



Issue Brief on *Reconstruction*

After the genocide, the widows decided to get together. There were 310 of us....At the first gathering it was mostly crying and some talking. We told each other what happened to us. Little by little we got accustomed to the situation — crying wasn't the solution. We thought of activities to do. We thought about getting lodging and getting houses....A group of four or five would build for one, then go to another to build a shelter for her. If it was too difficult we would go to the local authorities and ask them to help build the house. In Rwanda women are not allowed to go on the roof. That is the man's job. At first we'd go out at night to repair our houses, so no one would see us. But then someone found out and gave us pants to wear. Then we decided it did not matter if anyone laughed. We went out during the day.

—Elizabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment of the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building*

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Introduction

The reconstruction phase — the recovery and rebuilding period for a country devastated by violent conflict — requires not only the inclusion but the active involvement of women at all stages. Unfortunately, women rarely receive the necessary support or inclusion in leadership positions as efforts are made to establish a secure and functional state. The environment of a post-conflict society is extremely sensitive, with the most basic aspects of the country's infrastructure ruined, often rendering access to food, water, and roads difficult if not impossible. Refugee and internally displaced populations comprised predominately of women return to their home countries. Governments must be molded back together with the election and appointment of leaders willing to address the numerous needs of a crippled state and its peoples, including the concerns of women who form the backbone of post-conflict societies. Legal mechanisms such as international criminal tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions, local court systems, and other community-based justice instruments address issues of accountability, impunity and violations of human rights. While peace agreements are beginning to contain gender terms that highlight the economic and security needs of women, gender provisions are rarely backed by sufficient resources and will. (*continued*)



Introduction continued:

Following processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, peace and security must be maintained through the efforts of the police, international military observers and others. Crime lingers in post-conflict countries, often specifically targeting women in the forms of gender based violence and sexual violence. International and local agencies face the challenge of disarming and reintegrating both child soldiers and ex-combatants back into society, while paying specific attention to the needs of girls and women who fought as members of the warring factions. The educational needs of girls forced out of school during combat must be met, while civilians and ex-combatants alike require means to attain livelihood in order to support themselves and their families. Many women seek work outside of the home in order to sustain their families as single parents. Widows often do not have rights to the land they cultivated for years with their husbands. Few if any income generating options force many women to engage in survival sex in order to feed their families. A large majority of the population in a post-conflict society requires immediate and long-term medical attention, in the areas of both physical and psychological health, with AIDS devastating lives during and after war. Women and girls often require medical care focused on the effects of rape, forced impregnation, enforced sterilization, and sexual slavery.

While a post-conflict society faces a multitude of internal challenges to its reconstruction, the conditions and stability of neighboring countries also affects its potential for recovery and rebuilding. As states do not exist in vacuums, conflicts in bordering countries that trigger influxes of refugees and fleeing combatants can threaten the reconstruction efforts of a state. In the midst of the challenging and delicate task of piecing together a broken country, women, who often make up more than half of the population, stand in the center of recuperation and development efforts as agents of change and as individuals with specific needs that must be addressed effectively and efficiently.

Defining Terms

The Four Pillars of Reconstruction:

Security addresses all aspects of public safety, in particular establishment of a safe and secure environment and development of legitimate and stable security institutions. Security encompasses the provision of collective and individual security, and is the precondition for achieving successful outcomes in the other reconstruction pillars. In the most pressing sense, it concerns securing the lives of civilians from immediate and large-scale violence and the restoration of territorial integrity.

Justice and Reconciliation addresses the need for an impartial and accountable legal system and for dealing with past abuses; in particular, creation of effective law enforcement, an open judicial system, fair laws, humane corrections systems, and formal and informal mechanisms for resolving grievances arising from conflict. These tasks encompass the provision of mechanisms to redress grievances, exact appropriate penalties for previous acts, and build capacity to promulgate and enforce rule of law. Incorporating the concept of restorative justice, they include extraordinary and traditional efforts to reconcile ex-combatants, victims and perpetrators.



Social and Economic Well-Being addresses fundamental social and economic needs; in particular provision of emergency relief, restoration of essential services to the population, laying the foundation for a viable economy, and initiation of an inclusive, sustainable development program. Often accompanying the establishment of security, well-being entails protecting the population from starvation, disease and the elements. As the situation stabilizes, attention shifts from humanitarian relief to long-term social and economic development.

Governance and participation addresses the need for legitimate, effective political and administrative institutions and participatory processes; in particular, establishing a representative constitutional structure, strengthening public sector management and administration, and ensuring active and open participation of civil society in the formulation of government and its policies. Governance involves setting rules and procedures for political decision-making, and delivering public services in an efficient and transparent manner. Participation encompasses the process for giving voice to the population through the development of civil society that includes the generation and exchange of ideas through advocacy groups, civil associations and the media.

Fact Sheet

- The privatization of essential services such as electricity, water, and land in many reconstruction plans negatively targets women because they often are not legally entitled to purchase land and cannot afford market rates for electricity and water.
- Men often negotiate the transactions and contracts regarding land ownership, which means that women are unable to build credit or actively participate and receive public recognition for their roles in business management and land maintenance.
- The overwhelming debt of post-conflict countries and cuts in international monetary support prevent reconstruction governments from being able to pay the salaries of police officers, teachers, and other key figures.
- In post-conflict situations, a shortage of male labour caused by deaths in conflict – as high as a third or more of working-age men in some areas – encourages and sometimes forces women to seek employment outside the home, often for the first time in their lives.
- If women manage to find legal jobs, the terms and conditions are usually discriminatory, with less pay than men receive and longer working hours.
- In nearly 40 per cent of households surveyed in the occupied Palestinian territories, women on average were found to dedicate 10 hours a day to caring for injured family members.
- In Somalia and many other conflict zones women speak of a ‘lost generation’ who never had a chance to go to school because their education was interrupted by ten years of war. Women need education to help them understand their rights, voice their problems and identify their priorities. All too often the training courses for women in post-conflict environments emphasize domestic skills such as sewing while other skills not traditionally taught to women are much more marketable.
- Many reconstruction efforts and budgets do not specifically target women or undergo a gender-budget analysis, which compares spending in different sectors such as level of funding reserved for the military versus those assigned to education initiatives. For example, women-specific projects counted as only .07% of the \$1.7 billion UN-sponsored 2002 reconstruction plan for Afghanistan, the Immediate and Transitional Assistance. [The World Bank Reconstruction and Development Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) has no gender analysis and mentions women



only once in the micro-credit section. The World Bank Group Transitional Support Strategy for Kosovo does not mention gender or women. The UN's Mission in Kosovo ([UNMIK](#)) Consolidated Budget for 2001 mentions gender only once in the description of its gender-training project costing \$31,000, or approximately .006 per cent of the total budget of \$467 million. No money is committed to supporting this project after the initial funding.

- Many clinics in countries recovering from conflicts charge fees for basic health services due to insufficient availability of funds.
- Iraqi expatriates, women from Iraq and policy-makers met in June 2003 in Washington to devise a concrete plan to involve women in government, economic development, constitutional law, and civil society during Iraq's reconstruction period. Participants included the first woman judge in Iraq, the female minister of reconstruction and development of Kurdistan, and the president of the Assyrian Women's Union in Iraq, as well as 60 experts from nongovernmental organizations and key international and U.S. agencies.

Treaties and Institutions

[The World Bank](#) funds post-conflict reconstruction projects for women to promote sustainable livelihood, education, and women's leadership in countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

[The Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery](#) of UNDP takes a lead role in post-conflict reconstruction and long-term development around the world, including many projects designed to enhance and support women's roles in rebuilding war torn societies.

Tools and Checklists

- [Gender Checklist for Peace Operations](#). This checklist was adapted from one prepared for the UN Iraq Assessment Mission of June 2003. It was taken from United Nations resources, including those produced by UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, OHCHR, UN-HABITAT and the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and UNIFEM. Since its creation in 2003 it has been adapted for use in Iraq, Liberia and Haiti.
- [Handbook for Transition Assistance](#) (Japan International Cooperation Agency) March 2006. This handbook covers a wide range of post-conflict transition issues. Particular attention is paid to the integration of cross-cutting issues in transition assistance. This includes mainstreaming gender and a human rights perspective at the levels of projects, programmes, and beyond.
- [Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework](#). Centre for Strategic and International Studies.
- UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery: [Recovery activities and resources page](#)
- The World Bank Africa Region Working Paper Series: [Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes](#)
- World Health Organization: [Health and Disasters Topic page](#)
- World Health Organization: [Reproductive Health in Crises resource page](#), including fact sheets, guides and technical manuals



- Women Waging Peace: [Post-Conflict Reconstruction Resource page](#)
- ["Peace-building: Lessons Learned for Afghanistan,"](#) Chr. Michelsen Institute, Development and Human Rights, 2002.
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), [Gender Equality and Humanitarian Assistance: A Guide to the Issues](#). This resource offers a clear explanation of how issues of gender affect humanitarian assistance missions, including rebuttals to the most frequently raised objections to incorporating a gender dimension in humanitarian assistance. There is also a guide to reviewing proposals and reports to ensure adequate attention to gender, and a list of sector-specific considerations and questions for humanitarian operations. (This resource is also available in [French](#)).

UNIFEM Action

During the Burundi Peace Negotiations, UNIFEM partnered with the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation and UN agencies to organize the first All-Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference. As a result, more than 50 Burundian women presented a common vision for peace and reconciliation to former President Nelson Mandela, facilitator of the negotiations, and 19 of their recommendations were included in the final peace accord.

To ensure that women's needs are taken into account during peace negotiations for the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNIFEM supported the creation of a Women's Caucus to advise the official delegates on gender issues. UNIFEM also organized a meeting in Kenya with Congolese women, which resulted in a unified Declaration and Plan of Action highlighting women's proposals for the peace process in the DRC.

In East Timor, UNIFEM trained 145 women during a series of political skills workshops aimed at assisting them to make informed decisions about running as electoral candidates. Twenty-six of the women who participated in the workshops registered as candidates and one was successful in winning a seat in the Constitutional Assembly.

In Guatemala, UNIFEM's help in strengthening women's leadership and capacities to bring a gender perspective into electoral, constitutional, legal and judicial reform processes resulted in more female candidates elected to local offices.

In Albania, UNIFEM is working in close collaboration with the government and UNDP to promote women's active involvement in the disarmament process of the population.

In Tajikistan, UNIFEM is assisting government and civil society institutions to provide development assistance to women in crisis and post-crisis situations and raising awareness at district and village levels on women's rights and the psychological impact of conflict.

UN Resources

- [SC Resolution 1325](#): The Security Council urges member states to increase their support for gender-sensitive training programs undertaken by relevant funds and programmes. The Security Council calls on all actors to consider the particular repatriation, resettlement and reconstruction needs of women and girls.



- [The Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court](#) is the first permanent, international tribunal that criminalizes sexual and gender violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity. War crimes and crimes against humanity include rape, sexual slavery (including trafficking of women), enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, other forms of grave sexual violence, and persecution on account of gender. The Statute and Rules of Procedure and Evidence provide procedural protections for victims and witnesses and prevent intrusive attacks on victims' sexuality or credibility. The Rome Statute requires the ICC staff to have expertise on gender and sexual violence and facilitates victims' participation in the court proceedings.
- [The World Bank](#) funds post-conflict reconstruction projects for women to promote sustainable livelihood, education, and women's leadership in countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, Indonesia, and Pakistan.
- **The United Nations Population Fund** hosts numerous projects on women's health, gender, and post-conflict issues and also prepared a report on "[The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls: A UNFPA Strategy for Gender-Mainstreaming in Areas of Conflict and Reconstruction](#)," 13-15 November 2002 - Bratislava, Slovenia
- [The International Labor Organization](#) heads a Gender-Equality, Employment Promotion, and Poverty Eradication Programme (GPE) in addition to other research initiatives in the areas of gender and work.
- **The UN Research Institute on Social Development: "[Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources](#)"** – B. Sorensen explains decision-makers must ask key questions to ensure women-positive measures in reconstruction including, In political reconstruction: "will the emerging political system recognize and protect women's rights and interests? And will women be enabled to influence and participate in the political process?" In economic reconstruction: "will the emerging economic environment be conducive to women's empowerment, or will it rather reinforce economic marginalization and increase women's vulnerability?" In social reconstruction: "will the social sector address women's particular needs and concerns in an appropriate and adequate manner? Will women's capacities and skills be recognized and incorporated into the provision of social services? Will social reconstruction generate socio-economic relationships that are advantageous to women?"

Recommendations

The Independent Experts Recommend:

- **Gender budget analysis of humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction to ensure that women benefit directly from resources mobilized through multilateral and bilateral donors, including the Consolidated Appeals Process, the Bretton Woods Institutions and donor conferences.**

Explanation of the Recommendation: Gender budget analysis looks at direct allocations to women and the way in which other expenditures or priorities will have an impact on women's lives. It looks at specifics within and across sectors – spending on education versus spending on the military, or spending on commercial versus domestic water use. It also looks at how each budget line will affect women: Will there be jobs and training for women in new public construction projects? Will new taxes fall more heavily on women than on men? Gender budget analysis is also an important training tool for women because



it looks at the process of creating a budget. It allows them to understand governance in a wholly new, hands-on way. It gives women a stake in setting the priorities for reconstruction.

Entities Responsible: Donor governments, International financial institutions, All UN agencies operating in post-conflict countries, UNIFEM, OCHA (CAP)

Ideas for Implementation: Gender budget analysis tools, information and training should be made available to those processing the funding or implementing of post-conflict reconstruction projects. Gender budget analysis should be a required component in all CAP project proposals, and in all reporting and evaluation processes. A more systematic, and regular survey should be instituted to ensure that women are equal beneficiaries of humanitarian aid. All donor agencies and governments should require project proposals to demonstrate the specific benefits that both women and men will receive as a result of the project. These agencies should require evaluation and reporting on same.

- **Establishment of macroeconomic policies in post-conflict reconstruction that prioritize the public provision of food, water, sanitation, health and energy, the key sectors in which women provide unpaid labour. Special attention should be paid to the consequences for women of decentralization policies.**

Explanation of the Recommendation: Women are the most affected by structural adjustment policies that reduce government's ability to provide health care, education, water, transportation, energy, housing and sanitation. While seemingly gender-neutral, every policy decision made in these sectors will drastically affect women's lives since they are precisely the sectors in which women provide the majority of their unpaid labour. The privatization of electricity, water and land is particularly devastating for women, who generally do not have the means to purchase land and are unable to afford market rates for electricity and water.

Entities Responsible: World Bank, IMF, Donor governments, Recipient governments

Ideas for Implementation: UNIFEM should advocate for the restoration of public services and that they are funded and implemented in post-conflict reconstruction agenda supported at donor conferences. UNIFEM calls on donors and policy institutions to review the consequences of macroeconomic policies from a gender perspective, with a particular emphasis on gender disparity in access to social services, credit and employment. Research institutions and academics should conduct studies on the gendered impact of macroeconomic policies.

- **A lead organization to be designated within the United Nations for women's education and training in conflict and post-conflict situations. This lead organization, together with UNESCO, UNHCR and UNICEF, should ensure that all education programmes for displaced persons provide for women as well as girls.**

Explanation of the Recommendation: Investing in 'human capital' is generally not a priority of transitional aid. Yet for most countries emerging from conflict, rebuilding the education system is a key priority. On every continent, in rural and urban areas, and across all affiliations, women pleaded for education – for themselves and for their daughters. The displaced women the Experts met in Colombia, the farmers in Central Africa and the prostitutes in Cambodia all saw education and training as their key to



economic independence and their full participation in political and decision-making processes.

Entities Responsible: UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, Donor governments, NGO implementing partners

Ideas for Implementation: Convene inter-agency meeting between UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, and all other relevant agencies to propose either a lead agency or a collaborative arrangement or programme whereby the educational needs of displaced women do not continue to be neglected. Donors and NGO implementing partners to release funding (call for tender?) specifically for the development of curricula and facilities for the education of women, including childcare.

- **The World Bank, bi-lateral donors, UNDP and all other relevant UN departments, funds and agencies to integrate gender analysis in needs assessments for post-conflict reconstruction and throughout the planning, design, implementation of and reporting on programmes.**

Explanation of the Recommendation: Needs assessment missions which provide up to date information and analysis to help donors make decisions about where and when to put particular kinds of resources, are not examining the needs of women in enough detail. In the absence of gender analysis it is assumed that men and women will benefit equally from the general post reconstruction programmes, which is often not the case. As local women are carrying so much of the burden of putting communities and families back together, this recommendation suggests that experts from large institutions probably have a lot to learn from them, especially at the point of assessing and analyzing the needs of the post-conflict country.

Entities Responsible: World Bank, Donor governments, UNDP, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO, WFP, NGOs

Ideas for Implementation: Needs assessment missions have structured reporting formulas that differ depending upon the focus and priorities of the funding institution. Adding an additional gender component to the other elements under observation would require the alteration of standardized forms and reporting requirements, the training of staff sent on assessment missions, and the inclusion of gender expertise in the assessment team.

- **International organizations and governments to introduce affirmative measures that give local women priority in recruitment during emergencies and post-conflict reconstruction.**

Explanation of the Recommendation: International organizations and donor governments that answer the call for assistance also pass on skills and qualifications to staff employed locally. More efforts should be made by these organizations to ensure that the local women are also provided opportunities to acquire these skills and qualifications.

Entities Responsible: UN peacekeeping operations, UN funds and agencies NGOs

Ideas for Implementation: Institutional affirmative measures are policies, such as



quotas and the provision of other incentives such as flexible work arrangements and services, such as childcare, that would provide equitable opportunities to men and women.

- **Affirmative measures to be adopted to guarantee women's socio-economic rights including employment, property ownership and inheritance and access to UN and public sector procurement in post-conflict reconstruction.**

Explanation of the Recommendation: In order for women in post-conflict situations to enjoy their social-economic rights, they need what women the world over need: basic social support, including child-care, legal protection against all forms of discrimination, access to jobs with adequate pay and wage parity. Post-conflict reconstruction offers an opportunity to alter discriminatory legislation and launch efforts to equitably guarantee socio-economic rights to women and men.

Entities Responsible: Governments Operational UN agencies, UNIFEM, Legal experts

Ideas for Implementation: A regularly updated manual of key documents such as legislative, electoral, judicial and constitutional language used to improve and amend institutions in the post conflict context should be maintained by UNIFEM and used as a resource by women's organizations and advocates, and by SRSGs who oversee and direct the UN's activities on the national level, and other UN agencies.

- **The International Labour Organization (ILO) to expand vocational and skills training for women in post-conflict situations including in non-traditional, public and private sectors, in a manner that is sustainable and responsive to the local and national economy.**

Explanation of the Recommendation: The ILO's efforts as an institution to understand and address the obstacles faced by women in the post-conflict context are outstanding, both in terms of the research and analysis generated, and the programming undertaken on the ground. This recommendation suggests that this work should be expanded and replicated throughout the world's post-conflict zones, while continuing to address the specificities of each community emerging from conflict.

Entities Responsible: ILO governing body Donor governments 5th Committee of the GA Partner UN agencies and NGOs.

Ideas for Implementation: The lessons learned by the ILO and its partners in providing vocational and skills training opportunities to women should be closely studied by donors and relevant UN agencies especially UNDP, with a view to substantial increased assistance in this area. Inter-agency support and collaboration might prove an asset to donors interested in seeing more collaborative efforts in this field. UNIFEM's early work in AFWIC to train refugee women in non-traditional skills, such as housing, construction, etc., can be developed jointly by UNHCR, ILO and UNIFEM as an economic empowerment pilot project to be replicated in all camps managed by UNHCR.

The UN Secretary-General in his 2000 Report on Women, Peace and Security Recommends:



1. Identify and address problems relating to land and property rights facing women returnees, particularly in situations where their husbands are missing.
2. Ensure that the principles of gender equality and nondiscrimination are considered during the formulation of constitutions in the post-conflict era; that legal reforms are based on gender analysis of civil and criminal law, in particular in the areas of nationality, property and inheritance, and address criminalization of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence.
3. Promote sensitization of the judiciary on women's human rights to raise their awareness of and capacity to address gender issues.
4. Address in all support provided to electoral processes the need to ensure the equitable participation of women, through the use of quotas, where relevant; collaborate with local women's groups and networks and support training for women.
5. Ensure that attention to gender perspectives in economic reconstruction does not only imply micro -credit programmes for women but entails analysis of economic policy-making and planning from a gender perspective and efforts to increase the participation of women in economic decision-making; and incorporate gender perspectives into all support to national budget processes, in line with the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (2002).
6. Identify and address social and legal barriers to education and employment for women and girls, through both mainstream and targeted interventions.
7. Ensure in efforts to secure local ownership for reconstruction processes that women's groups and networks are actively involved, particularly at decision-making levels.
8. Develop clear strategies and action plans (with targets and timetables) on the incorporation of gender perspectives in rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, including monitoring mechanisms, and the development of targeted activities, with adequate resources, focused on specific constraints facing women and girls in post-conflict situations.
9. Incorporate attention to the situation of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations in needs assessments, initial appraisals and implementation plans for all sectors.
10. Fully incorporate gender perspectives into the UNDAF process, in particular in the preparation of the Common Country Assessments, the identification of common key indicators and the work of thematic groups.
11. Ensure that United Nations entities with broad multisectoral mandates and coordination responsibilities, particularly in relation to joint assessments, assume leadership roles in giving attention to gender perspectives in all reconstruction efforts.

