FROM RESOLUTION TO REALITY

Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance

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ACRONYMS

1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces (Uganda)
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
CA	Constituent Assembly (Nepal)
CARE	CARE International
CDC	Community Development Councils (Afghanistan)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DOWA	Department of Women's Affairs (Afghanistan)
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (Afghanistan)
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IC	Interim Constitution (Nepal)
Isis-WICCE	Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange
LPC	Local Peace Committee (Nepal)
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MOPR	Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (Nepal)
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs (Afghanistan)
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
NPA	National Plan of Action (Nepal)
NSP	National Solidarity Program (Afghanistan)
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda
PSWG 1325	UN Peace Support Working Group 1325 (Nepal)
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association
VDC	Village Development Councils

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Executive Summary

"If they asked me I would tell them, build a peaceful village, a good village. This is where I would start from."

— Woman in a village in the Churia Region of Nepal

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR 1325, 2000) was hailed a victory for women's rights activists around the world. The adoption of the resolution represented a significant step forward in recognising the strategic contribution that women can make to peace and security policy, as well as acknowledging the increasing use of violence against women as a tactic of war. Yet a decade later, women are still largely absent from peace negotiations. How can the policy be turned into practice, which impacts on the lives of women most affected by conflict?

Ten years on from the initial adoption of SCR 1325, CARE International launched this study to reflect on our own operational experience, and the perspectives of our local partners in civil society and the communities with which we work. CARE International is a rights-based agency supporting life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection, recovery and peacebuilding, as well as longer-term development work. The research is driven by familiar questions including: 'what does meaningful participation look like from the perspective of women in communities caught up in conflict? What can aid agency, UN and national government staff tell us about the realities of turning the policy commitments into practice? How can different actors ensure more effective strategies to enable women's meaningful participation in peace processes? How could the next ten years of SCR 1325 implementation better deliver on the aspirations the resolution embodies?'

Our survey in Afghanistan, Uganda and Nepal found that many thousands of women have used SCR 1325 to mobilise political action and resources in support of their rights and participation in peace and security policy. Yet despite all these efforts, women remain largely absent from the negotiating table. Participation by women in the negotiation of a political settlement, peacebuilding and post-conflict governance remains often inconsistent and tokenistic. Huge volumes of policy statements and seminar reports on SCR 1325 have been issued, but much of the action remains declarative rather than operational – translating into changes in practice and impacts for women on the ground.

SCR 1325 was created with a transformative intent: that women's participation could actually transform peace processes and security institutions. Experience in Afghanistan, Uganda and Nepal suggest that in some instances women have managed to change the agenda. For example, in Nepal, some of the most poor and marginalised women have fed into the process of negotiating a new Constitution, bringing issues like Dalit rights and gender-based violence into consideration. Women are also playing active roles in addressing conflict dynamics, such as cross-border violence in both Nepal and Uganda, which have been relatively neglected by international and national-level policy-makers.

While these have been good steps forward, overall, the original and innovative spirit of SCR 1325 has too often become lost in the process. One reason for this is that implementation of SCR 1325 has been compromised by the continued conceptual and practical disconnects between its gender and security stakeholders. Security policy-makers have not truly brought gender and specifically women's voices and issues in a substantive way into security policy-making. Participation is too often superficial and events-based, rather than feeding into the nuts-and-bolts of designing peace operations and mediation efforts. In turn, gender advocates have often failed to truly challenge the security agenda, focusing more on SCR 1325 as an entry-point for generalised women's empowerment. With this report, CARE challenges the international community – UN, state and NGO actors – to regain and capture the potential of SCR 1325 to transform both peace and security policy and the lives of women affected by conflict.

Unsurprisingly, given that the UN is comprised of member state governments, debates on SCR 1325 have focused largely at the national level; particularly in relation to national-level peace-making processes. However, our research finds that some of the most inspiring mobilisation by women to consolidate peace lies far beyond the capital. Too often this is failing to inform efforts at the national level due various factors, starting with a failure to connect with that grassroots work in a meaningful and sustained way. Additional factors that impede valuable contributions from women at the front line of conflict include their lack of understanding of the intricacies of peace processes, weak confidence, limited capacity (literacy, for example) and/or access – not least the vast distances involved and lack of transport or communications. Even the draft global indicators for 1325, which CARE strongly welcomes, focus largely at the formal peace-making level, and neglect peacebuilding at the grassroots level.

The present research conducted with communities in Afghanistan, Uganda and Nepal offers many examples of both innovative achievements and missed opportunities in connecting grassroots

activism for peace and rights up to sub-national and national level political processes. Going forward, all stakeholders – UN, governments, donors, NGOs and local civil society – need to do much more to foster these linkages. Realising the participation of women from the grassroots level and ensuring that their perspectives and priorities are reflected at higher levels is central to achieving the transformative intent of SCR 1325.

To enable meaningful participation of women, our research demonstrates the need for donors and the UN to make changes in their funding and diplomatic engagement. Longer-term donor funding is needed to embed women's participation and peacebuilding into wider integrated programmes that address the economic, livelihoods, health and psycho-social needs of those women, their families and the broader community. Without such multi-sectoral and holistic approaches, women acquire neither the means, nor the confidence, nor the necessary community acceptance to voice their concerns and input to the peace process. In particular, donor funding must change to avoid gaps and disconnects across humanitarian relief, recovery and post-conflict phases.

In each of our study countries, CARE and other agencies have worked with women and their communities during and after the conflict and supported their capacities for self-organisation, livelihoods and agency. Typically this involved our programmes transitioning from basic life-saving assistance, such as food aid or emergency health projects, to small-scale income generation, agricultural livelihoods and micro-credit schemes. Over a period of five to ten years, women participating in groups associated with these projects gained in self-confidence and trust, and the capacity to participate in decision-making and advocacy at the local level. Yet all too often funding for such work is short-term and dries up when the situation is declared 'post-conflict' and donor policy shifts to focus on state-building through multi-donor trust funds and general budgetary support.

Another key challenge to SCR 1325 implementation remains the risk of violence against women in general, and specifically against women who seek to participate and influence peace and governance processes. Our experience and this research shows that without protection, participation is unsustainable and may do more harm than good for the women themselves. While the establishment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) position and other aspects of UN Security Council Resolution 1820 are most welcome, a more significant block in its

implementation so far remains the 'gaps analysis'. Without a credible analysis of the gaps in the response to SGBV, identifying appropriate ways to fill these and coordinate action better in future will be impossible.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Adopt a holistic approach to women's participation in peace and security policy and practice informed by CARE's experience in implementing comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing women's competence and potential, as well as the structures and relations that condition their choices. This entails strategies that foster linkages between access to civil, political, economic and social rights.

- Fund and implement long-term and integrated, multi-sectoral strategies which embed women's participation and peacebuilding into wider community-based transitional programmes. Access to basic education, health services and economic livelihoods are proven foundations for meaningful participation in community and national affairs.

- Support a strategic approach to consolidating peace by connecting grassroots peacebuilding up to national and international peace-making efforts. Place enhanced emphasis on these linkages during the piloting of the UN global 1325 indicators by implementing the new S-G's report on Women and Peacebuilding, with its practical 7-point plan.

- Recapture the transformative intent behind SCR 1325 by identifying ways to engage women in the substantive work of peace, security and post-conflict governance processes, rather than in siloed and one-time 1325 events.

- Prioritise the protection of women who participate in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance from violence, intimidation and stigmatisation. Towards this end, emphasise the linkages between SCR 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889. In particular, a thorough analysis of gaps in frontline services and response capacity for protection should urgently be conducted – as mandated by SCR 1888 – and submitted to the UN Security Council within three months.

Background

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 AND ITS PARTICIPATION AGENDA

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted on October 31, 2000. The decision of the UN Security Council to pass this Resolution constituted a major step forward in the international community's recognition that women can make important contributions to peace and security, as well as the urgent need to tackle the scourge of violence against women and girls in war. As such, SCR 1325 represents a wider shift in international relations in the aftermath of the Cold War, with an increasing emphasis on tackling civil conflict and the social, political and cultural dimensions of violence in these contexts. The adoption of SCR 1325 also followed decades of advocacy by women activists, as well as studies detailing the contribution that women made to both fighting the war and consolidating peace in countries like Sudan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Subsequent deliberations on SCR 1325 have framed its commitments in terms of four main pillars, which also structured the 2008-2009 UN system-wide action plan on the Resolution's implemention: prevention, protection, participation and relief/recovery. While each element of SCR 1325 should be seen as inter-dependent, key components related to participation in the Resolution include the following:

- Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

- (UN SCR 1325) urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;

- Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia: [...] Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

- Expresses its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups; [i]

Recognising that SCR 1325 does not provide detailed guidance on its implementation, the Security Council adopted further Resolutions (1820, 1888 and 1889) that take forward certain aspects. [ii] They also follow a range of studies which highlight that women's participation in peace and security matters has often remained too little, too late. [iii] Thus, while SCR1820 and SCR1888 focus on the issues of rape and sexual violence against women in conflict, SCR1889 focuses on the participation agenda in SCR 1325.

FROM 1325 TO 1889: TOWARDS GLOBAL INDICATORS?

UN Resolution 1889 outlines various proposals and commitments to take SCR 1325 forward. For example, it calls on the Secretary General to develop a strategy to increase the number of women in key roles, such as Special Envoys, within UN peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions. However, it also calls for a set of global indicators against which progress on SCR 1325 commitments can be measured. In April 2010, the UN Secretary General published a report outlining proposed indicators.[1]

The indicators proposed on participation are detailed below:

- Goal: Inclusion of women and women's interests in decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts

    ‣ Indicator 8: Number and percentage of peace agreements with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls

- Goal: Increased representation and meaningful participation of women in United Nations and other international missions related to peace and security

    ‣ Indicator 9: Number and percentage of women in senior United Nations decision-making positions in conflict-affected countries

    ‣ Indicator 10: Level of gender expertise in United Nations decision-making in conflict-affected countries

- Goal: Increased representation and meaningful participation of women in formal and informal peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes

    ‣ Indicator 11 (a): Level of participation of women in formal peace negotiations

    ‣ Indicator 11 (b): Presence of women in a formal observer or consultative status at the beginning and the end of peace negotiations

- Goal: Increased representation and meaningful participation of women in national and local governance, as citizens, elected officials and decision makers

    ‣ Indicator 12: Level of women's political participation in conflict-affected countries

- Goal: Increased participation of women and women's organizations in activities to prevent, manage, resolve and respond to conflict and violations of women's and girls' human rights

    ‣ Indicator 13: Number and percentage of Security Council missions that address specific issues affecting women and girls in their terms of reference and the mission reports

These draft indicators will be discussed and agreed in October 2010 during the 10-year review of SCR 1325. This will be followed by a two to five year piloting period to test and further develop the indicators and related processes to promote greater accountability. If designed and piloted in an effective fashion, these indicators could introduce a more rigorous and transparent framework to assess impact and hold relevant actors to account. As such, they constitute an important opportunity to promote more effective ways to protect and empower women in situations affected by conflict.

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1. *Report of the Secretary-General//2010/173, 6 April 2010*

Bringing wider learning on peacebuilding and women's participation to 1325 implementation
Too often, reflections on SCR 1325 have failed to draw on wider innovations in policy and practice. Our research in Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda aims to bring in this wider experience from programming in women's empowerment and peacebuilding. [iv]

UNDERSTANDING WOMENS' EMPOWERMENT

In recent years, CARE has invested in major global research to assess the effectiveness of our efforts to support women's empowerment. Action research was conducted over a period of three years reviewing over 1000 projects in more than 30 countries. We found that too often agencies focus at the micro-level and short-term, supporting individual women or small-scale community initiatives without fostering linkages to wider economic, social or political structures or processes that could enable sustainable change. Interventions focused on a limited aspect of women's lives and livelihoods, and failed to grapple with the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions, which affect their rights in a more holistic fashion. Furthermore, initiatives were sometimes designed in a formulaic or prescriptive fashion, rather than being developed in a way that supports women's empowerment and action. One key output from this global analysis has been the development of a conceptual framework for CARE's approach to women's empowerment.

> CARE defines women's empowerment as the sum total of changes needed for a woman to realise her full human rights – the interplay of changes in:
>
> - Agency: her own aspirations and capabilities
>
> - Structure: the environment that surrounds and conditions her choices
>
> - Relations: the power relations through which she negotiates her path

Emerging from CARE's review of humanitarian action, we have identified the following lessons for integrating a gender perspective into conflict programmes of relevance to SCR 1325 implementation:

- Firstly, there is a need to integrate gender analysis and conflict-sensitive approaches. In emergency situations it is often women and girls whose rights are eroded furthest, and remedial measures often cause backlash and harm (especially through domestic violence), since they are not based on an adequate or integrated gender and conflict analysis. The capacity required to understand gender dynamics involves analysis of wider political, cultural and social dynamics which can be built on in terms of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding.

- Secondly, it is important to avoid a tick-box approach to gender mainstreaming. Without a plan and adequate safeguards (eg. complaint mechanisms) to address the specific needs and rights of women in emergency response, project impacts risk being gender-blind and having counter-productive consequences (such as sexual exploitation and abuse in exchange for relief items).

- Thirdly, a gender-sensitive perspective in conflict intrinsically challenges aid agencies working in conflict settings to prioritise skill-building and forms of assistance that have often been neglected in emergency relief, such as support for reproductive-health and psycho-social well-being.

"The first time, five years ago, a women organization came to us to form a committee so that they can help us learn tailoring and earn an income, we were all scared and thought these women will kidnap our children and might harm us. Because we have never seen anyone from other places coming to us and offering help. But when CARE's education team came to the village, they were not strangers, we knew them because they were from our own village. They started the school and our daughters and sons became literate. We women don't have any responsibility outside home, we cook, bring children, clean the house and live and die in this house behind closed doors. But this school changed this reality for us, we became involved in the education of our children, we became members of school monitoring shura and now monitor when a teacher comes on time or not. We also condemn the teachers that beat children. We need to teach children with love and peace. They cannot learn by the stick. As part of the school monitoring shura, we learn about and discuss our common concerns. An improvement in our lives is that while our elder women were married at ages of 12 or 13, we don't want our daughters to marry at this age because she is studying now."

— **A woman in Afghanistan who is member of a school shura (committee) supported by CARE's education programme**

LESSONS LEARNED IN PEACEBUILDING EFFECTIVENESS

CARE definition of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a comprehensive, long-term process working towards sustainable peace based on the values of rights and human dignity. Peacebuilding recognises and supports the central role that local actors and processes have in ending violence and constructively addressing both the immediate effects and structural causes of violent conflict.

Our findings on women's empowerment resonate strongly with lessons learned on peacebuilding. Over recent years, CARE, other NGOs and donor agencies have invested in extensive research to test assumptions and innovate in the design, monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding programmes. For example, in 2005, CARE collaborated with CDA Collaborative Learning Projects on a meta-evaluation of peacebuilding in Kosovo. Findings from that study are of significant relevance to SCR 1325. The violence of March 2004 in Kosovo prompted many agencies to reflect on their peacebuilding programmes. What factors enabled communities to resist or not to participate in the violence? To what extent and how did peacebuilding contribute to these factors?

Our research found that peacebuilding had some important, if modest, effects on inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, especially on the people who had directly participated. [v] However, too often peacebuilding was fragmented, ill-targeted and short-term. Furthermore, communities in Kosovo felt patronised by disconnects between small-scale projects for community reconciliation or recovery and political initiatives and peace-making processes at the national and international levels.

Developments in wider donor policy and programme evaluations also underscore the importance of connecting peacebuilding at the community level to national and international peacemaking. Coherence between peacebuilding efforts at different levels are emphasised in both the OECD DAC[2] and CDA's Reflecting on Peace Practice guidelines on design and evaluation of peacebuilding.[3] The importance of such linkages was also recognised at the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2008, which resulted in a process by donors and recipient governments to develop country-specific peacebuilding and statebuilding goals.[4] In the words of a major study commissioned by the Utstein group donors, peacebuilding policy must address its 'strategic deficit' by linking individual projects to a broader strategy to consolidate peace if its goals are to be attained. [vi]

All these efforts have informed the CARE conceptual framework for peacebuilding outlined in the box below.

STRATEGIC PEACEBUILDING:

- Is based on solid conflict analysis

- Has a clear vision of the peace it seeks to construct

- Seeks synergies with other peacebuilding interventions

- Has a clearly articulated theory of change

- Articulates the link between micro and macro, and seek impacts at the macro level

The above lessons on women's empowerment and peacebuilding have both policy and operational implications for 1325. Implementation of the resolution needs to support women's participation from a holistic empowerment perspective, seeing women as agents not 'beneficiaries'. A thorough and integrated gender and conflict analysis requires a comprehensive understanding of the institutional structures, policies and actors involved. This is the lens with which we assess the impact of SCR 1325 on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance in Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda. We also believe that this is the approach that can help to renew implementation of 1325 over the coming decade.

2. 'Guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities - Working draft for application period' OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2008
3. 'Plotting Sustainable Peace: A manual for training and advising peacebuilding programs' Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow, Reflecting on peace practice project, 2007
4. 'Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations - From fragility to resilience', OECD Development Assistance Committee, Off-print of the Journal on Development 2008, Volume 9, No. 3

Country Study Overviews
AFGHANISTAN

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Field research for our Afghanistan case study took place in three districts of Kabul province, two districts of Parwan province and one district of Kapisa province and interviews were conducted with activists and organisations working in conflict regions of Gardez and Paktya. Research involved in-depth interviews and group discussions with individual activists, civil society organisations, donors and international organisations, government officials and candidates for the Parliamentary elections in 2010 as well as field visits to local women's empowerment interventions.

CONTEXT

SCR 1325 came at a time when the women of Afghanistan were largely banned from social and political engagement during the Taliban regime. Women (and men) had suffered through war during the Soviet invasion from 1979 to 1989, followed by civil war from 1991 to 1994 culminating in Taliban rule which lasted from 1994 to 2001.

Women's rights activists in Afghanistan identify SCR 1325 as of great importance since the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001. The foundations of a post-Taliban Afghanistan were laid out in the Bonn Agreement that year and a group of about forty women gathered in December for the Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy advocating for women's inclusion in peace and governance processes.[5] In the nine years since, numerous national processes have been initiated to establish new governance structures. Each was an opportunity to increase women's voice. While Afghanistan has seen a rising level of women's political participation in the past 10 years there remain numerous challenges and growing concern for the future.

The situation for women in Afghanistan is even now, by most measures, dire. Research by Global Rights Afghanistan in 2008 concluded that 87 percent of Afghan women and girls are faced with at least one form of sexual, physical, economic or psychological abuse. Today in Afghanistan, a woman dies every 29 minutes from pregnancy related complications, 80 percent of which can be treated with basic health services. Up to 80 percent of marriages in Afghanistan are forced marriages (57 percent of girls are forced to marry without their consent). Afghanistan's Supreme Court does not have a woman member in its Executive Council, with only four percent of judges being women in different courts around the country. Women's and girls' access to education is extremely low; one girl to every two boys is enrolled in primary school, one girl to every four boys attends secondary school and only one percent of girls make it to higher education.[6]

Presumably it is only by comparison with the situation historically that a prominent woman Member of Parliament, Shukria Barakzai, was able to describe the past several years as "golden years" for Afghan women.[7] There have been many positive achievements to support this view but women's rights activists are concerned that gains made may be traded away in negotiations for peace. Already, on 1 December, 2009, Norah Niland, the UNAMA's Human Rights Chief at the time was cautioning at the opening of the 25-day Elimination of Violence against Women Campaign in Afghanistan that 'The space for women in public life is shrinking'.[8]
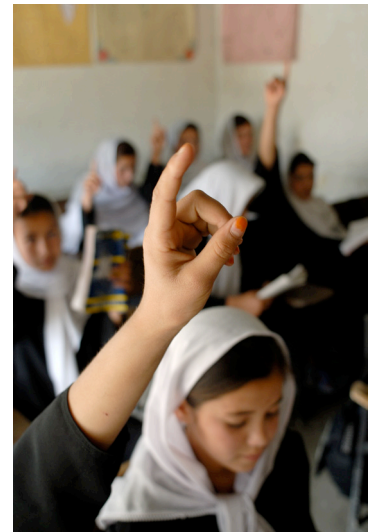
Years of civil unrest and tribal conflict in Afghanistan have exacerbated rigid gender roles for women and girls especially at the tribal and village levels. Women and girls have been abused and suppressed for the purpose of keeping the integrity and honor of the tribes. Issues that impact women's lives like physical abuse, violence at homes, giving girls away in Baa'd and exchange are perceived as 'private' and, if women discuss them, the integrity and honor of the community becomes tainted. In urban settings, women who break these traditional myths about them, are labeled as 'spies for the foreign agenda' and accused of 'loose character'.

5. Fact Sheet: WEDO Women's Environment and Development Organization for Women Engaging Globally, March 2005
6. UNIFEM Fact Sheet 2008 and Ministry of Higher Education Tv report 2008
7. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tl2B4dHk98o : Shukria Barakzai's interview with FROST
8. UNIFEM 01 December 2009, Media Centre , Global Rights 2008

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

NATIONAL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

The Afghan Constitution ratified in 2004 incorporated much of the rhetoric of women's equality from the Bonn Agreement of 2001 and is an important tool for women's rights. The Constitution requires the Afghan Government to adhere to United Nations declarations and conventions on human rights and protect the rights of its citizens as clarified in national and international law. Article 22 of the Afghan Constitution prohibits discrimination and ensures equal rights for women. Article 83 allocated 25 percent of seats of the Lower House of the National Assembly and 17 percent of the Upper House for women.

In the first parliamentary elections, we could only see women candidates pictures in the big cities and in Kabul but in the current round of parliament, in almost every province, there are pictures of women candidates running for office … despite threats and intimidation, women leaders realize that without their brave participation, they can not change the conditions of women at any level. If we don't have women in leadership, we can not help the women at the far remote villages of Afghanistan and I think women have understood this by now.

— Sabrina Saqib, the youngest member of the current parliament elected in 2005

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) was established during the first Interim government in 2002. The objectives of MOWA are gender mainstreaming within the governance structures of Afghanistan and more general empowerment for the women of Afghanistan. Currently there are 32 local provincial departments of MOWA - Departments of Women's Affairs (DOWA) - serving the 34 provinces. Although there is no National Action Plan for implementation of 1325 across all government departments, the MOWA launched a National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) in 2008. The NAPWA is a national commitment to implement the Constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination and equality for women's rights addressing 1325 only within the scope of overall international obligations of the Afghan government.

While there is no explicit National Action Plan for SCR 1325, Afghanistan has made many relevant policy level commitments. Afghanistan is a signatory to CEDAW (signed in 1980 but not acceded to until 2003). The Tokyo Conference (2002) and the Berlin Declaration (2004) organised by international donors created a foundation for improving security and governance for Afghan women. The Afghanistan Compact 2006 and Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) in 2007-2008 set out policies, outcomes and benchmarks for the progress of Afghan women. The Kabul Conference following the lead of the London Conference in 2010 affirmed government and international community commitments towards improving the lives of women and ensuring they have a voice and seat in the ongoing peace processes in Afghanistan.

During the second day of the Jirga the delegates were divided in 28 working groups. In my group there were men who had covered their faces while talking to me (in some parts of Afghanistan still it's a shame for a man to speak with a woman in public) but after our discussions debates and interaction, the same men offered support that if my organization starts working in their district they will support and protect the projects for women rights. This was a change that I saw myself".

— Hasina Safi head of AWEC and a delegate to the Peace Jirga

In addition to structural and policy changes there are positive signs of greater openness among the population to women's participation in national politics. The Afghan Independent Election Commission reported that the number of women candidates in the 2009 Provincial Council elections had increased up to 40 percent over previous elections. Women candidates in the current elections told our researcher that, while in the past only women from families of political leaders entered politics (and even those met with disapproval from the general population), there was now more acceptance of women candidates of all backgrounds among both women and men. Yet as shall be described, the basis for that acceptance is complicated and contrary to women's rights agendas.

Although, there are policy level commitments for the inclusion of women in governance and peace processes, traditional practices that harm and suppress the voices of women and girls are the biggest impediments to participation in rural areas of Afghanistan. At the village level, one of the only means of social progress for women and girls is through basic education. Since the majority is illiterate and follows strict versions of Sharia in areas where the government does not have a strong presence, women's access to basic rights like health and

education is a challenge. Access to education for girls and women in Afghanistan is a pre-condition for meaningful political participation. Before 2001, there were less than one million children in school and very few were girls. Other means of education for women were banned by the Taliban regime. Currently more than six million children are going to school and more than 30 percent of them are girls. Significantly, according to the Ministry of Education, in areas of relative security, the ratio of girls' to boys' enrolment is close to 50 percent. The Ministry of Education has developed a National Education Strategy intended to preserve and increase that ratio so that girls can continue their education beyond grades four and five.

PEACE AND POST-CONFLICT DECISION-MAKING

At the Emergency Loya Jirga, or Grand Assembly, convened in 2002 to create an interim government in Afghanistan only 12 percent of delegates were women. The Constitutional Loya Jirga, which in 2004 approved a new constitution for Afghanistan had around 20 percent women as direct delegates.[9] These delegates were instrumental in the adoption of anti-discrimination principles in article 22 of the Constitution.

The Regional Peace Jirga which included official representation from Pakistan in 2008 had about 20 percent women's participation although the smaller structure, which emerged from that – the Jirgagai – , had only one woman government official. The National Consultative Peace Jirga convened in June 2010 had 1600 participants of which more than 350 (22 percent) were women. The original list had only 20 women participants and it is broadly recognised that pressure from the international community and constant lobbying of these women's groups with government officials enabled their wider participation.

Before the Kabul Conference which was held the next month in July 2010, women's groups and activists led by the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) brought together 300 women from around the country for their own two day conference called the 'Women's Movement from the First Women's Council to Kabul Conference'. This was a driving force in bringing some government attention to women's needs. The conference called on the Government to stand by its commitments and put its obligations under the Constitution, Afghan National Development Strategy, EVAW Law and NAPWA at the centre of governance and peace building processes as well as the components of SCR 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889 that are key to women's participation.

The Kabul conference itself, involving representatives of donor and other stakeholder countries, included a detailed presentation of the Afghan Peace and Re-integration Plan (APARP). Following the pattern of the earlier London Conference in January 2010 where the APARP was introduced, the Kabul conference had only one woman participant who was asked to present as a representative of civil society, including women's groups. During the conference, the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) expressed their concern in statements, press conferences and direct negotiations with government officials that the APARP excludes women from the overall process of design, implementation and oversight of the planned peace and reintegration process. The plan does not refer to international instruments like 1325, CEDAW or other human rights conventions. National instruments like NAPWA and the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Law are also excluded from the guiding principles of the implementation of APARP.

Women's groups and activists are currently struggling to be included as part of the Leadership Committee of the High Peace Council that will be established as an outcome of the National Consultative Peace Jirga in June and are advocating for mechanisms to share their inputs into the various development clusters as part of the APARP. Women also expressed concern about secret talks believed to be taking place involving Afghan government officials, Pakistani intelligence and some Taliban leaders. While women's groups can advocate for inclusion of women's voices and concerns in publicly acknowledged negotiations, they fear that women's rights can too easily be negotiated away in behind-the-scenes dealings.

KEY ISSUES AND CONCERNS

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

Various women's groups and donors have been implementing activities focused on enhancing women's role in national and local decision-making processes. With no national action plan for implementation of SCR 1325, these efforts have been scattered and ad hoc. Respondents from women's organisations

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9. The formula for delegate selection, instituted by Presidential decree was for a total of 500 delegates: 344 elected at the district level, 64 women elected at the provincial level, 42 delegates representing special populations and 50 (25 men and 25 women) appointed by the president.

and activists described ongoing struggles to lobby for a National Action Plan for implementation of 1325. Many believe this will provide them a stronger foundation from which to advocate for a greater role for Afghan women in ongoing peace processes. Selay Ghaffar, the head of HAWCA, a women's and children's organisation expressed her concern that "since we don't have an action plan for the implementation of SCR 1325, we don't know how far we should strive for women's inclusion."

However, some officials at MOWA do not see the necessity for another National Action Plan. They argue that NAPWA fills that role, women's participation in past peace processes (Regional Peace Jirga and Consultative Peace Jirga) was possible without a 1325 NAP and another national action plan would only create more paper without practical impact for the women of Afghanistan. This inconsistency in positioning between the Ministry and women's civil society organisations is seen by many as a challenge to more effective advocacy on women's progress in Afghanistan.

NATIONAL POLITICS

The relative success of bringing women into government has brought new challenges. In the previous two rounds of parliamentary elections, women candidates were mostly those who were popular in Kabul and some provincial capitals. There was often an expectation that, if they did not receive enough votes to be voted in directly, they would still get in under the women's quotas. This assumption is heavily challenged in the current elections where even the most difficult provinces average more than three women candidates. Candidates interviewed said that this election pressure is making them reach out more to the local communities than before but also forcing them into political alliance with warlords and other powerful figures who deliver votes. As such, while the numbers of women participating in governance at the national level has increased, the qualitative nature of that participation is seriously questioned for a range of reasons detailed below.

MOWA is an obstacle rather than a solution. The stance of MOWA on women rights is very weak and pro the discriminatory attitude of the government overall. When we wanted to demonstrate on the Shia Law, the MOWA leadership was not supportive and stopped its staff from even attending the demonstrations.

— Women's rights activist and AWN member

MOWA AND NAPWA

Women's groups and activists working closely with MOWA believe that the institution is yet to have developed the adequate skills, mechanisms and authority to pursue its mission of gender-mainstreaming within the Afghan government. Many of the activists interviewed for this research complained about the lack of coordination and strategic communication within MOWA, with the rest of the government ministries and with non-governmental institutions, particularly women's groups.

Officials within MOWA believe that if NAPWA gets enough funding and political support, they will be able to empower women in leadership positions and improve the conditions of women at the local levels. Furthermore, women officials across government complain that the institutional approach to human resources and training is inadequately gender-sensitive, so that women are unfairly disadvantaged in performance-based management. While officials claim that NAPWA is a well-consulted process, women's groups and activists complain that the consultation was confined to urban areas and does not address the needs of women at the village level. Many outside MOWA argue that NAPWA was developed by international experts who worked in isolation without wider institutional input and the document carries commitments and plans that are much greater than the institution's capacity to implement.

NATIONAL-LOCAL DIVIDE

Efforts to empower women at the decision-making level have, for a number of reasons, tended to focus on urban women and particularly on urban elites. A consistent concern expressed by respondents in our research was that the larger population of women living in rural areas is not adequately consulted on national issues and their concerns are not well represented. Village women are seen as project beneficiaries rather than change agents for women's rights. This has created some tension within the women's rights movement. A perception that efforts for women's rights are just a strategy for the 'War on Terror' – that women were being used as symbols of progress against the insurgency – has created communal backlash and confrontation against women's rights in local communities.

Women's representation at the village level is either through their membership in Community Development Councils (CDCs) of the National Solidarity Program (NSP) or within the community shuras/councils created and facilitated by non-government organisations and women's groups. These women do not feel connected to women political leaders at the provincial and national levels. Leaders at the village level expressed willingness to connect with other women in district capitals and in their province. Women in the provincial capitals expressed concern that they do not have channels of communication with women at the village and district levels. In the words of one CARE worker, 'If these women at the grassroots level could be linked to efforts at the national level, the efforts of both would be reinforced.'

While MOWA has departments in most provinces, the relationship between these local DOWAs and the MOWA office in Kabul tends to be very hierarchical. A small department in the Kabul office is not able to adequately manage communications with DOWAs and among DOWA offices in different provinces. Some senior officials at DOWA offices said that, if they were able to make regional or zonal alliances with other DOWA offices, it would help them to implement consistent plans for women's empowerment. Such alliances would help women's organisations and activists unify their missions and projects, prevent duplication and strengthen women's unity across provinces and zones. As such, the sub-national capacities of DOWA to promote women's rights appear constrained by wider unresolved gaps and tensions over decentralisation in Afghanistan. Several informants also cited the lack of backing from central government officials and power-holders to enforce the NAPWA within line ministries or wider governance structures at provincial level and below.

PROTECTION AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

Physical security in Afghanistan determines the rights and conditions of women. As the conflict exacerbates, women become direct targets for intimidation, threats and violence from the insurgency.[10] Women in conflict-affected zones complain that as security worsens in their communities, they can't even travel out of their homes. This lack of mobility then impacts their access to education and health services and women eventually lose opportunities to voice their concerns to relevant bodies closing the door to political participation for women at the community level.

Security and protection for women should have been planned before inviting them to the Peace Jirga. I know many women like myself who came to the Jirga secretly saying to our homes that we are going for a doctor's visit in Kabul otherwise we couldn't return back home. How can we as women leaders then implement the plans we agreed in the Peace Jirga in our provinces when we can't even say we attended the Jirga?

— A woman delegate from central province to Peace Jirga

Women's groups and activists fear that traditional practices and norms being strengthened as part of the National Peace and Re-Integration Plan are inherently opposed to women's rights. While communities and particularly women are targeted by Taliban insurgents within the local jirgas and women are killed, stoned and tortured at the village level, these atrocities are not being addressed by the central government. During the month of August 2010, local media reported at least two cases of lashing or stoning of women to death.

In addition to more generally shared security concerns, so-called 'night letters' threatening women and videos or images of rape scenes sent through mobile phones are used to intimidate women's rights activists.[11] While speaking with women's groups and women activists, all respondents remembered the public assassinations of activists like Safia Amajan, the head of Kandahar DOWA in 2006, the

assassination of Malalai Kakar, the most senior police officer in Kandahar in 2008, the killing of journalists Zakia Zaki and Sanga Amaj in 2007, the assassination of Kandahar Provincial Council member Sitara Achakzai in 2008, the acid attacks on school girls in Kandahar, the school poisoning incidents in Kabul, Samangan and Sare Pul in 2010, and the recent killing of Hossai, an aid worker in Kadahar. All these incidences of violence have an impact on the morale of women's rights activists in Afghanistan.

Programme Case Study
HAWA: LONG-TERM STRATEGIES TO SHIFT FROM RELIEF TO EMPOWERMENT

Policy debates on women's participation under SCR 1325 often focus on elite level participation in events related to a peace process. Much funding related to 1325 is consequently ad-hoc and events-based. However, CARE's experience with the Humanitarian Assistance for Women of Afghanistan (HAWA) project provides important lessons regarding the need for long-term support to enable meaningful participation from the grassroots level upwards.

HAWA has been helping women, particularly widows, and their families meet their most basic needs since 1994. During the Taliban's regime, this food aid was a lifeline for 13,000 widow-headed households. Since then the programme has evolved to foster women's empowerment through livelihoods support, health services, literacy classes, organisation of widows' associations, research, documentation and advocacy. This multi-faceted strategy now reaches more than 28,000 women. While approximately 1,800 widows and their families depend on the vital food assistance provided by the project, many others have graduated into vocational training, livestock rearing, and micro-finance programs.

Over the past two years, HAWA has also supported some of the widows in five districts of Kabul to form 'solidarity groups' towards building a collective voice for the women's needs, aspirations and rights. To date, some 9,000 widows have become members of these groups. Even in their early stages, many of these groups have effectively advocated for their rights and entitlements. Some have challenged warlords for their rights to land; others have intervened to stop forced marriages in their communities. As this work has gained momentum, CARE is now exploring ways to support those groups who wish to form an independent widows association to coordinate their efforts \ and advocate at national level. Key issues to be addressed would include advocating for social protection mechanisms for especially vulnerable women whose circumstances prevent them from being able to support themselves and their families.

Hamida, an activist in one of these groups, says: *"When my husband died, my in- laws forced me to leave the house which was actually in my mahr (dowry). Since I was an illiterate woman, I didn't know if I had any legal rights. After I joined the solidarity group, I learned about my Islamic and legal rights. Then I went to the Family Court and demanded my property. The shura referred me to legal aid and I received a free lawyer who defended my cases. As a result, I got my house back."* Hamida has now completed her education at the age of 25 and now aspires to run for the parliament in the near future. Other women in this group are now also organising to advocate for girls education and clinics that women can access in their district.

The journey of the HAWA programme from relief to empowerment work has been a long one. This evolution in terms of both CARE's efforts and the trust, confidence and capacities of the women involved was necessarily incremental and slow. As such, HAWA illustrates the need for long-term donor funding to build the necessary capacities at grassroots level to enable meaningful participation.

Country Study Overviews
NEPAL

"We go weekly to the Reflect Centre. Before that we didn't know about training opportunities. Earlier we couldn't even say our names in public, now we have the confidence to go to the local Village Development Committee (the lowest tier of government) to ask for things."
— Meena, participant in a women's solidarity group supported by CARE in Maadi, Nepal

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Field research for our Nepal case study took place in the communities of Makwanpur, Chitwan, and Rupandeh districts along with meetings in Kathmandu and a desk review of relevant documentation[12] Meetings were held with CARE staff and partner organisations and other stakeholders including war survivors, donors, INGOs, NGOs, women's network alliances/coalitions, Nepal Government departments, Local Peace Committees, community groups, media and UN agencies.

CONTEXT

Nepal has been engaged in a peace and democracy building process since 2006 with the end to the armed Maoist insurgency accompanied by an end to Nepal's traditional monarchy. Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2006 an interim government and Constitution replaced the existing Parliament. Constituent Assembly Elections were held in 2008 with the Assembly given a May 2010 deadline for drafting a new Constitution. That deadline has now been extended by a year with the government mired in political gridlock. With this extended period of political transition, domestic problems have escalated. Power cuts, high unemployment and corruption have demoralised citizens. A culture of violence and extrajudicial killings has taken hold. Amnesty International reported more than one hundred armed groups active in the Terai region in 2010 kidnapping people, often of hill origin, and attacking public property.[13]

Through the conflict and its aftermath, at least in part due to conflict-related shifts in gender roles, a number of women leaders emerged in post-conflict Kathmandu and also at District and community levels throughout Nepal. The burgeoning women's movement in Nepal played a major role in putting pressure on the government to amend discriminatory provisions relating to the ownership of property, citizenship, mobility, marriage, abortion, sexual minorities, domestic violence and marital rape. They started with demands for equal property rights but have gone on to lobby for further reforms such as equal participation of women in political parties and at all levels of government.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

NATIONAL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Nepal has expressed its commitment to various international instruments and UN resolutions such as CEDAW, SCR 1325 and 1820. A Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2008. The Interim Constitution (IC) of Nepal guarantees 33 percent women's representation in the Constituent Assembly (CA), as a result of which 197 women out of 601 members were elected in the CA elections in 2008.[14] Women are also represented in each of the thematic committees set up to discuss the draft of a new Constitution. The new CA is the most inclusive body Nepal has ever elected. This gives women an unprecedented opportunity to influence national decision-making and the development of a new Constitution for the country. The Interim Plan (2008-2010) aims to increase women's representation from 33 percent to 50 percent in Peace Council and Peace Committees at all levels.[15]

After the elections, women's organisations worked with the CA members on a women's agenda to be sure that issues of importance were voiced in the CA. The Forum for Women, Law, and Development, for

12. The Country Study was carried out between 13th July and 30th September 2010 by Consultant Lesley Abdela, Senior Partner in UK-based Consultancy Eyecatcher/Shevolution. Lesley.abdela@shevolution.com
13. Amnesty International, Amnesty International Report 2010 - Nepal, 28 May 2010
14. In 1999 Parliament had 5.8% women's representation as compared to 32.8% women's representation in the Constituent Assembly elected in 2008. Nearly 3,500 women contested the CA elections.
15. Nepal Government, Interim Plan (2008-2011), p. 102.

instance, successfully lobbied for government recognition of reproductive rights as fundamental rights in Nepal's interim Constitution. This marked the first time a government in the region has explicitly recognised women's reproductive rights as human rights in a national constitution.[16] The boxed case study on the Constitution Initiative illustrates how CARE has contributed to efforts at grassroots and national level to influence this process.

The Government of Nepal recently initiated a process for drafting a National Action Plan for 1325 (NPA). The Secretaries of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR), Home Affairs, Defence, and Women, Children and Social Welfare, are responsible for implementation. The Government of Nepal set up the High-Level Steering Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister to coordinate with ministries, government bodies and donors to give policy guidance to the IC to prepare and implement the NPA for 1325 and 1820.

On the international side, this process has been supported by the UN Peace Support Working Group 1325 (PSWG 1325). The draft of the NPA for 1325 and 1820, challenging the assumption that gender only means women, emphasises participation of men as well as women in the implementation of 1325. The draft NPA is to be discussed across Nepal in 36 participatory meetings with stakeholders. Invitees will comprise of:

- Local NGOs

- Women human rights defenders and war survivors

- Displaced families

- People with disabilities

- Conflict victims association groups

- Dalits, Muslims, Marginalised women, Madeshi women

- Political parties, judges, Police, Journalists Federation.

- Local Peace Committees (LPCs)

The Government of Nepal is planning to obtain technical input from an international expert to finalise indicators. Once finalised, the NPA draft will need endorsement at the Cabinet level. The 1325 NPA and 1820 is scheduled for completion by October 2010 in which case Nepal will become the first country in South Asia with an NAP for SCR 1325.

PEACE AND POST-CONFLICT DECISION-MAKING

Women in Nepal were highly visible in campaigning for an end to the armed conflict with the Maoist insurgency. Women were severely affected by the conflict as victims, fighters, human rights defenders and peace builders but Nepalese government officials, political party leaders and Maoist rebel leaders failed to include women in the formal peace talks as mediators, participants, observers or signatories.[17]

There was no women's participation when the 25-point Code of Conduct was issued jointly by the government and Maoists in May 2005. And the following 12-point understanding between the Maoists and the seven other political Parties was signed in New Delhi in November 2005 with no participation of women.[18] The peace negotiation teams which emerged during the transitional phase comprised only men. Again, in June 2006 when the seven political Parties and the Maoists signed an 8-point understanding there were no women signatories or women's participation in decision making roles. The newly created Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction was led by a man and the majority at the decision making level in the ministry were also men. Current women's representation in the parliament is satisfactory, but it remains low in other state mechanisms. Women's representation in the Cabinet is less

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16. http://www.reproductiverights.org/ww_asia_nepal.html
17. SAMANTA, Changing Roles of Nepali Women due to Ongoing Conflict (2005)
18. http://www.peacewomen.org/news/Nepal/Dec04/tanahun.html

than 20 percent; 12 percent in the civil service and only 6.2 percent of women at senior level. Overall within the security forces, women's participation is improving through quota measures: participation in the police stands at 5.2 percent; armed police at 3.4 percent and Nepal Army is 2 percent.

In addition, all three of the most senior UN posts in Nepal were held by men: the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General who heads UNMIN and is the overall coordinator of the UN system's support to the peace process; the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, responsible for the UN Humanitarian Agencies; and the Head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which was established in May 2005. Country Directors of the UN Humanitarian Agencies in Nepal were fairly well balanced in representation of men and women.

Women's organisations put pressure on the government and political parties, including the Maoists, to include women in the peace process and in the drafting of the Interim Constitution.   Some success was achieved when the Interim Constitution Drafting Committee, initially made up of six men was subsequently, after a campaign led by women's organisations, expanded to include four women.[19]

The Truth and Reconciliation Bill approved by the Cabinet in 2010 has been disappointing from the perspective of women's rights and needs. Neither the language nor the provisions in the draft Bill acknowledge the special needs of women victims of conflict. The inclusion of 'at least one woman' among the candidate Commissioners falls short of guaranteeing gender balance in the composition of the Commission (TRC, Chapter 2:3). In the recommendations for reparations, there is no provision of psychosocial support for female survivors of the conflict, especially those who suffered through sexual violence (TRC, Chapter 26). There is also very little attention given to the protection of victims and witnesses.[20] Attempts by the Government of Nepal to introduce impunity for rape have so far been stalled by women's advocacy making reference to SCR 1325.

One of the lessons from what happened in Nepal is that within the UN system and among donors, although individuals championed SCR 1325, no person or body is accountable for enforcing implementation of its clauses on women's participation in the formal peace process. In December 2007, women's networks held two large national conferences bringing together women activists from the districts to strategise on how to make the peace process work better for women. The lack of progress in implementing commitments to women's representation and participation was identified as a major obstacle.

KEY ISSUES AND CONCERNS

HIERARCHIES AND RANKS – PARALLEL UNIVERSES

'We are talking about parallel universes – one universe is mostly male, the other universe is mostly female. The challenge? To bridge the divide.'

— Woman activist, Kathmandu

IIn a context defined by deeply entrenched and mutually reinforcing feudal, caste and patriarchal institutions, hierarchies remain one of the main barriers preventing women from meaningful participation in decision-making. The majority of women leaders are involved with more informal sectors of civil society: NGO leaders, community groups, peace activists etc.   Nepali senior military leaders, politicians, government ministers and diplomats are typically men, despite women's participation in both sides of the Maoist insurgency. Different actors primarily interact with counterparts of the same rank. This acts as a barrier to full participation in decision-making for women leaders, even for those from similar castes, but is a particular barrier for Dalits, Janajanati and Madeshi women and single women.

A complicated caste system and a complex intermingling of traditions, festivals, faiths and doctrines permeate all strata of Nepali society. A central element is the inherited superiority of some castes and the inferiority of others. A person born into a particular caste cannot change to another. The dominant order remains largely confined to male Brahmans, Thakuris and Chhetris from the traditionally influential Parbatiya or Hill Hindu group, and the urban-based and generally well-educated Newars. Overcoming social exclusion has moved up the public agenda as a pillar of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and officially concepts of caste no longer exist, but reality on the ground is quite different. Within each caste and ethnic group women are entrenched at the lowest end socially, politically and economically. Nepalese society has functioned under this rigid caste system for many generations. Women, Dalits and the 'tribal' indigenous ethnic groups, the Adivasi Janajatis or 'indigenous nationalities' are confined to the

19. María Villellas Ariño 2008. Page 10 Nepal: a gender view of the armed conflict and the peace process.
http://escolapau.uab.cat/img/qcp/nepal_conflict_peace.pdf
20. UNSCR 1325 and 1820: Implementation and Monitoring Status in Nepal.' Prepared By Sumitra Manandhar Gurung, Ph. D. Sangeeta Lama.
Submitted by Shantimalika, Anamnagar, Nepal May 1, 2010

margins of society. Caste can define a family's profession through generations. For example, the profession for female Badis is prostitution, passed down from generation to generation. While development efforts have provided alternative livelihood options, social attitudes and stigma continue to have influence.

Dalit women suffer from three main forms of discrimination - oppressed by the so-called high caste people (which equally affects both male and female Dalits), oppressed by the design of the Hindu patriarchal system and oppressed by Dalit males. Widows are especially disadvantaged. Cruel cultural stigma and traditions associated with widowhood remain a serious obstacle to their meaningful participation. Nobody has calculated how many conflict widows there are – certainly many thousands. During the insurgency thousands of women lost their husbands at a young age and continue to live under profound emotional shock and economic difficulties. Once they were widowed, some became targets for sexual exploitation and abuse meted out by all sides. Many are illiterate, most live in remote villages. There are frequent examples of widows driven out of their homes when a husband dies, leaving them vulnerable to prostitution and sex traffickers.

DONOR FUNDING AND LINKAGE PROCESSES

The existing system for channelling funding and resources may be constraining women's participation and leadership in rural areas. A significant gap in access to financial benefits and benefits in kind (training, attendance at conferences etc) exists between urban and rural women leaders and activists, perhaps inadvertently exacerbated by UN agencies and other international donors who direct funding to the pool of local partners based in Kathmandu. Several of these national NGOs established a strong reputation for their leadership in social movements for peace during the conflict period, but are challenged to sustain and build their grassroots constituencies in the post-conflict period. Women activists in the Districts and VDC levels report that they either depend on Kathmandu-based women's organisations for resources or they work voluntarily. Without deliberate strategies to renew these relations and build capacities at all levels, there is a risk of fuelling resentment, instead of increasing cooperation and partnerships between Kathmandu-based organisations and their rural counterparts. Women leaders and activists who contribute a great deal to their society at District and VDC levels expressed the view that they are not sufficiently recognised or not directly funded by donors and international organisations, or even by the Nepali mainstream women's movement organisations.

DONORS OVERLOOK GENDER AS A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE

Bilateral donors such as Canada, the Scandinavians and the US have been proactive in ensuring the projects they fund mainstream gender equality. Some donors have supported specific projects targeted for women, but have overlooked gender as a cross-cutting issue when it comes to their aid directed through wider bilateral or multilateral funding in other sectors. They forget to include Nepali women as equal partners in the planning, decision-making and implementation. As a consequence, some projects may have been blind to their differing impacts on women and girls compared to men and boys. Some informants alleged that this resulted in some infrastructure reconstruction funding with quotas for women's employment in the workforce resulting in 'jobs for sex' incidents, for example. The same lack of gender sensitivity also applies in data-gathering for situation reports and to the Nepal multi-donor Peace Trust Fund.

POWERLESSNESS TO ENFORCE 1325

Although SCR 1325 came into existence in 2000, the international community apparently lacked both the will and the means to provide more than rhetorical calls for women's participation in the intermittent peace talks held between the Government of Nepal and the Maoists starting as far back as 2001 and 2003, when it became bitingly clear neither side was making any effort to comply with the Resolution. Despite the fact that women organised impressive protest rallies and processions calling for an end to armed conflict, Party Leaders and Maoist rebel leaders failed time after time to include women in the formal peace talks. Kamala Pant, a lawmaker among the handful of women with positions of influence in the Interim Government, said, *"The inclusion of women took place only when the drafting of a new Constitution was almost finished."* She added, *"It's sad that despite the fact that millions of women took part in the anti-king uprisings, their role has been undermined."*

Female and male interviewees in both Kathmandu and at the VDC level stated that they believe male leaders on all sides have used the peace processes and transitional governments to jostle for personal power. In this, they believe men would find women's presence at senior levels a serious complication. One interviewee complained, *"Using Peace processes as a chance to gain personal power is the wrong emphasis. The Peace should be for the people."*

OBSTACLES FACED BY WOMEN CA MEMBERS

Obstacles to women's full participation in the political processes do not end on election. Women entering the CA face a kaleidoscope of challenges in a political environment that is often inhospitable and male-dominated. Women CA members and activists consider 33 percent women in the CA a major breakthrough and a very encouraging first step. Yet while one-third is perceived as numerically important as a threshold, they did not equate this with meaningful participation. Women CA members tend to be viewed dismissively as tokens, in office only through affirmative action not personal achievement. Stresses are in any case high on the first waves of women in the CA and can be even higher for women from poor and marginalised backgrounds. Further heavy pressure on CA women working in an alien male-dominated public environment lies in meeting other women's heightened expectations. For example the only woman District Chief of Police in Nepal, Gita Upreti, said, "There are more women in the CA than in any other previous governmental group. My question is if these women are really representing us, or are they there just to be a showpiece? They must step forward and really make a difference on the issue of women We didn't vote for women to have seats in the CA just so we could promote their careers. We voted for them so they would help us."

Other challenges include contemptuous views of the abilities of lower-caste women; difficulties juggling competing interests of family and party with CA responsibilities, and corruption. In July 2010, Sharda Nepali, a Dalit CA member from the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist Leninist), attempted to kill herself by swallowing phenol. The mother of six blamed pressures from family and party, alleging her party took two-thirds of her salary of 60,000 Nepali rupees. She said her husband didn't believe the party was withholding this money and accused her of pocketing the salary and allowances.

From our focus group discussions with women in the CA, members of a Forest Users Committee, and a Local Peace Committee, it is clear that obstacles exist at all levels preventing women from meaningful

participation. These obstacles and challenges fall into three broad categories: cultural stereotypes, attitudes and traditions; a lack of capacity and skills; and institutional barriers. In addressing these categories, interventions should include strengthening the capacity and skills of women once elected to committees and Parliament, developing the capacity of male and female office-holders to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role, and help to educate legislatures, committees and political parties. Support for gender sensitisation must shift beyond ad-hoc training facilitated by external agencies. Instead efforts should become owned by the respective parties and linked to their individual performance appraisal processes. The CA secretariat could also be supported to coordinate such efforts.

POLITICAL PARTIES – A GLASS CEILING

A 2007 commitment under the Interim Constitution insists that all political parties should include women within their executive committees as a condition of party registration. However, beyond this formal commitment, gender and wider political dynamics imbued in Nepal's main political parties remain significant obstacles to women's meaningful participation in peace-building and governance at national and local levels. Although there are supporters of women's rights within the parties and women are active in all the major parties, female members are rarely appointed to key roles or given opportunity to express opinions at party meetings. In some smaller parties it is easier for women to achieve leadership roles. Women are gaining more prominence in committees inside the major parties, but the most critical decisions are made largely by a handful of senior male office-holders. Women tend not to express themselves strongly without obtaining permission from the party elite.

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS OR WOMEN'S MOVEMENT?

Rivalries among women's organisations, in particular competition over limited funding, and tensions between women in political parties and women's organisations have weakened the women's agenda since the 2008 elections. Leaders in women's organisations express frustration that women in political parties stick to their party line and prioritise party issues to the neglect of women's issues. In turn, female politicians criticize women's organisations for being too ready to fit their agenda to the wishes of the donors to attract international funding. This rivalry, over funding, weakens the agenda and women's ability to address their rights.

LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEES

The male political ethos cascades to Local Peace Committees (LPCs). Created as part of the Government's peace consolidation strategy, the LPCs are supposed to facilitate policy dialogue and implementation related to peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery at sub-national level. Limited education and literacy along with a lack of political experience and knowledge of the political system hinder the confidence and ability of many women to participate effectively in the LPC process. In the words of one participant in our research: "It is a chicken and egg situation. If women are not given opportunities to express their opinions they do not get the opportunity to learn to articulate their views. Hence they are seldom seen as competent and are not sent by the Parties to represent them in committees and at meetings." A woman on the Rupandehi LPC said, "One of the principal blockages which prevent women's meaningful participation in decision-making on the LPC is the political parties. Initially the local representatives from the political parties were going to be all women but then the parties felt their representatives should have some clout so they nominated only the men." In general the view is that so far many LPCs have not yet functioned properly due to lack of party consensus and slow processing of funds from the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR).

IMPUNITY AND LACK OF IMPLEMENTATION

Systematic crimes during the conflict included brutality, rape and abduction of many thousands of Nepali women. Research by International Crisis Group highlights that there has not been a single prosecution for abuses in civilian courts and furthermore 'political parties have shown no interest in dealing with past crimes'.[21] Laws find their way on to the statute books but for a variety of reasons remain un-implemented, not least on issues of particular concern to women. Impunity acts as a barrier to scare women human rights defenders from speaking out. In spite of promises made by the government to protect them, women human rights activists are at risk of attack and abduction with impunity for the perpetrators. The police and doctors often refuse to file a complaint or to investigate attacks properly. Two women's rights activists in Nepal have been recently murdered with no significant attempt made to investigate or prosecute anyone. There is a similar reluctance to address even high-profile cases of brutality to girls and women in the civil war.

Following the adoption of SCR1820 on sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls in countries affected by violent conflict, extensive advocacy by national and international NGOs, as well as UN agencies, resulted in the Government of Nepal's development of a National Action Plan on SGBV and a decision to declare 2010 the year of action on SGBV. Despite these commitments, informants in our research alleged that political parties routinely interfere with the judicial system over cases against their members. For instance, women alleging rape face refusal by the police to file the first report because the focus shifts from the crime itself to ways to protect the alleged perpetrator if he is a party member.

21. Nepal: Peace and Justice (Asia Report N°184) published by the International Crisis Group on 14 January2010

Programme Case Study
THE CONSTITUTION INITIATIVE: LINKING THE GRASSROOTS TO STATEBUILDING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Nepal is at a critical juncture in the negotiation and drafting of a new constitution. While the Constituent Assembly has unprecedented diversity with 33 percent representation of women and a large number of Dalits and Janajatis, significant challenges to their meaningful participation remain beyond the numbers. One key challenge has been how to ensure the substantive participation of these members from poor and marginalised backgrounds, as they are often new to political processes at this level. Political parties have failed to democratise in the post-conflict period. External actors within political parties continue to influence the process, and generational gaps and tensions exist among party members.

CARE's Constitution Initiative was born out of recognition that a key challenge was the need to link the high-level political process to wider consultation and participation, especially amongst the poor and marginalised sections of the population. For this reason, CARE sought to support a new and dynamic network of grassroots women's organisations, called the National Forum for Women Rights Concern (NFOWRC), to facilitate grassroots-national level linkages. NFOWRC is a loose network of 35 organisations (women's rights forum, popular education centre for women, NGOs working in the area of women's rights), which had acted independently at the district level but came together to form a national network. With the support of a national NGO called Jagaran Nepal, the network seeks to "engender the constitution". Its working approach has been to bring all of these groups together along with key players from political parties, CA members, intellectual groups and lawyers on gender and women's rights issues of relevance to the constitution making process. Visits by CA members to some of the poorest and most isolated sections of the country have been facilitated through the programme, and technical inputs have been provided to the process and the national level also. Together with other CSOs and supportive CA members, NFOWRC has contributed to intensive debates on papers prepared by CA's thematic committees.

These efforts have resulted in specific commitments to tackle exclusion and discrimination in the constitutional process, thereby contributing to wider efforts to tackle grievances and inequalities associated with the conflict's root causes.

Country Study Overviews
UGANDA

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Our field research in Uganda was conducted in five districts: Kampala, Gulu, Amuru, Kitgum and Pader. Methodological tools included resource person interviews, key informant interviews, field observations, questionnaires and focus groups discussions with women in various positions and levels and key national and local CSOs.

CONTEXT

There have been 22 different recognised insurgencies in Uganda over the past 20 years affecting different parts of the country.[22] Conflict in Northern Uganda between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) turned into a proxy war in the late 1990s with Uganda supporting the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army and Sudan supporting the LRA in return. The conflict escalated in 2002-2003 in response to a Ugandan military offensive and millions were displaced.[23] The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Khartoum government and the SPLA in January 2005 and hence the loss of support from Sudan is credited with bringing the LRA to talk peace with the Government of Uganda.

The Juba Peace Talks began in July 2006 and resulted in a ceasefire by September 2006. A Final Peace Agreement was negotiated but the LRA rebel leader has repeatedly failed to appear for planned signing ceremonies. Although there is no signed agreement and respondents in our research indicated an ongoing fear that the LRA will return, the peace talks did mark the beginning of a period of relative normalcy in Northern Uganda. There are still other ongoing armed conflicts in Uganda including a rebellion led by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Karimojong armed cattle-rustling and violent raids. The latter has created displacements on a similar scale to the LRA insurgency.

The Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) has been the Government of Uganda's main post-conflict policy framework for Northern Uganda. Its overall goal is stabilisation, recovery and development through the consolidation of state authority, rebuilding and empowering communities, and revitalisation of the northern economy, peace building and reconciliation. The PRDP was, earlier this year, effectively absorbed into the National Development Plan which outlines a 30-year strategy for the socio-economic transformation of Uganda.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

NATIONAL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Women have participated and continue to voice their issues. Such participation often happens through traditional mechanisms, such as the Moto-Puti. It can often come through what seems like playing an insignificant role, such as preparing and serving food. However, interestingly through these roles, women are able to provide vital information to their husbands during the decision-making process. Information and gossip are shared. For example, one woman might provide information about how another is being beaten. If the information is passed onto a man in a mediator role, it can be used and influence the process.

— Community Development Officer, Amuru

Uganda is a signatory to CEDAW and ratified the African Union's Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (popularly known as the Maputo Protocol) in July of this year. A National Action Plan for implementation of 1325 was released in 2008. Politically, one seat in each district in Uganda is reserved for a woman Member of Parliament and at least one-third of Local Council Seats are reserved for women. Women's representation in the national Parliament is currently at 32 percent - 103 woman Members of Parliament of which 15 were directly elected, 82 hold reserved seats and six represent special interest groups.

The Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) has played a number of key roles relevant to women's political participation and SCR 1325 implementation more generally. UWOPA monitors women's participation in Parliament; provides various forums for women MPs to gather and promotes women's issues in legislation, policy-making and implementation. UWOPA's undeclared position is to pursue 1325 through policy rather than legislation. They believe that, legislatively, 1325 can be indirectly addressed through gender-sensitive legislation. As Presidential and local government elections for 2011 draw closer, women rights organizations, such as UWONET and Raising Voices, have started engaging in a dialogue with duty bearers (especially security services, electoral commission, political parties,and the media) to foster a conducive environment for women to freely participate in the political process.

22.UNSCR 1325 and Juba Peace Process Study, Sandra J. Ayoo, CARE International in Uganda
23. IBID

UWOPA lobbied the President in 2008 for appointment of women to the Juba peace delegation and other peace teams in Northern Uganda and reportedly lobbied the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) for inclusion of women in leadership positions created through the implementation of the PRDP. In a priority ranking, UWOPA ranked peace and conflict resolution second to last out of seven issues.

PEACE AND POST-CONFLICT DECISION-MAKING

UWONET (Uganda Women's Network), which deals mainly with issues of policy advocacy and legal reform, organised and won official 'observer status' and coordinated women's participation in the Juba peace process as a pressure group. UWONET is one of three national level CSOs addressing issues related to SCR 1325 in Uganda by, among other things, raising awareness with key policy makers and legislators, and advocating for the Government of Uganda to provide a specific budget for SCR 1325. While undertaking a 'women leadership' drive, it has adopted SCR 1325 on its advocacy agenda, introducing it in the 'Women's Coalition for Peace,' which unites over 40 CSOs for common action on women and peace. During the Juba peace negotiations, Isis-WICCE (Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange) was at the core of mobilising and organising the Uganda Women's Peace Coalition which sought integration of the needs, concerns and priorities of women in the Final Peace Agreement. It led the consultation and documented the abuse of women survivors in the affected communities to lobby for discussions under relevant agenda items of the peace negotiations.

Isis-WICCE was also one of the first organisations to raise concerns over gender issues in the PRDP for reconstruction in Northern Uganda. They felt it was not responsive to gender needs in either composition or implementation. In 2008 they created a "Women's Task Force" of 21 national and Northern Uganda CSOs as a permanent structure advocating for a gender-responsive PRDP. They also formed PRDP coalitions at district and national level to track and advocate for women's empowerment related issues and facilitated inclusion of SCR 1325 in a joint CSO/OPM instrument of indicators for a gender-responsive PRDP. Recently they have prepared a 'Baseline Study of Women's Leadership in Uganda' beginning a three year initiative to maximise the participation and contribution of women in national and regional dialogue and decision-making on peace and security.

There are a number of organisations also implementing local level peace and development-related initiatives aimed at improving women's lives. These include efforts to empower rural women by building their capacity to effectively participate in peace building and decision-making processes in areas of: maternal and child healthcare, SGBV interventions, economic empowerment, access to arable land, acquisition of farm inputs, credit facilities, technology, market, safe and clean drinking water, and access to education at all levels as well as civic education to enable women to engage in political and electoral processes. Findings from the research clearly indicate that Women have also been directly involved in community dialogues around domestic violence and land conflicts in the districts of Amuru, Gulu and Pader and organisations in other areas have also indicated they are involving women in mediations and negotiations at community, district and regional level. A serious challenge would appear to reside in the lack of support for female ex-combatants and female-headed households of internally displaced and returnee populations. Humanitarian assistance provided during the conflict already struggled to meet the needs on the ground in a gender-sensitive fashion. As populations return or resettle to new locations, services and livelihoods assistance are further stretched and support for reintegration inadequate. Indeed without adequate wider support to recovery and community-based development and thorough integration of women's participation into those processes, ad-hoc and project based 'gender sensitisation' initiatives have limited effect or may even be counter-productive.

"In spite of their differences the women were consistent and persistent with their issues. They talked as victims and demanded the rights of abducted women to be protected."

— Official at the Juba Peace Secretariat

As women we want peace. We are peace makers and builders both at home and during war. We provide counsel in case of conflict. Here in Acholi, women are source of spiritual support and motivation for those going to war especially the men. Without your mother's blessings in case you are going to war, you will never win the war or battle.

— Margaret, Community Based Facilitator, Acholi

KEY ISSUES AND CONCERNS

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The Ugandan Government's Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) developed a NAP for implementation of SCR 1325 in 2008. However, there are no formal mechanisms for implementation of the NAP or SCR 1325 into government or CSO policies. Without a clear cross-departmental mechanism or process to mainstream the NAP across the policies and budgets of other line Ministries, 1325-related priorities risk remaining siloed within the MGLSD. Our researcher in Uganda described government officials as "cagey" on the issue of 1325 implementation. Some government officials and a majority of respondents (70 percent) in an informal survey conducted as part of our Uganda research (including CSO representatives) speak of SCR 1325 and NAP interchangeably with the PRDP. Policies and programmes being implemented in Northern Uganda on peace and conflict issues show no evidence of having taken the NAP into account.

ELITE PARTICIPATION

Women's national participation mainly involves elites. The NAP itself has been criticized as not being informed by local realities. Respondents from local communities made the accusation that some women MPs, for political purposes, lie to local communities about pertinent women's issues. Another criticism was that women who participate on behalf of grassroots communities (the same women always called back to participate in conferences, trainings, meetings etc) do not take the knowledge received back to those communities.

CLAN

Specific to the Acholi people in Northern Uganda is a very strong clan system that sets norms, regulates justice and controls livelihood and land rights. This system resisted external values and authorities during the period of colonial rule (1894-1962) and continues to do so to date. Implementation of relevant components of SCR 1325 will be difficult if not carefully interpreted for the local context here.

"WOMEN'S" CONCERNS

While women have been involved in community level dialogue and conflict resolution in some areas, these tended to be primarily in matters having to do with perceived 'women's' concerns such as domestic chores and domestic violence. When women are involved in post-conflict reconstruction it tends to be in areas such as health care delivery, counselling, education, or assistance with the provision of basic needs or income generation while not taking part in issues involving legal and human rights institutions, governance and dispute resolution processes. Over half of respondents in the research survey indicated that most women lack expertise to function in the public arena and are therefore excluded from processes and institutions considered political. The common perception is that peace building activities such as formal peace negotiations, mediation and diplomacy are political. In the words of one parliamentarian: *'Women contribute by attracting men ... the presence of women is diversionary... when governments are negotiating peace, gender is irrelevant, and the important issue is the message from the head of government.'*[24]

Programme Case Study
ROCO KWO: INTEGRATING EMPOWERMENT AND PEACEBUILDING INTO LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMES

In Uganda, as in the other research countries, poverty poses a significant challenge to women's participation in all aspects of civil and political life. For this reason, CARE's Roco Kwo (Transforming Lives) Programme working in Northern Uganda links women's empowerment and involvement in peacebuilding to livelihoods restoration. Roco Kwo grew out of CARE's humanitarian and recovery programmes in Northern Uganda, in which village savings and loans (VSL) groups formed a key component. CARE had already supported VSL initiatives in camps of displaced peoples' during the conflict. The VSL groups were initially conceived with livelihoods goals, reflecting the protracted nature of the conflict and desire to shift away from dependency-creating forms of relief aid. However, the VSL groups came to also act as platforms for accessing other support services and government programs, and served as safe spaces in which women could share and discuss their problems.

Challenges included resentment that many such schemes originally focused on women and did not include men, and the significant resettlement of displaced populations into new locations over the past two years. However, Roco Kwo now strategically involves 70 percent women and 30 percent men and is linked to wider CARE efforts to engage with traditional leaders and men as a means of engaging with men and addressing the social and cultural structures inimical to women's empowerment while mitigating potential conflict. It seeks results in three areas: women's economic livelihoods, women's peace and decision-making, and women's access to justice and human rights. The livelihood component aims for recovery of pre-conflict women's livelihoods in terms of production, physical living conditions, health, consumption, income, human security and basic rights. The program also calls for women's control of the decisions, processes and outcomes of these initiatives and practical assurance that women will continue to control the livelihoods means acquired through the program. In the words of one participant in this project: *"The groups have provided us space to talk and support each other to address even problems in our individual homes. [...] Recently I was selected to be on the school management committee for the Primary school in my Parish. I increasingly feel responsible. I have got the desire to intervene and do not want to sit back and see more women suffer."*

24. IBID

Key Findings

Our research in Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda identified a range of common issues across the country contexts, both in terms of 'best practices' and key challenges and obstacles to progress on implementing 1325. These key findings are summarised below.

1. STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Our country studies identify varying degrees of progress in increasing women's participation in formal peace processes and promoting a more general women's empowerment agenda. All three demonstrate some changes in national policy which are favourable to women's rights and representation at the national level. All three countries are signatories to CEDAW and have, in their "post-conflict" period established quota systems for national legislative office[25] and developed or are currently in the process of developing some sort of National Action Plan addressing women's concerns.[26] In addition, Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda have each passed domestic violence legislation, which for the latter two were significantly enabled by the momentum generated by SCR 1325 -related advocacy.[27]

It is true that 1325-related policies and processes have often existed in silos or not translated into wider policy change. However, it seems clear that SCR 1325 has contributed to creating, on paper at least, an improved policy environment for women in these three countries. While all three studies also identified serious deficiencies in implementation of the various commitments, the commitments themselves represent progress and provide leverage for more substantive advancement.

2. WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

One of the most remarkable outcomes to which SCR 1325 has contributed is an astounding mobilisation of women's organisations and activism to promote wider participation in peace and security-related policy. Of our three country studies this is most obvious in Nepal and Afghanistan.

Mobilisation drawing support from the SCR 1325 framework has included an amazing range of activities. Just in Nepal, this has included: developing a women's peace network, capacity-building for women leaders, mainstreaming women into state machinery, publication of a directory of influential and capable women across Nepal, maintaining a women's rights monitoring network, protection of women human rights defenders, work with widows, women and constitution building, 1325 awareness training programs and street dramas and a book based on the street dramas.

3. POLITICAL WILL AND CULTURAL RESISTANCE

In all three countries, national leadership seemed willing, when encouraged, to commit on paper to pro-woman policies (perhaps to curry international favour) but then lacked the resources, capabilities and/ or political will to fully bring those commitments to life. Of these three deficits, the failure of political will seems the most debilitating. The idea of "failure of political will" needs to be further unpacked if appropriate responses at different levels are to be formulated. This would need to be done on a case by case basis as the factors involved are likely to be very context specific. However, in each of our research countries, cultural resistance to women's rights amongst large segments of the population also played a significant role in the leadership's political calculations. Some in the leadership may themselves personally be reluctant to implement SCR 1325 because of their own beliefs about women's roles and capabilities.

If it is just a matter of political calculation – taking measure of the relative balance and intensity of constituencies for, against and indifferent – the response to a lack of political will would be relatively clear in theory at least: change the balance. This happened repeatedly in Afghanistan and Nepal where women's participation or women's concerns were initially excluded from various processes but then concessions were made as the intensity of women's lobbying increased, particularly with support from the international community. Of course, this is more difficult when peace processes happen in secret or decision-making is less transparent.

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25. The Afghan Constitution establishes a quota of 25% of reserved seats for women in the Afghan National Assembly; the Interim Constitution in Nepal mandates 33% women's representation in "all state mechanisms" (the National Parliament in Nepal had 5.8% women's representation in 1999; the Constituent Assembly in 2008 had 32.8% women's representation). In Uganda one seat in each district is reserved for a woman Member of Parliament and at least 1/3 of Local Council Seats are reserved for women (women's representation in Parliament increased from 4 in 1989 to 103 in the 2006-2010 term – fifteen directly elected, eighty-two reserved and six representing special interest groups.
26. Uganda released its National Action Plan for 1325 in 2008. Nepal's National Action Plan for 1325 is scheduled for completion in October 2010. Afghanistan has no 1325 NAP but the Ministry of Women Affairs (established in 2002) has a National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA)
27. EVAW (Elimination of Violence Against Women) legislation was passed in Afghanistan in 2009. The Domestic Violence Act in Nepal was passed in 2008.

Afghanistan constitutes the most challenging context when reflecting on the relative positioning and political will of local and international actors in relation to women's rights and participation. Kandiyoti has argued that an internationally-driven approach to rights promotion risks hardening positions and entrenching the polarization between traditional power-holders, including parties to the conflict, and women's rights advocates.[28] In her analysis, this risks turning compromise on women's rights into a condition for a political settlement to the conflict by traditional power-holders and anti-government factions. Contrary to this analysis, purported representatives of insurgent groups have increasingly sought to portray the Taliban as not fundamentally opposed to women's rights issues, such as girls' education. Some commentators advocating for an expedited withdrawal of international forces and political settlement have also argued this point. Yet evidence from human rights organisations monitoring the situation on the ground and our own research in insurgent-controlled areas challenges these claims. Our research also uncovered a diversity of views from women at different levels. Concerns were expressed by some Afghan women rights activists regarding the extent to which 'their agenda' was used by international actors to legitimise wider political agendas. Yet all also feared that gains made in the past decade may be traded away at the negotiating table.

Our findings across Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda demonstrate clearly that implementation of SCR 1325 cannot be unilaterally imposed by the international community and it is weaker when overtly dependent on external conditionality and sponsorship. The greatest successes in advancing SCR 1325's goals have come when there is internal pressure exerted by a strong national constituency. This is a long-term task that requires capacity-building at all levels, not just tied to specific policy events.

4. CAPACITY (INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL)

One key issue for moving from women's representation in decision-making to meaningful participation is the capacity of women to effectively make their voices heard at decision-making tables. In recognition of this, there are numerous organisations undertaking capacity-building efforts particularly with women elected to national legislatures. It should be recognised that capacity to effectively participate in national level decision-making involves more than just technical knowledge and skills.

One issue raised by our Afghanistan researcher was that women newly elected to the National Assembly are unlikely to have relationships of access and influence as would men with longer experience operating in the corridors of power. These are not capabilities that can be readily developed in/through training workshops. Training can be used to enhance women's understandings of political processes, strategies to access various decision-making fora and to mobilise different forms of political leverage. Certainly enhanced participation by women can contribute to transforming institutions, policies and practices. However, women also need to seek out and develop alternative sources of power to influence decision-making when traditional sources of political power are – still – inaccessible or opposed to their participation. Where a strong and vocal women's lobby exists as in Nepal, this can provide access to alternative sources of political power and leverage to challenge patriarchal structures.

The importance of developing alternative independent bases of power for women is underscored by the comment of the woman candidate in the Afghan study who said that increased competition in elections was forcing her to seek alliances with warlords and other power holders who can buy her votes. If women only rely on patriarchal channels of influence, women's rights can be easily compromised and the transformative potential of women's participation undermined.[29] Whilst such challenges are common in other contexts also, they appear even more acute in post-conflict situations.

5. FAILURE TO CONNECT NATIONAL TO LOCAL

A consistent criticism from respondents in all three country studies was a failure to connect local women and their concerns to national-level processes. SCR 1325 implementation under the participation pillar tends to focus on peacemaking and political processes at the national level where, in the countries under study, urban elites traditionally dominate. There are a number of practical and logistical challenges to effective communication between urban capitals and women in the provinces and rural areas. These difficulties are exacerbated in countries where armed groups are still active and concerns for physical security add another dimension to restrictions on women's mobility.

28. 'Old Dilemmas or New Challenges? The politics of gender and reconstruction in Afghanistan' Deniz Kandiyoti, Development and Change 38(2): 169–199 (2007). C_ Institute of Social Studies 2007.
29. The Nepal country study provided a related lesson about women's access to power. With credit due to 1325, women now have significant representation in the legislature. However, the legislative agenda is largely controlled by the political parties who don't have the same level of commitment or international scrutiny with regard to women's access to decision-making.

Indeed poor and rural women face a number of additional obstacles to participation in national or even local level decision-making. Participation generally requires time taken away from subsistence livelihoods activities. Women's mobility may be restricted due to poverty or restrictions imposed by more traditional cultural values. Poor, lower-caste or women from other marginalised populations often lack the confidence or sense of their own agency to even consider participation in higher level decision-making processes. With its focus being overwhelmingly on ad-hoc participation around events at national level, 1325 policy and practice is yet to consistently engage with the more comprehensive approach to empowerment outlined by CARE's women's empowerment framework.

6. FAILURE TO INVOLVE WOMEN IN DIRECT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

In our case studies, even in those countries where there was significant movement towards women's participation in post-conflict governance and peacebuilding, there was very little participation of women in the formal peace talks. To the extent that women were able to participate in such peacemaking efforts, it often seems begrudgingly conceded. It is particularly disappointing then that this core area is the one in which, in the three countries in our research, there seems to have been the least progress in implementation of SCR 1325 commitments.

However, from a more positive perspective, our research also uncovered multiple activities undertaken by women activists in peacebuilding and opportunities for further action that embody that transformative intent. Experience from each of the countries demonstrates that the greatest transformative potential of 1325 lies in fostering linkages between women's experiences, roles and voices at the grassroots level and processes to forge peace and post-conflict governance at the national level. Examples would include the success of women advocating for implementation of legislation on gender-based violence in Uganda, and the engagement of grassroots women's organisations with members of the CA in Nepal.

A thorough conflict analysis in each of our research countries also unveils further opportunities for 1325-related initiatives to have a transformative effect and added-value related to current efforts. Not one of our three research countries is unequivocally post-conflict. The continued conflict in Afghanistan is self-evident. Our research in Nepal described on-going violence involving approximately one hundred armed groups operating in the Terai region. In Uganda, the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army which garnered all the international attention has gone dormant (although people in northern Uganda still see the return of the LRA as a real possibility and threat), but there is still an ongoing armed rebellion by the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) and armed cattle-rustling and violent raids by the Karimojong. International attention and SCR 1325 implementation efforts tend to focus on one central conflict. Our research uncovered various examples of how women activists were playing quiet but often effective roles in mediation, reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts in these 'lesser' conflicts outside the international eye. With less attention from both national and international stakeholders, there may be less resistance to women's involvement. Informal skills in negotiating culture and personalities may have more freedom to operate in more local environments. Over time, engagement in peacebuilding at this level could also help enhance wider recognition of women's roles as peacemakers at the national level.

Strategies Towards Meaningful Participation

Drawing on the country studies and CARE's experience at the programme level, we have identified the following lessons that should be addressed in designing strategies to promote more meaningful participation by women in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance:

1. WHICH WOMEN? DIVERSIFY TARGETING TO REACH A BROADER RANGE

Women are by no means a monolithic group. A common finding across our three studies was that SCR 1325 implementation was seen by many respondents in each country as failing to take into account the concerns, issues and needs of some groups of women – especially rural and poor women. This violates the spirit of SCR 1325 from both the empowerment and transformative peace perspectives.

This diversity implies that women have different kinds of capabilities and barriers to their participation. This is one of reasons that SCR 1325 implementation tends to favour certain groups of women – we tend to reach out to those who are easiest to reach, those who have the least challenging (or perhaps the most familiar) barriers to overcome. In development work we sometimes use the awkward term 'targeting strategies.' In encouraging women's participation external and local actors need to be more precise about our targeting strategies, about the question 'which women?' and deploy a more diverse range of targeting strategies. Whose participation are we encouraging in this particular effort? Failure to define a precise targeting strategy usually means the intervention will be largely ineffective – not wholly addressing the needs of any one group – or effective only for a sort of default group, which in the case of SCR 1325 implementation has tended to mean urban elites.

2. ENGAGE STRATEGICALLY WITH RESISTANCE

At the village level, confrontational strategies are rarely effective in producing sustainable change in social or cultural attitudes over the long term. Confrontation and adversarial approaches have their uses in advocacy, but they can also provoke a backlash and erode solidarity by forcing potential allies to make an either-or choice. Community level experience suggests that sustainable change requires more subtle and collaborative strategies. 'Engaging men' in gender based violence work has had some great success in reducing resistance and building allies among both men and women. Women's empowerment projects at CARE Uganda, for this reason, have a 70-30 strategy – a men's quota of 30 percent for participation in their SCR 1325 related women's empowerment projects.

It is not only men who resist women's participation. Another strategy, particularly when women themselves are reluctant to engage around a particular issue because of internalised gender constraints (or other reasons), is to gain entrance by engaging on less volatile or more immediately compelling issues. To empower women's participation in decision-making, we do not have to go straight to peace and governance issues. At the village level micro-credit, income generating activities, maternal health projects and other social, health and economic initiatives can all serve as a base for developing women's confidence and skills in communication, conflict resolution, decision-making and enhancing their sense of agency. To break down oppressive gender norms, it is not necessary to always explicitly confront them as gender issues.

3. INVEST IN CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Most international agencies will acknowledge the importance of local context but often are unwilling or under-resourced to engage in the difficult (often unfunded) work involved in developing the deep understanding necessary to work with firmly embedded cultural and social norms, attitudes, practices and institutions related to gender and conflict. Principles like 'do no harm' and gender equity are easier to cite than to implement. There is a need also to reflect on how gender and conflict analysis intersect and inform each other. This challenges agencies to shift beyond the institutional silos among gender and conflict analysis, capacity and strategy development. The importance of local understanding is obviously a key argument for empowering and supporting local change agents who are already familiar (and will always be more familiar than external actors) with the context. Multi-mandate NGOs like CARE often find the trust and contextual understanding built over years intervening across a range of sectors with local partners before, during and after conflict to be a useful asset in understanding gender and conflict dynamics. However, in conflict and post-conflict contexts, the frequently short-term nature of funding for initiatives

on women's rights, protection and recovery works can result in a fragmented approach which represents a challenge in terms of sustaining and building an analysis beyond the micro level of individual projects.

4. ADDRESS THE CONSTRAINTS THAT WOMEN FACE IN PARTICIPATION

A. ECONOMIC/LIVELIHOODS:

Women, particularly poor and marginalised women, often do not have the space or time to participate in decision-making. In village level interventions, this often means making special accommodations (e.g. meeting at unusual hours), arranging for transportation and childcare. For many women, participation can only be justified if the activity is economically viable. Broader community-based income generating activities and other livelihoods interventions can be coupled with efforts designed to engage and empower women. Of course, this means first developing the necessary understanding of local context and the diversity of constraints and barriers among and between different sections of the population. Which women's voices aren't being heard? What will it require, group by group, to bring them into the dialogue?

B. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL RISKS:

The importance of creating a "safe space" was frequently cited by participants in our research if women are taking emotional and social risks by participating in peace and post-conflict governance processes. This is particularly important when working with poor or otherwise marginalised women, or working in very hierarchical social contexts. Safe space can have to do with physical space, privacy, confidentiality or simply ensuring an effectively inclusive approach to facilitation. In some cases, it is a developmental process of building trust over time within a given group. In contexts where there are serious social or cultural taboos on women's participation, the creation of safe spaces for women to gather, strategise, freely express their views and develop communication skills can be a useful strategy for encouraging broader participation.

C. PHYSICAL SAFETY AND SECURITY:

The physical security risks that women who participate in political processes was most apparent in Afghanistan. However, risks of physical violence were also cited in Nepal and Uganda. Investing in context-specific strategies to establish protection from physical violence and tackle the culture of impunity that fosters such intimidation is clearly essential. In Nepal, for example, women's rights NGOs have sought to engage political parties in the negotiation and internalisation of a code of conduct on violence against women in politics. In terms of international policy on 1325, the implication of this finding is that enhanced emphasis must be placed on the linkages between the participation and protection pillars of SCR 1325. It is encouraging that SCR1820 focused on the protection of women and girls in situations of armed conflict has been passed and various initiatives taken forward, such as the establishment of a UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence. However, the continued lack of progress on one key relevant element of SCR1820, namely the global mapping of gaps in frontline efforts to promote protection, remains a concern. There is no greater priority than protection – morally and strategically – in promoting women's participation where such risks are faced.

5. ENHANCE AGENCY AT INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP LEVELS

Particularly with poor, marginalised or otherwise disempowered groups, the most significant first step in empowerment often involves enhancing an individual or groups' sense of agency: the confidence in their own ability to make choices and take more control over their lives. This includes identifying and taking ownership of their own goals and aspirations, as well as identifying and acquiring the most appropriate means to achieve them. One of the difficulties with this is that specific outcomes of true empowerment projects cannot be predicted. You cannot encourage someone to take control and then tell them what to do with that control. Women, for instance, empowered to address SGBV issues within their villages may (and often do) use their new skills, confidence, and relationships to address issues within the community beyond the original objectives of the intervention.

This unpredictability applies to means as well as ends. While our intention may be to support conducive conditions for women's empowerment in particular decision-making forums, this may not be the way in which a particular group of women wants to exert influence around any given issue. Given the local context, it may not be the only way, the right way or the most effective way for this particular group of women to exert their influence. For instance, there may be situations in which there is a serious risk of backlash from husbands or other community members in insisting on direct participation around a given issue. Women may (and often do) have other indirect means of exerting influence. We have to trust women's own assessment of their risk boundaries.

While it can be inspiring to see this sort of empowerment process evolving, it often makes for challenging relationships with donors who are looking for specific and tangible project outputs which have been defined in advance. In order to support social change processes like empowerment, which underlie both meaningful participation and sustainable peacebuilding, we must change how we think about project objectives. Donors have to get much better at recognising and accepting process outcomes. Implementing agencies have to get much better at measuring process outcomes so that they can be held accountable for them.

In our review of efforts at the community level, we found it is also critical to celebrate the achievements of women and their allies in expanding women's decision-making roles. Too often the narrative on women, peace and security at the policy and project levels can dwell on stories of disempowerment and victimisation, which can become self-reinforcing. We must search for ways to also celebrate achievements which can both enhance women's sense of agency and build community acceptance by highlighting the benefits from the family to the community level. CARE's community level experience shows as well the critical importance of solidarity in women's empowerment efforts. Building solidarity among groups of women enhances agency at both the individual and group level. Solidarity can bridge all three elements of our women's empowerment model: agency, relationships and structure. Different forms of 'solidarity group' have been a central feature of much of CARE's empowerment programming in Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda.

6. MOBILISE AND PROMOTE LINKAGES FROM THE GRASSROOTS TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Our research in these three countries suggests that the most powerful factor influencing the success of SCR 1325 implementation is the support of a strong capable and active women's movement within the country. In our case studies, pressure and advocacy from the international community was critical in getting the process off the ground – getting structural and policy support for women's participation in place. However, it took internal pressure from women's organisations and activists to breathe life into those structures and policies.

This is probably the single most important factor in moving from representation in decision-making to meaningful participation. Support for a diverse national support base, with their inherent understanding of local context, is the most effective strategy in implementing SCR 1325. A powerful local women's constituency can provide support and an alternative power base for women in decision-making positions. The existence of an empowered women's rights lobby will help to ensure sustainability of gains made when international attention shifts elsewhere.

The implication for those involved in funding and implementing SCR 1325 interventions is the critical importance of providing support to local women's organisations for 1325 awareness raising and advocacy and for linking local efforts to national. The disconnect between micro level (local) needs, concerns and activities of women and women's organisations and those at the macro (national) level were repeatedly referred to by respondents in all three countries. Micro-macro linkages have also been identified as a critical factor in strategic peace building efforts. Both women's empowerment and peace building efforts can, by themselves, have positive benefits at local levels but sustainable change requires for structural and policy change at national level. Likewise, national level progress can only be sustained if informed and supported by a wider support base.

7. INVEST IN LONG TERM APPROACHES

All of the above implies the need for long-term strategic approaches beyond the current emphasis in SCR 1325 policy and practice on ad-hoc and project based support for women's participation in peace and security policy. There is still a tendency to focus project outcomes in two or three year time frames. With the focus in 1325-related policy on the higher levels of peacemaking and disconnect to peacebuilding efforts, support for women's participation is often events-based rather than integrated into longer-term programmes. This is also reflected in the current draft UN indicators for 1325, which reference peacebuilding at the goal level but give inadequate attention to peacebuilding-peacemaking linkages in their specific indicators. Again, as previously mentioned, donor funding cycles are often also shortened in high risk conflict contexts. Yet many of the grassroots and national level interventions in our country studies reflect five to ten year time frames for identifiable and sustainable change.

Social change is a long process involving difficult to measure and sometimes incremental shifts in attitudes, behaviours, practices, relationships and institutional structures. This may entail working first with women on issues that are less likely to meet strong social resistance and later transferring the acquired skills, confidence, experience, legitimacy and conscious agency into more challenging decision-making arenas. This requires adjusting the expectations and methodologies of donors and NGOs which focus on readily measurable short-term outputs, and instead learning to rigorously monitor and demonstrate changes in processes and outcomes

Policy Recommendations To Institutional Actors

TO THE UN:

REGARDING THE UN GLOBAL 1325 INDICATORS:

- Security Council (SC) to adopt the Secretary Generals (S-G) report on Women, Peace and Security, Security (WPS), including the appended indicators (based on the S-G's April 2010 proposal for indicators) towards developing a coherent, system-wide 1325 monitoring system;

- Security Council to call for a dedicated unit within within the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the new agency, mandated to monitor implementation of the indicators, and for the Under Secretary General (USG) of UN Women to make regular reports to the SC on the progress of implementation.

- SC to call for the establishment of a formal consultative structure including experts from civil society at all levels, especially women's rights and peacebuilding organisations, to advise UN Women on the piloting of these indicators and wider accountability frameworks for 1325.

- To develop participatory mechanisms and processes at country and United Nations (UNHQ) levels dedicated to monitoring and accountability against the 1325 commitments, including direct participation in country-specific planning for mediation, negotiations, and further peacebuilding done by UN Department of Political Affairs (UN DPA), UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) and other key agencies.

- To establish clear benchmarks and goals for each indicator over a specific timeframe for measuring the progress in implementation of 1325, specifically noting the substantive nature of women's participation in mediation, negotiations, peacebuilding and post-conflict governance and to collaborate with wider UN efforts to foster system-wide coherence and avoid duplication and gaps.

- To ensure that the UN Country Teams facilitate the process of monitoring and evaluating progress against the indicators in order to ensure collaboration with relevant UN processes of peacebuilding strategic framework development, and ensure synergies with wider inter-agency initiatives to innovate and develop more effective approaches to monitoring and evaluation of women's empowerment and peacebuilding.

- To ensure that UN Country Teams facilitate strategic linkages between women's involvement in formal peacemaking processes and peacebuilding efforts from the grassroots upwards.

PARTICIPATION AT PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL STAGES:

- SC to call for a joint mediation strategy for the UN DPA and Peacebuilding Support Office to ensure recommendations from the S-G's 7-point plan for women and peace building are implemented without delay. The strategy, consistent with S-G reports on Peacebuilding and Women, Peace and Security, should ensure meaningful participation of women, especially those from conflict-affected areas who have been active in the provision of community-based assistance and peacebuilding efforts at the operational level.

- While Arria Formula briefings can be very useful, SCR 1889 and the current S-G reports imply a need to go beyond them and ensure that women are engaged in the "nuts and bolts" of UN mission design and implementation, in-country assessments for planning peace operations, and in the design and implementation of UN mediation efforts.

- Where possible, such women should participate directly at the table with planners, mediators and in governance. At the very least, planning and implementation of peace operations, mediation and peacebuilding should establish at the earliest moment possible a formal parallel advisory mechanism for women's input from the level of the front line to UN HQ expertise.

FACILITATING GREATER CROSS-COUNTRY LEARNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT:

- SC to request the S-G to ensure hiring of greater gender expertise in UN DPA in general, as well as DPA's Mediation Unit, in order to comply with the requirements of SCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions across all mediation efforts. The SC should request regular updates from the USG for Political Affairs and UN DPKO on the progress in building up gender capacity in their departments. They must ensure that gender advisors at HQ and field level have appropriate conflict-related experience required to complement current gender advisors, whose mandate has focused more on internal gender mainstreaming. Adequate and consistent field capacity is essential and urgent.

- UN to accelerate efforts to include 1325 and gender-related issues into the training and recruitment of UN Special Envoys and Mediators and make their compliance with existing standards a core element of their performance appraisal.

- UN DPKO and UN DPA to establish regular opportunities for UN gender advisors and women peacekeepers from field missions to engage in regular cross-learning workshops with NGO practitioners aimed at sharing best practices and informing policy. Organizing these to coincide with annual HQ consultations with field staff would be most efficient. Examples of such exchanges can be drawn from other branches of the UN, including the humanitarian clusters system's global efforts to cross-learn for better coordination.

- In addition, for cross-learning to benefit member states, the SC should call for a regular international High Level WPS-meeting involving relevant UN entities, including the UN Peacebuilding Commission, UN Women, UN DPKO and UN DPA in which member states can exchange experiences and lessons learned on developing NAPs. This should include a specific focus on South-South exchange (including governments and CSOs).

ACCOUNTABILITY:

- To strengthen the Accountability of UN member states to fulfil the provisions of UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 by linking the fulfilment of 1325 to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); having the next 'General Comment' on CEDAW written on behalf of the fulfilment of 1325 and sister resolutions; and by making the Optional Protocol a means for having individual or collective complains of women on international tribunal when 1325 and the participation of women in and after war is not fulfilled.

UN SYSTEM COHERENCE AT GLOBAL LEVEL:

- The special unit under UN Women recommended above for overseeing implementation of SCR 1325 should be responsible for coordination of all member state reporting. Formal reports by member states should take place at least every two years on the status of the 1325 indicators.

- To prioritise protection concerns related to participation (and wider 1325 agenda) by adequately resourcing UN humanitarian leadership/capacity and implementing the gaps analysis of services and response to protection for women and girls in armed conflict, as mandated by SCR 1888, and submit this analysis to the UN SC within three months.

IN-COUNTRY UN:

- To regularise the establishment of high-level advisory UN/donor groups to support national implementation of 1325, building on the Nepal model and other efforts to date.

- To ensure that UN Women has dedicated capacity to ensure linkages between its wider agenda and efforts on 1325 led by the UN peace and security entities. UN Women also needs a credible operational presence, including representation in UN Country Teams, and expertise at country level to mainstream gender-sensitivity and women's rights across the wider UN mission in country.

- To ensure that regular 'Open Days' are held, where the diverse UN entities in the country hold dialogues with civil society, especially women´s human rights groups and women human rights defenders, in order to inform UN programming and support women´s participation in peace-building and conflict prevention.

- To earmark a fixed percentage of funds which are allocated for Peacebuilding/Reconstruction processes (minimum 15 percentage) to projects which directly benefit women.

TO UN MEMBER STATES

TO ALL MEMBER STATES:

- To develop NAPs on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) that is informed by best practice and at least include a set of minimum standards: specific and realistic goals; objectives and priority actions; timelines; a dedicated budget; indicators in line with those adopted by the UN; benchmarks and targets; clear lines of responsibility to specific individuals, unit or functions and a results-oriented and transparent reporting and monitoring mechanism; strong accountability and annual reporting in Parliament.

- To ensure effective inter-ministerial coordination and mainstreaming on the National Action Plan, especially in terms of line ministries responsible for peace, security, justice and post-conflict reconstruction policy, to avoid 1325 becoming marginalised within the Ministry for Women Affairs. Focal points should be nominated in these ministries and institutions.

- To institutionalise the participation and consultation of Civil Society Organisations, in particular women´s and survivors groups, in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all NAPs and WPS strategies. All CSO consultations should be inclusive, transparent and announced in advance to allow for adequate preparation.

- To support meaningful participation of women and women's groups as key actors in all peace and security initiatives, including in high-level political forums and senior leadership roles. Special attention must be given to assure the participation of poor/marginalised women, members of minority groups, war widows, female ex-combatants and women living in remote rural areas. Channels of communication must be strengthened or newly created, to overcome the dilemma that progress at the national level – applauded from the international community - is often completely disconnected from the reality for women on the ground.

- To challenge existing patriarchal traditions and cultural norms which harm women and girls, confine them to their homes and hinder their equal participation including at community level, by initiating nation-wide anti-discrimination and women empowerment programs integrated into wider community-based recovery, livelihoods and development efforts, organising public and media campaigns, investing in gender-sensitive education and developing special strategies addressed to men to make them agents for change.

- To promote and enhance women's economic opportunities, as women who do not have economic rights and opportunities cannot engage in political participation or leadership.

- To ensure security and protection of women and girls from violence through national legislation which respects international law and adequate funding allocations within relevant Government budget lines related to gender-based violence; and work with experts in CSOs to ensure safety and protection of women human rights defenders. States should also assure accountability for past and present crimes and not in any case grant immunity to perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity within peace processes, which effectively means providing amnesty for future crimes.

TO BILATERAL, MULTILATERAL DONORS AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

- In addition to developing NAPs or Strategies on WPS which are informed by best practice as outlined above, donors should also develop country-specific NAPs for bilateral and multilateral country assistance programmes which outline how gender/1325 issues will be taken up and mainstreamed across those funding channels. Such an approach can help catalyse change in wider aid funding channels that may not have dedicated 1325 expertise.

- To support the development of NAPs on 1325 and related resolutions and support their effective implementation at country level.

- To establish medium to long-term strategies in conflict affected countries for women's empowerment and participation and so avoid the gaps, which emerge when donors phase out humanitarian funding and switch to longer-term developmental aid modalities like general budgetary support and multi-donor trust funds.

- To create flexible WPS funds and earmark allocations within wider bilateral and multilateral funds to support women's participation from grass-roots to national levels, especially in countries affected by conflict, with special emphasis on: enabling women's role as agents of change and peace-building (from conflict prevention, to peace-keeping, peace-building and post conflict reconstruction and state-building); permitting flexibility in funding to allow for unpredictable outcomes in terms of how women themselves define participation and empowerment, including in terms that may not fit our predetermined criteria/priorities; introducing greater flexibility in donor funding procedures; and making use of local languages.

- To support joint programming between NGOs and government institutions responsible for 1325 and other sectors of relevance to a multi-sectoral approach to women's participation/empowerment, protection etc.

- To provide funding and political support to civil society: to act as a 'watch-dog' and promote the demand-side of accountability of government authorities at national and local levels; to ensure female leadership emerging in post-conflict countries, in order to support the quality not only the quantity of women's participation in decision-making; to establish specific programs for war widows and survivors of SGBV who often suffer tremendous stigmatisation.

- To promote clarity in Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programs about the challenges of reintegration of female ex-combatants and develop tailor made reintegration programs for them.

- To improve donors' coordination mechanisms at country level by creating networks/contacts groups of donors and relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in conflict affected countries to facilitate an on-going dialogue towards fostering innovation and sharing of lessons learned, good practices and to inform better donorship models. Such initiatives can build on and link to the 'Friends of 1325' network at the UN headquarters level.

POLITICAL SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP :

- To use better the leverage provided by the political dialogue conducted in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU-Africa Strategy and other bilateral and regional agreements, to ensure that the partner governments commit to addressing women's participation in conflict situations and post-conflict scenarios by changes in their national legislation and its implementation.

- To strive towards a benchmark of 40 percent of women holding reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, peace building, and conflict preventive posts in the field missions in which the EU participates, as stated in the European Parliament Report on Participation Women in Peaceful Conflict Resolution (A5-0308/2000, Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities).

ACCOUNTABILITY :

- To appoint a High-Level Representative on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) with proper resources and mandate to implement the EU Comprehensive Approach on Women, Peace and Security

- To strengthen the EU Task Force on WPS mandate, which should be chaired by the EU High-Level Representative on WPS. The mandate of the Task Force should include encouraging and peer-reviewing the adoption and implementation of NAPs by EU Member States; applying a systematic gender analysis to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations' mandate as well as to the work of EU Delegations in conflict-affected countries. Civil society and women's organisations from conflict-affected countries should be regularly consulted by the EU task force.

- To consult with civil society and women's organisations during the pre-deployment and planning of CSDP missions in order to bring into their views and concerns.

- To organise an annual WPS-meeting at European Level, as foreseen in the Comprehensive Approach, with strong participation of civil society organisations and women's groups.

- To include full-time, competent gender advisors in EU Delegations and CSDP missions and operations. Their mandate should include reaching out to women's networks (at national, district and grass-roots level) and setting up dialogue and mechanisms to guarantee the participation of women and to ensure that women's concerns and needs are fully integrated in EU's strategies.

FUNDING:

- Using better the potential of existing EU funding instruments (both geographic and thematic) by earmarking financial allocations to support capacity building, networking, and advocacy work for women's networks and coalitions, particularly those which allow for women's participation from grass-roots to national levels; and especially to support linking up in countries affected by conflict, in order for networks to organise as agents of change and peace-building (from conflict prevention, to peace-keeping, peace-building and post conflict reconstruction and state-building).

- As part of the consultation with Civil Society Organisations on EU development, governance and security strategies, women's organisations should be heard to ensure that women's concerns and needs are fully integrated in the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), plans or other strategies that can potentially target and address Women, Peace and Security. CSPs should be gender-sensitive.

- EU Humanitarian and development assistance should better bridge the gap between relief, rehabilitation and development in order to ensure continued humanitarian assistance and protection to conflict-affected women and to support emerging women's leadership after conflict.

TO NGOS & LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY

- To reflect on their organisational position and programmatic approach towards promoting a holistic approach to women's empowerment. Core to this approach is an emphasis on women's agency, and methodologies that enable this, rather than viewing women as 'project beneficiaries' or 'victims'. Such an approach entails developing an analysis of how individual projects focused on specific sectors or issues relate to wider efforts to address the structures and relations that condition women's choices.

- To ensure that International NGOs (INGOs)'s support to women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance is informed by integrated conflict and gender analysis, careful targeting strategies to address the obstacles, risks and the constraints that women face in participation. INGO programmes are also challenged to draw from wider learning on effective approaches to peacebuilding, notably the need to promote linkages between grassroots projects and efforts at the national level.

- To sustain and grow in relevance during the dynamic post-conflict period, national NGOs and local civil society organisations which gained prominence during the conflict are challenged to build and renew the sources of their legitimacy, especially their linkages to communities and grassroots activism.

Annex

REFLECTIONS ON PILOTING THE UN 1325 INDICATORS ON PARTICIPATION

Goal: Inclusion of women and women's interests in decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts

Indicator 8: Number and percentage of peace agreements with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls [vii]

Our research suggests that more progress has been made in women's participation and rights concerns being incorporated into post-conflict governance and legislative processes than in the earlier stages of peace-making. As such, provisions within peace agreements on the security and status of women and girls constitute an important indicator. However, beyond the inclusion of specific provisions, there is also a need to monitor their implementation. Too often commitments on paper remain there, with inadequate implementation. Furthermore, women must also be brought more effectively into the mechanics of mediation and peace negotiation processes from the outset. In Afghanistan, women should be involved in the coming period in multiple tracks of mediation both at local and national level through the reintegration and reconciliation process. Specifically women's participation in the High Peace Council and women's participation and rights in the context of any localised political settlements must be prioritised. In Nepal, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and wider efforts to end impunity and promote justice will require enhanced support during the piloting period. Enhanced strategies are also required to address the politicisation and influence of caste and other exclusionary dynamics in Local Peace Councils and the national Constitutional processes. In Uganda, key challenges in taking forward provisions of the peace process relate to reparations for survivors of gender-based violence and tackling the culture of impunity.

Goal: Increased representation and meaningful participation of women in United Nations and other international missions related to peace and security

Indicator 9: Number and percentage of women in senior United Nations decision-making positions in conflict-affected countries [viii]

Indicator 10: Level of gender expertise in United Nations decision-making in conflict-affected countries [ix]

The challenge for UN and other international actors, including NGOs, to 'practice what you preach' in terms of women's participation is clear. However, beyond numbers a key challenge also remains quality of the staff, as well as their country-level presence and authority. At present, DPKO and DPA advisors responsible for gender mainstreaming and women's issues focus on mainstreaming gender at the headquarters level, and have limited capacity to engage or influence UN missions and operations on the ground. The piloting period should involve increased deployment to the operational level as well as reviews of different strategies to give gender advisors greater influence over UN mission decision-making, for example in terms of allocation of budgets and resources. While these indicators provide a good entry-point, they need to be accompanied by a wider review of UN human resources recruitment, on-going training and performance management processes. Furthermore, UN Member States should put forward more qualified women's names to the Secretary-General for top international posts, with a minimum target of at least 40 percent female UN SRSGs by 2015.

Indicator 11 (a): Level of participation of women in formal peace negotiations

Indicator 11 (b): Presence of women in a formal observer or consultative status at the beginning and the end of peace negotiations [x]

Quantitative indicators for participation provide an entry-point. However, during the period for piloting these indicators, the UN, donors and international and national civil society organisations should explore ways to innovate in reviewing and addressing challenges on the qualitative aspects of such participation. In doing so, two key challenges arising from our research must be addressed: Firstly participation in peacemaking should be informed by and foster linkages to wider peacebuilding efforts from the grassroots level up. Secondly, such participation must be monitored and strategies developed to address the risks faced by the women involved.

Indeed, while the goal level for this indicator includes peacebuilding, the indicators are largely centred on the formal negotiations (peace-making). While there is a welcome reference to women's CSOs being present at the beginning and end of negotiations, this is not adequate for monitoring and enhancing the processes and connections necessary to foster strategic linkages between peacebuilding and peacemaking. Stock-takes to review qualitative aspects of such participation can also help with gathering lessons learned from the important process aspects of women's participation in peace and security matters. As our recommendations to UN, donors and NGOs outline, it is critical that credible ways of measuring and demonstrating progress in terms of process are developed. As such, the UN piloting process can be informed by the developments in the EU 1325 indicators, which call for quantitative indicators to be complemented by descriptions of the consultative processes involved and the impact of women's participation on outcomes of the peace process. Furthermore, such stock-takes should also catalyse reviews of donor funding and policy and NGO operational guidelines, linked to wider innovations in women's empowerment and peacebuilding monitoring and evaluation standards.

Goal: Increased representation and meaningful participation of women in national and local governance, as citizens, elected officials and decision makers

Indicator 12: Level of women's political participation in conflict-affected countries [xi]

Quantitative commitments in the peace process, and indicators to measure these, are seen as important entry-points to enable qualitative change. In Nepal, for example, the success in lobbying for a 33 percent female participation commitment is seen as a significant achievement. However, one of the key qualitative challenges arising from our research for this indicator was framed by several participants in terms of 'setting women up for success'. Too often, quotas or other strategies bring women into the political process, but those same women then struggle due to inadequate support or wider systemic challenges. As such, the piloting process should also support efforts to monitor and inform better strategies to enable the sustained participation of women over time, as well as addressing trends in terms of their influence, safety and needs in terms of training or mentoring. In Uganda, some of the civil society activists have explored using parliamentary reporting systems to monitor the levels and quality of follow-up on issues raised by female parliamentarians.

Goal: Increased participation of women and women's organisations in activities to prevent, manage, resolve and respond to conflict and violations of women's and girls' human rights

Indicator 13: Number and percentage of Security Council missions that address specific issues affecting women and girls in their terms of reference and the mission reports [xii]

While this goal is very broad, the indicator is very narrow. Alongside indicators 8, 11 and 12, an effective assessment of this goal during the pilot period would benefit from inter-agency processes to reflect on the effective, timely and adequate ways of assisting women's organisations and activism, including both financial and political support. For example, in Uganda, the UN and bilateral donors are key actors in relation to the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda, which women's organisations have sought to influence and gender-sensitise. How might UN mission reports and wider processes of political dialogue and aid financing support the participation of women's organisations in policy dialogue, implementation and review of the PRDP during the piloting period? Another concern raised by our research is the risk of women's involvement in peace and security efforts becoming marginalised as a side-show in the process or additional clause in policy statements. While mention of 'specific issues affecting women and girls' in terms of references and mission reports can be useful, such documents should also reflect on the substantive ways in which women can, should and do contribute to peace, security and post-conflict governance priorities in the context.

Endnotes

[i] UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) available for download at: http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf

[ii] UN Res 1820 and 1888 focus on the issue of rape and sexual violence against women in conflict settings. These two resolutions call on member states to implement political and security measures to combat gender-based violence as a means of war. For example, UN Res 1888 calls for the development of rapid-response judicial experts and women protection officers to work with peacekeeping missions.

[iii] Global Monitoring Checklist on Women, Peace and Security', Gender Action on Peace and Security, 2009

[iv] CARE is currently implementing a cross-country multi-agency project in collaboration with International Alert on designing more effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks for peacebuilding programming.

[v] What Difference Has Peacebuilding Made? A Study of Peacebuilding and the March 2004 Riots in Kosovo (2005) CARE International and Collaborative for Development Action

[vi] 'Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting Their Act Together', Overview report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding, Dan Smith, PRIO, Oslo, 2004

[vi] RATING IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY OF DATA: C Specific provisions to be identified in the following areas:
• Ceasefire agreements
• Resolving border disputes
• Security and demilitarization
• Refugee return
• Linguistic minorities
• Human rights and fundamental freedoms
• Economic restructuring
• Elections
• Transitional agreements
• Constitutional agreements
• Peacekeeping operations
• Trust funds
This impact indicator is intended to address the inclusion of women's and girls' interests in decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The indicator is responsive to paragraphs 8 and 16 of resolution 1325 (2000). Specific areas in which provisions should be made to improve the security of women and girls include ceasefire agreements, resolving border disputes or issues, economic restructuring, transitional agreements and peacekeeping operations.

[viii] RATING IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY OF DATA: A
To include:
• Number and percentage of women appointed to senior positions at the United Nations (special and personal representatives, envoys, heads of mission, resident coordinators)
• Number and percentage of female uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel in decision-making positions (at Colonel or P-5 level and higher)
• Number and percentage of female Professional staff across United Nations system (at P-5 level and higher)

[ix] RATING IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY OF DATA: B To include number and percentage of appointed gender advisers (at P-5 level and higher) in:
• Mediation teams
• Post-conflict needs assessment processes
• Disarmament, demobilization and
reintegration processes
23. Indicators 9 and 10 are responsive to paragraphs 3 and 4 of resolution 1325 (2000). The indicators aim to track the representation and participation of women in United Nations and other international missions related to peace and security. Data on indicator 9 would be disaggregated to include the number and percentage of women in senior positions at the United Nations and the number and percentage of

women uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel in decision-making positions (at the level of Colonel or at P-5 level and higher).

x RATING IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY OF DATA: A
To include:
• Percentage of eligible women who are registered to vote
• Percentage of women registered to vote who actually vote
• Percentage of women parliamentary candidates
• Percentage of women in parliaments
• Percentage of women in ministerial positions
25. This indicator tracks the meaningful representation and participation of women in governance structures. The five components include the percentages of women who are registered to vote, those who actually vote, those who are parliamentary candidates, those actually in parliaments and those in ministerial positions. This indicator is responsive to paragraph 1 of resolution 1325 (2000).

xi RATING IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY OF DATA: B & B
To include:
• Number and percentage of female mediators
• Number and percentage of female
negotiators
• To include whether women's civil society groups were present are the beginning and end of negotiations. The monitoring of these indicators is intended to keep track of the representation and meaningful participation of women in formal and informal peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes. For indicator 11 (a), attention would be paid to the number and percentage of women mediators and negotiators in formal peace negotiations. These indicators reflect the goals of paragraph 2 of resolution 1325 (2000).

xii RATING IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY OF DATA: C
Specific gender dimensions would be identified in both terms of reference and mission reports. Efforts would be made to identify specific issues and needs affecting women and girls.

26. Indicator 13 is intended to track the consistency with which the Security Council remains seized of issues related to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Indicator 13 is responsive to paragraph 15 of resolution 1325 (2000) and paragraphs 1 and 5 of resolution 1820 (2008).

FROM RESOLUTION TO REALITY:

LESSONS LEARNED FROM AFGHANISTAN, NEPAL AND UGANDA ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACEBUILDING AND POST-CONFLICT GOVERNANCE

UN Resolution 1325 represents a significant step forward in terms of recognising the strategic contribution that women can make to peace and security policy, as well as the increasing use of violence against women as a tactic of war. How can the policy be turned into practice? How can greater accountability be introduced against the commitments to promote women's participation at global and country levels? And what constitutes meaningful participation of women in peacemaking, peacebuilding and post-conflict governance?

This study reflects on the operational experience of CARE International, and the perspectives of our local partners in civil society and the communities we work with in Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda. Extensive interviews were also conducted with aid agency, United Nations and government representatives to gather perspectives from practitioners engaged in supporting the efforts of women to participate in peace and security policy and practice. Practical lessons learned and policy recommendations are identified. With this report, CARE challenges the international community – UN, state and NGO actors – to regain and capture the potential of SCR1325 to transform both peace and security policy and the lives of women affected by conflict.

CARE International is a non-governmental organisation working in life-saving humanitarian relief, recovery, peacebuilding and longer-term development assistance. Across the globe, we have prioritised working with women and girls, based on our belief that their empowerment is a key strategy towards ending poverty, conflict, human suffering and gender inequality.

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