not sensitive to the differences between men, women, boys and girls.

How to improve the gender sensitiveness in the Security Sector Institutions?

6) Conduct gender audits

Analysing a security sector institution for its gender responsiveness helps to find space of improvement or starting gender mainstreaming activities. It examines gender balance, working atmosphere, impact on the population and recruitment procedures.

7) Carry out gender budget analysis

The gender dimension remains to be still marginalized within security programs although literature, legal provisions, policy makers and practitioners call for more investments in this area. Often highly understaffed and badly financed multiple gender mainstream initiatives fail. Analyzing how much it is actually invested to reduce issues such as gender based violence help to make SSIs more transparent and accountable.

8) Create participatory gender action plans

A popular monitoring tool with respect to gender mainstreaming, are gender action plans, which indicate concrete activities and performance indicators. In participatory processes these action plans can be made comprehensive.

9) Build sustainable capacity

Gender training for security is a big asset and improves the institutions capacity in order to respond to security needs and threats in a comprehensive matter. Public awareness and continuous reflection make a process and gender mainstreaming more sustainable.

10) Involve independent oversight mechanisms

By consulting external consultants and women's organizations a more objective perspective can be gained outside of rigid and often hierarchical structures. A dynamic learning process can be stipulated this way.

The virtual discussion on *Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel* was part of a joint project of UN-INSTRAW (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women), DCAF (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces) and ODIHR (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights). The issues raised during the three-week dialogue serve as an input to a comprehensive *Gender & Security Sector Reform Toolkit* that will be published at the beginning of 2008.