KOFF Essential

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Gender-oriented peace policy

Peace work and women's rights through the lens of KOFF

Table of contents

1 <u>Introduction</u>

[1] In this case, "re-politicization" is to be understood in the context of gender-specific balances of power in society, i.e. reforging the link between a mechanical understanding of gender (the number of men/women who are involved, excluded, taken into account, or supported as individuals, etc., used for statistical purposes and for quantitative assessments) and the concept of gender as something that structures social relations. In this sense, gender has an impact on all of swisspeace's fields of activity in both numerical and structural terms.

The issue of women and girls being the targets of rape during war was long considered a taboo subject. Despite publicized incidents in countries such as Bosnia, dealing with gender-specific discrimination was for a long time left to chance when it came to peacebuilding. A breakthrough was not reached until October 2000 when, following a year-long civil society campaign, the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted. Many countries responded to this new commitment by drawing up their own National Action Plan (NAP) – including Switzerland, which approved its first NAP along with corresponding courses of action and indicators in 2007.

The system for monitoring the Swiss NAP worked well, but civil society criticized, that gender mainstreaming – be it involving women in peace talks, raising the issue of gender as an important dimension in multilateral negotiations, implementing projects to protect women from violence or support those affected by it – was being viewed in increasingly technical terms. The critics argued that the focus was shifting away from the causes of violence until ultimately all that seemed to matter was measurable results, i.e. the number of women reached. Proponents from civil society, academia, and even – in some cases – from government bodies have since been pushing for a change of direction in peacebuilding as a necessary basis for achieving gender equality. The normative framework of UN Resolution 1325 offers a good opportunity to exert pressure on institutions at national level. Yet in order to go back to examining gender difference from a political perspective, other avenues need to be pursued too. For the Center for Peacebuilding (KOFF) at swisspeace, this kind of re-politicization[1] in the context of peacebuilding means examining the shifts between civilian and military approaches to promoting peace, questioning who has the prerogative to interpret matters of protection and security, and calling for an appropriate understanding of gender.

KOFF was founded in 2001 with the aim of stimulating dialogue at the interface where peacebuilding efforts from state and civil society to promote peace meet, and thus improving the coherence of civilian peacebuilding in Switzerland.[2] With its activities and networking opportunities, KOFF has the appropriate tools at its disposal for taking action at this point of intersection and highlighting different perspectives. Thanks to the dynamic role it plays, KOFF has built up a wealth of knowledge on the political significance of gender as an issue in peacebuilding and as a constructive feature of security and civilian peacebuilding processes. However, this knowledge is not always applied and exploited as effectively as it is acquired.

This document is based on an examination of swisspeace and KOFF activities relating to gender and peacebuilding. The purpose of this publication is, firstly, to illustrate how the topic of gender and peacebuilding has developed in Switzerland, drawing on examples from swisspeace and/or KOFF, and to make the experiences gained from this accessible to a wider audience. Secondly, it aims to pinpoint where the issue of gender currently stands within the context of peacebuilding, harness the conceptual and operational achievements of UN Resolution 1325 (in a political sense), and stimulate debate.

The review is based on documents from swisspeace /KOFF and selected peace organizations, an analysis of KOFF's activities in the field of gender and peacebuilding (publications, training courses, events), and interviews with gender specialists at KOFF and external experts.[3]

[2] KOFF – cf. Imprint and http:// koff.swisspeace.ch/
[3] The resources used to compile this publication include documents such as KOFF annual reports, swisspeace reports, newsletters, and factsheets (including internal documents), as well as training material (presentations), invitations to and minutes from roundtables, and information about events and the development of the mandate with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Interviews were conducted with Maren Haartje, Cordula Reimann, Ursula Keller, Barbara Brank, and Rahel Fischer as former KOFF employees, as well as with Stella Jegher (a.i.), Carmen Jud, and Barbara Müller (formerly with the feminist peace organisation cfd). We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jeanne Luethy, who worked through the documents and picked out the relevant passages of text.

2   The 1990s to 2003

4   T. Batscheider (1993),
    Friedensforschung und
    Geschlechterverhältnisse.
    Zur Begründung feministischer
    Friedensforschung [Peace
    research and gender relations:
    the need for feminist peace
    research].
5   G. Sturm (1996), Das
    gesellschaftliche
    Geschlechterverhältnis als
    Konfliktfeld [Societal gender
    relations as an area of conflict].
6   These comprised two
    studies: "Geschlecht in der
    Friedenspolitik" ["Gender in
    peace policy"] (1992) and "War
    against Women, the Impact of
    Violence on Gender Relations"
    (1994). See also the article by
    Yvonne Joos on gender relations
    during wars and violent conflicts:
    http://www.cfd-ch.org/pdf/
    frieden/artikel_beitraege.pdf.

2.1   Context

The Bosnian War (1992-1995) sparked tremendous outrage: For the first time, the subject of widespread gender-specific violence entered public discussion and the significance of rape as a weapon of war became a topical issue. The fact that UN employees were involved in the trafficking of women and prostitution – at least indirectly or by allowing it to continue – also raised the question of the structural dimension of gender inequality in military and militarized contexts. At that time, peace research was expanding into the territory of gender difference. Hanne Margret Birkenbach and Tordis Batscheider[4] were among the first researchers in the German-speaking world to explore the topic of gender relations and peace. Gabriele Sturm's work on the "social place of women in the system of unrest"[5] also sparked a great deal of interest, especially in academic circles. These three pioneers were important reference figures for swisspeace. By linking gender research with the study of peace, they managed to bring this topic area to the attention of universities. From a feminist activist's perspective, however, this was not necessarily a positive step, as universities were regarded as patriarchal institutions that would simply reinforce existing gender stereotypes and hierarchies. This friction surrounding gender-specific issues in patriarchal institutions – something that has also emerged in the debate over the inclusion of women in the armed forces – also had a significant influence on the gender-based work carried out by swisspeace.

2.2   Important milestones for swisspeace

One key milestone for research on peace and conflict in times of upheaval came in the form of a conference held in Bern in 1990, which paved the way for awarding the first research assignments on the topic of gender and peace policy.[6] In 1995, the Swiss Peace Foundation advertised a vacancy for a "women peace researcher"

– a post that had been called for at the annual "War Against Women" conference – and received 50 applications from Switzerland and abroad. The position was funded by the organization Women for Peace.[7]

In 1998 – three years after the World Conference on Women in Beijing[8] and two years before the adoption of UN Resolution 1325 – swisspeace began organizing its first roundtables for women, featuring female representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), administrative bodies, academic institutes, and international peace missions. The content of these discussions was based on a working paper in which swisspeace staff specializing in women's rights presented 15 theses to illustrate the importance of a female-focused perspective in peace work and peace policy,[9] and on the section on women in armed conflicts in the Swiss NAP, which was adopted after the World Conference on Women. The focus was on the participation of women in political decision-making processes. Thanks to good networking and public engagement, a group coordinated by swisspeace – and made up of representatives from organizations such as cfd, Amnesty International, and Women for Peace – successfully ensured that this issue had a prominent place in the NAP on implementing UN Resolution 1325, which was approved a few years later.

2.2.1   Conflict Resolution and Gender – CraG

Women-focused roundtables were a regular feature of the swisspeace CRaG (Conflict Resolution and Gender) project, particularly between 1998 and 2000, and formed an important basis for further networking. The project coordinator initiated activities relating to peace policy and took part in public discussions in which experts from research and politics examined the importance of a gender-specific approach in civil conflict transformation from various different

7   This position, which was funded
    by Women for Peace for three
    years, was filled by Elenor
    Richter-Lyonette in 1995/96.
    However, she stepped down
    from the post after just a
    few months. The swisspeace
    employee responsible for dealing
    with women's rights issues
    took on part of the role, with an
    assistant appointed to handle
    the rest (first Patricia Barandun,
    then Andrea Huber). Tordis
    Batscheider had a research
    mandate at another institution.
8   The UN's Fourth World
    Conference on Women in
    1995 was based on the theme
    of "Equality, Development,
    and Peace" and covered a
    comprehensive range of topics.
    The recommendations from the
    conference were intended to be
    implemented by 2000. Following
    the conference in 1995,
    Switzerland drew up a National
    Action Plan under the motto
    "Gleichstellung, Entwicklung
    und Frieden" ["Equality,
    development, and peace"] (see
    also www.postbeijing.ch). The
    UN Security Council's Resolution
    1325, which was adopted in 2000,
    focused on one of the topic areas
    addressed in Beijing: "Women,
    Peace, and Security". However,
    Switzerland did not approve its
    own National Action Plan for
    implementing UN Resolution
    1325 until 2007.
9   Maren Haartje, Die Partizipation
    von Frauen in politischen
    Entscheidungsprozessen
    insbesondere im Bereich der
    zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung
    [The participation of women
    in political decision-making
    processes, especially in the field
    of civil conflict transformation].
    Working Paper no. 25 of the
    Swiss Peace Foundation.
    Institute for Conflict Resolution,
    1998.

10 http://www.parlament.ch/r/ suche/Paginas/geschaefte. aspx?gesch_id=20011009

11 KOFF was already established by this point, but its specialist gender unit had not yet been set up, so this initiative was implemented within the scope of KOFF projects and not as an explicitly gender-focused activity.

perspectives. One of the highlights among these debates was a conference in 2000 entitled "Frauen an den Krisenherd" [which translates roughly as "instead of women staying at home, they should be part of solving crises"], which was jointly organized by swisspeace and the NGOs cfd, BODS (Bewegung für eine offene demokratische Schweiz – a movement for an open and democratic Switzerland), Women for Peace, Kampagne für den Frieden [Campaign for Peace], and FRAu. This conference focused mainly on the participation of women in decision-making processes concerning war and peace, the key question being whether women can or should take part in these processes – and whether they want to get involved at all. The discussions held and papers presented were published by swisspeace in 2001 in a conference transcript with the same name.

It is worth noting that, during this period, swisspeace had already started working on gender mandates. Following the referral of the Grossenbacher motion in 1999[10] regarding compulsory training on gender for all participants involved in humanitarian, survival, and peacekeeping efforts abroad, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) commissioned swisspeace to set up a training program designed to raise awareness of conflict resolution and gender. The foundation was also officially invited to join the Swiss delegation at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Supplementary Meeting in Vienna to discuss questions relating to gender equality in the context of the "human dimension" of security. Another factor that helped to firmly establish the issue of gender as a key topic for swisspeace was the foundation's appearance at the 2002 exposition Expo.02 (during the week dedicated to the theme of "peace"), where women from Afghanistan and experts from swisspeace brought the question of gender into discussion.[11]

When it was suggested that swisspeace should approach gender as a cross-cutting topic, the response was positive. This is perhaps partly due to the significant engagement in feminist issues at swisspeace and the diverse network cultivated by the coordinator of the CRaG project. The relevance of the topic seemed largely undisputed, as demonstrated by the inclusion of a gender lens in the Environment and Conflicts Project (ENCOP) on peacebuilding in the context of resource conflicts, swisspeace's first large-scale research project, which was launched in 1992.[12]

2.2.2 A brief comparative examination of gender in feminist peace policy and in development cooperation

Within development cooperation in the late 1980s, there was a shift away from the specific involvement of women (Women in Development) towards gender mainstreaming. This new approach could count on financial backing, with none other than the World Bank itself pushing it from an economic angle based on providing "worthwhile" support for development through growth. In this respect, women, too, represented a lucrative target group as both (cheap) labor and (willing) consumers. One consequence of gender mainstreaming is that the female workforce could be integrated into the economy and exploited to maximize profits. In contrast, the field of peace work showed no signs of following the principles of an economy-based growth strategy. Moreover, peace work in Switzerland was not positioned to coincide with the areas where project funding was being invested; instead it was embedded in security and peace policy, which were primarily concerned with negotiations, dialogue, and mediation. However, feminists intervened in the debate on war and peace with a pointed critique of patriarchy: They saw the gender hierarchy as the main culprit behind violent developments. Not only did they criticize the army as a hotbed

12 The discussions focused partly on the different ways in which men and women are affected by environmental disasters due to their specific roles and opportunities, and what different strategies they come up with to deal with this. Other questions that were already being discussed include how the resilience of men and women needed to be reinforced in different ways. The intention was to use this analysis as a basis for developing project ideas that would allow women's organizations, in particular, to play a central role alongside civil society organizations.

13 http://www.fama.ch

of patriarchal values, but they also pointed the finger at universities, where feminist concerns were being undermined by male-dominated historiography. In the context of development policy, critical voices may have been calling into question the North's postcolonial claim to authority over defining what was meant by "development," but feminist views were still rarely heard. In Switzerland, cfd, an NGO guided by feminist principles and actively involved in development cooperation, was one exception to this. Yet like other NGOs, the main focus of its activities was on revolutionary movements. Matters concerning gender hierarchies were kept to the sidelines. Feminist ideas developed separately from specific, concrete projects, cultivated instead by feminist theologians (the Swiss feminist theological journal FAMA[13] played a key role in this regard) exerting an influence on Swiss (and international) peace policy (munitions, women in the armed forces, security concepts, etc.). In terms of development policy, female migrants were the main proponents voicing feminist criticism of patriarchal postcolonialism.
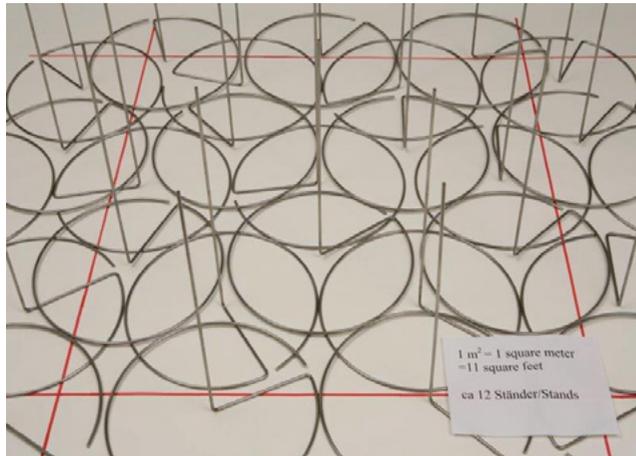
The peace policy advocated by cfd and its critical views on the overriding concept of security demonstrate the link between feminist theology and postcolonial criticism.

Attempts to find justification for concrete gender-oriented activities too have proven complicated. Cracks kept and still keep appearing, partly due to the wide-ranging views of feminist policy and the difficulty of finding partner organizations that can espouse feminist values and implement projects at the same time. A lot changed in the year 2000, when specific gender policies, bodies, and tools were established and studies on gender in development were set up. This distinction of gender issues, which also had an effect on budgets, could finally be incorporated into peacebuilding too when UN Resolution 1325 entered into force.

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14 The UN has also adopted four follow-up resolutions – 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), and 1960 (2010) – on more specific elements of the implementation of UN Resolution 1325.

15 The first NAPs adopted in 2000-2008: Denmark (2005), Norway (2006), Sweden (2006), Switzerland (2007), Austria (2007), Finland (2008), and Uganda (2008). The OSCE also adopted an "Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality" in 2004 and set up a corresponding specialist unit.

16 For an example of a shadow report (2008) produced by the organization NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland, see www.postbeijing.ch/cms/upload/pdf/Cedaw-Schattenbericht-2008.pdf.

3.1   Context

The UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace, and Security" was adopted in 2000,[14] marking a turning point in international peace policy. This was brought about partly by NGOs through intensive and competent lobbying and by feminist and women's rights organizations. The member states of the United Nations were urged to implement this resolution in peacebuilding activities, involving as many conflicting parties and actors as possible. Based on experiences following the World Conference on Women in 1995, many of them saw the National Action Plan (NAP) concept as a suitable tool for this implementation.[15] Most of the countries that opted for an NAP went on to set up specialist gender units, which were tasked with collecting relevant data based on experiences and findings and producing reports for the attention of politicians and civil society. The aim of this was to allow civil society to judge the quality of the NAP implementation process and to make the expert knowledge acquired regarding the interrelationships between gender, security, and peacebuilding available to as wide an audience as possible. Before long, the authorities found they could no longer handle this additional work themselves, so they contracted it out to specialist organizations and institutions with the appropriate expertise. This created a veritable "backstopping culture," which in turn set institutional developments in motion. For many NGOs, this situation was far from straightforward: In some cases, it sparked conflicts over the role of organizations that were also critically examining the significance of UN Resolution 1325 from a feminist perspective, as they now found themselves compiling reports for the responsible authorities as well. The situation for the organizations concerned was made even more complex by the fact that, according to Resolution 1325, the authorities had to obtain critical views from civil society. Since, unlike the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),[16] this regulatory framework

did not make any real provisions for shadow reports. Laborious consultations regarding the implementation of the resolution provided the only opportunity for civil society to regularly participate in such processes. There was evidently a conflict of interests, as – in Switzerland in particular – some of the organizations paid to write reports for the authorities were acting as a mouthpiece for critical opinions from civil society at the same time.

This conflicting state of affairs led to a certain degree of depoliticization on this issue. On the one hand, this was because the authorities' work consisted primarily of monitoring the NAP 1325 from a technical perspective, which had to be done with minimal manpower costs. On the other hand, feminist voices were increasingly distancing themselves from the "1325 culture," which required precisely this kind of technical approach. Some were keen to shift their focus back to establishing a direct dialogue with local NGOs in the Global South, while others exposed themselves politically as a civil society force by shedding a critical light on, for example, the significance of gender in national security concepts. This split among the NGOs was also apparent in Switzerland – and at KOFF.

3.2   UN Resolution 1325 and the Swiss NAP

To date, the development of gender-specific peacebuilding in Switzerland has been strongly influenced by the way in which the Swiss authorities[17] (especially the FDFA) have gone about implementing UN Resolution 1325.

In 2004, Swiss National Councilor Barbara Haering asked about the status of the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 in an interpellation. In 2006, a new Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG), "UN-Resolution 1325 – CH," was commissioned by the Peace Core Group to draw up the first NAP in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection

17 Switzerland is a member of the UN working group "Friends of 1325," which has also given the resolution symbolic and political value.

and Sport (DDPS) and under the leadership of the FDFA. The NAP for 2007 to 2009 – the first to be designed as a "developable tool" – was the result of a long discourse between the FDFA, other administrative bodies, and the NGOs as the "voice" of civil society. It was acknowledged and brought into force by the Swiss Federal Council in 2007. At the official launch of the NAP on August 31, 2007, Peter Maurer, who was the Swiss ambassador to the UN in New York at the time, explained how women could be better involved as actors in affairs of state and the private sector. He also mentioned the core contents of the NAP: Promoting and strengthening the participation of women in peacebuilding, preventing gender-specific violence, protecting the rights and needs of women and girls during and after violent conflicts, and implementing a gender-sensitive approach in all peacebuilding projects and programs. The limits and possibilities of cooperation between state actors and civil society were also explored at this event under the heading "Rolle der Zivilgesellschaft in der Umsetzung von 1325" ["The role of civil society in implementing UN Resolution 1325"].

The civil society organizations supported the implementation of the resolution, but they also feared that conceptual simplifications could reduce the emphasis on feminist concerns and thus undermine them. In 2004, cfd's Frauenstelle für Friedensarbeit [Women's Office for Peace Work], Amnesty International Switzerland, and HEKS [Swiss Church Aid, the aid organization of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland] launched a postcard campaign entitled "Der Code ist nicht geheim" ["The code is not a secret"] and called on the state institutions to bear feminist peace policy in mind when implementing UN Resolution 1325. The aim of this was to inform the general public about this issue and to raise awareness of the well-documented role of gender-specific violence as a weapon of war since the Bosnian War and thus the responsibility of countries that export munitions – including Switzerland. Another

example of the important part played by civil society in the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 is the "1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005" initiative, which is still actively involved in Swiss peacebuilding today as an NGO.

3.3   KOFF

To help put the decision to draw up a Swiss NAP for implementing UN Resolution 1325 into practice, the FDFA – as the competent authority – awarded a mandate to KOFF. In addition to developing the actual plan and the monitoring system, this involved coming up with a concept for training the authorities concerned. When this mandate was granted in 2003, a gender unit was formally established at KOFF.[18] KOFF's platform for state and non-governmental organizations seemed the perfect vehicle for this. For one thing, KOFF had plenty of gender expertise to draw on. Along with the experiences and knowledge that had been acquired through the women's roundtables organized by the CRaG project and other activities, the excellent networks established with both women's organizations and peacebuilding actors were seen as key resources. With KOFF, it was also possible to fulfil the requirement of involving civil society in the implementation of the NAP as systematically as possible to provide critical input.

The adoption of UN Resolution 1325 and the subsequent parliamentary initiatives and political pressure fundamentally changed the way in which the topic of gender was dealt with at swisspeace. The decision to create a specific gender unit underlined the significance of this topic and its acceptance by swisspeace, while it certainly served to enhance KOFF's profile in public. KOFF's mandate from the FDFA also meant there was an institutional and professional link between the issue of gender and the relevant government offices, which in turn had a lasting impact on

18 Although swisspeace has done a lot of work on gender and women's rights in peace policy, it has never had a formalized gender office or a requirements specification for such a unit.

[19] Cf. KOFF's strategy for 2006-2008.

KOFF's gender program and profile and the dynamics of its cooperation and dialogue with its members as important voices from civil society.

Documents published after 2003 show that the further development of the topic of gender at KOFF was heavily influenced by this mandate. Both the NAP development phase from 2004 to 2006 and the task of monitoring the implementation of the approved action plans (NAP I: 2007-2009; NAP II: 2010-2012; NAP III: 2013-2016) set a clear framework for KOFF's activities and its choice of focal topics.[19] At the same time, KOFF, along with its members, could use this mandate to exert a certain degree of influence on the basic structure of the NAP and the way it was to be monitored. The cooperation with the NGOs, the broad-based consultation process, and the monitoring of the NAP were carried out via the 1325 Working Group, which was set up for this purpose in 2007. According to documents and statements by former employees, the cooperation between KOFF, the FDFA, and the NGOs involved was apparently reasonably satisfactory, but more and more critical comments began emerging from the NGOs over time. Records include references to the laborious planning processes, overworked NGOs and experts, and weak efforts to incorporate experiences from the Global South as important benchmarks for gauging the relevance of UN Resolution 1325.

During this phase, swisspeace only occasionally delved into the topic of gender outside KOFF and the gender roundtables paid less and less attention to issues that affected swisspeace's core fields of activity beyond UN Resolution 1325. There were no more women's roundtable discussions like those organized as swisspeace activities in the 1990s. The discourse on gender was now conducted exclusively by KOFF. The swisspeace employees who did not work for KOFF and were not especially interested in this topic were

scarcely aware of the significance of gender for conflict-related work and the methods developed by KOFF for gender-sensitive peacebuilding. In addition, few organizational efforts were made to apply the findings from gender work in the area of civilian peacebuilding to the topic areas covered by swisspeace. The Swiss Peace Foundation had therefore shirked its responsibility for this issue to a certain extent: It had provided a forum for it through KOFF, but it had not made the most of its critical potential and usefulness as an enriching cross-cutting topic.

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3.3.1 Gender roundtables overshadowed by the 1325 Working Group

Since 2000, UN Resolution 1325 has dictated the debate surrounding the role played by gender in peacebuilding — something that has also been evident in the gender roundtables, one of KOFF's most important tools for sharing knowledge and developing expertise. These roundtables enabled KOFF members, representatives from women's rights groups, civil society and international organizations, independent experts, and government representatives to exchange ideas and transfer knowledge among themselves. They would therefore have provided a good opportunity to address new gender debates, to discuss current topics, concepts, and methods both within and beyond the areas prescribed by the structure of UN Resolution 1325, and to reflect on their political relevance. Yet it gradually became apparent that the feminist debate on the influence of civil society actions in developing the concept of "human security" and in peacebuilding in practice was losing momentum, until eventually it almost ground to a halt. While the 1325 Working Group was heavily involved in the discourse on gender, the roundtables that offered a platform for such discussions dwindled in importance and KOFF's member organizations hardly had any time or energy left to engage in the gender roundtable debates. They, too, focused on UN Resolution 1325 instead.

The gender roundtables reflect how KOFF's gender work has been progressively disciplined by the normative power of UN Resolution 1325. This influence was evident not only in the roundtables' rather passive reception, but also in the choice of topics for the discussions, which were all directly related to the resolution's measures and indicators. Between 2003 and 2006, some attempts were made to pick up on other topics relating to gender and peacebuilding or to look at resolution-based issues from a different perspective than the logical, managerial approach of the NAP, but these initiatives were still few and far between and generated little visible response at KOFF or swisspeace.[20] There is no record of any gender roundtables taking place at all in 2007/2008 and 2010.

Naturally, KOFF needed a vehicle that would enable it, as a platform, to ensure that the NGOs could participate in monitoring the NAP 1325, to gather their opinions, and to provide the FDFA with regular summaries of their views. For KOFF's gender specialist, the 1325 Working Group was an indispensable source of information for fulfilling the mandate. This was the only way that the critical views of the NGOs regarding the state implementation of the NAP could be elicited for reporting purposes. Legitimized by its criticism, the 1325 Working Group therefore represented a "sounding board" of experts for the FDFA that could be deployed in a targeted manner. It began to meet more and more frequently, while at the same time the composition of the group changed in favor of the representatives from the FDFA and the participation of civil society declined.

The 1325 Working Group thus became established as an addition to the roundtables, which originally served a different purpose. For the NGOs, this extra engagement meant more work, which put further strain on their already limited resources. In hindsight, it is no surprise that the NGOs dedicated themselves to the 1325 Working Group, as the NAP was clearly now the official tool for laying the foundations — and possibly providing funding — for gender-sensitive projects in peacebuilding. As a result, they noticeably began to withdraw from the discussions on content and policy, as this kind of reflection had become a luxury that many of them could scarcely afford when times were hard due to a drop in donations. However, although the impetus for

20 Thematic roundtables were held on the following topics: the roles of men and women in conflicts in a broader sense, gender mainstreaming and the "do no harm" approach or conflict analysis, gender-sensitive disaster relief, gender and dealing with the past, gender-sensitive trauma work in Kosovo, and gender-specific dimensions of access to justice in post-war Rwanda.

21 Cf. Cordula Reimann: „Grenzen der Evaluation von zivilgesellschaftlichen Projekten in Friedensprozessen" ["Limits to the evaluation of civil society projects in peacebuilding"], in: swisspeace Working Paper "Stärkung der Zivilgesellschaft als Mittel der zivilen Friedensförderung?" ["Strengthening civil society as a tool for civilian peacebuilding?"], swisspeace Annual Conference 2004, Bern (2005); and "Unterstützung von Friedensallianzen: Wer unterstützt wen und wie? Vorüberlegungen aus gendersensitiver Perspektive" ["Supporting peace alliances: Who supports who and how? Preliminary considerations from a gender-sensitive perspective"], in: Loccumer Protokolle. Geschlechterverhältnisse in der Überwindung von Gewaltkonflikten [Gender relations in overcoming violent conflicts], 27/03 (2004).

thematic roundtables was decreasing, KOFF's members evidently did not agree with the idea of scrapping the gender roundtable concept altogether. When KOFF's Annual Report for 2008 announced its decision to dispense with the gender roundtables it had been organizing for several years in favor of pursuing new fields of activity, this caused a real wave of indignation among the member organizations. Prompted by this response and the considerable demand among members for this forum for exchange, the roundtables were reinstated from 2009 onward as part of KOFF's medium-term plans.

In 2009, KOFF decided to go back to organizing gender roundtables that were not connected with UN Resolution 1325 and also provided the personnel for this. This was helped by the demand for gender-specific development of various different peacebuilding strategies and the fact that the academic debate on gender and violence had never been completely abandoned.[21] The difficulty of linking scientific findings and empirical data with peacebuilding in practice was generally acknowledged. At both KOFF and swisspeace, however, efforts to systematically promote this transdisciplinary exchange were, for the most part, lacking. The findings from gender studies and feminist peace research barely left a mark on the work of the 1325 Working Group, whose reports were restricted to information and assessments that were easy to handle from a technical perspective. These two fields of activity seemed to be developing in different directions – with mandate-based mainstreaming work on the one hand and a debate on fundamental questions on the other. Nevertheless, the KOFF publications from this period often featured fascinating articles about the gender dimension of violence and the impact on women, while the newsletter, too, included references to academic works.

3.3.2   Implementing the NAP 1325

Thanks to KOFF's careful and effective coordination, it proved possible to meet the needs of the NGOs while also fulfilling the Human Security Division (HSD) mandate. Firstly, information was gathered as a basis for official reports, in accordance with the monitoring scheme for NAP I. Secondly, the measures taken were evaluated by the relevant personnel, with a distinction made between multilateral efforts and bilateral projects aimed at protecting women. A third important element of the evaluation process was – and still is – the institutional involvement (e.g. training and recruitment, internal implementation structures) of the Swiss authorities in putting UN Resolution 1325 into practice. In addition to this, the 1325 Working Group used a country-specific example to demonstrate how local civil society could reap the benefits offered by the resolution, highlighting the situation in Colombia, where both Swiss NGOs and FDFA projects were receiving support. The documents consulted chronicle the complex consultation process led by KOFF and the high level of engagement among the NGO members of the 1325 Working Group. The conclusion reached was that UN Resolution 1325 certainly carried some weight in state peacebuilding, but at the same time, Colombia – a country without a NAP – had a strong civil society that attached a great deal of importance to approaching peacebuilding from the perspective of women's rights. Thanks to good local networking, the participation of these kinds of civil society groups, and political lobbying, the Colombian feminists, too, were able to achieve success in promoting the idea of UN Resolution 1325.

Monitoring the implementation of the NAP gave rise to plenty of discussion, both within the framework of the 1325 Working Group and beyond. On the one hand, it was clear that UN Resolution 1325 could serve as a useful lobbying tool for international peacebuilding, provided

that the NGOs were able to make use of it. On the other hand, however, questions were raised as to whether – given the fact that resources were scarce and the work involved was unpaid – it really offered an opportunity for community-based and smaller, local civil society organizations to gain access to international legal frameworks and international peacebuilding discourse. Moreover, there is still an ongoing debate over whether UN Resolution 1325 is splitting the NGO landscape into two camps: professional organizations that receive funding for implementing the resolution and need an administrative apparatus for managing this, and organizations operating on the basis of politically motivated and voluntary grassroots work with no access to project management tools. Smaller organizations were questioning whether the effort required to participate in the consultations on UN Resolution 1325 was really worth it for them, or whether they would be better off working directly with local women's rights organizations.

3.3.3   Training courses and advice

The scope of Switzerland's NAP 1325 also included the provision of training courses and the development of implementation tools. During this phase, KOFF extended its portfolio of training schemes in relation to this area and expanded its range of methods. In addition to the mandates from the FDFA, KOFF's new services led to occasional commissions from other quarters too, such as NGOs or universities, which offered potential benefits for KOFF's networking and knowledge sharing activities. Between 2003 and 2005, KOFF supported the FDFA's internal training program by offering training on gender mainstreaming. As part of this task, which formed the core of a more comprehensive backstopping mandate, KOFF's gender specialist ran regular training courses in various fields of activity covered by the FDFA.[22] Specific models were also developed for this, such as the "Gender Triangle"[23] for conflict analysis. The aim of

this was to investigate the importance of gender at a structural, individual, and symbolic level and to adapt methods of analysis to make them gender-sensitive. NGOs that had only recently become involved in peacebuilding and were able to obtain advice from KOFF also benefited from the tools and training offered, with some even setting aside budgets specifically for this. The main objective was to use gender mainstreaming across all areas of peacebuilding to highlight the significance of gender difference and to make corresponding conceptual and methodological changes.

3.3.4   Publications and newsletters

Between 2004 and 2005 in particular, the KOFF newsletters devoted a great deal of attention to the gender perspective. As well as being the focus of two feature articles, the topic of gender appeared in more than a third of all of the articles published in 2005. The brief, regular news bulletins on KOFF roundtables and external events demonstrate the effective networking between KOFF's gender experts and its member organizations, who could find and share information via the newsletter as well as through the physical platform provided by the roundtables. Other (non-swisspeace) publication channels were used to convey information on academic debates and conceptual developments.[24]

22 From 2007 onwards, KOFF ran a course on gender and conflict as part of its own training range and was awarded a teaching mandate by the Institute for European Global Studies at the University of Basel for a postgraduate program on gender and conflict. In response to specific requests, the person responsible for gender at KOFF also occasionally organized courses and provided consultations for individual member organizations or FDFA offices.

23 The "Gender Triangle" was developed by Cordula Reimann, who was running KOFF's gender unit at the time, and was regarded as a useful concept for the FDFA's training programs and other schemes to help demonstrate and unravel the complexity and multiple threads of the concept of gender.

24 2004: Roles of Women and Men in Violent Conflicts (Information sheet); Gender in Problem Solving Workshops (Working Paper); 2006: UNO Resolution 1325 und was passiert damit in der Schweiz? [2006: UN Resolution 1325 and what is happening with it in Switzerland?] (Publication); 2008: Peace and Mediation in der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Genderbeauftragten [Peace and mediation in gender specialist's PR work] (Essential).

4 2010 to 2014

4.1 Context

The National Action Plan was reviewed in light of the World Conference on Women in Beijing, which took place in 2010, 15 years after the NAP was implemented. This review found that there were still certain deficiencies in some areas, including those covered by KOFF such as violence and armed conflict. This concerned measures taken in connection with checking export licenses for munitions. Both NGOs and academic researchers were criticized for not paying enough attention to the possible infringements of women's rights that these measures could cause. It was suggested that case studies could help to deduce the significance of gender-specific violence in conflicts and thus enable the authorities to make decisions in line with the principles of the Women's Rights Convention. Time and again, complaints were and still are being made regarding the insufficient budgets provided for women's research projects and studies in fields relevant to peace policy.

In the year marking the tenth anniversary of UN Resolution 1325, UN Women (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) was established. This move was politically significant, including for countries in the Global South: with its expertise and effective networking at local level, the new organization offered the UN member states support for implementing documents relevant to peace policy, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action or UN Resolution 1325, and continues to do so today. In connection with UN Resolution 1325 in particular, this step was crucial, as it finally directed attention toward setting up national monitoring and evaluation systems based on the resolution, which could be used to speed up and measure progress in the campaign against sexual violence toward women and girls during armed conflicts. The major importance of having a practical system of indicators was reinforced with the approval of

Resolution 2106[25] in 2013. In the same year, the UN Secretary-General published 26 indicators for problems relating to peace, women, and security.[26] Meanwhile, at the 2013 session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, violence against women was condemned and a declaration on equal rights and protection for men and women was adopted. In Resolution 2122 (adopted in 2013), the UN Security Council called on member states to systematically implement UN Resolution 1325 and provide regular progress reports.

Following a consultation phase, during which KOFF gathered and communicated recommendations based on previous implementation processes as part of a monitoring program, the second Swiss NAP was released in November 2010. Both the UN's follow-up resolutions and the suggestions for improvements put forward by civil society were duly taken into account. The FDFA's anniversary event in 2010, which was entitled "10 Jahre 1325 – Chancen & Grenzen" ["10 years of 1325 – opportunities & limits"], paid great tribute to the achievements made to date.

25 The Resolution on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict focuses exclusively on the problem of gender-based violence (GBV) during conflicts. http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC_ResolutionWomen_SRES2106(2013)(english).pdf.
26 http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/Strategic_Framework_2011-2020.pdf.

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27 "Efforts in the area of gender and peacebuilding [in 2010] were influenced by the 10th anniversary of UN Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security.' KOFF worked closely with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) for the relaunch of the Swiss National Action Plan on Resolution 1325, facilitating the consultation process with NGOs, whose suggestions have to a great extent been incorporated into the new NAP." swisspeace Annual Report 2010, p. 18.

28 http://koff.swisspeace.ch/ what-we-work-on/gender-peacebuilding/

2012 marked the start of the next phase in reporting on the initial results from implementing UN Resolution 1325 within the framework of NAP II. These findings were submitted to the HSD and for the attention of the Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG) as a report in 2013 and formed the basis for NAP III, which was subsequently drawn up and adopted.

4.2 KOFF

4.2.1 The 1325 Working Group

In 2013, on behalf of the HSD, KOFF's gender unit continued working on reporting on the implementation of the NAP,[27] with the evaluation of 2012 and the formulation of NAP III taking up the most personnel resources. It also began producing factsheets and country profiles for the HSD.[28] This period also saw some critical responses from NGOs, claiming that resources were becoming increasingly scarce in spite of or even because of the NAP, making it difficult to continue working on gender issues at all. Although experiences "from the field" were being listened to, they argued, this was not leading to any real change of direction. Switzerland (KOFF, with support from specialist NGOs) was commissioned by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) to compose a report on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 that also included the critical views repeatedly being voiced by member organizations in the 1325 Working Group meetings – e.g. that expenditure in civilian peacebuilding had not been sufficiently reviewed in terms of its actual gender-specific impact, something that would surely have been possible by implementing a "gender-responsive budgeting" initiative. The critics warned that if such aspects were ignored, this would have serious consequences, running the risk of losing sight of the structural causes of violence. In spite of this

criticism, however, the NGOs involved seemed willing – albeit with less expenditure – to commit once again to the new edition of the NAP.

Juggling their participatory role on the one hand and resource-related constraints on the other, the NGOs involved also raised fundamental questions based on their respective experiences and from a critical perspective. With hindsight, it is clear that the NGO consultation influenced the way the NAP was formulated. The FDFA endeavored to take selected aspects and incorporate them into the action plan. This is where the involvement of the 1325 Working Group proved that cooperation between state and non-governmental organizations is essential for developing and implementing a normative framework such as the NAP. At the same time, successful implementation of an action plan like this – one that is heavily geared toward changing social relations, aims to combat stereotypes and clichés, and ultimately triggers structural processes – cannot be achieved if there is no scope for carrying out qualitative, context-relevant evaluations, supported by funding in accordance with Goal 5 of the NAP.[29]

4.2.2 Gender roundtables

In the area of gender, too, the roundtables, whose primary purpose was – according to KOFF's strategy (2012-2015) – to address new issues, were required to increase their focus on new and ongoing debates beyond the discourse surrounding UN Resolution 1325, and to do so in a way that made a certain degree of strategic sense for KOFF. One of the priorities of the gender unit was to stimulate the debate through public events, discussions on current affairs such as the upheavals in North Africa or engaging with feminist personalities from the worlds of art and politics. In addition to participants from member organizations, members of the media and

29 Goal 5, Subordinate Goal 4 (Greater accountability and strengthened monitoring function for civil society and parliament), indicators for measure no. 2: "Financial and human resources earmarked for impact analyses, and impact analyses carried out." NAP III (2013-2016), p. 21.

30 Six regional roundtables took place between 2011 and 2013 on "Women's perspectives in the Arab Spring," "Young activists from North Africa & the Middle East," "Women's perspectives on non-violence and peace in North and South Sudan," "Women's participation in North Africa," "Gender & art in a contested public space - Afghanistan," and "Mali women in transition," as well as a thematic roundtable on the subject of masculinity.

31 C. Reimann and R. Fischer, in: Femina Politica, 1/2012.

representatives from research and the private sector took part in the roundtables. This created a forum that was conducive to intense discussions on gender-related issues. All too often, however, these were restricted to one-off events with no lasting impact on peacebuilding and no clear conceptual integration into swisspeace's key topic areas. The trend moved away from the platform concept in favor of information-based events. Aside from the exchange, creation and transfer of knowledge that were typical of platform debates, greater and greater emphasis was being placed on individual learning and picking up information. The roundtables that took place after 2010 were characterized by their informative nature[30] or mandate-related links with UN resolution 1325 and dealt with topics such as the role of civil society, gender and the New Deal, or the critical report from the OSCE's gender team on the situation in Switzerland.

During this period, KOFF employees also critically examined UN Resolution 1325 in an academic context and took part in the feminist debate on this issue, albeit through other channels such as academic journals and scientific conferences – at least that is what the article "Politische Rhetorik im Norden – lokale Realität im Süden" ("Political rhetoric in the North – local reality in the South")[31] would lead us to believe. In this article, the KOFF employee who wrote it and the expert who temporarily assisted her pick up aspects of depoliticization, outlining the often unexpected but now foreseeable side effects of the NAP on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325. Previously, KOFF's training programs and discussion forums paid relatively little attention to this process of depoliticization as described in the article – something that was also evident in discussions with the employees and network partners dealing with this topic at the time.

The 1325 Working Group has apparently not held a meeting since the last reports on NAP II were completed in 2012 and the draft for the new NAP III (2013-2016) based on a wide-ranging consultation process was introduced. Major staff changes are likely to have contributed to the dissolution of the group.

4.2.3 Training courses and advice

KOFF continued to carry out its three-day training courses, with gender and peacebuilding regularly featured among the topics covered. Programs on gender and peacebuilding run by KOFF employees were also held at the Institute for European Global Studies at the University of Basel. On top of this, KOFF offered individual courses on specific topics, such as an event entitled "A Question of Honor? Gender and Culture-Sensitive Approaches to Peacebuilding" in 2010 or the gender module "Women, Peace and Security – Implementing UN Resolution 1325" in 2012, which formed part of the new Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) program in Civilian Peacebuilding. Gender aspects were included in swisspeace's training schemes on mediation, and were also incorporated into modules for courses on "Peacebuilding Analysis and Impact" and "Dealing with the Past," two of swisspeace's key topic areas. However, this was not done systematically, but was dependent on the knowledge and interests of the course instructors and lecturers concerned. The gender elements of peacebuilding examined in the training programs offered by KOFF and swisspeace related almost exclusively to UN Resolution 1325, so it was regarded more as a self-contained topic rather than as a cross-cutting issue with relevance to all other subject areas.

32 These factsheets also include the two publications "Policy Debates on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) – Ways Forward" and "Analyzing Power Dimensions regarding Women's Participation in Peace Processes."

33 http://koff.swisspeace.ch/ fileadmin/user_upload/koff/ Publications/Fischer_2012_ KOFF_Factsheet_Gender_ Dimensions_of_Conflict_and_ Peacebuilding.pdf.

Gender modules continued to be included in the "Civilian Peacebuilding" course held in Stans for the Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding and international participants. In addition, two training courses on integrating the gender dimension into humanitarian aid and disaster risk reduction (DRR) were introduced in 2010 as part of a Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) mandate for KOFF. However, there was little demand from the member organizations for advice – even though, with the factsheets produced by KOFF on behalf of the HSD on specific areas of peacebuilding,[32] there was actually a useful range of tools available for dealing with gender not just as a "mainstreaming object," but as an interdisciplinary issue affecting various different topic areas. For example, the "Gender Dimensions of Conflict and Peacebuilding" factsheet published in October 2012 highlighted aspects of general interest that would be particularly relevant to statebuilding strategies, dealing with the past, and working in fragile contexts:

"The Post Conflict Trap: In conflict and post conflict situations power relations are newly negotiated. This moment of transition is often said to provide opportunities for women to improve their social status and to gain new prospects. It is argued that the change in gender roles during conflict presents an occasion for women's empowerment and can serve as a catalyst for societal change towards more gender equality… While it is often the case that women's roles get more diverse during conflict, it is also true that for the majority of women more tasks and responsibility means more burden on their shoulders with no security and without gaining any more rights. This is confirmed by the fact that new roles and spaces for women usually are quickly reversed in post-conflict and transitional contexts."[33]

The KOFF gender unit continued to respond readily to requests from external institutions and academics to provide knowledge and expertise, be it in the form of brief consultations, talks, publications, or seminars.

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5   Conclusions

Gender in the context of peacebuilding is still, to this day, one of KOFF's core areas of expertise. Since 2003, its gender unit has kept up a regular and active debate on this topic through publications, roundtables, consultations, and training courses. It can rely on a strong national and international network and is recognized among feminist peace organizations as a center of excellence. Thanks to the monitoring mandate for the NAP 1325, KOFF has been able to significantly build on its specialist expertise, tools, and knowledge relating to the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 and bring continuity to its discourse on gender and peacebuilding. At the same time, the HSD's annual renewal of the mandate for monitoring the NAP suggests that the FDFA is satisfied with the expert knowledge and reliability offered by KOFF. However, the intention in the section below is to provide a summary of the critical points, followed by an outlook based on the various achievements to date and an outline of possible alternatives and areas for expansion.

5.1   KOFF: caught between a government mandate and a commitment to civil society

The conflicting interests between the FDFA as its mandator and its member organizations are reflected in KOFF's gender activities. Since the adoption of UN Resolution 1325, gender has been the subject of critical academic debate, but this was largely disconnected from the practical implementation of the resolution in official administration. The NGOs have also struggled to apply the critical aspects to their work in a useful way, not least because of a lack of personnel resources and the difficulties of securing funding for basic groundwork.

Maintaining the right balance between the interests of actors from civil society and the requirements of the FDFA mandate has been a challenge for KOFF. On the one hand, it had to make use of the impetus generated by expert, innovative reflection, but on the other hand the demands of the mandate – including both technical monitoring and consultation with civil society – had to be met. The dynamics of KOFF's relationship with its member organizations fluctuated accordingly, with KOFF shifting its focus first toward the organizations commenting on gender and peacebuilding from a primarily political perspective and then onto its advisory activities for the FDFA. KOFF was therefore faced with the challenge of functioning as a platform for a range of different approaches and an exchange of ideas – as a place for innovative thinking and generating knowledge.

5.1.2   The bureaucratization of gender mainstreaming

The experts working around the KOFF gender unit endeavored to gain critical, feminist insights. They analyzed the significance of gender hierarchies and discrimination in peacebuilding, applied concepts of inclusion and exclusion to their practical work, and regularly put terms such as "civil society," "diversity," and "participation" up for discussion to highlight their relevance with regard to gender. Nevertheless, these critical approaches had little to do with the NAP monitoring process. This can probably be explained by the fact that gender was increasingly being seen as an issue to be dealt with at a technical level – like gender mainstreaming in general, which was originally regarded as an achievement for equal opportunities policy but was increasingly reduced to merely a bureaucratic tool. The bureaucratization of the issue of gender is the result of a management-oriented administrative system that presents gender as a matter of arithmetical inequality. It therefore comes as no surprise to find that the approach to reducing gender disparities was based on mechanistic and linear principles.[34] There is no doubt that the tools for assessing impact in the context of gender mainstreaming certainly have their place. The normative

34 Bieri, S., L. Fankhauser, A. Sancar and N. Stolz: Added Value: Contributions to gender equitable economic development. SDC, 2011, p. 84.

requirements of the National Action Plans, with their clear indicators, are an essential basis for ensuring transparency and accountability. The reports based on this also provide important information that is used in different ways depending on the interests being served.

5.1.3 Inconsistent translation of 1325 reporting into political requirements

The depoliticization of the issue of gender within the context of peacebuilding is, to a certain extent, due to the failure to adopt a sufficiently systematic approach to translating the information from the gender monitoring reports into political requirements. This is not something that happens automatically; it requires an institutional framework to be put in place. KOFF would have been an eminently suitable platform for placing even stronger emphasis on the political discourse on the gender dimensions in peacebuilding, not least by involving its member organizations. However, these organizations barely seemed to be engaging with the political dimension. A few exceptions, such as cfd, Frauenstimmen gegen den Krieg, or Women for Peace, repeatedly highlighted the complexity of the topic, which – despite what the dominant discourses suggest – cannot be fully dealt with using simple, linear methods.

5.2 The difficulty of firmly establishing a cross-cutting issue at institutional level

5.2.1 Insufficient exploitation of the potential for a transversal approach regarding gender in peacebuilding

Since the gender unit was set up in 2003, the topic of gender has become established at swisspeace, too, via the KOFF project. However, the impression gained from reviewing developments and perusing strategic documents is that this topic has been addressed on specific

occasions, when the opportunity arose or upon request, or included more on a random basis than as a cross-cutting issue. Depending on who was responsible for dealing with the topic of gender, it was certainly tackled as an academic challenge. There was also no lack of awareness of the fact that gender could serve as a useful distinguishing feature and analytical category across all areas of peacebuilding, and that information of significant value to peacebuilding – including in the interests of interdisciplinary research – was readily available for use. Hitherto, however, this knowledge had not been regarded as very important at swisspeace. So while some kind of community of gender experts certainly existed, this was based at KOFF. Its sphere of influence within swisspeace was limited, so the potential for adopting a transversal approach with regard to gender in peacebuilding was not sufficiently exhausted.

5.2.2 Isolated analysis of the situation for women in conflict contexts

The review has also revealed how difficult it is to take account of the importance of gender to an adequate extent. The task now is to find new ways of applying this knowledge and the wide range of practices available to the organization at all levels and to make use of these in various respects. There is no denying the significance of the gender dimension for peacebuilding, including for swisspeace. It is therefore important to investigate the structural aspects of gender relations, going far beyond simply presenting the issue of gender and thus beyond (technical) gender mainstreaming too. Involving more women in the armed forces, peacekeeping missions, or peace negotiations does not automatically lead to more peace. It can in fact serve to divert conflicts or detract public attention from them. Many training courses have taken place over the years, but that does not tell us much about the actual approach used by the participants and how they apply their training to civilian peacebuilding. The participation of women in peace

6 The outlook for gender-oriented peace policy

negotiations remains an essential requirement. However, bringing more women to the negotiating table does not necessarily mean that peace processes will become more gender-oriented or that political decisions will focus more heavily on the gender-specific needs of civil society. Issues like these have been raised time and again, but they have been – and still are – approached in isolation (as problems concerning men and women) rather than as a symptom of deep-rooted patriarchal power relations. Gender aspects have been largely detached from social structures, which is probably one of the main reasons behind the trend toward depoliticization, since it has closed the door to any dialectical interpretation.

A more holistic understanding can be achieved by following schools of thought that advocate collective and interdisciplinary debate. It is generally understood that viewing and reflecting on the importance of gender in conflict contexts from this diverse but concerted perspective helps to create a sharper focus, test different approaches, and improve the quality of the work carried out. Finding a way to incorporate gender aspects systematically into the various fields of peacebuilding in practice – as a key social issue concerning men and women and with regard to underlying structures – still poses a challenge. One of the major stumbling blocks in this respect is that routine processes, strategies, and dominant concepts would have to be put up for discussion as well.[35]

The issue of gender, in all its complexity, needs to be brought back to the forefront of peacebuilding and the policies that influence it. A sustainable transformation with a view to ensuring more equality and less violence can only be achieved if the significance of gender with regard to social structures is taken into consideration. The fact that gender is a suitable topic – perhaps even a key one – for tackling questions of power in conflict contexts in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary way could also be highlighted more strongly by civil society. KOFF and its members, as well as other civil society and state actors involved in peacebuilding, need to pay due attention to this aspect across all fields of activity, in accordance with each organization's opportunities and objectives. This review of the history of the topic of gender at KOFF and swisspeace draws attention to thematic, methodological, and institutional weaknesses that are, in some cases, evident in the failure to address the issue of power and thus in the lack of a political dimension in the understanding of gender-oriented peacebuilding. In spite of the challenging sociopolitical environment and institutional frameworks, in spite of – or even thanks to – the areas of tension in which KOFF operates, and based on what has been achieved so far, there are starting points for further development in this regard.

The process of monitoring the NAP 1325 has repeatedly shown that, even when the objectives have been met, it is impossible to draw direct conclusions on the everyday situation of women and their security in a local context. The information gathered about the situation in question, the duties and activities of men and women in conflicts, and the impact of violent experiences on their everyday lives provides a good basis for guiding the strategic focus of peacebuilding activities. However, decisions, methods, and resources are required to incorporate these findings into policies and strategies. Case studies should not be hastily

35 Cf. the statement by KOFF in the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) "Think-piece on Gender, Peace and Security" on the question "How do we ensure that issues related to women's empowerment and equal rights of women do not get diluted in the gender, peace and security debate?" http://www.eplo.org/assets/files/2.%20Activities/Working%20Groups/GPS/Centre_for_Peacebuilding_KOFF_Think_Peace_Gender_Peace_and_Security.pdf.

reduced to mere anecdotal knowledge. It is also important not to turn the topic of gender into a question of women's rights, even if this could create particular advantages if good projects could be linked to it. One has to be extremely cautious when dealing with portrayals of women as victims. There is certainly still a need for budgets to support women and girls (and men and boys) who have been victims of gender-based violence, but this is by no means an isolated phenomenon; it is a sign of underlying exclusion mechanisms and discrimination, which must be brought to light through careful conflict analyses. As a platform, KOFF therefore intends to continue working with the normative framework of the NAP 1325, while at the same time focusing on the root causes of gender inequality in the realities of local contexts. The areas of conflicting interest that are relevant to KOFF, as set out below, must be explored and tackled in a targeted way using the tools provided by KOFF as a project and swisspeace as an organization.

6.1   State administration versus civil society

6.1.1   Continuing the official NAP 1325 reporting
        mandate and supporting implementation

The continuation of the mandate to report on the NAP 1325, as well as the provision of implementation support for both state administration and civil society actors, is an important anchor for the issue of gender and peacebuilding in Switzerland. In spite of the criticism, this mandate should not be given up, as it has played an instrumental role in establishing this topic in the Swiss peacebuilding landscape, ensuring the success of lobbying campaigns for "women, peace, and security," and developing useful tools and methods.

6.1.2   Embracing a diverse range of perspectives
        – avenues for critical civil society reflection
        on the implementation of the NAP 1325

KOFF's role in balancing the interests of both state administration and civil society brings with it the advantage of a diverse range of perspectives. However, greater attention needs to be paid to the critical views expressed. Civil society should share and document its wide-ranging experiences independently instead of simply allowing them to be incorporated into official reports via consultations as the "voice of civil society." The state administration and the Swiss Federal Council would then be required to evaluate these views and refer to them. In addition to the official NAP report to the administration, scope would also need to be created to provide civil society with an avenue for reflection, where the political issues relating to the implementation of the NAP 1325 could be discussed and publicized. In democratic terms, it makes sense to give all the various different forces in society a chance to have a say. The diverse range of perspectives would give rise to new questions and ideas, such as how peacebuilding could adopt a different approach or where there may be crucial issues that have hitherto been overlooked.

6.1.3   Case studies from conflict and post-conflict
        contexts

At the same time, KOFF could provide a forum for evaluating two or three case studies from a civil society perspective, which would be like a kind of shadow report on the NAP 1325. One possible example is the application of information gathered from feminist economic research on the importance of care work in fragile

context. KOFF and cfd therefore plan to use a small study from Bosnia and Herzegovina to show what effect the measures taken to combat gender-based violence and the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 actually have on security and equality. Another idea is to highlight the situation and scope for action of women in Syria or in the refugee camps in Jordan and to show where UN Resolution 1325 could make a stronger impact, where its contextual relevance could be improved, and what additional support strategies should be used to supplement it. From a civil society point of view, there are other questions to deal with beyond those raised within the framework of the official NAP reports. A critical examination of security in a broader sense could also yield more findings and reveal possible gaps in UN Resolution 1325.

6.1.4 A hub for feminist expertise in peace policy

KOFF also serves as a hub for feminist peace policy: the group "Feministische Friedenspolitik" ["Feminist peace policy"], which is made up of female peace activists and experts – some of whom have already previously been involved in 1325 Working Group – and focuses on women, peace, and security, has been meeting at KOFF since July 2014. The aim of this group to turn gender back into a political issue and to trace the causes and significance of gender differences in socio-political relations. It also approaches gender-specific forms of exercising power as a structural issue, be it in the context of foreign affairs, security policy, or foreign trade policy. The group aims to clarify the main political aspects of the topic of gender, using this as a basis for raising key questions – e.g. where are specific analyses needed? Who are the relevant actors? What are the sensitive points in a gender-based approach? Where

are the blind spots where gender is deliberately ignored? KOFF's member organizations have a crucial role to play in the debates, both as individual actors and as a network: they are both sources and transporters of knowledge and, as NGOs, they can and should contribute toward national peace and security policy. Together with them and their local partner organizations, KOFF intends to discuss different security situations and the discour-ses on security and peace, analyze the wide-ranging impact of UN Resolution 1325 or the NAP in conflict situations and transition countries, and influence official policy accordingly. The purpose of this is to ensure that gender forms an intrinsic part of civilian peacebuilding, and not just in mainstreaming processes, but as a core social category that is dealt with right from its roots and on a structural basis.

6.2 Normative frameworks versus everyday reality

6.2.1 Translating between everyday reality, peace policy, and international policy

Political work is always faced with having to strike a balance between normative tools, such as UN Resolution 1325 or CEDAW, and the everyday reality of people in conflict situations. However, this area of tension needs to be exploited in a targeted way for gender-oriented peace work. First and foremost, this requires a wide range of knowledge obtained from various sources. The case studies mentioned above are ideal for this. Based on these studies, KOFF could create scope for an exchange of different experiences and links with reality at various levels: with regard to people's everyday experiences on the one hand, and the lobbying work involving UN Resolution 1325 at the political level on the other. The dynamic knowledge base of KOFF's various members is available to all interested actors and it is up individuals to decide how they want to use it or build on

it further. For instance, descriptions of the everyday lives of women in the refugee camps in Jordan could both serve as a starting point for specific humanitarian aid projects and be incorporated effectively into peacebuilding or the policy work surrounding UN Resolution 1325. In addition, they provide relevant material for the official reports, which would otherwise have limited access to local knowledge. However, detailed descriptions of everyday life must not be taken out of context and misappropriated, but systematically integrated into each analysis of the conflict that is relevant for making political decisions. KOFF thus finds itself at another point of intersection, where there is potential for a culture of exchange to develop between research and technical project work – i.e. between "theory" and "practice." This interplay is also particularly relevant to swisspeace as a practice-oriented research institute.

6.3 Research versus practice

As an analytical category, gender is, in principle, relevant to all fields of research covered by swisspeace and could be incorporated into them in a more systematic way. The experiences of KOFF as outlined above could provide impetus for designing and developing research projects. In exchange, the KOFF gender roundtables and the training and research schemes could contribute more toward establishing a holistic understanding of peacebuilding and putting it into practice.

6.3.1 Transdisciplinary research that includes gender as a category for analysis

The transdisciplinary work required cannot, however, be carried out without institutional support. Transdisciplinary methods need vehicles that are structured in different ways. Debates that arise by chance are just

as conducive to innovative and creative thinking as highly structured seminars and explicitly transdisciplinary research projects. Sharing expertise and methods across various disciplines makes it possible to tackle and describe the topic of gender in all its complexity. This helps to ascertain the relevance of gender for swisspeace's key topic areas and thus develop them further by applying different methods and approaches. In addition, it encourages the entire organization to sharpen its overarching focus on conflicts to a degree that prevents gender relations from being distorted or obscured or remaining hidden behind other discourses.

6.4 KOFF 2016–2020

In order to operate effectively between the conflicting interests mentioned above, without veering off the course of gender-oriented peace policy, KOFF needs to make good use of its room for maneuver and expand it in future. It intends to continue functioning as a platform and, in specific areas, increasingly take on the role of "translator" between everyday reality in local contexts, Swiss peacebuilding and peace policy, and international policy processes. This means gaining access to knowledge via different everyday realities and subjecting it to a gender-specific analysis. The findings gleaned from this then need to be made accessible at strategic and political level, both in Switzerland and internationally, and fed back into the local contexts. With this in mind, the Center for Peacebuilding will, in future, draw on case studies, facilitate access to detailed descriptions of contextual realities, develop tools for transferring knowledge, and organize forums for discussion and mutual learning in Switzerland and – wherever possible – in local contexts. Moreover, KOFF can and should provide swisspeace with gender-related knowledge for research purposes, which will also serve to strengthen its cooperation with swisspeace's key topic areas. KOFF has a vast pool of experiences, resources, networks,

About the Authors

methods, and partnerships relating to gender at its disposal, which it will also make available for independent political analyses and peace projects and initiatives in future. In doing so, it will continue to contribute toward developing a gender-oriented peace policy that combines both peace work and women's rights.

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swisspeace

swisspeace is an action-oriented peace research institute with headquarters in Bern, Switzerland. It aims to prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts and to enable sustainable conflict transformation.

swisspeace sees itself as a center of excellence and an information platform in the areas of conflict analysis and peacebuilding. We conduct research on the causes of war and violent conflict, develop tools for early recognition of tensions, and formulate conflict mitigation and peacebuilding strategies. swisspeace contributes to information exchange and networking on current issues of peace and security policy through its analyses and reports as well as meetings and conferences.

swisspeace was founded in 1988 as the "Swiss Peace Foundation" with the goal of promoting independent peace research in Switzerland. Today swisspeace engages about 40 staff members. Its most important clients include the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Swiss National Science Foundation. Its activities are further assisted by contributions from its Support Association. The supreme swisspeace body is the Foundation Council, which is comprised of representatives from politics, science, and the government.

swisspeace is an associated Institute of the University of Basel and member of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS)