Through a gendered lens?
Institutional approaches to gender mainstreaming in post-conflict reconstruction

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ABSTRACT

Although civil war affects all civilians, it impacts men and women in different ways, and it influences their gender roles and responsibilities. Comparatively little attention has been given to assessing the gender sensitivity of international organizations who implement post-conflict reconstruction programs. The different social, economic and political dimensions of war to peace transitions, and how they impact on gender relations, can shed some light on the complicated intersections of needs and interests in wartorn societies. An examination of the policies of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Bank reveals that there is relatively little gender mainstreaming within their post-conflict operations. This research finds that the lack of resources and coordination, the failure to build on local capacities, and a lack of commitment to gender mainstreaming are the main obstacles these organizations face. To improve the situation it is recommended that organizations develop and use a ‘gender checklist’ at all stages of project planning, implementation and monitoring to ensure increased gender sensitivity in post-conflict programming.
RÉSUMÉ

Même si la guerre civile a un effet sur tous les civils, l’impact est différent pour les hommes que pour les femmes. Souvent, les rôles des genres sont aussi influencés par les conflits. Comparativement peu d’attention a été mise aux évaluations du degré de sensibilisation au genre au part des organisations internationales qui s’occupent des transitions vers la paix. Les dimensions sociaux, économiques et politiques de ces transitions pourront éclairer les interactions complexes des besoins et intérêts dans les sociétés déchirées par la guerre. Une étude de la politique de l’Haut Commissariat des Réfugiés de l’Organisation des Nations Unies et le Banque Mondiale révèle qu’ils donnent très peu de priorité aux relations des genres dans leurs opérations en pays sortant de conflit. Cette recherche trouve que le manque de ressources et coordination, l’insuccès à consolider les capacités locales, et un manque d’engagement de sensibilisation au genre sont les plus grands obstacles qui confrontent ces organisations. Pour améliorer cette situation, c’est recommandé que les organisations développent et utilisent un ‘gender checklist’ pendant toutes les phases de planification, implémentation, et évaluation des projets pour assurer que les différences de genre auront pris en considération.
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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines contemporary civil conflict and ensuing war to peace transitions through a gender lens, focusing on the need to include both men and women as active and constructive participants in the humanitarian and reconstruction operations that are implemented as a country emerges from war. Armed conflict throws gender relations into flux, and it is crucial that these shifting societal roles are acknowledged and that any positive changes are reinforced during the transition to peace. Women can play a vital role in peacebuilding initiatives, agricultural production, income-generation, and many other reconstruction activities. This only holds true, however, where women have access to decision-making positions, land and capital, equal economic and employment opportunities, and other resources. Using the examples of the World Bank and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), this paper will evaluate the difficulties encountered by international organizations in reconstructing societies in the context of the socioeconomic inequalities and gender imbalances that often persist despite peacebuilding efforts. Through this analysis it will be demonstrated that, in order to be successful and sustainable, it is essential that gender considerations are mainstreamed into all phases of the war to peace transition.

The discussion presented in this paper will be of use to both academics and policymakers since although comprehensive analyses of war to peace transitions, gender and conflict, and the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction exist, comparatively little attention has been devoted to the ability of international organizations to implement truly gender-sensitive reconstruction programs in conflict-stricken areas. As the analysis will demonstrate, women and men are affected by conflict in unique ways. Thus, each group has a key stake in the reconstruction process, and the concerns and inputs of each must be taken into account. It is the ambitious aim of this paper to successfully argue that by incorporating a gender perspective at every stage of project design, implementation and evaluation, international organizations will be able to concretely and permanently support the inclusion of women in war to peace transitions. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into post-conflict programming is of critical importance because, although women are a key group in both peacebuilding and income-generation, they are often overlooked.
Indeed, as will be demonstrated through the case studies included in this paper, gender-blind policies and programs can often further undermine women's role and status in society.

This paper is divided into six sections. First, a brief introduction sets the theoretical context of the paper and draws attention to the many problems associated with the concepts of 'post-conflict reconstruction' and 'gender mainstreaming'. Second, the changing nature of gender roles during and in the aftermath of armed conflict is examined, and the various elements and phases of war to peace transitions will be outlined. This chapter will focus on a range of issues during the emergency phase, and also the economic, political, and social aspects of the war to peace transition, and will demonstrate the need for gender analysis when designing and implementing these reconstruction programs. Third, a short chapter explains the selection of the case studies for this paper, and how their 'success' at gender mainstreaming will be measured. Fourth, the evolution of gender mainstreaming at UNHCR is illustrated, looking at institutional, policy, and program-level initiatives. The example of Rwanda is used to examine in more detail what degree of mainstreaming was present in UNHCR's response to that country's conflict. Fifth, this analysis is repeated for the World Bank, with a focus on explaining the apparent total separation of its gender mainstreaming and post-conflict strategies. Finally, the paper concludes with a summary of the key obstacles facing international organizations and some suggestions for a 'gender checklist' that could be implemented by international organizations working in post-conflict situations. In essence, the overall aim of this paper is to argue that major international organizations must begin to integrate their agendas of addressing the socioeconomic needs of wartorn countries and gender mainstreaming so that both men and women are empowered and benefit from reconstruction activities.
I. SETTING THE CONTEXT: A BRIEF THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

I.1 ‘POST-CONFLICT’ RECONSTRUCTION: INAPPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY?

Conflict, by its nature, is a time of flux when structural and interpersonal relationships are constantly changing, and identities, resources, and processes are being challenged. Despite the recent international attention that civil conflicts have received in Western development discourse, there is a striking lack of consensus over what terms to use to describe the different stages and phases of conflict, and indeed what these terms mean. The World Bank has been using the term ‘post-conflict reconstruction’ for over half a decade since it assisted in the post-war reconstruction of Europe as part of the Marshall Plan. Several other organizations have adopted the term as well, with the result that its usage is dominant in the discourse of civil conflicts. However, this term is ambiguous and carries connotations that become problematic in dealing with wartorn societies.

As Moore (2000) argues, there are three main problems with the usage of the term ‘post-conflict reconstruction’ to indicate a stage entered by a country experiencing civil conflict. Firstly, it implies that there is some finite end to a conflict, a point that once reached can never be transgressed. It is starkly evident from a brief survey of civil wars around the world that this is not the case. Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are two of the most recent and devastating examples and Afghanistan also risks being the latest example of this assumption. Peace negotiations, elections, economic reform, cease-fires or any other measures do not guarantee the stability of a country, and even when peace settlements are in place, fighting and destruction often continue.

Contemporary civil conflict is a fluid, dynamic process that cannot be neatly divided into individual phases. Thus, it is important to approach civil war as a process of conflict, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction that is unpredictable and often reversed. UNRISD coined a far more descriptive term where “[b]eing ‘war-torn’ implies […] that the

1 As Moore points out, there are several alternatives to the term, yet ‘post-conflict’ has achieved a somewhat ‘hegemonic’ status amongst development practitioners. See Moore (2000): 17.
existing political structures are weak or lack legitimacy, that the limited infrastructure previously in place has been largely destroyed, and that the population remains in a general state of instability.\(^2\)

The World Bank uses different terms inter-changeably to discuss its policy in countries emerging from conflict, but the following excerpt describes its general approach:

Post-conflict reconstruction supports the transition from conflict to peace in an affected country through the rebuilding of the socioeconomic framework of the society. Given the nature of intrastate conflict, the formal cessation of hostilities does not necessarily signify the completion of a process of transition, although it does represent a critical point in the transitional path. Reconstruction supports forward motion along this path.\(^3\) [my italics]

The Bank evidently subscribes to the notion of a development path, where cessation of hostilities marks a stage in a linear process. Nevertheless, several of the countries that it classes as ‘post-conflict’ are still experiencing high degrees of instability and violence, in some cases after settlements have been signed and the reconstruction process has begun.\(^4\)

It is worth mentioning, however, that the World Bank has recently changed the name of the Post-Conflict Unit to the “Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit”, purportedly to reflect the broadening of scope from narrowly defined post-conflict activities to the inclusion of addressing the wider needs of conflict-stricken countries.\(^5\)

Second, and perhaps even more problematic, Moore presents the argument that the term ‘post-conflict reconstruction’ is merely a convenient invention by Western donors to allow them to end the costly humanitarian assistance necessary in conflict situations, and return to administering ‘normal’ development policies such as its structural adjustment programs. The neo-liberal justification for this is that humanitarian assistance fosters dependency and can even fuel warriors. Moore suggests that by claiming a ‘post-conflict’ status it then becomes possible for the World Bank and other development actors to

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institutionalise their neo-liberal interventions. 6 Certainly, the cutbacks in development assistance and shifts in policy would support this claim, but whether it is empirically supported remains to be seen. As Crisp (2001) points out,

If donor states want to spend less on humanitarian relief; if they want to disengage from crisis-affected countries; if they want to suggest that the situation in those countries has ‘normalised’; and if they want to impose the rigours of structural adjustment on the world’s poorest and most devastated countries, then what better way than to suggest that such states have entered a ‘post-conflict’ phase? 7

A third criticism of the concept of ‘post-conflict reconstruction’ is that it assumes a level playing field, and also homogeneity amongst conflicts. 8 In reality, all manners of inequalities and disputes remain in a country that is undergoing a transition to peace, where some actors have more access to resources and power than others. In designing its five-pronged framework to engage effectively in wartorn countries, the World Bank has created a generic blueprint to follow in all conflict-stricken countries. 9 Although, it is not constructive to adopt a ‘one-size fits all’ attitude that distracts from the need to analyze the specific context of each conflict and to determine the range of potential solutions, this attitude is prevalent amongst many international development agencies. 10 For example, the militarization of the camps set up in then-Zaire to cope with the Rwandan emergency demonstrated that UNHCR did not fully understand the specificities of the regional conflict dynamics with the consequence of more brutality and loss of life.

From the discussion so far, it is clear that the term ‘post-conflict’ should be avoided. As Smillie (1998) points out, the main reasons are “it implies an absolute cessation of violence; because it does not differentiate between regions within a country, some stable and some not; and because it can underestimate structural problems.” 11 To this list must be added the ideological and strategic usages of the term suggested by Moore (2000) and

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10 Whilst the importance of having institutional guidelines and blueprints for action in certain situations is recognized, section IV of this paper will discuss why the Bank’s post-conflict strategy is too limiting and restrictive.
Crisp (2001). This is especially relevant to the problem of complex political emergencies (CPEs) in the African continent which are repeatedly ignored in favour of the more geopolitically important flashpoints in Europe, the Middle East, and most recently, South-central Asia. Several alternatives have been suggested in the literature and in development theory, such as the relatively neutral and loosely-defined concept of ‘war to peace transitions’. Using this term recognizes the flexibility required by wartorn countries, and accepts the idea that recovering from civil conflict is a transitional process, and movements in all directions are possible. Throughout the course of conflict, the original structural tensions that caused and contributed to the conflict are profoundly altered. Describing the evolution of civil war and the ensuing path to peace as a transition allows the constantly shifting, dynamic nature of the process to be captured.

I.2 THE GENDERED NATURE OF CONFLICT AND THE PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

Although gender identities are intensely politicized during conflict and are subject to the manipulations and shifts that occur during the flux of war, gender analysis has rarely informed investigations into the causes and consequences of conflict. Conflict, especially civil conflict, is essentially a struggle over access to, and use of, resources and power. Thus, it is important to understand the different ways that men and women are drawn into this struggle through their distinct identities, differential access to and control over resources, and through changes in gender ideologies. Conflict itself is cross-cut by gender issues, and the fact that traditional approaches to peacebuilding strategies and development assistance often ignore the gender component means that they fail to acknowledge one of the fundamental underlying dynamics of the conflict.

12 For example, during the crisis in Kosovo large amounts of funds were diverted from aid budgets destined for other regions around the world that did not have the same kind of publicity or international support. Currently, the ‘war against terrorism’ being waged by the United States and its allies is draining ODA budgets in the developed world. Conflicts in Burundi, Liberia, and other African countries and the looming crisis in Zimbabwe are receiving little media attention and political efforts.


14 There are exceptions such as Byrne (1995); Byrne (1996); Date-Bah (1996); Turshen (1998); UNECA (1999). The contributions of these works will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper.

Recently, there have been more attempts by the international community to adopt a gender-sensitive approach when examining development, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, recognition of the contribution of gender relations to the study of conflict has lagged behind the inclusion of other factors such as the impact of development assistance or the role of natural resources. Despite some recent endeavors, women continue to be marginalized from national and international decision-making structures, economic development policies, and conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies. This section attempts to draw attention to both the limitations of conventional discourse, how gender and conflict theory interact in the context of complex political emergencies, and the advantages of adopting a gender-sensitive approach.

Any discussion of gender and conflict is immediately faced with the problem that it occurs within what is traditionally seen as a 'masculine discourse'. Most societies, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa are structured around patriarchal cultural traditions, and in the case of war, men tend to be the ones who take up arms and go to the battlefield while the women tend the home fires. Many societies also tend to be increasingly militarized, due directly to the increase in civil conflicts around the globe and also indirectly to the gradual militarization of gender roles, and this further reinforces notions of masculinity. In addition, most large institutions throughout the world adopt a masculine approach in culture and practice: "[t]hey tend to be hierarchical in structure, to militate against co-operative and consultative working patterns, and to encourage individualistic, competitive behaviour. They typically have top-down leadership and management styles to match." This is problematic because it follows then that the key structures mediating war and peace also operate under similar masculine norms that continue to exclude women.

16 For example, most international organizations now have operational sections devoted entirely to women: the UN (DAW) and its agencies [UNDP (UNIFEM), UNECA (ACW), UNESCO (Women in a Culture of Peace), UNHCR (The Office of the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women)], the World Bank (GenderNet), OECD/DAC (Working Party on Gender Equality). As do several governments: USAID (Office of Women in Development).
Furthermore, traditional stereotypes tend to intensify during conflict where men are seen as the 'aggressors' and women as 'nurturers'. Byrne suggests that this exaggeration of traditional gender ideals that occurs during conflict is a manifestation of society's patriarchal structures. Indeed, there has been significant debate about whether these perceptions of men and women are based on biological reality or are artificially constructed in response to a male-dominated society. During the Rwandan genocide there are well-documented examples of how women contributed to, and in some cases instigated, mass killings. Despite the fact that women participated in a variety of ways, from moral support and public exhortations for violence to mass murder, the international community continued to believe that all Rwandan women in refugee camps needed protection. Also, throughout the conflicts in El Salvador and Nicaragua large numbers of women served in the military and in rebel movements, although the gender dimension of these liberation struggles has rarely been taken into account. Thus, it is evident that the traditional perception of women as nurturers is not always warranted. The assumption that they are only victims of conflict prevents any analysis of conflict from being complete and accurate.

Although not all approaches to conflict are 'masculine', since some are ungendered or gender-neutral, they are problematic because they also fail to account for the way that gender relations shape and are shaped by conflict. However, it is not only a simple matter of sensitizing conflict analyses that are conducted in masculine or gender-neutral terms. Even where gender differences are acknowledged, analyses that conceptualize masculinity and femininity as fixed entities during conflict can generate negative repercussions. As Byrne (1996) effectively demonstrates, the image of conflict as intrinsically male masks the ways which women are affected by, and involved in, conflict. It is particularly problematic to have unquestioning

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20 According to Byrne, women accounted for an estimated 30% of the Sandinista army, although rarely in direct combative roles. Byrne (1995): 17.
21 The varied and complex roles of women (and men) during conflict will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.
22 An 'ungendered' analysis is one that fails to acknowledge that international and domestic patterns and structures of power are based on gender inequalities as well as the more conventionally recognized social, regional or ethnic inequalities. See Byrne (1996): 32.
and fixed notions of masculinity and femininity at a time when gender identities and relations are, as a result of conflict, in a considerable state of flux.\textsuperscript{23}

Callamard (1999) defines ‘gender’ as “a social construction of femininity and masculinity that varies over time and place and is constructed through learned, rather than innate, behaviour.”\textsuperscript{24} Conflict affects definitions of masculinity and femininity, and gender in turn affects all other social divisions during conflict. Thus, it is important to retain a certain degree of flexibility when conceptualizing gender identities during conflict situations to accommodate this two-way relationship.

Thus, there are two common theoretical pitfalls that beset most analyses of contemporary civil conflict. First, most analyses devote little time and space to considerations of how gender relations and gender roles are fundamentally altered during conflict, and they fail to give women agency in conflict situations. Women are not considered to have an effect on conflict dynamics, and conflict itself is not seen to have a gender dimension that directs its course. Second, just as interventions of any kind cannot be socially, politically or economically neutral, they also bring consequences to gender relations. International actors have consistently failed to consider how these stereotypical conceptualizations of men, women and gender relations are shaping their actions in conflict zones. For example, in the World Bank’s evaluation of its performance in post-conflict Uganda the role of women is only briefly mentioned, and only to highlight that the Bank has overlooked their potential role in the reconstruction process. In the report’s section on rebuilding human and social capital, there is no distinction made regarding the specific needs of or projects directed towards women’s health and education.\textsuperscript{25}

Evidently, the Bank did not undertake any kind of gender analysis when examining its post-conflict performance. Notions of masculinity and femininity, aggressors versus nurturers, and the patriarchy of war can inform studies and can shed light on how the dynamics of conflict are played out, but their potential contribution has only recently begun to be recognized. Many studies continue to fall into the trap of essentializing women and of ignoring how conflict shapes and affects gender relations.

It is obvious from the preceding analysis that gender-sensitive analyses of conflict are absent from the discourse. Such an analysis would require recognition of the socially constructed nature of gender relations, the gender inequalities present within society, the state-sanctioned discrimination of women, and how access to resources, political participation and basic rights vary depending on gender.\textsuperscript{26} In the context of war to peace transitions this analysis would need to be performed both before and after the outbreak of hostilities to enable a full understanding of the changes in gender roles. Adopting gender considerations would allow international and domestic actors to increase the positive impact of relief, development and peace interventions and to end damaging traditional gender stereotypes.\textsuperscript{27} Gender-sensitive analyses allow theorists and practitioners to improve their ability to act during conflict and also to increase the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies. One of the main focal points of these analyses must be to “look at the extent to which women’s social, political and economic marginalization are increased during and after conflict as well as whether there are opportunities for improving women’s position as a result of the changing situation.”\textsuperscript{28}

The 1998 African Women’s Report published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) was devoted entirely to presenting a gender perspective of post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. This is indicative of the importance of gender to conflict and the need to recognize that “women in post-conflict situations are not mere passive sufferers and aid-dependent beneficiaries specially vulnerable to abuse, but have been and should be very much part of the solution.”\textsuperscript{29} African women traditionally play a major role in agriculture, raising the family, and in the community. This means that not only do they have a large stake in peace, but also that their interests and needs are greatly affected by periods of conflict. In some cases, they abet conflict, and in others they must be protected from its ravages. In all instances, African and other

\textsuperscript{26} op. cit. Callamard (1999): 8-10.
\textsuperscript{27} For example, when women are consulted about and given limited control over the distribution of food aid the relief is often more effective than when it is given only to the male heads of households. See Judy el Bushra and Eugenia Piza-Lopez (1994) “Gender, War and Food” in Joanna Macrae and Anthony Zwi, eds. War and Hunger: Rethinking International Responses to Complex Emergencies. London: Zed Books: 180-193.
\textsuperscript{28} op. cit. Byrne (1996): 35.
conflicts cannot be fully understood without the inclusion of gender as a unit of analysis. African women have also been key mobilizers for peace in many instances and have created a strong peace network throughout the country. Despite this contribution, they are frequently marginalized in formal decision-making circles, and the potentially positive contributions that they could make to the success of peacebuilding initiatives are lost forever. Discovering ways to mainstream and gender analysis in the war to peace transition process is an area that merits further analysis, and this paper will later make some modest suggestions for international organizations working in this area.

This section demonstrates the relationship between conflict and gender and why it is so crucial that the connection between the two is recognized. However, conflict analysis and gender theory have yet to be fully integrated to offer a comprehensive model for examining contemporary civil conflicts around the world. It is true that the relative position of individuals before the conflict ultimately determines how they will be affected. However, women are generally worse off because they have less rights and access to resources than men, they are constrained by their reproductive role, they are marginalized from decision-making, and the gender ideologies and structures of society exacerbate their vulnerable position. One of the key concepts adopted throughout this paper is that conflict provides the opportunity for the redefinition of gender roles, and that this must be capitalized on. It must be remembered that conflict does not affect the genders in the same way, and nor does it affect each individual in a similar manner. The impact of a conflict on gender cannot be generalized across all conflicts. Nevertheless, this paper argues that it is possible to increase general understanding of the roots, consequences and solutions to conflict by looking through a gendered lens.

1.3 FROM WID TO GAD AND THE CONCEPT OF ‘GENDER MAINSTREAMING’

The mainstream is usually defined as the place where choices are considered and decisions made that affect the economic, social and political options of large numbers of people. It is where things happen. This mainstream largely has been occupied and controlled by men.⁴⁰

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The attitudes of academics, policy-makers and development practitioners to the role of women in development, the relationship of gender to development, and the reasons for the subordinate position of women in all political, social and economic structures have evolved significantly over the past few decades. In the early 1970s, academics and policy-makers began to look for explanations why women seemed unable to access the 'mainstream'. As Anderson points out, the main impetus for the emergence of the new "women in development" (WID) approach was that economic growth and productivity were lagging despite the concerted development efforts of the previous decade; poverty appeared to be widespread, and increasing rather than diminishing; and even where development projects had had some degree of success, men consistently benefited more than women.31

At the dawn of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985), many theorists began to posit that women could play a productive, as well as reproductive, role in society, and that the main impediment to them doing so was their unequal access to resources. The proponents of this approach aimed to make women more visible, target them at field-level with microcredit, education and other projects, and train staff while institutionalizing a WID strategy within organizations through the creation of WID units. These goals all emphasize that "a major preoccupation of WID advocates has been to establish women's issues as a serious "developmental concern", to show that women are producers and thus participants in the process of economic growth, and not needy beneficiaries."32

However, despite its initial momentum as a new development strategy, several shortcomings in the WID approach became evident. First, WID was criticized for essentially sanctioning the unequal gender relations that existed throughout most of the developing world. Creating special programs targeted towards women did not help them to overcome marginalization from the mainstream of development work, and they did not solve the problem of addressing the reasons why they had been sidelined from the development process for so many years. "Although an analysis of women's subordination was at the heart of the WID approach, the essentially relational nature of their

subordination had been left largely unexplored."33 Second, the productivity and efficiency focus of WID neglected to assess "the impact of a broad range of social divisions and social relations that constrain women's economic choices and opportunities", and it focused more on what development could gain from including women rather than how women could gain from being brought into the development process.34 Finally, no real improvement in the situation was evident as the last half of the Decade for Women came to a close, and WID strategies did not appear to have had an enduring and widespread success. Nevertheless, WID did make a contribution by generating vast amounts of research and discussion to the debate on women and development, and even more importantly, the beginnings of institutional investments in gender equality were made during this stage.

As the realization was made that "women's ability to retain control over resources allocated to them is mediated by the powerful social relations and gender ideologies that render them subordinate and not fully autonomous in the first place",35 it became clear that to force change on resistant cultures and structures women's issues would need to be brought to the forefront and centre of development discourse. The move towards a more inclusive 'gender and development' (GAD) approach attempted to improve on WID theory by examining and questioning existing social structures. It also signified a movement away from women as a target group and towards gender equality as a new strategic goal for sustainable development: "In addition to focusing on everyday problems, GAD is concerned with addressing the root inequalities (of both gender and class) that create many of the practical problems women experience in their daily lives".36

Until this point, mechanisms for gender equality had been operating outside of the mainstream and thus had little ability to make their impact felt. Mainstreaming is an evolving concept, and as a result, there is no universal consensus on what exactly it means 'to mainstream'. However, the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 defined the

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36 M. Patricia Connelly et al. (2000) "Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives" in Jane L. Parpart, M. Patricia Connelly, and V. Eudine Barritteau, eds. Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre: 140.
strategy that it deemed to be a system-wide responsibility of the United Nations, and it is useful to highlight this characterization of mainstreaming below:

...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.37

For gender mainstreaming to be successful, “the most important necessary prerequisite is political will. Without political will, there will be no reallocation of funds for developing knowledge of gender issues or for developing and implementing policies containing a gender perspective.”38 The lack of institutional commitment is still a major problem within most international organizations, and the levels of resistance against mainstreaming tend to be high amongst senior managers. Part of the solution is to adopt both specific policies targeting women while moving women’s concerns into the centre of organizational structures: “mainstreaming and specific equality policy are not only dual and complimentary strategies, they form a ‘twin track’ strategy.”39 However, there is a high degree of tension between the concepts of integration and targeting, since many question the need for targeting if a mainstreaming policy is in place. However, policy is not practice, and in many cases institutions need to empower women, creating a culture of gender equality before it can be assimilated into the mainstream. This explains why a majority of organizations adopt both methods simultaneously.40 There are also other factors, such as comprehensive understanding of gender relations, necessary financial and administrative support, and the participation of both men and women, that can significantly enhance the effectiveness of an institution’s mainstreaming strategy.

Mainstreaming happens on both technical and political levels, and it is hoped that, following the two-track system of targeting and agenda-setting, once women assume

37 ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2.
positions of leadership and decision-making they will begin to change the terms under which those structures operate.

Other major obstacles to the achievement of gender equality through mainstreaming are the lack of tools, resources and techniques, insufficient knowledge and awareness about gender equality issues and the risk that gender concerns will become invisible once they are centralized and responsibility is generalized, rather than in the hands of a few specialists. Nevertheless, the pursuit of gender equality is one of the defining characteristics of current development strategies, and it is hoped that once mainstreaming has succeeded, the mainstream itself will have transformed into a more inclusive, equal environment.

1.4 THE DILEMMA OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING DURING HUMANITARIAN AND RECONSTRUCTION OPERATIONS

Integrating a gender perspective into emergency responses requires different levels of approach: clarity about underlying principles, which may be formalised in policy guidelines; systematic social and gender analysis in a given context; systems and procedures which are recognised on the ground as good practice; and agreement on minimum standards. The ‘bottom line’ must be to include women at every level and stage.

While the above section has detailed the background and development of thinking about women, gender and development, and the use of the strategy of mainstreaming to promote gender equality, this section of the paper seeks to illustrate why it is crucial that gender analysis and mainstreaming are fully integrated into every stage of war to peace transitions. It is now widely recognized that conflict affects men and women in different ways, and that in turn, gender is a cross-cutting issue during conflicts. However, performing a gender analysis requires time and the participation of the population, both

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40 For example, UNHCR has a system-wide policy to mainstream gender into all of its programs and activities, yet the Office of the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women and Gender Equality plays an instrumental role in training, advocacy and research on gender equality within refugee situations.

41 Byrne and Baden (1995) use a classification of emergencies into six categories: natural rapid onset, technological rapid onset, slow onset, ‘permanent emergencies’, mass population displacements, and ‘complex emergencies’. While it is recognized that ‘humanitarian operations’ can apply to all these situations, for the purposes of this paper it will be limited to describe the ‘complex emergencies’ which are generally precipitated by civil war and are characterised by conflict, intimidation and harassment.

of which are generally in short supply during emergencies, and often gender concerns are left by the wayside in favour of “life or death” issues of survival. Successive Deputy-High Commissioners at UNHCR have decreed that sanitary supplies constitute an essential basic good and that they must be supplied. However, at field level, few offices provide these materials arguing that they are not an immediate survival concern. A detailed survey carried out by UNHCR in 2000/2001 revealed that the failure of UNHCR to recognize the importance of sanitary materials resulted in serious negative health, psychological, educational and economic consequences for women and girls.

Whatever emergency assistance is being given will be less effective and sustainable if gender relations are not taken into account from the initial phases. Indeed,

while some emergency responses carried out by the international community have achieved improvements in responsiveness, targeting and social awareness, the majority of emergency responses ignore the special needs of women, miss opportunities to strengthen their position (and sometimes weaken it), ignore women’s own resources and characteristics, and disregard the long-term social rehabilitation needs of the communities they serve.43

In fact, war can offer a timely point of intervention to influence traditional gender roles as there is often less rigidity in times of conflict, and assistance can be designed and delivered in such a way as to institutionalize and foster the positive changes in gender roles that occurs.44 Some methods that have been employed to allow for a gender analysis to be incorporated during emergencies are People Oriented Planning (POP) and Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (CVA). These strategies can help organizations to recognize the different needs of different segments of the population, to assess the gender impact of their programs, and to measure the capacity of men and women to recover during the war to peace transition. For example, an important consideration is that because women have less access to and influence over resources than men in addition to less mobility, their abilities to overcome shocks may be lessened.45 This must be taken into account when designing programs during emergency and reconstruction.

44 The impact of conflict on gender rights, roles and responsibilities will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2 of this paper.
operations, and the different methods must be used at the individual, household, and community levels to assess the different impact the emergency is having on gender roles.

Previous attempts to provide gender-sensitive emergency assistance have been largely influenced by the WID approach. Many agencies designed programs to address women’s needs as a ‘vulnerable’ group, rather than considering how material and social resources influence the coping strategies of men and women and basing their strategies on this information. More recently, a move has been made to using the GAD approach which emphasizes the differentiated access to resources within households, gender divisions of labour, decision-making structures, and the socio-cultural constraints faced by men and women. Most importantly, “a gender perspective highlights women’s capacities and can indicate where opportunities are missed by relief interventions for making aid more effective by supporting and developing women’s skills and capacities.” As Byrne and Baden (1995) stress, consultation with the beneficiary group is one of the most important elements to successful gender-sensitive emergency responses. Without understanding the power structures and resource balance, and participation and leadership roles of the men and women in the society it is impossible to design a gender equal intervention.

Emergency aid, by its nature, is political. It is also gender-related. When and how international agencies intervene to assist wartorn populations inevitably affects both short-term and long-term outcomes. It is especially important that both men and women’s health, security, education and employment opportunities, and access to food, shelter and other basic needs, are addressed at the same time. Reflecting this, most international agencies and NGOs attempt to adopt gender-positive policies and guidelines for responding to gender issues during an emergency. Several agencies, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Food Program (WFP), have been very successful in creating a culture of gender equality. For example, the WFP set out a series of five commitments for the period 1996-2001 detailing how it will use its resources to reduce gender-related inequalities through actions such as ensuring women’s full participation in power structures and decision-making. Also, in November 1998, a

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48 See op. cit, Byrne with Baden (1995): 41-44 for detailed examples from UNHCR, WFP, USAID, GTZ, and Oxfam.
Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance was created by the Working Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). This group was formed in an attempt to coordinate and further develop the response of international organizations to the gender issues during humanitarian emergencies. Several factors, both internal and external to international organizations, have contributed to the shift towards incorporating a gender analysis. For example, demographic shifts in the population, the perception that women are more politically neutral, increased tendencies to participatory and community development approaches, or pressures from staff in other sectors are all factors which may encourage organizations to adopt a gender approach.

Although these initiatives are encouraging, much more remains to be done. Many agencies still have problems coordinating across different sectors, men and women are not always both fully included and integrated into the programs, policy has often failed to translate into field-level practice, and resistance within donor agencies, NGOs and the wartorn societies themselves still poses a huge obstacle to gender mainstreaming in humanitarian and reconstruction activities. In addition, successful gender mainstreaming is difficult during emergency situations “not only because of the culture of speed and the technical nature of many operations, but also because gender relations undergo rapid transformation during crises.” Thus, gender mainstreaming during emergency and reconstruction operations remains a challenge, but it is a challenge that must be met if the international community is to succeed in assisting wartorn populations. The following chapters of this paper examine in greater detail the need for gender analysis in war to peace transitions, specifically looking at the experiences of the World Bank and UNHCR in addressing this challenge in contemporary conflict situations. Without the sustained commitment of international donor agencies to fundamentally alter the way that reconstruction and relief programs are designed, the marginalization and subordination of women will continue to worsen.

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50 The IASC-WG is co-chaired by WFP and UNICEF, with the participation of FAO, OCHA, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNDP, IOM, UNFPA, ICRC, IFRC, SCHR, WHO, ICVA, and InterAction.
II. POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH A GENDERED LENS

Carbonnier states that, “the objective of socioeconomic rehabilitation [after conflict] is not to restore the economy to what it was before the war, but to lay the foundation for lasting peace and sustainable development, so as to enable postconflict countries to draw maximal benefits from potential capacities.”\(^1\) Although he undoubtedly did not have gender in mind when he made this statement, understanding and adapting to the changes in gender roles, rights and responsibilities that occur during conflict is the first step towards sustainable post-conflict programming. Before embarking on a discussion of how to achieve this, it is important to draw attention to the pitfalls of overgeneralisation and over-simplification. No single typology of conflict or of post-conflict situations exists, and consideration of all of the socioeconomic, political and cultural factors present is essential to a complete understanding of conflict and post-conflict dynamics. Thus, it follows that there is no universal strategy that the various actors involved must adopt during the transition phase, and the following overview should not be taken as gospel since the range of potential responses is great. Rather, this chapter merely serves as a context in which to situate the subsequent case studies so that the challenges of rebuilding wartorn societies are better understood.\(^2\)

II.1 GENDER AS A CROSS-CUTTING THEME

During war, men and women experience many horrors including displacement, destruction of land and property, sexual and physical violence, and loss of and separation from family members. However, they are not always victims and innocent bystanders, and may participate directly in combat or indirectly by supporting the conflict through information-gathering or supplying food and other resources. On the other hand, they can also be instrumental in rising above the fighting and instability to become a force for change, advocating peaceful resolution to conflict. Gender relations serve as a backdrop

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\(^2\) Chapters IV and V will provide detailed case studies, country examples, and empirical evidence to illustrate and expand upon the various elements of post-conflict programming.
for all these facets of life during conflict, defining how men and women respond to their situation. For example, as this paper will demonstrate, civil war itself can destroy and influence the traditional cultural values that men and women live by, often allowing women to take on more productive roles in society during times of conflict. Thus, conflict affects men and women in unique and complex ways, and irreversibly transforms the world and social space in which they live.

Because the postconflict era provides an opening to build on the progress made by women during conflict, it makes sense for the international community to capitalize on this opportunity by designing and implementing programs to ameliorate the negative conditions women endure and to help to promote gender equality.3

Although age, class, education, and other factors can influence conflict, gender is a fundamental dynamic that cut across all these variables. If the gendered impact of armed conflict is not recognized then it is possible that crucial issues influencing its course will be overlooked.4 The relationship is in fact cyclical, as gender affects the way individuals respond to and cope with conflict, conflict affects demographics which in turn affect gender roles, and changed gender roles can transform society and offer up new opportunities, at the same time creating new constraints for those individuals. Moser (2001) explains the need for gender analysis during conflict on the basis of two factors. First, as mentioned above, men and women have different roles, relations and identities. Second, they have different needs and interests that must be addressed in an operational framework that addresses practical issues as well as gendered power relations.5 This chapter will follow Moser’s example and offers a theoretical overview of the gender dimensions of war to peace transitions, looking at how post-conflict programming can reflect the constant transformations in gender roles.

II.2 The Immediate Aftermath of Conflict: Emergency Relief and Humanitarian Assistance\(^6\)

The fallout from armed conflict is severe, and in the immediate aftermath as hostilities are winding down, international agencies often come in to assist the local wartorn population by providing emergency relief and humanitarian assistance.\(^7\) Whether this assistance alleviates the humanitarian consequences of conflict, and whether it even reaches its intended beneficiaries, depends upon how it is designed and delivered. Despite the fact that the needs and priorities of men and women vary greatly during conflict, humanitarian assistance is often delivered in a gender-blind manner, where the entire population is grouped together under the umbrella of ‘beneficiaries’. Thus, the population is treated as a single homogeneous group that does not possess any gender-differentiated characteristics. However, as will be shown, emergency assistance programs can be implemented in a gender-sensitive way, increasing their effectiveness and sustainability.

Large populations, sometimes even entire communities and villages, are forced to flee their homes during conflict. While in refuge, either in other countries as refugees or as internally displaced people (IDPs), civilians face many challenges while trying to survive under difficult circumstances. Physical and mental health are at risk, personal security is limited, access to food, water and basic services may be restricted, and opportunities for self-sufficiency in food and other supplies are few and far between. This lack of the most basic resources and infrastructure presents a particular challenge for the international community as they struggle to ensure the survival of wartorn populations.

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\(^6\) Date-Bah defines the emergency/relief stage as "the first couple of years immediately after the (partial) cessation of hostilities when the emphasis is on relief programmes and the immediate practical and short-term needs of the people including food, water, shelter, health, sanitation, transportation and other infrastructure." Eugenia Date-Bah (1996) *Sustainable peace after war: Arguing the need for major integration of gender perspectives in post-conflict programming*, ILO Action Programme on Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Countries Emerging from Armed Conflict. Geneva: International Labour Office: 16.

\(^7\) As the first chapter of this paper pointed out, the journey from war to peace does not occur along a linear, fixed path, but rather it is a fluid, reversible process. However, for the purposes of examining the different aspects of post-conflict reconstruction programs the chapter will first look at emergency reconstruction measures, and then will turn to the economic, political and social spheres. It is important to restate that these stages are not mutually exclusive or necessarily chronologically progressive, and movement back and forth across phases is possible. It is merely to maintain a logical explanation that they are ordered this way. As stated in the ECA 1998 report, "the reconstruction period has to include both curative measures such as emergency assistance, and preventative activities for reducing recurrent violence and sustaining the peace[...]." However the process is not linear. It is a long-term process with various entry points depending on political will, domestic resources, including organizational management and capacity building, and external
Compounding the many problems is the fact that civilians can be specifically targeted during conflict, and protecting them from poverty, malnutrition, violence, and the warring parties can be a complex task. Within displaced and needy populations, women and girls can suffer disproportionately as their social, cultural and economic position within society exposes them to violence, exploitation, and deliberate subordination. Nevertheless, it is possible to provide emergency assistance in a manner that builds on women’s strengths and skills. It is common to see women as helpless and hapless victims of conflict, and,

too often in the rush to provide such assistance, little or no account is taken of what they have already achieved for themselves – and women have often developed flexible and creative coping mechanisms and strategies – and some forms of assistance can distort or disrupt the mechanisms they have already set up or are utilising. 8

One of the most important considerations of international agencies at this stage is to ensure that the gender-differentiated needs and interests of the beneficiary population are taken into account, and that they are not shunted aside in favour of ‘survival’ or ‘life and death’ issues. 9

Provision of basic needs

One of the first major components of emergency assistance is the provision of basic goods and services such as food and healthcare. In an emergency situation, whether in a refugee camp or rural community, food aid is usually distributed in a central location to one member of a family or group of families. Traditional structures and gender roles usually dictate that it is the senior male member of a household who is given initial control over the food rations. There are several problems with this practice. First, men often sell the food they receive to buy weapons or other goods, or it is given to other assistance. 8 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1999) Post-conflict Reconstruction in Africa: A Gender Perspective, African Women’s Report 1998, Addis Ababa: UNECA: 33.


9 This argument is often used in defense of agencies or individuals who adopt a gender-blind approach to emergency humanitarian assistance. Not only does this attitude fail to recognize the key issues and interests at stake within a given community, but it also masks the reality that reproductive health, food for girls, freedom from sexual violence and other supposedly ‘non-survival’ issues are actually life or death issues for many women and girls in conflict situations. See EuroStep (1996) "Gender and Humanitarian Assistance: An EuroStep Paper", Brussels: European Commission: 9.
women in exchange for sex at the expense of the whole family. Women, who bear the responsibility of domestic food production and preparation should be the ones who retain primary control over the food supplies in any emergency situations. They are more likely to understand how to prepare the food and how much and what type will prevent malnutrition. Second, the reality of households in many developing countries may not conform to the traditional four or five-member family on which food rations are often based. Food distribution mechanisms should be designed so that they are flexible enough to be able to adapt to situations where there are many children, especially girls, or polygamous family structures. Status between wives, or amongst female and male children, should never determine whether or not access to food assistance is granted. Third, women are often traditionally primarily in charge of food provision and management. If emergency food aid is distributed to men, women can lose control of this area where they previously had responsibility, further eroding their fragile power base and bargaining position within the home.10

By ensuring that food distribution is done in a gender-sensitive manner, women and children’s nutritional status and access to resources can be improved.11 When providing food in a wartorn context, international agencies should ensure their procedures are transparent, simple and decentralised, and that all precautions necessary are taken to ensure that all beneficiaries have access to the resources. Local women must also be involved in the planning, distribution and monitoring processes.12 The development of gender-sensitive policies can be assisted by the use of gender checklists and sex-disaggregated data for food distribution, food-for-work programs involving women, improved registration systems, and information campaigns. This also applies to water and other non-food emergency items such as cooking implements, blankets and clothing, and plastic sheeting. Simply put, when supplying basic goods it is essential that the method of

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11 It is worth noting that gender-responsive food distribution systems can sometimes be abused. For example, the initial system set up in Khmer refugee camps gave fixed rations to women and girls. The result was that many families tried to disguise their male children so they would qualify for extra rations, causing inequalities amongst families. See op. cit. El-Solh and Oxaal (1996): 6.

distribution is gender-sensitive, and that common household gender inequalities are kept in mind.

The health of a population during times of conflict is compromised as medical services, access to clean water, and functioning infrastructure are disrupted by warfare. Malnutrition, sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), and injuries related to landmines are just three of the major health-related problems men and women face in an immediate post-conflict setting. To be healthy requires a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being, and this depends on “the fulfillment of numerous other needs, such as availability of food and drinking water, adequate shelter, access to washing and toilet facilities and security.”13 Thus, “health” is not an easy state to achieve, but the economic, political and social success of post-conflict countries depends on a healthy citizenry that can carry out the many tasks involved in reconstruction and rehabilitation.

When international agencies enter a country in the aftermath of conflict, medical skills are usually in high demand and it is important that agencies work with the local communities to educate, train, and supply them with the resources necessary to treat those in need. When health programs are being initiated, it is crucial that adequate attention is given to women and children’s needs and that medical practices and traditional healers are used as a base for developing healthcare projects. Focused activities such as reproductive and maternal health care, traditional birthing assistants, nutrition programs, immunization drives, and SGBV clinics must be undertaken. As Sorensen argues, women have been very active in wartorn societies, providing not only their skills and experiences, but also organizing training and information sessions within the community to raise awareness about critical health issues. This proves that “targeting women for professional health care training is a key to improving the community’s health status.”14 Since women also have many domestic and agricultural responsibilities, health care facilities must be located in an area that is easily accessible to them to ensure that

they will benefit from the services being provided.\textsuperscript{15} In addition, they should be provided in a confidential and discreet setting to avoid aggravating the social stigma and isolation that victims of sexual and gender based violence face. Gender checklists, the use of minimum initial services packages (MISPs), or guidelines on minimum standards that must be met in conflict settings can help to ensure that women's specific needs are not ignored in the emergency phase.

\textit{Physical protection issues}

Massive population flows are often a side-effect of conflict. As fighting intensifies, individuals and entire communities are displaced and may flee to neighbouring regions or countries. As a cessation of hostilities seems apparent, the majority of these people try to return home. The management of these population flows can sometimes make it difficult to ensure physical protection. However, as these people are travelling long distances, often on foot and through rural or densely-vegetated areas, it is paramount to protect them from abduction, landmines, SGBV, and other forms of violence. International agencies and foreign peacekeepers often assist with returning populations to their home areas, ensuring that the passage is safe and that the basic infrastructure to support the returning civilians exists. It is important to identify those members of the population who require special attention and assistance such as separated children, female/girl-headed households, and the disabled. Also the areas which receive these migrating populations should also be supported and measures should be taken to limit the social and economic impact on the local communities.\textsuperscript{16}

The presence of demobilized soldiers, the lack of community or traditional structures that would have provided protection, and extreme levels of poverty all mean that a key strategy in all wartorn societies must be to address the problems of physical protection of the civilian population. As Kumar points out,

\begin{quote}
during the early phase of postconflict transition, the presence of demobilized soldiers and unemployed militia continued to pose a serious threat to the lives and property of innocent people, particularly those in rural areas...Consequently [...]\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} According to the ILO, "clinics, hospitals, and other facilities are usually concentrated in urban areas, [so] access is restricted for those in rural areas for whom transportation costs may be prohibitive." ILO (1998) \textit{Gender Guidelines for Employment and Skills Training in Conflict-Affected Countries.} Geneva: ILO: 10.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{op. cit.} Date-Bah (1996): 12.
fear of violence and sexual abuse often kept [women] from moving about freely and restricted their social and economic activities.\textsuperscript{17}

The problem of sexual and gender based violence must be recognized by all agencies involved in international relief, and all must adopt clear policies on recognizing, addressing and following-up on cases of abuse. It is also especially important that all combatants and foreign peacekeepers who may be operating in the area are informed and warned about the implications of SGBV and are made aware of the need to protect women's human rights. The best ways to alleviate the problem of SGBV are to take concrete measures to enhance women's personal security, take action against men who commit rape, and conduct better training for women to act as investigators and counsellors for victims of SGBV, as well as monitors and protection officers in local communities.\textsuperscript{18}

**Refugee camp design and management**

Refugee situations pose particular challenges to relief agencies, as they are usually working under severe budget and staff constraints, and have a large population of displaced people requiring immediate assistance. It is extremely important that a gender perspective is adopted from the initial stages of designing the layout and setup of a refugee camp, right up until the refugee decision-making mechanisms that are put in place as the camp becomes more established.

When designing basic infrastructure in the emergency phase special attention must be given to the needs of women and girls. It must be ensured that water sources and toilet areas are safe and accessible, and that women and girls are not exposed to unnecessary risks when collecting firewood, water and food. Also, when quarters are cramped, overcrowded, or occupied by more than one family this can place women and girls at increased risk of SGBV. The location of shelters should be considered, ensuring that they are well-lit and secure. International organizations should meet with members of the local community, especially women, to discuss the particular security concerns in


each region. The gender-sensitivity of planning health centres, schools, and community buildings influences whether or not women will be able to take advantage of and benefit from these services. Also, as pointed out above, distribution of food and other goods must be done with the active participation of women so that they can retain a certain degree of control over these resources.

Security is a major concern within refugee camps, and the problem must be approached in a gender sensitive manner. Combatants may use the camps as a base to recuperate or may stage incursions into the civilian areas, and women are also at risk of SGBV from other refugees, local residents, security forces, and aid workers. Experience has shown that incidents of sexual violence decrease when women are included as security monitors and counsellors and when awareness is raised amongst the male refugee population. In addition, it is vitally important that positions on any food distribution committees or decision-making councils, and opportunities to work with NGOs or UN agencies inside the camp are determined on a gender equal basis. The (sometimes) temporary and immediate nature of life in refugee camps means that crucial gender concerns are at times overlooked. However, "women are the life-sustaining force of any refugee community. They have the power to nurture future generations, re-establish the family and culture in exile, and recreate it on return to their homeland." 

II.3 Economic Reconstruction

The destruction of infrastructure, economic markets and agricultural production during conflict, and the displacement or incapacitation of the workforce dramatically increases poverty rates and compromises the economic viability of a war-torn society. As Cockburn starkly points out, conflict places women in an exceptionally precarious economic position.

Many women will have become widows and single parents, dependent on their own earning power to provide for themselves and their children. In the absence of jobs of the kind they can do, training they can get access to, capital, credit and

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land, many women fall more deeply into the poverty they knew before war began. Prostitution is often their only hope of a living. Men may consolidate their gender power in such periods.\(^{22}\)

Poverty is a difficult burden for women to bear as their reproductive and domestic responsibilities limit their options for coping with increased hardship. Men, on the other hand, are able to more easily move to urban areas in search of employment, and indeed have more economic opportunities available to them. As Sorensen points out, “the economic reconstruction of a country emerging from war is crucial and complex, and directly or indirectly shapes women’s post-war livelihoods.”\(^{23}\) Traditionally, economic reconstruction has been approached in a gender-blind manner. For example, labour and employment policies have failed to recognize the changing sexual division of labour, the construction and location of key facilities have not been planned in cooperation with local women, and the differentiated impact of necessary economic reform policies on men and women has not been assessed. Without the active participation of women and a gender-sensitive planning process the productivity, sustainability and economic growth of a country will not be maximised.

During conflict, the overall gendered division of labour is redefined and adapted.\(^{24}\) Increased poverty and a lack of alternative economic opportunities combined with changes in the demographic makeup of society leads more women to enter the workforce during times of conflict. This is not a new phenomenon: in 1914, many British women gained access to and were trained in unconventional jobs such as driving post-office carriages while the men were away fighting in World War I.\(^{25}\) This erosion of the traditional structures means that new economic roles and responsibilities are assigned to men and women. Women often build up courage while fulfilling new roles during conflict that can lead them to challenge the gendered division of labour in the post-conflict phase, and the new skills that they acquire can also lead to increased productivity. However, it is necessary that as the country emerges from conflict men also

\(^{24}\) The ‘gendered division of labour’ describes the reality that the labour roles that are taken on by members of a society are, in part, influenced by gender identities. For example, in many societies women are entirely responsible for the care of children, whereas men undertake construction work. Both of these activities are a direct consequence of the perception that childcare is ‘women’s work’, whereas building houses should only be done by men.
successfully adapt to the new economic roles that have been assigned to them. If men (or women) are unable to accept and adjust to the changes then social and economic dislocation can cause further family and community conflict. \(^{26}\) Nevertheless, despite their new economic roles and responsibilities, many women continue to have little access to capital, including credit and other means of production, and the general labour market. It is important that international agencies identify and build on local capacities and strategies of economic survival, to encourage long-term sustainability.

**Restoration of agricultural activity and the elimination of landmines**

Agricultural activity suffers during conflict as communities are displaced and markets are non-existent or difficult to access. Nevertheless, “in most war-torn societies, agriculture is the largest source of employment and is responsible for a major share of the gross national product and foreign exchange earnings. In addition, agricultural outputs are essential as inputs to industry.” \(^{27}\) International agencies have assisted in agricultural rehabilitation through measures such as harvesting and transporting crops, livestock vaccination programs, reforestation projects, provision of seeds, tools and other resources, and credit for agricultural cooperatives. \(^{28}\) As Trujillo points out, agencies tend to assess war-related losses in agriculture in terms of losses in staple cash crops and since these are mainly associated with male crop production (women are more involved in subsistence crop production), it is mostly men who benefit from the seeds that are being distributed to make up for crop losses. \(^{29}\) This does not reflect reality if only men receive assistance since women are primarily responsible for planting, cultivating and harvesting crops, caring for livestock, preparing and delivering food and water, the collection of firewood, and general healthcare of the family. \(^{30}\) Thus, women and women’s groups

should be targeted for agricultural initiatives, and they should be included in all decision-making processes, including the determination of division of land and local land use systems and the choosing of crops and livestock for production. Gender-disaggregated statistics should also be collected to facilitate gender-sensitive agricultural planning in the post-conflict phase.

The scourge of landmines is a serious, deadly side effect of contemporary civil conflict, as they are often planted in areas where food, water and firewood are collected. Also, landmines prevent the use of arable land for growing crops and grazing livestock, exacerbate poverty and malnutrition, and limit the development of agriculture in the post-conflict phase due to restrictions in mobility. The removal of landmines, and raising awareness of their dangers amongst the population, must be an integrated part of any agricultural reforms. Landmines have a gender impact since many more women than men are injured due to the nature of their domestic and agricultural responsibilities. This must be recognized by international agencies and they should make a concerted effort to clear areas frequented by women, and to support female landmine victims.

Access to credit and labour markets

Employment opportunities, vocational training schemes and educational programs can be introduced during the post-conflict phase to assist with the reintegration and return of displaced populations and ex-combatants, and to reinvigorate the wartorn economy. Due to both resource and cultural constraints, women and girls tend to have a lower rate of participation in these initiatives, and where they do participate it tends to be in traditional ‘female’ tasks such as baking bread or soap-making, even though there may not be a market for these items. The ILO suggests that women should be encouraged to participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of infrastructure rehabilitation and public works projects. Not only does this ensure the location and design of the facilities will improve the lives of women, but they will also be acquiring more marketable skills that can help them to compete in the workforce. Many international

31 Statistics about the number of landmines around the world vary, since it is impossible to know exactly where landmines are and how many there are. Most estimates suggest that with millions still in the ground, Angola and Afghanistan are among the most heaviest mined countries.
agencies are involved in post-conflict training and employment, and they have a responsibility to ensure that the programs are open and accessible to women. They should recognize any informal skills and qualifications women may have, and a focus should be placed on training women in skills relevant to the management and organization of small businesses.

Reintegration programs undertaken by international agencies can also offer small amounts of credit for independent business ventures and petty trading. In fact, microcredit initiatives are a key cornerstone of many post-conflict reconstruction programs since they enable men and women to make small investments in economic production that will eventually allow the family and community to become self-sustainable. Microcredit initiatives are useful for women because this allows them to engage in activities outside of the formal economic structures that they have little access to, especially in the post-conflict phase.³³ Loans that have been implemented through grassroots women's organizations have been particularly successful, and have allowed women and girls to have access to resources that allow them to achieve minimum household food and income security. It is important that collateral requirements and interest rates charged on loans are not prohibitive for women, who often have few personal assets, and that women are given assistance with their domestic responsibilities so they can participate in non-traditional activities.³⁴ Increased poverty and few opportunities for conventional employment drives many men and women to engage in black market activities. For women, this means that they are exposed to the dangers of prostitution, violence, and HIV/AIDS. Attempts should be made to reduce the number of women working in the informal sector by supporting them with credit and other resources, as well as the necessary skills to allow them to benefit from post-conflict income-generating opportunities.³⁵

³³ Kumar found that the majority of women surveyed earned their living in the informal economic sector, selling food, clothes and household items. The number increased even more in the post-conflict phase as women lost their jobs in the formal sector because of privatization, a shrinking economy, and the lack of access to resources. See op. cit. Kumar (2000): 24.


³⁵ In addition to prostitution, activities such as petty trading or selling alcohol on the black market may be seen as inappropriate livelihoods for women and they may lose the support of their families and communities. As El Bushra and Piza Lopez point out "the factors which push women into taking on socially unacceptable roles are complex and inadequately understood". More work needs to be done to assess the root causes of women's involvement in these activities, and to link them to political and economic factors so
Labour market reform is necessarily a key component of any post-conflict economic reconstruction, since the demographic and labour shifts that occurred during conflict require the essential rehabilitation of productive capacity. The local population must be empowered to participate in this process of rebuilding the economy. Some of the first steps that international agencies should encourage are to develop labour institutions, regulatory frameworks, and data collection and analysis about the labour market composition. It is important that any vertical or horizontal segregation that was present in the labour market before the conflict is not re-institutionalized in the aftermath, allowing women to participate equitably. To encourage this, labour ministries can be sensitised, labour unions and civil society groups promoting workers’, especially female workers’, rights should be supported, new laws and regulations should be gender-sensitive, and property rights should be clearly defined for men and women.

**Economic policy reform**

When a country is emerging from civil conflict its economy is generally under great stress from operating at limited or sub-optimal capacity during the war. As part of international assistance packages it is normal for donors to require that a country adopt certain economic reforms to help build a more sustainable economic base for future development. These reforms are intended to restore basic infrastructure (transportation networks, electricity and telecommunications, water and sanitation plants, etc.), provide social safety nets, boost economic production and household income, liberalize and privatize industry, address fiscal and balance of payment problems, and control inflation. As Carbonnier points out, “often critically short of expertise in macroeconomic management, domestic authorities have to wrestle with the competing demands of economic stabilisation and peacebuilding requirements. While the former requires drastic cuts in government expenditure, the latter implies increased public spending to cope with pressing requirements of the peace agenda.” One common problem is that structural adjustment policies often impose strict limitations on welfare budgets and other public

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that the risks encountered by these women may be minimised. See op. cit. El Bushra and Piza Lopez (1993): 25.


spending, which can mean major cutbacks in health and education. Although both men and women suffer from these policies, these two sectors are especially important to women in war-torn societies, and the cutbacks usually affect them disproportionately. Also,

because of social and gender discrimination, the strategies adopted for structural adjustment have tended not to take into account the vital economic role of women in agriculture, in industry and in the home. Instead of supporting women’s productive roles, such strategies have created further obstacles to their economic participation and consequently reinforced the negative effect of such programmes on the most vulnerable.  

Often, the gendered impact of economic reconstruction policies is not immediately recognized by domestic authorities and international agencies, yet these policies can have a lasting effect on gender relations and the distribution of resources. For example, national budgeting is often gender-neutral despite the many unpaid productive and reproductive contributions that women make to the economy. 

II.4 Political Reconstruction

A brief survey of the many conflicts around the world reveals the minimal formal roles women are playing in the conduct of and recovery from these wars, and how they are marginalized when political issues, either at the local, national or regional level, are being discussed. It is possible that if their rights go unprotected during conflict women can lose control over their own bodies, freedom of movement, personal choices, and are subject to gender-discriminatory laws and customary norms. This can be due in part to the reinforcement of patriarchal values, the pressure on women to uphold cultural identities, or limitations in the resources available to protect them. This retraction of women’s political and human rights has been seen in Somalia and Afghanistan, where women are punished severely for crimes such as mixing with men from outside their families, and where they are not allowed to participate in the community’s decision-

making structures. A side-effect of the political marginalization that women can experience during conflict is that they are made increasingly vulnerable to sexual violence and harassment, and due to their lack of access to or control over resources, they often become dependent on the men around them. Community structures that might also have given support and a certain degree of influence to women are absent or weakened. Thus, even where women did have political roles and responsibilities, when conflict occurs, their rights are often restricted, their options for accessing decision-making procedures are limited, and this is compounded by the fact that the non-formal community structures that would have been in place are absent or weakened.

On the other hand, in countries such as El Salvador and Rwanda, women have had an opportunity to expand their public roles during conflict, partly due to the necessity to cope with the absence of men from society, and the increased opportunities for women that this absence brings. "War [...] destroys the patriarchal structures of society that confine and degrade women. In the very breakdown of morals, traditions, customs, and community, war also opens up and creates new beginnings." Women have mobilized during conflict to raise funds, provided humanitarian relief, taken on new economic production roles, volunteered in hospitals and schools, attended and helped to organize political rallies, or have become leading voices in the movement for peace. It is especially clear that women have been active political mobilizers in the non-formal spheres, and have often cooperated within and between communities to stem the negative consequences of conflict. Indeed the number of women’s organizations increased dramatically in many countries during conflict. Many of these organizations serve to provide assistance to vulnerable groups such as widows or girl-children, promote women’s human rights, and form a strong basis for political mobilization.

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45 For example, in Bosnia the number of women’s organizations increased exponentially during the war as there was a governance vacuum at the same time as overwhelming need of assistance for much of the population. Women’s organizations filled this gap and grew to be involved in areas such as microcredit and training, human rights, health issues, and psychosocial support. See Martha Walsh (2001) "Women’s Organizations in Postconflict Bosnia and Herzegovina" in Krishna Kumar, ed. Women and Civil War: Impact, Organizations, and Action. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.: 165-181. For a detailed description of the activities of women’s community groups and organizations in Rwanda see WCRWC (2000a) Rebuilding
The state of flux during conflict opens up new possibilities for men and women, and a movement in either direction – either positive or negative – is possible. Poverty, displacement, a culture of fear and violence, and changing social norms are thrown into this empty space, and how they are experienced and adapted to can determine the political outcomes for men and women. This period of transformation of political structures is critical for women because it determines whether they will have an active or passive role in governance, which rights they will be given and how extensive they will be, and whether women are empowered or are exposed to more discrimination during and in the aftermath of the conflict.

The peace process

The peace process is arguably the most important activity in the early stages of reconstruction, often preceding all other economic and social initiatives, since it sets the stage for the cessation of hostilities and the eventual move towards the consolidation of peace. However,

The negotiations leading to peace are never simple. They are wrapped in history and identity, in the struggle for power and the quest for justice, in personal loss, grief, fear and uncertainty [...] The peace table is not a single event. It spans the entire process of negotiations, often beginning in the midst of war and continuing through the various phases of the transition to peace.\(^{46}\)

A multitude of factors converge to determine whether or not a given peace settlement will stick, and it is often the case that they fail, and countries slip back into violence and disarray. Hampson suggests that several factors are crucial to a successful peace process: ‘ripeness’ of the conflict, the presence of committed and coordinated third parties, whether the settlement contains the provisions for peace amongst a divided community, and the local/regional/systemic structural characteristics of the conflict.\(^{47}\)

However, it could be argued that equally important is that the post-conflict political processes are as inclusive and equal as possible, and this means involving


women. When negotiating peace accords women’s representation at the formal negotiation table as participants, not just observers, is of key importance. The presence of women from civil society, representing both rural and urban interests, is essential to ensuring that a gender dimension is included in any peace settlements. Important decisions regarding land redistribution, political representation, security sector and judicial reform, and provisions of ceasefires are made during this phase. Cultural pressures, the lack of awareness and training, and poor representation within formal political structures mean that women are consistently relegated to the political sidelines.\(^{48}\)

It is important that any retrenchment into gendered perceptions of public life are avoided and that the peace process nurtures the new spaces that may begin to open up for women. If traditional local councils are being used to negotiate for peace, local women should also be included, especially if both men and women had active political roles within the community before the conflict.

Women’s civic organizations should be supported, international pressure can come to bear on reluctant patriarchal regimes, and gender-sensitivity of the peace accords and peace process can help to preserve an active role for women in post-conflict political life. Most importantly, however, is that women are trained in the skills necessary to allow them to fill public roles constructively. For women to engage actively in post-conflict political life, international agencies must offer them support, education, access to information and other resources, and training in political skills. It is also important that a wide and diverse group of women benefit from international assistance in this area. A few individual women sitting at a negotiation table is not enough to ensure that all women’s interests are represented. Training women in decision-making skills and encouraging them to spread the knowledge throughout their communities is one way of both educating a greater population and of determining what that population’s needs and interests are.\(^{49}\)

Despite their lack of formal recognition and support, women are active and important agents of peacebuilding within their communities. Perhaps due to their responsibilities in the domestic and community spheres, women are normally among the

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\(^{48}\) op. cit. UNECA (1999): 36.

first to call for peace. Peace and reconciliation initiatives cannot be seen as gender-neutral processes because women and men have different skills, capabilities and strategies that they use to pursue their goals in the peacebuilding stage. In parallel with efforts to include women in the formal peace process, their initiatives at the local and community level must be supported. Women’s grassroots peace movements often develop significant momentum that with assistance could be translated from the informal to the formal sphere. In addition to their potential as participants at the peace table, women’s peace groups are often active in other important areas such as psychosocial counseling, advocating for land reform, providing small loans to women, and a variety of other activities. Thus, it is important that the nascent women’s peace networks present in a number of post-conflict countries receive adequate support from international organizations.

Post-conflict elections

Elections are considered an important landmark for countries that are newly emerging from civil war. They are perceived to restore democratic stability and legitimacy to a weak political and institutional structure. The international community has been playing a growing role in ensuring that post-conflict elections are free, fair and legitimate. However, this is not an easy task. Often, the political culture in a wartorn country is fragmented, the economy is unstable, deep social cleavages likely still exist, and law and order and a real democratic commitment are not always present. Kumar neatly sums up this dilemma:

The most obvious objective of postconflict elections is to transfer power to a democratically installed government that enjoys national and international legitimacy and is able to start rebuilding the country [...] The second objective of postconflict elections is to initiate and consolidate the democratization process in the country [...] The third objective of postconflict elections is to promote reconciliation between the parties that were formerly at war with each other [...] Problems arise because the above three objectives are not always compatible with the hard realities of the postconflict societies.

51 See Kumar, ed. (1998) for a thorough discussion of the complexities of post-conflict elections in diverse geographical and contextual locations.
When giving international assistance to the running of post-conflict elections, it is important to consider the gender-related factors that will influence their success. Are women fairly represented amongst the pool of candidates? Do women have the *de facto* as well as *de jure* right to vote? Are women free to vote independently of their husbands and male family members? Are women aware of how and where to vote, and do information campaigns take account of the fact that many women are illiterate and depend on informal community networks for information? Are balloting stations located in an area that is easily accessible to women? Are women voters free of harassment and violence? These questions point to important dimensions of the electoral process that are often overlooked, yet they carry immense implications for the post-conflict political landscape.

**Land reform**

Land reform, while often intensely politicized, is an issue of critical importance in the post-conflict phase, for both women and men. As displaced populations return and families recover after the loss of their family members, land rights often come under dispute. Often peace accords give returning refugees and displaced people the right to return to their own homes and land, but they may find their properties taken over or that other families were given occupancy rights in their absence. For women, the problem can be even more complex, and their rights to land ownership and inheritance may not be protected by national legislation, or may be subject to discriminatory customary laws regarding land use. It is important that international actors involved in the peace negotiations recognize the gender dimension of land reform and that it is an important issue of potential future conflict. Whether or not women are granted independent land rights in the post-conflict context will have a huge impact on their economic and social stability, and it cannot be assumed that their interests will be protected or furthered by their male relatives. Additionally, it is important that inheritance laws are reformed and made gender equal, because in many cases the land and property of men killed during conflict is confiscated instead of being passed on to female relatives.
II.5 Social Reconstruction

Social reconstruction in the post-conflict phase involves rehabilitation and reform of social services as well as activities related to reknitting the social fabric of the country, such as reintegration of ex-combatants and displaced populations. Generally, countries experiencing civil war tend to be highly militarised, and in this state, traditional views of ‘macho’ masculinity and ‘vulnerable’ femininity tend to prevail. However, as Turshen (1998) points out,

The enduring wartime picture of ‘man does, woman is’ has depended on the invisibility of women’s participation in the war effort, their unacknowledged, behind-the-lines contributions to the prosecution of war and their hidden complicity in the construction of fighting forces [...] As more and more civilians are drawn into conflicts, the conventional separation of male belligerents and female inhabitants no longer prevails. In modern forms of war, especially civil wars and wars of liberation, women are also combatants, women resist and fight back; they take sides, spy, and fight among themselves; and even when they don’t see active service, they often support war efforts in multiple ways, willingly or unwillingly.

Thus, when analyzing societal relations in war-torn countries, it is important to be constantly aware of the trap of generalisations and to be highly critical of representations of men as inherently violent, and women as inherently peaceful. While it is obvious that many young men throughout the world are taking up arms, what is less immediately recognized is the many girls and young women who are conscripted, willingly or unwillingly, abducted as sex slaves or ‘wives’, or drawn into the fighting as porters or cooks for warring parties. Similarly, the disempowerment brought about by conflict is acutely felt by many men, as they may be unable to fulfill the roles traditionally expected of them. This, although it is rarely acknowledged, may contribute to the culture of violence. As Moser points out, “gender cuts across all levels of causality and shapes both women’s and men’s involvement in, and experience of, violence.”

The vulnerability of women to sexual and gender-based violence dramatically increases during times of conflict. Members of government armies and rebel forces have

53 See Byrne (1996); Enloe (2001); Moser and Clark (2001); Pankhurst and Anderlini (2000).
frequently used rape as a weapon of war, sometimes to intimidate or manipulate the population, and sometimes as a method of ethnic cleansing. "In practically all war-torn societies, young women living in combat zones were victims of sexual abuse by rebel forces and by the soldiers assumed to be guarding them." The increase in SGBV that is brought about by conflict and the militarization of society also implies increased risks for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Men, and especially women, with HIV/AIDS face social stigma, and rarely have access to the necessary healthcare this disease requires. The entire family unit suffers, as parents are unable to care for their children, and in many cases, infected women are abandoned and ostracized by their husbands and families. The psychological, social, political and economic effects of sexual violence must not be overlooked, and it is crucial that this issue is properly addressed as a country moves into the transition to peace.

Thus the military experiences of men and women during civil conflict are extremely diverse. At the same time, they are intertwined. For example, a failure to recognize the disempowerment and problems of male combatants can mean increased levels of domestic violence and SGBV during and after conflict. It is crucial to examine the psychological and societal repercussions of men and women’s involvement in military activities to ensure programs designed to address combatants and those who surround them are more inclusive and successful. During the long process of social reconstruction, a war-torn population must heal from the atrocities committed against it, rebuild vital institutions, and reconcile with itself to enable society to move on and prosper in the post-conflict phase. Like all the other dimensions of the transition to peace that have been discussed above, social reconstruction must take into account the differentiated experiences of men and women in their domestic and community lives.

**Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs**

The demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants is an important stage of the peacebuilding process, since until the ex-combatants are successfully integrated into civilian life, the chances of a return to violence are high.

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According to Ball, "the typical veteran is semiliterate at best, is unskilled, has few personal possessions, often has no housing or land, and frequently has many dependents." DDR operations involve many components such as the turning in and destruction of weapons; physical relocation of combatants (cantonment); the distribution of clothes, small amounts of money and other benefits to ex-combatants; and training, loans and other initiatives to assist former combatants with reintegrating into their communities.

When implementing DDR programs in wartorn countries, international agencies tend to focus on the need to disarm young men, since they are seen as a key spoiler to reconstruction efforts. Although it is true that armed, idle men do tend to resort to hostilities, this narrow approach to DDR must be discredited. Although more men than women do take up arms, women ex-combatants also face difficulties adjusting to civilian life and need help to demobilize and reintegrate. As well as the ex-combatants, the women and girls who have been involved in the conflict as cooks, wives, carrying supplies or providing sexual services must be recognized. They generally do not qualify for most DDR programs, yet they also have many problems returning to civilian life after the disruption of being involved in conflict.

Some ways to ensure that a gender perspective is adopted in DDR programming is to assess who is eligible; who has been consulted and involved in the process; how other people will be affected by the program; what the political, cultural, and socioeconomic context of the initiative is; and in what ways local capacities and resources can be strengthened and integrated. Finally, returning men and their families need to be prepared to accept the changes in gender roles that may have occurred during their absence. As the case of Mozambique shows, "only men were involved in the distribution of resettlement allowances and, therefore, only men received payments. Furthermore, clothes distributed only fitted men [...] Former soldiers

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60 op. cit. UN (2001): 15.
were considered [as a] homogenous group whereas they were heterogeneous including men, women, children and disabled combatants.  

Although the experiences of women during conflict are often overlooked, they are ever-present. For example, amongst the notorious ‘lost boys of Sudan’ there were also ‘lost girls’.  

International agencies must ensure that their programs prevent these and other girls and women from being lost forever.

Reform and rehabilitation of the health and education sectors  

During conflict the health and education sectors are rarely performing properly, if at all, as a result of public spending diverted to military expenditures, direct targeting by combatants, or the withdrawal of professionals and resources. Few children have the opportunity to attend school and the health of the entire population is likely to be poor. Rehabilitating these sectors in the post-conflict phase is thus a priority of international agencies. Facilities must be rebuilt, professionals trained, awareness of health and education issues must be raised amongst the populations, and resources and money must be provided for all these activities. Mainly due to their prime responsibility for the healthcare of the entire household, women play a major role in the reconstruction of social services in the aftermath of conflict. Projects designed to revitalize the social sector should involve women in all stages from planning to implementation, and they should build on the skills and expertise that women can bring to these sectors. Priority should be given to women and children’s healthcare, and extensive campaigns must be initiated to encourage the enrolment of girls in school. Limited resources and heavy domestic and agricultural workloads during the transition to peace can mean that girls are pulled out of school in favour of their brothers or to help with household duties. Where possible, donors should press for gender-positive reforms of the social sectors.

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63 A group of approximately 11,000 Sudanese children arrived in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya between 1992-1994, having walked to Kenya through Ethiopia to escape fighting in their native Sudan. Since the majority of the children who arrived were male the group was quickly termed the “lost boys of Sudan”. UNHCR and the international community failed to recognize and care for the many girls who were included in this group, often completely excluding them from resettlement and assistance programs. The failure to recognize their plight and to identify and address their needs resulted in their ordeal being prolonged and worsened. See Refugees International (2002) “Do not forget the ‘lost girls’ of Sudan”, http://www.refintl.org/cgi-bin/rl/other?occ=00290.  

**Female-headed households**

The increasing number of female-headed households is a serious consequence of conflict that straddles both the economic and domestic dimensions of gender roles. In these households the lines guiding the traditional division of labour are completely blurred, and women must assume 'male' tasks such as building houses, negotiating with community leaders and making key decisions for the family. In the absence of a male head of household, all members of the family can become vulnerable to SGBV as well as increased poverty and deprivation.65 This is becoming an increasingly important issue: in Cambodia, 25-30% of all households are female-headed, mainly because of the death and absence of men due to war, and also changing social traditions resulting in increased rates of divorce and population dislocations.66 El Bushra and Piza Lopez clearly summarize the key challenge facing female-headed houses both during and in the aftermath of conflict:

The disadvantages faced by female-headed households are wide-ranging: the most obvious is the reduction in available adult labour and income-earning power. Linked to this is the problem of access to resources. [...] Thus, though women who head households have increased economic responsibilities, they do not have the increased access to and control over economic resources which is necessary for them to meet their obligations.67

Not only are there problems when families are headed by a woman, but when the male head of household returns after an absence the adjustment to the changed domestic roles and responsibilities can lead to increased problems and conflict. The decision-making structures within the family have changed, women are accustomed to increased burdens, including new economic responsibilities, and they have sometimes also experienced a social and political empowerment. As a result, the man's role within the family may have become less important, and he is no longer the 'provider' of the family. An identity crisis can ensue which has negative consequences for the entire family as this can lead to abandonment, domestic violence, or the deeper subordination of women. These changes in domestic roles and responsibilities are extremely important, since

65 **op. cit.** Date-Bah et al. (2001): 6-7.
trends within the home play a role in defining a community. Also, they are tied into psychological and social issues since they can affect a woman's chance of marriage, they are linked to cases of SGBV, and they influence the capacity of a family to overcome the negative effects of conflict.

When implementing employment policies, food or basic good distribution, offering trauma counselling services, or any other programs in a post-conflict setting it is important to keep these special challenges in mind. It is important that land ownership and the inheritance rights of these women are protected and that they have methods of economic activity open to them to ensure the survival of the family. As Kumar points out though, assisting these households can be a delicate issue:

Targeted programs may create dissension locally between woman-headed households and other poor households because the poor resent special treatment of any specific group […] Nevertheless, experience also shows that programs targeted toward women are necessary to provide them adequate assistance. Thus, the international community has followed a twofold strategy in post-conflict societies. First, international donors have provided assistance to all women, not exclusively to woman-headed households. Second, international organizations have supported expanded property rights for women, which would directly benefit woman-headed households.68

Thus, although female-headed households may require extra economic assistance and support for the isolation they may experience from the community, these issues must be addressed in tandem with measures supporting all needy households.

**Psychosocial trauma**

The events during the wars in Bosnia and Rwanda raised awareness about the need to address trauma in a post-conflict setting. Displacement, violence, separation from family, starvation, and various forms of abuse all leave their scars on men, women and children. Women, as victims of some of the grossest human rights violations during conflict, often suffer the most severe cases of trauma. They can show tremendous resilience and continue to function and care for themselves and their families, but it is still important that psychosocial needs are recognized and treated during emergency

situations. Women who are survivors of SGBV need to receive counseling, rehabilitation, and medical care in a confidential and secure environment. At the same time, men are often overlooked when psychosocial counselling programs are being established, since they are usually biased towards treating women and children. Men are not immune to the traumas of war, and, especially as returning ex-combatants, may have serious difficulties overcoming their past experiences and integrating back into civilian life. This impacts the whole family and community and has been blamed for increased levels of domestic violence. Thus, psychosocial trauma and reconciliation programs must ensure that both men and women’s different experiences are acknowledged and that programs are designed to fit their needs. Local community groups and women’s organizations dealing with trauma should be supported by international agencies. Since they often offer small loans, training opportunities, health workshops, and other activities in conjunction with psychosocial trauma services they can serve as a valuable gateway into other forms of assistance.

II.6 ADOPTING GENDER-SENSITIVE POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMMES: Key Strategies for International Organizations

This chapter has presented a brief overview of some of the important elements of post-conflict programming. The range of activities is broad and diverse, and no single international agency is capable of addressing all these issues. Election monitors, refugee camp workers, trade and finance economists, trauma counsellors, health specialists, and many other groups of people are needed to perform the tasks required during the transition to peace. Nevertheless, despite the complexity and variety of social, political and economic reconstruction activities, several common characteristics can be identified. From the above discussion it has become evident that several ground rules or strategies should be universally implemented by all agencies to assist them with adopting gender-sensitive policies. The key strategies suggested below should be kept in mind throughout


the presentation of the case studies which follows, and they will be developed into a concrete checklist in the final chapter, demonstrating that it is possible to successfully mainstream gender into all types of post-conflict activities.

The most crucial strategy is to involve local men and women in the planning, implementing and monitoring of all projects. It is a common mistake of international agencies to ignore local capacities and mechanisms of survival and activity in the post-conflict phase in favour of imposing their own methods. In fact, the local population is itself a valuable resource. It is crucial that frequent consultations are held with a wide range of local people – not just officials, and not just men – so that the real interests and needs at stake can be identified.

In some cases, local consultations may be difficult, unreliable, or infrequent. As a matter of course, all organizations should conduct regular gender analysis and provide sex-disaggregated data in all project proposals. If this is done properly, the gender-differentiated needs of the population will be highlighted, and the impact of the proposed project on the entire population can be assessed. Although agencies are often operating under strict time and resource constraints, it is more cost-effective to conduct this type of analysis from the initial stages than to address costly gender problems at a later stage.

From headquarters down to field office-level, all international agencies should strengthen gender training programs and research and information exchange amongst their staff. Gender-sensitive personnel are the first step to mainstreaming a gender approach in all post-conflict programming. It is not feasible to expect all staff within an organization to be gender experts, but all must be aware of how the conflict has affected both men and women in different ways and they must understand how avoid a gender-blind outlook. As well as within agencies, research and information should be exchanged with all actors working in a post-conflict context so that the issues at stake are better understood and they can adopt tried and tested methods of gender mainstreaming.
Although it is outside the mandate of many organizations to change legal, political and economic structures in post-conflict countries, the programs and strategies that they adopt can influence the domestic context. For this reason, international organizations should promote positive changes in gender roles by involving and integrating women in all of their activities. They must take all measures possible to ensure that women must have equal access to and control over all resources, training and employment opportunities, and services that are being provided.
III. FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES

The first section of this paper set out in detail the theoretical underpinnings of the gender and conflict debate. Successful interventions in post-conflict countries are difficult to ensure, and these interventions become even more challenging when gender mainstreaming is added as a goal. Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming in war to peace transitions is an extremely important element of successful interventions. Institutional obstacles, the lack of training and awareness, the difficult terrain of war to peace transitions, and the socioeconomic and cultural environment all make it difficult to maintain a truly gender-sensitive perspective. The issues involved in post-conflict reconstruction are many and complex, and involve a wide variety of actors. Compounding the problem is the well-known gap between policy and practice. In many cases, international organizations have sound policies and guidelines sitting in their archives at headquarters, but what matters is how well the principles contained therein are applied at field-level. Often, unfortunately, the answer is not well at all. Before the two institutional case studies are presented, this brief section will set out the reasoning behind the selection of these organizations, the benchmarks against which success will be measured, and how the analysis will be presented in the following two chapters.

III.1 SELECTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE CASE STUDIES

Although it is well beyond the scope of this paper to discuss all the social, political, economic and cultural aspects of a transition to peace, some of these areas must be assessed to determine to what degree gender informs the planning, implementation and monitoring of the post-conflict programming. Thus, in selecting the case studies it was important to choose two organizations that between them cover a broad spectrum of activities, ranging from providing emergency humanitarian assistance to long-term institutional development. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Bank are large-scale inter-governmental organizations that have both professed
gender equality as an institutional goal. Both are also involved in the myriad of activities that make up post-conflict reconstruction. The broad range of experiences, and broad range of successes and failures, of these organizations to address gender roles and inequalities make them excellent candidates for this analysis.

Each of the following two chapters will briefly describe the mandate and activities of the organizations, as well as the evolution of their gender mainstreaming policy. In the case of UNHCR, particular attention will be given to the areas of food distribution, camp layout and protection of refugees, health, education and trauma services, support for the participation of refugee women in political life, and training and microcredit initiatives within a refugee context. The World Bank offers a different perspective on post-conflict activities. Guided mainly by its most recent Operational Policy, OP 2.30, the Bank accepts the necessity to adapt its programs to deal with the specific economic and social problems brought about by conflict. Thus, it is concerned less with immediate humanitarian concerns and more with the medium to long-term structural, socioeconomic and institutional developments necessary for sustainable development. The track record of the World Bank in gender mainstreaming is measured against its developing strategy of post-conflict reconstruction. The performance of the two organizations in post-genocide Rwanda is also examined. Finally, some of the major obstacles to gender mainstreaming within these organizations are discussed, and lessons learned are presented in the context of each organization.

III.2 MEASURING ‘SUCCESS’

Determining success in any context is difficult. Indeed, leaving aside the success of gender mainstreaming for a moment, how can the success of a war to peace transition itself even be measured?

“Do we define success in minimalist terms, as associated with, for instance, the onset of negotiations, the conclusion of a formal agreement, or the maintenance of a cease-fire? Or should we associate it with more comprehensive criteria like the demobilization of forces, the laying down of arms, and the eventual restoration of political order. Furthermore, should we include the establishment and
maintenance of participatory, democratic political institutions in our definition of political order and success?\textsuperscript{1}

In favour of time and space this complex question will be left aside. To determine the success of gender mainstreaming it is first necessary to identify what the goals of this strategy are. Undoubtedly the ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. This is done through assessing the gender-differentiated impact and implications of all policies, projects, legislation, and practices at all levels. By doing this, it is possible to ensure that the different needs and interests of men and women are incorporated at every stage of planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and policies in economic, political, social, and institutional spheres. Eventually, gender will be mainstreamed into the entire workings of the organizations, with the result that men and women benefit equally in all areas of activity.

Applying these goals in a post-conflict context can be difficult due to time constraints, as well as the presence of external variables that can negatively impact the mainstreaming strategy. When entering a war-torn society, organizations should be aware of and should understand the gender dynamics and background of the situation. By recognizing how men and women interact in a given society, what their roles, responsibilities and rights are, and how they will be impacted by any international assistance being given influences programming in a positive way. Some ways to ensure this occurs are to develop gender training tools and guidelines, exchange resources and good practices, and to create gender focal points or networks. The subsequent case studies will examine how effectively the World Bank and UNHCR are achieving these aims. In addition, whether there is a clear gender mainstreaming policy in place, whether gender training tools and research have been developed and shared with all staff, and whether programs reflect the objectives of gender mainstreaming all collectively determine 'success'.

\textsuperscript{1} op. cit. Hampson (1996): 9.
IV. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS: THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

IV.1 UNHCR’s Mandate

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was founded in 1950, mainly in response to the massive flows of refugees generated by World War Two. The international community had for some time recognized the need to create an agency to provide assistance and protection to the refugee problem created by the war. UNHCR was initially given a three-year mandate to resettle the 1.2 million refugees in Europe, but every five years its mandate was extended.\(^1\) Indeed, as of 2000, UNHCR’s caseload surpassed 22 million ‘people of concern’ worldwide.\(^2\) The bottom line of UNHCR’s activities is international protection, which means that UNHCR is mandated to protect the basic human rights of refugees, and will ensure that no one is returned involuntarily to a country where he or she fears persecution (the principle of non-refoulement). Over the years, UNHCR has become one of the best field-level operational UN agencies. The mandate of UNHCR has been extended to reflect the integrated role of assistance to legal and physical protection of refugees, and the organization is now charged with a broader range of activities.

IV.2 Evolution of Gender Mainstreaming at UNHCR

The discussion in Chapter II of the gender dimensions of emergency relief operations highlighted why a gender mainstreaming approach should be adopted. Food distribution, camp design and layout, participation of refugee women in decision-making, prevention of SGBV, and the development of microcredit and training initiatives are just some of the ways where UNHCR has an opportunity to assist with the empowerment of

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\(^1\) UNHCR (2000b) *Helping Refugees: An Introduction to UNHCR*. Geneva: UNHCR/Public Information Section: 5.

\(^2\) This number includes both refugees (11.5 million), internally displaced people or IDPs (7 million) and returnees and asylum-seekers. See op. cit, UNHCR (2000b): 6-7. There are many more millions of IDPs around the world that do not receive assistance from UNHCR, but are aided by the International Committee for the Red Cross. The United Nations Secretary-General is currently assessing the policy on IDPs to determine how the mandates of UN agencies can be extended to ensure that this vulnerable group receives protection.
women and the promotion of gender equality. Nevertheless, traditionally, international refugee law and refugee assistance have both been conceptualised in gender-blind terms: the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees uses the pronoun 'he' in all its documentation, and for decades refugee law did not recognize gender-based persecution as a cause of flight. This section will discuss the progression within UNHCR towards a more gender-sensitive approach to refugee protection and assistance, looking at both institutional and policy mechanisms as well as developments in field-level program interventions.

The development of institutional mechanisms

As UNHCR's mandate has grown over the years it has become increasingly evident that women are marginalized within UNHCR’s programming interventions. Along with the evolution of thought in the developing world, in the 1980s, the organization began to develop a strategy for assisting refugee women. UNHCR’s approach towards refugee women and gender equality has not been static throughout time, but has evolved with the organization. Initially, refugee assistance was delivered in a gender-blind manner on the assumption that everyone would have access to the resources and services being provided. In fact, this strategy has favoured men as they have often been the only ones registered, given food ration cards, or included in decision-making processes. Women have, in many cases, been invisible. Eventually, in 1985, Executive Committee (ExCom) Conclusion No. 39 (XXXVI) acknowledged that women had particular protection needs. Although this conclusion was somewhat vague and emphasized the vulnerability of refugee women, it did recognize that UNHCR’s policies and practices had a differentiated impact on men and women. Over the next few years the organization began to develop a strategy to ensure the protection of refugee women. ExCom Conclusion No. 54 (XXXIX), adopted in 1988, was more positive and was a major step forward in the development of a policy for refugee women.

...Supported the High Commissioner’s recognition of refugee women as a vital economic force and of the need to promote their participation as agents as well as beneficiaries in the planning of protection and assistance programmes; Requested

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the High Commissioner to introduce further effective measures towards the integration of women's issues within the programme-planning cycle at all stages, in particular: check lists within technical sector guidelines, gender issues in the Executive Committee country chapters, detailed reference in the UNHCR Programme Manual. Also requested that all project documents submitted for funding purposes include a paragraph on its impact and on the problems and special needs of refugee women and that the periodic narrative reports refer to this aspect as well...  

This symbolized the beginning of UNHCR's commitment to refugee women, a commitment which has evolved to include a range of institutional structures and policy measures supplemented by program initiatives in the field. However, it remains a commitment that is yet to be fulfilled.

- The Office of the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women

   In 1989, the Office of the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women was finally established under great pressure from several donor governments. The first woman to hold the post of Senior Coordinator was Ann Howarth-Wiles, a Canadian seconded from the Canadian International Development Agency. The Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women was responsible for "creating gender awareness in all UNHCR programming and for ensuring that the policies and programmes adopted by the organization to assist refugee women are respected in the field." Initially, Howarth-Wiles wanted to leave a lasting legacy beyond her two-year posting, and so focused on the integration of women refugees into all existing programs instead of designing new projects to target them as a special group. It was also the Office's belief that all refugee men and women should benefit equally from UNHCR's activities, and this could be achieved through efficient planning and wise resource allocation.

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4 UNHCR Executive Committee, Conclusion, No. 54 (XXXIX), 1988.
5 Canada, the United States, and the Nordic countries have led the push for gender equality at UNHCR.
7 op. cit. Hamilton (1999): 17. In fact, Howarth-Wiles remained with UNHCR as the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women for seven years, from 1989-1996. It was not anticipated that an independent unit charged with refugee women would be established, but eventually it became obvious that to fully train staff and mainstream assistance and protection for refugee women would be a major organizational culture transformation. After three years of funding from CIDA the post was eventually integrated into the regular organizational budget. Joyce Mends-Cole is currently the fourth Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women. See Patricia Weiss Fagan (2001) Protection of Refugee Women: Ten Year Review and Assessment of the UNHCR Guidelines, (Unofficial Draft): 6.
Over the past decade, a symbolic advance in the unit’s policy was changing the title of the post to the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women and Gender Equality (SCRWGE). This reflected changing international attitudes from WID to GAD, and also indicated the reality of UNHCR’s organizational mainstreaming policy. The terms of reference for the first Senior Coordinator stated that one of her main tasks was to “elaborate proposals for a policy framework to govern UNHCR’s responses to the special needs and potential of refugee women, incorporating the women-in-development concept adapted appropriately for the refugee context and UNHCR sponsored programs.” Thus, despite the Policy on Refugee Women that clearly elucidates a strategy of mainstreaming, the Senior Coordinator had been operating under the WID approach. Since 1989, there have been four Senior Coordinators, although at times the post has remained unfilled and the fate of the Unit has been under question. Indeed, there is significant pressure from some in senior management to abolish it altogether, despite the fact that currently only two full-time employees work for the Unit. The SCRWGE is currently placed under the Division of Operational Support (DOS), a decision that means that it does not have real financial leverage or enough staff to monitor gender-related practices throughout the entire organization. As Weiss Fagan points out, “its influence derives from collaboration with staff throughout the system, and from the NGO partners and the donors who are committed to the principles [of the SCRWGE].” Thus, there is still a tendency amongst many UNHCR staff members to believe that special “women’s programs” such as vegetable gardens or bread-making projects, or a few lines about the ‘vulnerability of women’ in project proposals fully address the protection needs of refugee women.

Altering the organizational culture and the attitudes of staff members is still a battle that is being fought daily by the SCRWGE, but as will be shown, progress towards gender mainstreaming is being made in small, sometimes faltering steps.

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8 “Gender Equality” was added to the post’s title by the current Senior Coordinator, Joyce Mends-Cole, at the beginning of her term in early 2000.
10 The logic of placing the unit under DOS is that it will then be working at the same level as other cross-cutting issues such children and health and community development. However, gender is an issue that affects every since aspect of UNHCR operations, including children. Therefore one of the most significant obstacles to a more effective gender mainstreaming policy is the lack of authority and influence given to the SCRWGE.
• People-Oriented Planning training

The People-Oriented Planning (POP) training program was developed by the Office of the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women of UNHCR in 1989, and is based on the premise that no refugee populations are alike. Therefore, it is necessary to assess and analyse the different socioeconomic and cultural roles assigned to men and women in any given context in order to design appropriate interventions. POP provides a framework for UNHCR staff to use to ensure that protection and assistance programs account for the gender differences that are present in refugee populations. The central objective of POP is to conduct a refugee profile to clarify "the usual division of labor in roles and responsibilities of men and women and children, the usual system of resource use and distribution, and how all of these usual patterns of life of the refugees have been changed by the fact that they are now refugees." When, and if, POP is used properly it improves the provision and allocation of assistance to refugees. It ensures that certain groups do not suffer from a lack of or inadequate protection, existing refugee resources are utilized, the resources and services provided are appropriate to the circumstances and reach all beneficiaries, and that the distribution mechanisms do not fail vulnerable groups.

Over the years POP training has been modified to incorporate changing international trends and priorities, such as the Beijing Platform for Action established in 1995. Indeed, POP has become an integral part of gender mainstreaming policy within UNHCR:

One aspect of creating [fundamental changes in UNHCR] was a full-scale, people-oriented-planning training programme that had prepared over thirty-six percent of the UNHCR professional staff to use a gender approach in programming assistance and protection activities for refugee. In addition, more than fifty UNHCR staff had been trained to train others to use this approach. This cadre of practitioners gave UNHCR an in-house gender training capability that surpassed that of other multilateral agencies.

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POP training has been used on the ground in several refugee situations with great success, and has been extremely useful in addressing situations of sexual and gender based violence. However, one problem that is now being encountered is that since the training of trainers began, more and more people have been teaching this planning method in various field locations. This decentralization of training has resulted in the course being taught to fit the individual trainers' objectives, which are not always gender-related. The SCRWGE should modify and update the POP program to ensure that its valuable gender component is not lost, and that the case studies used to illustrate the concepts being taught maintain their relevance to current refugee situations.

- Regional gender advisors and the gender networks

UNHCR has four regional gender advisors, in the Americas, the Middle East, Southern Africa and Europe/Central Asia. They only succeed in touching the tip of the iceberg, as huge swaths of refugees do not have a regional gender advisor who is responsible to them. The gender advisors are supplemented by gender focal points within all field offices and the various departments at headquarters. Ideally, that there will be increased coordination and staff will work together to create gender networks across regions, ensuring that gender mainstreaming becomes the responsibility of all offices, and that it is integrated worldwide into programming processes. Training and planning for protection and program staff in these regions is part of the development of the networks, and after holding meetings and workshops they are supposed to submit project proposals to be included in the Country Operations Plans each year. The regional gender advisors face many problems such as lack of coordination in their network, and conflicting expectations from the SCRWGE, regional offices, and country offices where the posts are located. They are separated by vast geographic distances, and also different refugee contexts, thus they find it difficult to coordinate their policies and approaches with each other.

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15 For example, recently it has come to international attention that refugee girls and women are being forced to have sex with aid workers to obtain food in Liberian, Guinean and Sierra Leonean camps. (http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vb/home/opendoc.pdf?id=3c7c9f9a48b1-PARTNERS). If UNHCR tried to implement POP principles to assess why young women are being required to provide sexual favours for food they may find that bringing women in to manage the food distribution process may help limit this problem. See op. cit. UNHCR (1994): 11.
other. Nevertheless, they remain an important resource for the Senior Coordinator and it is hoped that this year, as reported in the 2002 Global Appeal, the number of posts will be increased so that the regional gender advisors can offer more comprehensive and constructive support to the SCRWGE in Geneva.

The role of gender focal point is often filled by the community services officer in any given location, since their duties are perceived to overlap with gender mainstreaming priorities. Within UNHCR, community services officers are often seen as inferior to protection officers, and they tend to have few resources, but broad terms of reference. This means that they rarely have the authority to implement changes, and the responsibility of gender mainstreaming often falls into the shadows. This also contributes to the problem of the perception amongst UNHCR staff that gender issues are not a core protection issue, whereas clearly, they are. A recent review of UNHCR field offices found that the gender focal points rarely had clear terms of reference for their responsibilities in this position, and they rarely had the opportunity to contribute to policy decisions. The end result is that the gender focal points simply tag on a gender component to their formal task (as community services officer, protection officer, repatriation officer, etc.) instead of encouraging a gender perspective in all of the office’s activities.

UNHCR policies on refugee women and gender equality

Concurrent with the development of institutional mechanisms, UNHCR has issued a number of policy documents focused on the protection of refugee women. Over the past decades, guidelines, ExCom Conclusions, policy papers, manuals, and a wide variety of other resources have become available to UNHCR staff and its implementing partners. This section briefly outlines the basic principles of these documents in preparation for the ensuing discussion on whether or not these standards are actually implemented in the field.

18 Within UNHCR there exists a certain degree of tension between the protection and assistance arms. The Department of International Protection tends to concern itself with legal issues such as refugee status determination and repatriation, failing to see the link between legal issues and the provision of assistance. However, if refugee women are not involved in decision-making and do not have access to material assistance this results in a failure to provide them with adequate protection.
• UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women

Following the establishment of the Office of the Senior Coordinator, UNHCR quickly released its 1990 Policy on Refugee Women, building on the ExCom Conclusions from the previous five years and also its obligation as a UN agency to implement the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The policy is based on the principle of gender mainstreaming guided by “the integration of the resources and needs of refugee women into all aspects of programming, rather than creating special women’s projects, and the need for each staff member to ensure that this takes place in his or her area of competence.”20 According to the Policy, every project or program implemented by UNHCR should: involve refugee women as participants and beneficiaries; increase their status and participation within the community; act as a catalyst to give the women access to better employment, education, services and opportunities in their societies; and to take into account the social relationships between refugee women and men.21 The policy sets out organizational goals, policy objectives, and operational objectives that apply throughout UNHCR. However, evaluations by UNHCR over the next years demonstrated that a huge gap between policy and practice existed. In fact, it was found that “significant gaps […] continued to prevail between the reality of actual practices in the field and UNHCR’s policy. The Coordinator identified accountability, recruitment of female staff, training, programme monitoring and evaluation as areas that presented systematic barriers to gender-based programming.”22 To improve compliance it was recommended in 1998 that formulation and dissemination of policies be improved and formalised, project planning and needs assessments for refugee women be conducted, accountability mechanisms be institutionalised, and that adequate financial and human resources must be devoted to this issue.23 Although undoubtedly much progress has been made by a small group of committed individuals through training and educating staff about gender issues, there still remains a lack of financial and human resources.

committed to the objective of gender equality mainstreaming outlined by UNHCR's Policy.

- UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women

The Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women outline in detail the program interventions that should be applied to improve the quality and delivery of legal and physical protection and assistance to all refugee women. The Guidelines were written in 1991, following up and elaborating on the policy of gender mainstreaming within UNHCR, but they also recognized that "special efforts may be needed to resolve problems faced specifically by refugee women." They cover a wide range of program areas such as food distribution, refugee status determination procedures (RSD), physical security, and camp layout.

Currently, two initiatives are under way with regards to the Guidelines. First, for the past two years, the Department of International Protection has been revising and updating the text to maintain its relevance to the current refugee situation. The new document will reflect the particular challenges associated with refugee crises as a result of armed conflict, and will also incorporate the international advances made such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions on gender mainstreaming. Currently, the revision process appears to be stalled at the drafting stage, and there is little inter-departmental cooperation to ensure the completion of this revised version. Second, in coordination with the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC), a study was commissioned in 2001 to assess the system-wide implementation of the Guidelines. Through a range of field visits to five countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Zambia, Pakistan and Turkey) the team discovered that compliance was insufficient in most locations. A number of advances were recorded in areas such as food distribution and registration of refugees, and women are beginning to take on more active leadership and decision-making roles in most of the locations visited. However, several recommendations have been put forward in the review and UNHCR must acknowledge these and work towards improving compliance.

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25 CIDA and the US Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration are also offering support for this project.
- **Sexual Violence Against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response**

  As the guidelines, issued by UNHCR in 1995 point out, "sexual violence is a gross violation of fundamental human rights and, when committed in the context of armed conflict, a grave breach of humanitarian law." The term sexual violence covers a broad range of threats, violence and exploitation, and can be carried out by a wide range of actors, either before, during or after flight, while in asylum, or during repatriation. The wide range of situations where SGBV occurs makes it difficult to create a single set of guidelines, but UNHCR must assist staff to implement procedures to address this serious problem. Since most cases go unreported due to stigma, fear of reprisals, the failure of authorities to take the matter seriously, or the inability of victims to talk to those who could help, reducing the likelihood of instances of SGBV from occurring is extremely important. Some of the most important recommendations are to ensure the victims' access to medical, psychosocial and legal recourse; consider SGBV and other gender-related aspects when designing camps and assistance mechanisms; raise awareness of the issue amongst the male and female refugee population; and ensure that female staff in a confidential, secure location are available for victims who wish to report any incidents. However, it hoped that these Guidelines will be reviewed and updated so that the protection response to this issue can be improved.

  These Guidelines were supplemented with the publication of "Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Refugee Situations" in 2001. This document is based on an inter-agency conference that was held to evaluate progress made since the release of the 1995 Guidelines, and also to develop a new plan of action for prevention and response to SGBV in refugee and IDP settings. One of the main recommendations of the meeting was that a multi-sectoral approach to the problem should be encouraged, and also that training and awareness levels amongst staff should

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28 The 2001 Mid-Year Progress Report indicated that this would happen in 2001, but the results of any evaluation have yet to be reported on. UNHCR (2001e) *Mid-Year Progress Report 2001*. Geneva: UNHCR: 22.
29 This document is based on the Inter-Agency Lessons Learned Conference Proceedings, held in Geneva from 27-29 March 2001.
be increased. Some of the key strategies for prevention suggested by the document include working with men against SGBV, developing a code of conduct for humanitarian workers, and improving women’s safe access to resources.\(^\text{30}\) Recently, a report issued by Save the Children Fund-UK and UNHCR highlighted how important a code of conduct for aid workers and international peacekeepers has become.\(^\text{31}\) It is hoped that the valuable analysis presented in this report will lead to some concrete changes in the approach of international organizations to incidents of sexual violence in refugee and IDP settings.

- **UNHCR Good Practices on Gender Equality Mainstreaming**

  The SCRWGE began to produce a series of research tools entitled “Good Practices on Gender Equality Mainstreaming” in 2000. So far, two volumes have been issued and distributed throughout the organization and to other interested parties.\(^\text{32}\) These reviews assess the progress made by different regions to promote and protect women’s rights and gender equality. They are intended to be used as a guide and reference for all offices, and increase the body of knowledge within UNHCR on how to implement effective gender mainstreaming. This series supplements the large number of formal and informal documentation that is available within the organization about gender mainstreaming and refugee women. However, as pointed out in a recent review, “Many staff-members feel overwhelmed with the volume of policy-related texts. This results in confusion over which guidelines prevail and where the[y] are to be found. In the absence of a consistent dissemination strategy, it cannot be assumed that every staff-member has had access to policy and guidelines.”\(^\text{33}\) In order for these good practices to be useful it is

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\(^{31}\) It has been discovered that gross violations of women’s human rights have been occurring in the refugee camps of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. An investigative team found that international peacekeepers, local and international NGO workers, and community leaders have been forcing children to have sex in exchange for food, money, and other assistance materials. See UNHCR and Save the Children Fund-UK (2001) *Sexual Violence and Exploitation The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone*, Note for Implementing and Operational Partners Based on Initial Findings and Recommendations from Assessment Mission, 22 October-30 November. http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/who/commission/operationalpartners.nsf/Doc?opendoc.pdf?id=3c7cf89e4&tbl=PARTNERS.

\(^{32}\) The two published volumes are entitled: “Building Partnerships Through Equality” (2000a) and “A Practical Guide to Empowerment” (2001d). The SCRWGE plans to release a third volume on refugee women and peacebuilding in the coming months.

\(^{33}\) op. cit. UNHCR (1999a): paragraph 56.
necessary to ensure that they are written in a basic, brief format, and are distributed widely, preferably by IOM/FOM or with a memo issued by senior management.\textsuperscript{34}

**UNHCR program initiatives addressing refugee women and gender equality**

- The Women's Initiatives

The aim of the Women’s Initiatives, developed by UNHCR in conjunction with the United States government, is to socially and economically empower refugee women in a post-conflict setting. Prior to the 1990s, UNHCR had not really been involved in addressing the socioeconomic problems of repatriation. However, after the devastating civil conflicts in Rwanda and Bosnia, it became impossible to ignore the difficulties that widows, female-headed households, and victims of SGBV faced when trying to reintegrate into their societies. To date, Women’s Initiative programs have been launched by the SCRWGE in Rwanda (1996), Bosnia (1996) and Kosovo (1999).

Funding for these initiatives should be increased, and ventures in new countries should be launched in cooperation with local women to give them the capacity-building and education skills that they need for their future empowerment. Currently, planning for a Sierra Leone Women’s Initiative is underway, and a gender consultant has met with local women to develop a strategy for this project: “it is anticipated that the broad-based women’s forum will provide a foundation for quick and accurate needs assessment and project evaluation […] Secretariats of the forum were also established in accessible country areas to facilitate outreach activities.”\textsuperscript{35} The Bosnian Women’s Initiative was led by UNHCR in cooperation with local Bosnian women’s groups. In this case, four activity areas were sponsored: psychological support, community services, education, and income generating projects.\textsuperscript{36} As pointed out by a review of this initiative,

a specific fund to support the initiatives of women in post-conflict situations opens critical spaces in which women and men can work to promote gender equality. The BWI is a critical source of support to women at an individual and community level through income-generation; community-based and skills-building projects.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34}IOM/FOM stands for Inter-Office Memo/Field-Office Memo.
\textsuperscript{35}op. cit. UNHCR (2001b): 53.
These initiatives have faced obstacles and difficulties, but they do offer a novel approach to the age-old problem of empowering women in otherwise disempowering circumstances.

- Gender Advisors in the Emergency Response Teams

From December 2000 to January 2001, UNHCR deployed an Emergency Response Team (ERT) to the Sierra Leonean-Guinean border to conduct an operation to relocate refugees from insecure areas near the border where rebels from Sierra Leone were launching attacking on refugees to sites further inside Guinea. For the first time, the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women and Gender Equality sent a Gender Advisor to serve as part of the emergency team.38 The contract of the advisor was subsequently extended until June 2001, and for six months she moved between the two countries ensuring the protection and assistance activities implemented by UNHCR were gender-sensitive. The gender advisor found that implementing measures to protect women and girls at an early stage in the emergency increased the likelihood that the needs of both men and women would continue to be addressed later on. The three areas of activity that the gender advisor chose to focus on were addressing sexual and gender based violence, improving the safety and security of camp facilities, and to encourage consultation with refugee women about their needs and concerns to ensure that their interests were not de-prioritised in the emergency phase. The advisor found that levels of gender-awareness varied widely across regions and organizations, and that encouraging a cross-sectoral approach to the problem was necessary.

In both Guinea and Sierra Leone, it was clear that to effectively address gender-related issues, responsibility for this task had to move beyond the implementing partners engaged in SGBV programmes, to include those delivering assistance in all other sectors of the operations. The key challenge in this case was how to obtain strong commitment from partners who have traditionally not been required to employ a gender lens in the field.39

The Gender Advisor worked closely with UNHCR staff, local community members, NGO implementing partners, and grassroots women’s organizations to identify areas where action needed to be taken and to assist with developing detailed responses to the protection needs of refugee women and girls. Again, the findings of this project were that more attention needs to be given to training staff and providing them with the tools to identify and solve gender-related problems, there needs to be a cross-sectoral ‘buy-in’ of all UNHCR to ensure organization-wide responsibility for these issues, men need to be thoroughly integrated into the programs, and more resources must be diverted towards initiatives like this so that they are able to have a broader and deeper impact. The advisor continues to work with UNHCR offices in Guinea and Sierra Leone, and her post has now been taken over by the Africa Bureau, signifying the acceptance of this regional bureau to address important gender issues. Also, in late 2001, a Gender Advisor was dispatched to assist the UNHCR Emergency Response Team sent to Pakistan to deal with the Afghan crisis. However, this only occurred after much bureaucratic wrangling, and there was reluctance among senior level managers to accord the Advisor the authority and rank her professional background and terms of reference for the posting required. She is currently on the job, but faces significant problems due to financial constraints and a lack of cooperation from the ERT that is in place.40

• Global Dialogue with Refugee Women

Last year the SCRWGE, in cooperation with UNHCR regional gender advisors and the field offices, held a process of local and regional consultations with refugee women culminating in the Global Dialogue with Refugee Women held from 20-22 June 2001.41 The aim of this process was to give refugee women a voice in assessing UNHCR’s performance with regards to its commitments to refugee women. UNHCR staff, NGO partners, and refugee women met together in over twenty locations around the world to discuss issues of concern and suggestions for moving forward and improving protection and assistance for refugee women in a variety of situations. As a result of these local and

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40 This information was obtained during informal conversations held with the SCRWGE Unit in December 2001.
regional consultations fifty refugee women were nominated to attend the meetings in Geneva. The women identified personal safety and security, access to the rights associated with asylum, access to basic goods and services, and increasing participation in decision-making and peace initiatives as the main priorities for refugee women. The refugee women met with senior-level managers, including the High Commissioner, Ruud Lubbers, to discuss their recommendations in the hopes of receiving some reciprocal commitments. Although the response was not as enthusiastic as the SCRWGGE had hoped, the High Commissioner did commit to take action in five areas including SGBV, registration, and food distribution and management mechanisms. The process that brought about the meeting in Geneva was an important advance for UNHCR, an organization that surprisingly does not make consultation with refugees – its supposed beneficiaries – a regular, institutionalized process. It is hoped that the networks formed during this process will endure and that similar consultations will occur on a regular basis to ensure more active involvement of refugees in their own protection and assistance.

A decade later: How well is UNHCR doing?

The lack of progress, or perhaps rather the remaining gaps between policy and practice in UNHCR, should come as no surprise. Throughout the last decade, senior management has had access to a number of reports that have been commissioned by ExCom and others to determine to what extent the Guidelines and Policy are being followed. The results have consistently described the shortcomings within the organization and made recommendations for change, although there is little evidence to indicate these recommendations have been taken into consideration. As stated in the Mid-Year Report,

UNHCR continues to pursue gender equality and the full integration of the rights, needs and capacities of refugee women in all UNHCR’s programmes and activities. This is done in two ways: through programmes that specifically target refugee women and girls to redress discrimination against them and promote their equal enjoyment of resource and protection; and through the integration of a gender perspective into existing activities, policies and programmes.42

42 op. cit. UNHCR (2001e): 22.
Nevertheless, budgeting, accountability, and staffing procedures all continue to demonstrate that this pursuit is far from over. For many years, women have been one of the so-called ‘priority areas’ of UNHCR. In reality, although it carries certain reporting requirements, this distinction has not contributed to an increase in gender mainstreaming within the organization. While it is unquestionable that the general level of awareness of UNHCR staff about gender issues has increased, without strong management leadership and sanctioning when programs do not take these issues into account, there is no incentive for real changes to be made. As pointed out during the 21st Standing Committee meeting on 25-27 June 2001,

UNHCR has made important strides in empowering refugee women through initiatives such as the project to encourage Kosovar women returnees to participate in the emerging economy. There have been projects to assist Rwandan and Guatemalan returnee women to realize their rights to property. Yet the challenge remains to systematically implement policies and guidelines at the field level in all refugee settings.43

There has not been a proportionate increase in funding for these alleged policy priorities. In fact, of all three policy priorities Refugee Women has the smallest budget. Thus, it is not a time for complacency, but a time for action. UNHCR’s policy on gender mainstreaming does give hope that positive changes are being made. Compared to where the organization stood twenty years ago, it is clear that gender has been taken on board as a real concern. To ensure that UNHCR does not lose the valuable momentum it has been gaining over the past decade, considerable efforts towards achieving gender equality must continue to be made.

IV.3 Rwanda

The Rwandan refugee crisis required a response unprecedented in UNHCR’s history. More than 100,000 people crossed the Rwandan border into Tanzania in one 48-hour period in April 1994, and in the months following the massacres more than one million people were displaced. The massive refugee flows generated by the genocide caused hundreds of thousands of desperate people to look to UNHCR for protection and assistance. UNHCR had been operating in the region for years, dealing with recurrent
influxes of refugees from Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The example of UNHCR’s response to the Rwandan crisis is useful to a discussion on gender mainstreaming because it was one of the first times that UNHCR’s developing gender policies were put to the test in a large-scale emergency situation. The following evaluation will attempt to assess the actions taken by UNHCR in responding to this crisis through a gender lens, with reference to the institutional and policy mechanisms that were in place at the time to determine what lessons should have been learned from this experience.

**Physical protection**

Undoubtedly, physical protection issues were the most major concern of UNHCR during its Rwandan operation. The genocide and its aftermath placed the entire population at risk from violent attacks or reprisals. The refugee camps were used by combatants to stage attacks, recruit new supporters, and the valuable food and material assistance being offered by the relief agencies was frequently looted. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were used as a tactic during the war, affecting the majority of Rwanda’s female population. From the beginning, there was undoubtedly a conflict between addressing women’s needs and the fast-paced, survival-based nature of the situation. The programming budgets were tight, and there were divisions between protection, community services, health, and other staff that prevented a systematic approach to the problem of protecting women’s rights. Although the 1995 Guidelines were not available at the outset of the crisis, by the time the refugee camps were established all staff should have been aware of them. Nevertheless, there was a tendency amongst staff to see the problem as ‘cultural’ and not included under the mandate of UNHCR. There was a definite separation between what were perceived to be protection issues, and what were seen as ‘women’s issues’. To the harm of Rwandan women, the link between the two was not acknowledged and the valuable lessons and recommendations contained within the Guidelines were not used.

UNHCR and other organizations conducted many evaluations after the Rwandan emergency to assess what could have been done differently. One of the major findings was that insufficient attention was paid to the need to identify the composition and social,

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43 NGO Statement on Refugee Women, UNHCR Standing Committee, 21st Meeting, 25-27 June.
political and cultural background of the population. A better understanding of the situation may have permitted UNHCR to identify the risks women were facing in the highly militarised camps at an earlier stage.

A stronger protection presence in the field, combined with a better understanding of the refugees’ background, would have had a number of beneficial effects, notwithstanding the extreme complexity of the problems involved. The protection needs of women and children would have been identified and addressed more swiftly, the search for credible interlocutors among the refugees would have been facilitated and the crucial switch from a food distribution system involving a frequently corrupt leadership to the more family-based could have been expedited.44

Clearly, this is situation where POP could have been used by UNHCR and NGO staff to identify and address gender-related issues in the emergency situation. In addition, the 1991 Guidelines clearly state that food distributed through male networks is often diverted causing a negative impact on women and children. Suggested program interventions include involving women in all food-related decision-making processes or designating women as the primary point of contact for emergency and long-term food distribution.45 These Guidelines would have been available to all staff members, and should have been consulted in the development of programming responses in the wake of the Rwandan genocide. However, in this case external factors may also have been to blame for the lack of gender-sensitive planning. Hamilton contends that UNHCR was unable to adopt a more gender-sensitive approach because the various militias and combatants were effectively controlling operations in the camps and prevented relief agencies from carrying out their work.46

Another evaluation also pointed to the necessity to adopt “a community-based approach, involving close cooperation between protection, medical and community services staff, both of UNHCR and NGOs, and a central role for the community itself.”47 It is clear that most major decisions were made without the consultation of the female refugee population, which compromised their security. Human Rights Watch’s (HRW)

report on SGBV in the Tanzanian refugee camps highlighted the prevalence of domestic violence and other forms of SGBV, a lack of coordination amongst protection and community services officers, and the consistent failure of staff to implement the 1991 and 1995 Guidelines related to the protection of women. As HRW points out in its recommendations, "UNHCR needs to ensure a more institutionalized response if it is to address consistently and effectively the protection needs of refugee women from the start of an emergency [and the] UNHCR guidelines on the protection of refugee women and the prevention of sexual violence must be more speedily and consistently implemented in all refugee situations." In Rwanda, UNHCR was also constrained by the stigma and reluctance of refugee to approach the agency in dealing with problems of SGBV. Nevertheless, UNHCR staff were slow in addressing their potential role in reducing the opportunities for SGBV to take place. For example, approximately 65% of the rape cases that occurred in the camps in Ngara were while women were collecting firewood, a scenario that has repeated itself elsewhere around the world and has only recently been systematically addressed by UNHCR. Different strategies to address the problem of SGBV were tried, and one successful project involved the hiring of female guardians to patrol the camp. This resulted in more refugee women coming forward with protection-related problems, women gained new skills and respect, and awareness about gender-related issues was raised throughout the camp. Thus, although many problems faced by refugee women in the camps went unaddressed by UNHCR, there were some encouraging signs that women were being involved in decision-making and consultative processes, and that when they were brought in to act as guardians and community services workers, the problems of refugee women in emergency situations could be solved.

**Rwanda Women’s Initiative**

The Rwanda Women’s Initiative (RWI) was launched during the mass refugee returns of 1996 in association with the Ministry for Gender and Women in Development (MIGEPROFE) and various grassroots women’s organizations. The primary focus of the RWI was to socially, economically and politically empower returning refugee women through skills-training, income-generation and education opportunities, and to support them with reintegration. The longer term objective, however, was to build the capacity of indigenous women and institutions, thereby raising awareness of women’s rights. This allowed the RWI to play a valuable role in the difficult transition from emergency to long-term development in a post-conflict context.

The RWI did succeed in offering important support to many women during the early stages of the project. However, over time, there were staff turnarounds and cutbacks, funding shortages, and a lack of commitment from the various parties to forge networks and work with local refugee women in designing appropriate capacity-building projects. As pointed out in a review of the Rwanda Women’s Initiative, massive fluctuations in budget levels due to “a lack of a shared understanding and agreement within UNHCR about the potential and role of women’s initiatives in post-conflict societies” have hampered the effectiveness of the core projects. The lack of funding, resources, and commitment from UNHCR headquarters staff are the greatest challenges facing the RWI. Also, at the planning level, there has consistently been a lack of clear objectives and strategies for achieving them through the initiative. In late 1996, the expectations of many Rwandan women that they would become involved in the projects were raised, where as in reality, funding shortfalls prevented their inclusion. This suggests “the need for realistic assessments of local capacity and coordinating mechanisms at the outset of any Initiative.” In addition to a more comprehensive assessment process, it is vital that there is effective coordination between the various actors (UNHCR, implementing partners, local women’s groups, and government

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54 *op. cit.* WCRWC (2001): 14. In 1997 the RWI was funded with $2.6 million, yet in 2000 that amount fell to a mere $300,000.
officials), and a clear monitoring process to ensure that problems are addressed and project improvements are made. Although the RWI was an important mechanism for the engagement and empowerment of women in a post-conflict context, it did not prove to be a vehicle for wider gender mainstreaming within UNHCR: "RWI soon became the responsibility of a sole focal point in UNHCR, and lost the engagement of different field, protection and program officers. As a result, there was limited ownership or buy-in of the initiative, counter to the objective of gender mainstreaming."56

The future of the RWI has been in question for some time, but regardless of what the outcome of the project is, these initiatives are undoubtedly central to UNHCR's mandate. They contribute to the protection of women, and also to their return and reintegration, one of the 'durable solutions' that UNHCR works towards. In addition, they demonstrate that undertaking gender programming in an emergency context is possible, and also necessary.57 However, the in-depth evaluation of the RWI found that little gender analysis of the impact of these projects was done, and that men were not sufficiently involved in the empowerment of women in the Rwandan context. In the future, it is hoped that further evaluations of these initiatives will be conducted, resulting in a clearer articulation of priorities and strategies and a guide for UNHCR staff on how to successfully implement and support these valuable projects.

IV.4 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

It is possible to draw one major conclusion from this detailed assessment of UNHCR’s gender mainstreaming policy and activities. There is no shortage of policy and institutional mechanisms within the organization clarifying and outlining the gender mainstreaming strategy that UNHCR claims to follow. However, there is a systematic and repeated failure in applying these principles on the ground. UNHCR does not seem to have found an effective way to translate policy into practice with the result that the protection and assistance of refugee women continues to fall short of acceptable levels and staff do not routinely approach the challenges of emergency relief through a gender

lens. The three reasons for this appear to be funding issues, the lack of institutional senior-level commitment, and the lack of accountability of individual staff.

**Lack of institutional commitment, especially at the senior management level.** Within UNHCR there is a clear conflict between the publicized aims of the organization and the individuals who control the resources and priorities of UNHCR programming. Until the commitment level of senior managers and country officers increases, it is unlikely that gender mainstreaming policy will ever receive the practical and financial support that are required to make it effective. All evaluations that have been conducted on gender mainstreaming have pointed to this as a significant obstacle. Senior management made five commitments to refugee women during the Global Dialogue, and it is hoped that this is an indication of more support from UNHCR’s leaders.58

**Lack of financial and human resources dedicated to gender mainstreaming activities.** UNHCR, although going through a period of adjustment, has a significantly large budget at its disposal: of approximately $800 million, less than $1 million is devoted to the activities of the SCRWGE. In addition, even where funding for gender-related projects exists, there can be a problem in getting field offices to submit project proposals that qualify for the ear-marked funds. If UNHCR is serious about pursuing gender equality mainstreaming within the organization, then budgeting decisions must take into account the cross-cutting nature of gender activities. All divisions and offices should have engendered budgeting procedures and staff should be trained in soliciting, designing and implementing projects that empower women.

**There is increasing donor pressure for more aggressive gender mainstreaming within UNHCR.** UNHCR is under increasing pressure from its donors to increase funding and support for gender mainstreaming. At the Standing Committee and ExCom meetings of 2001, the issue of gender equality mainstreaming was discussed, and several donors raised their concerns that more evaluation should be conducted to determine how well UNHCR is performing. This is encouraging, and hopefully the United States,
Canada, the Nordics, and other countries will continue to emphasize the need for gender equality mainstreaming within UNHCR.

**Analysis must be done on why the gap between policy and practice exists.** Although plenty of analysis and evaluations exists about why UNHCR staff do not practice the policy that the organization preaches, an extensive, internal review by the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit should be conducted to determine *why* this discrepancy is occurring. Gender mainstreaming is still seen as an add-on policy not an integral approach to all of UNHCR’s activities.

**There should be immediate development and implementation of the Gender Learning Program, and it should be made compulsory for all staff wishing to attain management-level posts.** UNHCR must develop a gender learning program to train its staff in how to identify and resolve gender-related problems. This training course should be compulsory for all staff entering management level positions and should include an on-going component that encourages staff to take practical examples from their work and teach themselves how to approach the problems. Once UNHCR trains a cadre of committed managers it is more likely that gender mainstreaming will take hold. The SCRWGE is currently in the early stages of developing this program with the support of UNHCR’s training division.

**Mechanisms of accountability and evaluation of gender mainstreaming policy must be institutionalized and a certain standard of performance required of all UNHCR staff.** One of the major obstacles to the integration of a gender mainstreaming strategy in all areas of work is the lack of accountability. Until the High Commissioner issues a directive to the effect that promotions and performance evaluations will depend in part on the staff member fulfilling certain gender-related performance criteria, it is unlikely that staff will take ownership of the idea. In all country planning and operations reports and project proposals a gender-reporting component should be absolutely necessary, and should be more extensive than a list of the women-targeted programs that are being

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58 Encouragingly, these commitments are outlined in the 2002 Global Appeal.
implemented. Currently, the SCRWGE tries to review as many UNHCR documents as possible, editing in a gender perspective where it does not already exist. However, the volume of reports and proposals generated by UNHCR each month is huge, and even if the SCRWGE received the documents in time before printing, which it rarely does, the office does not have the capacity to examine each and every one. Therefore, all staff should be trained in writing reports from a gender perspective, so that eventually gender will be mainstreamed throughout all UNHCR publications.

Although there is no institutional culture of gender mainstreaming, projects and efforts backed by enthusiastic individuals have made a positive impact. It is encouraging that there does exist within UNHCR several committed individuals throughout the organization that continue to press for change. These people are able to make a limited positive impact through their enthusiasm, innovation and dedication to the cause of mainstreaming gender equality.

Building on the resources of refugee men and women. Building on local capacities is one of the most effective ways of ensuring effective protection and assistance to refugees. UNHCR’s gender mainstreaming strategy should involve and build on the efforts of refugee men and women, because not only does this improve UNHCR’s performance, but it allows refugees to work towards a sustainable future, especially in wartorn societies. The Global Dialogue and local/regional consultation process held in 2001 is an example of such a strategy, and it is hoped that the SCRWGE will have the support to continue and extend this initiative in the coming years.
V. THE WORLD BANK: SOCIOECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION IN WARTORN SOCIETIES

The examples given so far relate primarily to emergency assistance in a post-conflict context. This chapter will present the World Bank’s role in working towards engendered post-conflict reconstruction. The World Bank has been refocusing its activities over the past five years to adapt its institutions and programs to the new scourge of endemic civil conflict throughout much of the developing world. Post-conflict economies tend to suffer from destroyed infrastructure, depleted or corrupt markets, weak currencies, and the lack of institutional capacity. These all pose serious challenges to the pursuit of sustainable development. The World Bank intervenes in war to peace transitions at a critical point between the short-term goal of emergency humanitarian assistance and the long-run goals of economic growth, institutional reform, and sustainable development. It is crucial to bridge the gap between these two periods to facilitate and reduce the socioeconomic costs of the transition to peace. However, what is not immediately clear is how the Bank intends to integrate the ever-present post-conflict gender dynamics into its approach. This chapter will examine the separate evolutions of Bank gender and post-conflict policy in attempt to discern why these two complex, yet intimately related, concepts have not been integrated into a broader strategy.

V.1 THE MANDATE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD BANK

The World Bank and its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), were formed at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 to aid in the postwar reconstruction of the Western European economies. The mandates of the two institutions were separated, with the IMF being responsible for macroeconomic stabilization and surveillance, and the World Bank predominantly concerned with the structural and social aspects of development. Since then, the World Bank has evolved to become the largest international development agency in the world. In Fiscal Year 2001, the World Bank provided $17 billion in loans to over 100 client countries around the world. The Bank is made up of five organizations: the International Bank for Reconstruction and
Development (IBRD), the International Development Agency (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Financial Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The Bank undertakes development projects across a wide range of sectors (health, transport, education, governance, etc.) and encourages economic policy reform in recipient countries to promote sustainable growth and development.

One of the key tenets of the Bank is that it is a politically neutral organization. As stated in the Articles of Agreement: “The Bank and its officers shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions...” However, despite this apolitical stance, one can look as far back as the Cold War era for evidence of international financial institutions bestowing aid on certain regimes and withholding it from others, often with detrimental socioeconomic and distributional effects. “Injections of large sums of money into a society inevitably affect the balance of power within it. The real issue is not whether political effects will result, but what these will be.” This is especially true in post-conflict situations, where institutional structures are weak, society is often polarized, and socioeconomic infrastructure and development are poor. As Boyce and Pastor (1997) emphasize, in post-conflict countries, there is an inherent tradeoff between macroeconomic and political stabilization. For example, fiscal policies, such as deficit financing of government expenditures, can influence the degree of social tensions, and thus economic policies must be designed explicitly with peace consolidation in mind. Indeed, “it is clear that the relationship of politics and economics in collapsing African states at the present time is perverse, with political instability worsening economic performance and a weak economy failing to provide an autonomous economic kingdom

1 IBRD provides capital, technical assistance and policy advice to countries, IDA provides interest-free, long-term loans to poor countries with per capita income of less than $925, the IFC promotes sustainable private sector investment and technical advice, and MIGA promotes foreign direct investment (FDI) in emerging economies.
Thus, although the World Bank is primarily concerned with socioeconomic development, political development and the political consequences of its actions are becoming increasingly important and are inseparable from the organization's 'pure economic' aims.

V.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE BANK'S POLICY ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Bank's consideration of gender issues began with the realization that gender equality could, in fact, have a positive effect on economic development and poverty alleviation. In the 1980s, it was finally acknowledged that where women have more access to resources and are able to participate in decision-making, development was more inclusive, sustainable, and successful. Indeed, the main goal of the World Bank is to promote development in a profitable way: "As a banking institution, its goal is to increase its profitability through its lending operations; as a development institution, its principal goal is to increase economic productivity and stimulate economic growth in developing countries." Thus, a key step in the process was to link women's issues to the promotion of these aims. In response to many of its critics, the invisible contribution of women to economic growth and social development was finally made visible. The Bank followed international trends with the establishment of its first WID advisor in 1977, trends that were strengthened in the following decades with Nairobi in 1985, and Beijing in 1995. However, "for the most part, the World Bank has followed, not led, developments in analysis and action on women-in-development issues." In addition, at the beginning, its programs generally benefited women as mothers rather than as workers. That is, Bank WID programming focused on addressing gender in women's reproductive role (health, education, population) rather than addressing their productive roles.

In the 1990s, the Bank made a shift to gender mainstreaming in part because its previous WID strategy failed to make concrete and lasting positive changes. "Those projects often suffered from government resistance, poor design, inadequate resources,

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poor supervision, or neglect during implementation.” However, as Buvinic goes on to point out, “mainstreaming will not necessarily solve these problems; instead, the reasons for the failings of these efforts may yield the same results, if not worse, in mainstreamed approaches.” Thus, like UNHCR, the World Bank must negotiate the fine balance between supporting overall gender mainstreaming within its organization and policies, and the need for specific projects targeting women. The following sections will discuss the major institutional, policy, and program developments, and how they relate to the Bank’s evolving strategy on gender mainstreaming.

Institutional Mechanisms

The Bank’s first WID advisor, an external senior UN official, was appointed in January 1977, ushering in a new phase in the World Bank. An informal working group within the Bank suggested that a WID advisor post be established, since it “would show the Bank’s willingness to address women’s issues, and the WID advisor could handle the growing operational and external relations workload.” The WID advisor played a key role in providing technical assistance for project planning, and training and informing staff through a series of “Notes on Women in Development” and workshops. Although this was an important step in the firm establishment of gender-related priorities within the Bank, the advisor faced many problems including a lack of resources and official directives on the issue of women in development. Indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s, WID or gender issues were rarely discussed in official speeches, or mentioned in any great detail in operational manuals, directives, or sector papers. In 1985, at the end of the WID advisor’s posting, the Bank changed tack and officially committed to placing more emphasis on developing operational objectives to solidify the clear relationship between WID and development. The leadership of the Bank, especially the President and the

10 It is beyond the scope of this paper to explain in detail the many phases and elements of the World Bank’s approach to gender mainstreaming. For the purposes of this paper it is only necessary to outline some of the major developments and assess them on the basis of whether they include some measures of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict reconstruction.
Development Committee, gave credibility and support to the new focus on WID at this time it began to push hard for positive change.

In 1986, a new WID unit was established, and in 1990, regional WID coordinator posts were established by an operating memorandum. “High-level support, adequate resources, and a work program jointly agreed upon by the center and the regions were followed by a large increase in outputs in the portfolio, and in discussion papers, guidelines, and dissemination efforts.”\(^{13}\) Over time, there has been a decentralization of authority to the regions, and they have played a major role in conducting analysis and giving operational direction. The Gender and Development Board was created in 1997, and was placed as a sector board within the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, on the same par as finance, energy, health, poverty and the environment. This board leads the Bank’s policy on gender and is composed of representatives from the six country regions, the four networks, and staff from other key areas. The Gender and Development Group is then responsible for implementing the strategies put forth by the Board. According to the World Bank President, James D. Wolfensohn, this positioning of the Gender and Development Group “is a signal that the Bank is committed to integrating gender into country strategies, economic policy, and poverty reduction.”\(^{14}\) Another important structure within the Bank is the External Gender Consultative Group (EGCG). This group was established in late 1996, and is designed to promote dialogue on gender-related issues between the Bank, its partners, civil society, and other actors. The members of this group meet annually to assess implementation of the Bank’s gender policy and provide guidance on key issues. Compared to UNHCR, the Bank does not have clear central institutions in place charged with carrying out a coherent gender mainstreaming policy. Certainly, the institutions that exist are a valuable source of technical assistance and guidance, but the Bank has tended to follow a decentralized, suggestive approach rather than prescribing action on gender interventions from the top down. This strategy appears to be quite successful as the Bank does have a relatively well-developed knowledge base on gender issues. However, it is questionable how well this knowledge is applied on a daily basis.

\(^{13}\) op. cit. Murphy (1995): 53.
Policy Mechanisms

The World Bank took some time to develop its Operational Directive on the Gender Dimension of Development, apparently preferring to first establish legitimacy and consensus for its (at the time) WID policy. Since then, this Directive has guided Bank policy, and has served as the basis for a number of other program initiatives. The Operational Policy 4.20 and the recently released strategy paper are the two most important policy documents for the purpose of this paper, and these are outlined below.

- OP 4.20: Gender Dimensions of Development
  This policy was developed in 1999, and the overall aim is to “reduce gender disparities and enhance women’s participation in the economic development of their countries by integrating gender considerations in its country assistance program.”\(^{15}\) It states that the Bank should assist clients to develop gender-sensitive programs and policies to ensure that overall development efforts in any country benefit both men and women. Officials should be trained in gender analysis, using gender-disaggregated data in programs as much as possible. Also, legal and regulatory frameworks should be reviewed, and changes should be encouraged wherever possible to enhance women’s access to resources. The OP also indicates that gender analysis conducted in a variety of areas, such as ESW, should be incorporated into the overall Country Assistance Strategy. Again, as has been mentioned above, the OP states that gender strategies, program design, implementation and monitoring are all done at country-level.

- New Gender Mainstreaming Strategy
  The World Bank recently released its new strategy on integrating gender into the Bank’s activities. This strategy builds on other Bank documents such as Enhancing Women’s Participation in Economic Development (1994) and Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice (2001). Gender inequalities are becoming ever more apparent in developing countries, lowering the short-term and long-term productivity of labour, increasing poverty, slowing development, and impacting

negatively on social development. These facts necessitate that international development actors take a strong stance on reducing gender inequalities, and empowering women through access to resources, more rights, and a role in decision-making. As stated in this new report,

The opportunities for improving the development impact of the Bank’s work through gender mainstreaming include making Bank interventions more responsive to country gender conditions and commitments; making these interventions more strategic; and improving the alignment of Bank policies, processes and resources to support such interventions. 16

The Bank’s new strategy is based on three pillars: to periodically prepare Country Gender Assessments (CGA), develop policy and operational interventions to respond to the findings of the assessments, and to monitor and evaluate the implementation and results of these interventions. The strategy places a major emphasis on cooperation with client governments, other donors and civil society to develop the CGAs, and also to implement country-specific gender-sensitive interventions. Although this points to a more participatory approach – a laudable goal – it is questionable to rely so extensively on the expertise and gender-responsiveness of other actors. In many of the client countries of the Bank, governments severely restrict the rights and opportunities of women, and gender analysis rarely informs their policies. It will be important that the Bank balances the need to consult and confer with other actors, and the need to ensure that the gender dimension is not lost. 17 The strategy also recommends that a gender dimension be integrated into sectoral analytic work, including Social Assessments, the criteria used when elaborating Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the criteria used to determine the adequacy of Country Assistance Reports and Sector Strategy Papers, and in the quality assessment of projects and analytical work. 18

17 The integration of gender into operations will be discussed further in the section below on program interventions.
Program Interventions

Since the mid-1970s, the World Bank has been implementing a number of measures to improve the integration of gender into its operations at field-level. This section will examine the most recent initiatives, to provide a brief overview of where the Bank stands on putting its extensive policies on gender mainstreaming into action. The Bank treats gender as a cross-cutting issue relevant to all countries and sectors, and identifying how it can link to poverty reduction in each case is the foundation of its mainstreaming policy. However, as will be shown below, there can be difficulties in ensuring up-to-date gender analysis in project planning and design.

- Country Gender Assessments

Through previous evaluation procedures, the Bank has found that it is effective to conduct gender analysis before implementing a country strategy to identify the distribution of resources and power between men and women in a society. By examining the gender context, it is possible to design poverty reduction and economic growth measures that benefit a greater proportion of society. As detailed in the new strategy paper, “the main conclusions and recommendations of the CGA are then used as the basis for discussions with the government and other stakeholders about any desirable gender-related actions. These conclusions, recommendations, and discussions will ultimately inform the Bank’s country assistance program.” Thus, the gender assessment will be a key input in all areas of project planning. After setting out the gender-based inequalities in a given country’s economic, political and social spheres, a gender review of the Bank’s ongoing activities in that country will be done. This will be situated in the specific country context and a focus will be placed on institutional and legal frameworks governing access to and control over resources. Gender-responsive interventions will be suggested in the CGA and will be developed and implemented in coordination with the government and civil society in the client country.

Although the strategy for creating and using CGAs is quite comprehensive, there appear to be three limitations. If CGAs are to become the key mechanism for gender analysis within the Bank then the time-scale for conducting these examinations should be
reconsidered. If, as the strategy suggests, they are only done every five years, it is possible that important gender dimensions will be overlooked. This holds especially true for post-conflict countries, where it has been shown that gender relations are under constant flux. Therefore, the Bank should also develop an interim measure to account for some kind of gender analysis in countries that are between CGAs. Second, if the CGAs are to be used by staff to inform the comprehensive Country Assistance Strategies, then it is possible that individual staff will lose the skills required to conduct independent gender analysis at the micro level, relying on the gender-informed CAS to provide any needed information. It is therefore important that training of staff is maintained and that gender analysis also continues to be an important element of sectoral work and project planning reports. Third, as mentioned before, it will be important to ensure some kind of standardization within CGAs if external consultation is to be part of the process.

- Integrating gender analysis into other Bank activities

Social Assessments are one of the main ways for the Bank to determine the social context of its projects and to ensure that social dimensions are addressed throughout the entire project cycle. One of the main reasons that gender should be integrated into its Social Assessments is that it can be hard to reach women through many of the conventional surveying methods that deal with leaders and officials, who are mostly men. Also, a gender analysis contributes to an understanding of gender dimensions in the household and community, and what social and cultural constraints exist that affect men’s and women’s access to resources. These are all important considerations since they can influence the effectiveness of a project, and it is useful for the Bank to identify and address them as early as possible. In fact,

Social assessments are clearly an important and effective tool for incorporating gender concerns into World Bank operations. All social assessments can, at little extra cost, include gender issues in household surveys, focus group interviews, and other methods used. In some cases gender may not be an important consideration for a project, but this can only be established reliably after the completion of a social assessment that has successfully integrated gender.20

Gender has also been included as a chapter in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Sourcebook, where it is treated as a ‘cross-cutting’ issue, along with participation, governance, community-driven development and the environment. On the whole, the sourcebook is relatively gender-sensitive with most of the sections considering the gender dimensions of different areas of Bank activity. For example, the health chapter discusses the importance of maternal and reproductive health and the gender inequalities in access to healthcare. The Bank sees the integration of gender into the PRSPs as important because it brings gender issues into focus at the country-level, and it also provides an opportunity to have a greater role in decision-making through the participatory nature of the PRSP process.\textsuperscript{21} Beginning in FY76, some Economic and Sector Work (ESW) projects began to have a WID component or focus. As pointed out by Murphy, “success in achieving any objective depends on many technical, economic, and institutional factors outside gender attention, and attention to gender issues by itself does not determine results.”\textsuperscript{22} Many statistics were gathered and reviews done to determine what percentage of projects contained a gender component, and what the sustainability and success rate of these were.\textsuperscript{23} The new strategy indicates that certain sectors will be designated as high priority and gender analysis will continue to inform sectoral and project work in these areas.\textsuperscript{24} The Bank also claims that gender analysis in adjustment and programmatic lending is improving overall performance. In Rwanda, the Emergency Recovery Credit is designed to encourage legal and institutional changes in agriculture and the labour market to eliminate discrimination against women.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{How successful are the Bank’s gender policies?}

When examining the evolution of WID and gender mainstreaming at the World Bank, what is immediately evident is that there does not seem to be any lack of policy or mainstreaming documents, but there is a real problem with determining the impact of the money and resources devoted to this issue. As the members of the Bank’s EGCG report,

\textsuperscript{21} See \textit{Report of the 5\textsuperscript{th} Annual Meeting of the World Bank External Gender Consultative Group}, Washington, DC, November 30-December 1, 2000: 3.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{op. cit.} Murphy (1995): 40.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{op. cit.} Murphy (1995): 38-42.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{op. cit.} World Bank (2002): 27.
although there have been many important gender-related policy documents released recently, there is a concern that "these policies are not reaching people in operations and as a result, are not being translated into action on the ground." 26 It is doubtful whether enough resources are diverted to gender analysis on an institutionalized, rather than ad hoc, basis, and whether there are enough trained and committed staff to implement the goals of the Bank’s mainstreaming policy. Until the dual aims of targeting women in the productive and social spheres and integrating gender analysis into all areas of policy and operations are realized, there will need to be continued emphasis on gender-sensitivity within the World Bank. The Bank needs to improve its mix of gender skills within its pool of staff, and to ensure that adequate funding and resources necessary to implement the gender policies are available. Also, responsibility for gender issues needs to be internalized by the Bank’s staff, instead of the current strategy of relying on short-term consultants. 27 The new gender strategy is a major step towards this end, and it remains to be seen what impact this will have on the organization.

However, a Bank-wide gender strategy aside, what is more important for this paper is how well the Bank is doing in encouraging a gender approach to operations in countries emerging from conflict. The answer, unfortunately, is not well at all. A detailed reading of the new strategy paper reveals no mention of the relationship between the Bank’s gender and post-conflict agendas. The policy paper Engendering Development, discusses briefly the health implications of violence against women, but even this stresses domestic violence and does not mention conflict-related violence and how this can affect women’s health and economic activity, as well as participation in the post-conflict context. 28 In 1999, the Bank did hold a conference on ‘Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence’ that discussed the relationship between gender, conflict and development. 29 A volume was produced based on the papers presented at the conference, but no synthesis of how the analysis presented in these papers related to Bank post-

29 For copies of the papers presented see http://www.worldbank.org/gender/events/armedconflicl.htm.
conflict work was included. Thus, on the basis of publicly available information, it would appear that the Bank has not succeeded in gender-sensitizing its post-conflict processes. The implications of this omission will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this chapter.

V.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BANK'S POST-CONFLICT POLICY

As illustrated by the previous chapters, the number of violent conflicts around the world has escalated, the causes of these conflicts are becoming increasingly complex, and the amount of assistance required by these countries to restore their economies and polities to a viable state has also increased. Civil conflict exacts a heavy toll on the well-being of afflicted populations, the economic and political structures of a society, and at the same time, the conflict itself limits the ability of domestic actors to address these problems. Given the evidence that conflict increases poverty and derails development programs, it would be impossible for the World Bank to continue to turn a blind eye to the needs of wartorn societies.

According to a recent publication by the Bank, “conflicts are both a cause and an effect of impoverishment”; “often conflicts are linked to competition for scarce resources”; “the withdrawal of the external support system after the end of cold war rivalries led to resurfacing of these conflicts”; and “many developing countries with a fragile resource base, growing populations, and weak mediating institutions are likely to be confronted with competing demands […and] there is a risk that conflict will result”. In an analysis by its Operations Evaluation Department, complex emergencies are described as essentially political despite their multi-causality, and “they typically include a breakdown of limits, institutions, and governance, widespread suffering and massive population displacement, and they often require a range of responses from the

31 It is possible that there is currently an internal evaluation ongoing within the Bank, but due to the nature of this project the author was not able to obtain and restricted information.
32 For example, since 1980, the volume of World Bank lending to post-conflict countries has grown by over 800% and post-conflict lending commitments have become a greater percentage of the Bank’s overall portfolio. See op. cit. Kreimer et al. (1998): 12.
international community.\textsuperscript{34} Evidently, the Bank recognizes that violent conflict reverses the advances brought by development, hampering the Bank's ability to abolish global poverty.\textsuperscript{35} Therefore, reconstruction programs must be designed to address, ameliorate, and possibly prevent conflict, in order to bring long-lasting benefits to society. World Bank post-conflict policy has evolved over the years, permitting it to engage more effectively in wartorn countries, and this section aims to examine the course of this evolution.

\textbf{Operational Policies}

The Bank's original guidelines for reconstruction were designed in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the need to encourage disaster mitigation and to assist with post-disaster recovery. 'Emergency Recovery Assistance' guidelines were eventually transformed into Operational Directive 8.50, then into Operational Policy (OP) 8.50 in 1995, which urged the Bank to participate in restoring assets and productive levels rather than immediate relief activities. However, although it covers broad-ranging responses to 'disasters'\textsuperscript{36}, there is no mention or consideration of the specific needs of post-conflict countries, despite the obvious political and economic tensions and fragility that persist in that kind of environment. To reflect this deficit, OP 8.50, although remaining a key tool for assistance of countries in conflict, was supplemented by Operational Policy 2.30 in February 2001.

OP 2.30 reaffirms the necessity to adapt programs to deal with the specific economic and social problems during a transition to peace, but stipulates that the Bank must maintain political neutrality in all cases.\textsuperscript{37} The main contribution that this operational policy makes to the Bank's post-conflict approach is that it outlines how the Bank should respond sensitively to a conflict situation; namely through conflict analysis,

\textsuperscript{34} op. cit. Kreimer et al. (1998b): 2.
\textsuperscript{36} OP 8.50 defines an emergency as "an extraordinary event of limited duration, such as a war, civil disturbance, or natural disaster." However, most of the guidelines seem to be directed at droughts, famines and other similar occurrences rather than conflict. See World Bank (1995) Emergency Recovery Assistance, OP 8.50. Washington, DC: World Bank.
\textsuperscript{37} The difficulty of maintaining neutrality, and the reality of the political nature of any kind of intervention in a post-conflict country will be discussed later in this section.
watching briefs, or transitional support strategies (TSS). Nevertheless, this policy demonstrates the continued failure of the Bank to fully recognize the impacts of its policies on conflict, and the need to differentiate its programs according to varying needs across countries and within populations. Although the policy states that the causes of conflict differ from country to country [...] the Bank’s analytical work in the area of conflict attempts to increase an understanding of the root causes, catalysts, indicators and policy implications of conflict and post-conflict recovery, it is evident that the Bank has not succeeded in drafting such a wide-reaching policy document that adequately addresses the complex nature of contemporary civil conflict.

The Bank’s Post-conflict Framework

Despite the limitations of the OP, the Bank has designed a strategy involving several different mechanisms to permit engagement in conflict zones. This five-pronged framework was initially set out in A Framework for World Bank Involvement in Post-

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40 See Kreimer et al. (1998a): 45.
41 The major factors determining the scope for continuing or resuming Bank operations in wartorn countries are: relative absence of internal conflict; legitimate and effective civil authority; freedom from large debt; and sufficient international interest for conflict resolution (see op. cit. Kreimer et al. (1998a): 2). However, it is often unrealistic to expect all of these conditions to be present in countries requiring post-conflict assistance. The Bank needs to develop means to permit it to become involved in these countries at an earlier stage, such as its recent document, Assistance to Post-Conflict Countries and the HIPC Framework (2001), which outlines more flexible rules of engagement.
conflict Reconstruction that was released in 1997. First, the Bank produces watching briefs covering countries in conflict where there are no active lending programs. Ideally, these briefs enable monitoring, information gathering for later stages, enhanced understanding of the conflict dynamics, and an assessment of institutional capacities. Second, once peace appears imminent, an early transitional support strategy (TSS) is developed. This consists of a detailed assessment of the direction and extent of potential Bank involvement, including financing details and contingency plans for exit in the case of renewed conflict, and highlights the opportunities for working with other agencies. Third, small-scale early reconstruction activities that can be implemented quickly begin as soon as conditions permit, including repair of vital facilities, provision of social safety nets and emergency demobilization. At this stage the Bank also provides vital technical and planning assistance to build the foundations for increased domestic capacity. Fourth, more comprehensive reconstruction efforts ensue, such as demining, structural reforms, and the reintegration of refugees, and funding usually shifts from special to regular sources. Finally, once the immediate post-conflict stage has passed, the Bank can resume normal lending operations in the country.

Programming Interventions

There are two main ways the Bank can assist a post-conflict country. First, through lending it can support macroeconomic and sectoral adjustment reforms, direct investment and technical assistance for reconstruction programs. Second, through non-lending initiatives such as damage and needs assessments, economic and sector work (ESW) and country assistance strategies the Bank can help wartorn countries to develop strategies for reconstruction and to mobilize and coordinate international donor resources. Undoubtedly, the Bank is increasing its commitments to post-conflict countries, with over 16% of IBRD and IDA lending being devoted to them in 1998. It must not be forgotten, however, that the World Bank is still a Bank, and must earn a profit. However, "the risks and rate of return in post-conflict countries are volatile and a return of

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hostilities could wipe out millions of dollars of Bank work overnight." Thus, it is important that the Bank retains a flexible approach, preferably operating in areas where it has a comparative advantage, and ensuring that it has an exit strategy to employ when the situation becomes untenable. The Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank has released a five-volume series of both detailed and broad assessments of the Bank’s involvement in post-conflict activities. For a thorough examination of the different policy and program elements and the performance of the Bank, these documents should be consulted. The following three areas have been selected for a brief discussion.

- Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of combatants

The Bank has been a major actor in DDR programs, and has conducted extensive research on the implications of these programs. Indeed, “Bank-supported efforts in this area have expanded in the 1990s and the Bank has played a leadership role through the analysis of its experience in Africa.” DDR is a key phase in the transition to peace, as it contributes to the demilitarization of society, and enables the population to be productive participants in the country’s reconstruction. The World Bank finds that there are several elements to a successful DDR program:

(a) classifying ex-combatants according to their characteristics, needs and desired way of earning a livelihood (mode of subsistence); (b) offering a basic transitional assistance package (safety net); (c) finding a way to deliver assistance simply, minimizing transaction costs while maximizing benefits to ex-combatants; (d) providing counseling, information, training, employment, and social support while sensitizing communities and building on existing social capital; (e) coordinating centrally yet decentralizing implementation authority to districts; and (f) connecting to ongoing development efforts by retargeting and restructuring existing portfolios.

Following their typology of a DDR program, the first step is to conduct socioeconomic analysis and develop a profile of the population in question. This permits

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45 Kreimer et al. (1998a) note that there is no clear guidelines on what the exit strategy of the Bank should be, but they suggest that it should be incorporated into each TSS. See op. cit. Kreimer et al. (1998): 7.
the identification of the supposed beneficiaries, and can also help to determine what their needs and opportunities might be in the reinsertion and reintegration phase, such as their access to land and capital, education level and health status. However, profiling can be difficult due to time constraints, lack of accurate records, and inconsistencies in registration processes. As the demobilization process begins, ex-combatants should be placed in a discharge centre where emergency relief services can be administered, and the process of rehabilitation and adjustment can begin. Ex-combatants then need to be transported back to their home communities, and provided with an extensive reinsertion package, including cash, housing assistance, health and education services, and, ideally, psychosocial counselling. Each post-conflict country has unique characteristics that will define the terms of the DDR process, and how it is implemented. It is extremely important that specific factors are addressed, such as whether the ex-combatants are being integrated in rural or urban areas, what kind of community support structures are in place for returning ex-combatants, and whether the programs being implemented adequately address the needs of the individuals and their families, and the realities of the socioeconomic, political and cultural environment. "Successful long-term reintegration can make a major contribution to national conflict resolution and to the restoration of social capital. Conversely, failure to achieve reintegration can lead to considerable insecurity at the societal and individual levels, including rent-seeking behavior through the barrel of a gun."

As discussed in chapter II, the gender elements of DDR must be recognized in order for these programs to be successful. This means that every aspect of the process must be analysed from a gender standpoint. When cash payments are being given out are female ex-combatants included and able to collect theirs? Are employment or educational reintegration opportunities appropriate for and available to women? Women affiliated with militias, as combatants or in other roles, face stigma and rejection from their families and communities. Do DDR programs address this fact and offer women relocation options and special reintegration support, especially in the cases of psychosocial trauma or where they have dependents? These are just some of the questions that should be asked, but rarely are, by the World Bank and other partners
implementing DDR programs. The report by Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer (1998) makes no reference to the gender dimensions of DDR, and only mentions the role of female ex-combatants in passing, usually in reference to the need to provide childcare services during reintegration. In their summary of the DDR programs in Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda they list ‘programs for women’ as one of many issues included under reintegration, and report that in two out of the three countries no special efforts were made to assist female ex-combatants or spouses of ex-combatants. In an extended study conducted by the same authors of they write that a key lesson is “the particular problems of female and child soldiers as well as of disabled combatants justify development of targeted interventions.” This is a clear example of the lack of gender mainstreaming, or even gender awareness, within the post-conflict unit at the Bank. Encouraging donors and other actors to see women as a vulnerable group on par with the disabled completely undermines the objective of empowering women to participate in development processes.

• Donor Coordination

Although it has not been discussed until this point, donor coordination is an important element of post-conflict activities, and it is especially relevant to large international organizations such as the World Bank and UN agencies. The multiplicity of actors present during war to peace transitions necessitates that lead agencies emerge in their areas of comparative advantage. The weak political and institutional structures in post-conflict countries make it even more important that an external actor coordinates relief and development activities. International organizations should collaborate in designing a country’s national reconstruction plan, co-finance the operations as much as possible, and take action to reduce the overlap of projects and areas of responsibility. While it is undeniably important to ensure that donor activities are coordinated, a more long-term approach would argue that international organizations should be working towards integrating their activities so that they are mutually supportive. Forman and Salomons

describe some of the activities that can be taken by donor agencies to move from
coordination to integration: a common strategic framework based on a common agenda
for reconstruction should be developed; a recognized convening authority should be
identified at headquarters; a common needs assessment is essential for program design
and implementation; a joint action plan for post-conflict recovery should be devised by
all donors, government officials and NGOs; evaluation mechanisms should be included
as part of the joint action plan; field-based coordination and management mechanisms
should result in a productive division of labour based on comparative advantages; and a
funding management system should be instigated to allow for the monitoring and
tracking of expenditures in the short and long-term.52 Pledging conferences and
consultative groups have also been employed to encourage collaborative action between
the World Bank, UN agencies, and other actors.

The Bank's own evaluation suggests that it is well-placed to act as donor
coordinator because of the quality of its analytical services, close relationship with the
IMF, credibility in the eyes of the donor community, and its potential to mobilize funds
from other sources.53 As Brynen points out, the donor coordination process in the
peacebuilding efforts in the West Bank and Gaza has been complicated, and not always
successful. The World Bank and its Consultative Group played an important role in
designing and administering various projects. However, it came under fire for moving too
slowly and relying too much on assumptions such as: that the Palestinian Authority (PA)
would quickly become well-functioning and viable, donor commitment would be timely,
and political negotiations would progress rapidly.54 The Bank needed to be flexible and
creative in its response to the challenges presented by this situation, and was constantly
balancing demands from the PA to be more consultative and from the donors to be more
discretionary in funding choices. In the future, the World Bank should focus on
improving and strengthening its role as a donor coordinator in post-conflict countries.

51 Nat J. Colletta, Markus Kostner and Ingo Wiederhofer (1996b) Case Studies in War-to-Peace Transition:
The Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Ethiopia, Namibia, and Uganda, World Bank
52 Shepard Forman and Dirk Salomons (1999) Meeting Essential Needs in Societies Emerging from Conflict,
Paper prepared for the Brookings Roundtable on the Relief to Development Gap. Center on International
• Peace conditionality

Conditionality has long been a tool of loans and aid for economic reform, where it has been used to bring about lasting changes in a recipient government’s fiscal and macroeconomic behaviour. Recently, there has been a trend towards using conditions attached to aid as a way of influencing the dynamics of violence and peace, by making disbursement of funds conditional on progress in peace settlements.55 So-called ‘peace conditionality’ can be both positive (incentives) and negative (sanctions), and can be implemented either ex ante or ex post. The assumption behind the use of this tool is that if aid is contingent on fulfillment of the peace settlement, then political momentum and commitment to the process can be enhanced.

Boyce and Pastor suggest that international financial institutions should acknowledge that their economic policies can exacerbate conflict and they should use peace conditionality to minimize these negative effects.56 Some of the strategies available at the disposal of the Bank are formal performance criteria, informal policy dialogue, or other measures for tying assistance to the actions of the borrower.57 However, there are some limitations to the use of this tool. On a theoretical level, the use of aid conditionality challenges conventional notions of sovereignty by legitimizing intervention into another country’s domestic affairs. An argument can be made that aid conditionality reinforces unequal power relationships and promulgates dependency on donor countries, which can, at times, adopt a paternalistic approach when applying it to certain sectors and policies. Also, using conditionality either explicitly or implicitly implies that the donor knows what is best for the recipient government. This can damage the peace process by causing resentment amongst recipients and may discredit the very policies that are in fact necessary for sound growth and peace consolidation.58 More importantly, “when the donors, not the government policymakers, become the source of inspiration (or commands and conditions) for a governance reform or any other public

program, the public authorities concerned can easily escape accountability.\textsuperscript{59} Also, the level of internal commitment of the recipient government, and the range of alternative aid funding options open to it can influence the effectiveness of a conditionality policy. Experiences of the IFIs with using economic conditionality have shown that it works most effectively when changes can be implemented by a small number of officials and can be easily monitored, when only once-off policy measures are required rather than sweeping institutional changes, it is only used as a last resort after other avenues have been exhausted, and when there is high levels of coordination and consistency amongst the various donors.\textsuperscript{60} In fact, this element of donor coordination is extremely important when attempting to tie assistance to certain conditions in post-conflict countries.\textsuperscript{61}

In Uganda, conditionality was used extensively as part of the Bank’s strategy. An evaluation of the post-conflict reconstruction experience in this country revealed that it might have weakened the government’s image of being dedicated to reform, at the same time allowing the government to rely on the World Bank to apply the pressure needed for these reforms. The use of conditionality may also have diluted the focus on the key reforms that were needed: “there was arguably too much concentration on maximizing the pace of reform across a wide front and insufficient recognition that the core task was improving investor confidence.”\textsuperscript{62} In Cambodia, the Bank also faced difficulties. It had decided the post-conflict government was too fragile and unpredictable to allow for successful implementation of conditionalties, since they were too strict and unnecessary as long as the government put into force the measures described as ‘critical’. The evaluation of the Cambodian experience suggests that a more flexible, consultative form of conditionality, based on processes of change rather than actual benchmarks may have been more appropriate in this case.\textsuperscript{63} Peace conditionality is evidently becoming an ever-more important tool of assistance, and it is a tool that could perhaps be used to ensure a gender-perspective is adopted in any post-conflict programming. Land reform, access to


political structures, and participation in the peace process are all key concerns of women in wartorn societies, yet they are not always on or near the top of the post-conflict government’s agenda. Thus, the international community may have a valuable opportunity to integrate gender concerns into post-conflict assistance, thereby making the assistance more effective and sustainable. Indeed, “donor agencies should use their grant conditionalities and their reporting criteria as instruments to ensure that value is placed on quality and on developmental approaches, rather than exclusively on quantitative targets and the satisfaction of immediate needs.” The Bank should conduct research to determine the outcome when engendered conditionalities are used.

How successful is the World Bank at preventing conflict and assisting wartorn countries?

The first question that many people ask is should the World Bank even be involved in post-conflict reconstruction at all? The answer is (a complicated) yes. Although its mandate constricts the Bank’s actions in certain respects, it is flexible, and the sheer size and influence of the Bank make it well-positioned to influence post-conflict dynamics. Several researchers have written on this topic, and it is important to briefly consider a few of their conclusions. Stevenson’s paper looks at IFI involvement in peacebuilding from a post-Cold War security standpoint. He concedes that the World Bank and the IMF can play a role in development in wartorn societies. However, since they are principally economic organizations, their role should be limited, transparent, focus on technical assistance to domestic institutions, and should involve some measures intended to subvert conflict. As he points out, “although IFI input into, and support for, peacebuilding generally cannot substitute for the coercive and organizational functions of non-economic actors, they may be essential for realizing sustainable peace. IFI efficacy
cannot make a peace process, but IFI inefficacy can break one." On the other hand, some have been extremely critical of the role the Bank and other donors have played in various conflicts, especially in Rwanda. Uvin and Chossudovsky both contend that the harsh structural adjustment policies implemented in Rwanda in the 1980s and early 1990s played a role in destabilizing the country. This debate is likely to persist, so more research should be done on whether the Bank’s policies have undesired effects on conflict dynamics.

The Bank has had a mixed performance in post-conflict countries, and its capacity to act in this area is constrained by resources and mandate. However, it does appear to have a comparative advantage in the areas of economic and technical expertise, rehabilitation of infrastructure, aid coordination, and institution building. The Bank is beginning to gain experience in dealing with post-conflict issues, and has identified some of the most important elements in their strategy. Operationally, the Bank emphasizes the need to maintain a strong field presence that permits monitoring and flexibility of projects, and enables strong linkages to develop with other humanitarian and development agencies. The Bank has developed country and regional teams to fulfill this function. In addition, procedures for procurement, audit, and disbursement of funds must be streamlined to enable early engagement in the form of faster and more flexible responses. The Bank also focuses on the importance of local ownership of the development and post-conflict initiatives, and the need to restore financial, government and institutional structures. Fostering the private sector is particularly important since it is the main long run provider of investment and employment opportunities. Finally, the Bank must focus on its areas of comparative advantage and continue to play a leading role in aid coordination. Conflicts are complex and involve multiple issues and fostering linkages amongst all donors is essential to maximize the capabilities and resources that can be devoted to post-conflict reconstruction. World Bank activities should complement those of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and other actors. As Marshall points out, the World Bank "is an institution uniquely placed in

terms of global experience and information, and with a powerful mandate to support the long-term development programs that are urgently needed after wars end.\textsuperscript{70}

The World Bank is engaged in an on-going procedure of evaluating and assessing its experience with post-conflict reconstruction. However, certain drawbacks remain in its performance and approach. Firstly, the Bank exposes itself to certain risks when working in a post-conflict environment. The Bank should take action to minimize these risks by considering the timing of its programs to ensure maximum returns on its loans, and also the political realities of the country and sequencing of reforms to prevent damaging its reputation when objectives are not achieved. Secondly, the Bank should avoid excessive conditionality (as was the case in Uganda), and ensure that its policies are flexible and adapted to the needs of each country.\textsuperscript{71} It should also conduct more research on the interaction between the requirements of macroeconomic stabilization and the consolidation of peace. Thirdly, the Bank must improve its quick-disbursing facilities and adapt its operational guidelines to become more compatible with post-conflict needs. Finally, like gender mainstreaming, a successful post-conflict policy also requires the sustained commitment of the organization. For example, some requirements suggested by the 1998 evaluation are:

well-staffed resident missions are a pre-condition for successful Bank intervention [...] expeditious preparation, piloting and bridging funds, and loan instruments should be resourced at sufficient levels to enable the Bank to be effective earlier in post-conflict situations [...] Effective implementation of post-conflict operations requires intensive monitoring, and the Bank must be prepared to allocate sufficient administrative budget resources for this task [...] the Bank should sharply reduce the interval between project closing and completion report, with appropriate streamlining of the process.\textsuperscript{72}

V.4 Rwanda

Prior to the beginning of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the World Bank and other donors had been quite significantly involved in the country's economic development: in 1990-1993 Overseas Development Assistance amounted to US$343

\textsuperscript{71} op. cit. Kreimer et al. (1998a): 65.
\textsuperscript{72} op. cit. Kreimer et al. (1998a): 37.
The civil conflict within Rwanda began in 1990, and steadily began to worsen until April 1994, by which point the economy was crumbling. Although the international community stood aside and watched the killing fields of Rwanda, in spring 1994, “once the killing stopped, it mobilized massive resources to provide humanitarian relief for the over two million refugees camped on Rwanda’s borders. Some US$1.4 billion was spent on emergency humanitarian relief for Rwanda from July to December 1994, two-thirds of which went to camps outside Rwanda.”

During the first eighteen months after the genocide, opportunities for significant donor action were limited due to continued violence, lack of security, and the questionable legitimacy of the government. Nevertheless, from the earliest stages the Bank pledged to assist with the rehabilitation of the wartorn country: at the first UN donor conference on August 2, 1994, the Bank pledged $20 million in the form of a Special Emergency Assistance Grant. During several missions to Rwanda, the Bank played a role in assisting the Government of Rwanda to design its Emergency Recovery Program and it began to adapt its country portfolio to the diverse needs of the post-conflict context. Since then, the Bank has continued to play a significant role in restoring the human, physical and financial capital necessary for development to this impoverished, wartorn nation. Two areas of Bank activity are focused on below, examining how well the Bank performed in both post-conflict reconstruction and gender mainstreaming.

**Restoring Human and Social Capital**

In Rwanda, the political conflict and economic disintegration combined to destroy the broad forms of social capital had existed in Rwanda. Of the initial Special Emergency Assistance Grant, a significant portion was designated to rebuilding this social capital.

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75 For a more detailed description of the development of Bank policy in Rwanda after the genocide see op. cit. Kreimer et al. (1998b).
76 Although defining social capital is difficult due to the complex nature of the term, a recent World Bank study uses the following definition: “In general, social capital refers to systems that lead to or result from social and economic organization, such as worldviews, trust, reciprocity, informational and economic exchange, and informal and formal groups and associations, [and the role of social capital is to facilitate] collective action, economic growth, and development by complementing other forms of capital.” Thus, undeniably, social capital plays an extremely important role in post-conflict societies. See Nat J. Colletta and Michelle L. Cullen (2000) *Violent Conflict and the Transformation of Social Capital: Lessons from Cambodia, Rwanda, Guatemala, and Somalia.* Washington, DC: World Bank: 6.
human and social capital. Some of the measures implemented included a grant for health care and disease control, nutrition and sanitation to UNICEF, support to UNHCR for refugee assistance, and to NGOs to rehabilitate the primary education system. Although these social sector grants were much needed, the evaluation points out the need to ensure that the programs maintain their relevance to the post-conflict context, and sufficient analysis is conducted to ensure that institutional mechanism are in place to support the projects.\textsuperscript{77} The Bank also tried to strengthen the developing governance institutions through providing technical assistance and expertise to the Government of Rwanda, and gave some limited assistance to civil society organizations. The evaluation of the Bank’s post-conflict involvement in Rwanda cautions that the restoration of human and social capital is a slow and highly politicized process. More working relationships should be developed between the Bank, local NGOs and community groups to lend legitimacy to the reconstruction process.

On a positive note, the Bank evaluation does make a brief mention of what it terms the ‘gender challenge’. Although it begins with the discouraging comment that “Rwandan women are disadvantaged and vulnerable in the extreme”, implying that they are victims rather than actors, it does go on to say that they represent a “source of hope for economic recovery and social reconciliation.”\textsuperscript{78} Amongst its recommendations are that “through dialogue with the government and other donors, and through its own program strategy (CAS) and operations, it should aggressively pursue reforms of discriminatory law and practices and support of gender-specific interventions in the economic and social sectors.”\textsuperscript{79}

\textit{Economic Reforms}

The Rwandan conflict was the result of a complex mix of factors – political, social, and economic – that culminated into a potent mix leading to violence civil conflict. The previous section briefly mentioned the controversy surrounding the Bank’s role in the run-up to the genocide, and it is not necessary for the purposes of this paper to expand on this debate further. Rather, this section will examine the post-conflict

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{op. cit.} Kreimer et al. (1998b): 103.
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{op. cit.} Kreimer et al. (1998b): 118.
economic reforms, and how they impacted the overall reconstruction process. The World Bank and the IMF took over control of the money supply and implemented a number of basic monetary and fiscal policies in the immediate aftermath of the genocide. This helped to control inflation (through a devaluation), and eventually interest rates were liberalized, and a privatization of the energy, water and public enterprise sectors was begun. Also, since agriculture is the key economic sector in Rwanda, a sub-grant of US$4 million was given to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) through the Special Emergency Assistance Grant. The majority of this money was used to distribute seeds and tools to Rwandan families through a network of NGOs. Although this was successful, later attempts to adapt the pre-conflict agricultural portfolio of the Bank were unsuccessful due to the complexities of working in cooperation with the poor agriculture management and technical expertise of the Rwandan government.80

The evaluation conducted on the Bank’s role in stabilizing and rebuilding the economy is generally positive. However, it does indicate that the Bank should be more flexible in applying certain fiscal and monetary reforms since the expenditures required in a post-conflict context are great while the domestic revenue capacity, especially in Rwanda, is limited. The Bank and its partners should also be more open to altering or extending the time-scales of projects to match the current context, which may require a longer process of consensus and legitimacy building. Less encouraging is the evaluation’s total disregard for the gender impact of economic reforms. Social sector reform is often cut back in the face of tight macroeconomic stabilization measures, and economic opportunities for the poor and unskilled often decrease. These, and other related consequences of economic reforms, impact disproportionately on women. Had the World Bank incorporated some kind of gender analysis, or at least gender-disaggregated statistics, it could have determined who benefited and how, from its programs. This would have lead to more efficient and equitable economic reform measures. Consultative processes are difficult in post-conflict societies due to time and resource constraints, the political and social sensitivities of the post-conflict era, and the difficulties of integrating civil society into decision-making. However, their importance cannot be underestimated.

Working with Women's Organizations

In Rwanda, women’s groups have been extraordinarily active in rebuilding the social, economic and political fabric of society. USAID has conducted extensive research on the role of women’s organizations in post-genocide Rwanda and has found that in many areas they have taken leading roles in rebuilding the economy, promoting rural development and distributing small livestock, advocating for women’s land rights, and providing health and education services. However, the reliance on donor funding has obstructed their capacity to implement all of their programs successfully. Indeed,

International donors’ tendency to shift their priorities from year to year makes it difficult for women’s organizations to undertake long-term planning. Even when they carefully design a long-term initiative, they are under constant threat that it may abruptly close. Moreover, as the resources for humanitarian and development assistance diminish, donors are withdrawing from funding and ongoing programs, creating problems for women’s organizations.81

The World Bank’s new gender strategy emphasizes the need to adopt more participatory decision-making methods, and it is hoped that women’s organizations in post-conflict countries will not be overlooked. Through arrangements with its implementing partners, and within its own project planning processes, it has the opportunity to encourage more gender sensitivity and equality.

V.5 The Missing Link: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

There is one stark conclusion to be made from the above analysis: the Bank’s gender mainstreaming policy fails to assess the consequences conflict has on gender and economic development. Also, all the research done on post-conflict operations draws attention to the fact that the needs of women are never given adequate attention. What explains this lack of integration of two important, well-developed areas of Bank activity? The first volume of the evaluations on the Bank’s post-conflict activities does discuss the role of women very briefly, in relation to social capital. It points out that “analysis should be used to identify unequal power relations underlying social organizations to ensure that

women are not further marginalized by relief and reconstruction activities."\(^{82}\) However, this falls far short of spelling out the need for a comprehensive approach to systematically integrate gender into relief and reconstruction activities. The following are some suggestions to improve the integration of gender and conflict-related strategies.

**A gender audit of the Bank's reconstruction activities should be conducted immediately.** The Operations Evaluation Department should assess the overall post-conflict policy of the Bank and supplement this with a number of in-depth country studies to determine to what extent gender perspectives have informed the implementation of projects in wartorn societies. Links must be identified between gender, conflict and development, and a coherent strategy of how to integrate gender concerns in a post-conflict setting should be disseminated to all staff.

**Lack of monitoring and evaluation of projects at field-level.** As the members of the Bank's EGCG report, although there have been many important gender-related policy documents released recently, there is a concern that "these policies are not reaching people in operations and as a result, are not being translated into action on the ground."\(^{83}\) The Bank should set up clear guidelines on the gender-related responsibilities of staff members to ensure that they are accountable for these issues.

**More human and financial resources should be given to gender-related post-conflict programs.** The connections between gender, conflict and development are clear and have been presented in the first sections of this paper. What is also clear is that the World Bank has given insufficient attention to these connections. The EGCG reported that the Bank needs to improve its mix of gender skills within its pool of staff, and that adequate funding and resources are necessary to ensure that they are able to implement the gender policies. Also, responsibility for gender issues needs to be internalized by the Bank's


staff, instead of the current strategy of relying on short-term consultants. Staff must be trained to approach all Bank activities from a gender perspective, and those being deployed to post-conflict regions should be aware of the impact of all social, political, economic and cultural dimensions on the Bank’s work. In coordination with increased funding, the actual impact of these programs should be assessed. Beyond breaking down the amount devoted to gender projects as a percentage of total projects, tools for measuring the effect of these projects should be developed.

More emphasis should be placed on gender mainstreaming throughout post-conflict programming as a whole, rather than targeted initiatives for women in the social sectors. It is clear that the World Bank’s record in supporting education and health programs for women and girls is encouraging. To complement this the Bank should also focus on gender mainstreaming other areas of post-conflict programming such as demobilization, microcredit initiatives, and agriculture. Grassroots women’s organizations can act as a key intervention point to activities in this area. However, they often operate outside of formal economic and political structures and rarely have access to project planning processes, especially in a post-conflict situation where the initial points of contact are often the male leaders of the warring parties.

The Bank should develop a good practices series on gender mainstreaming in post-conflict activities. Building on the extensive research capacity and expertise of the staff of the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, the Bank should develop a series of field staff-oriented guidelines on how to integrate gender perspectives into the various areas of post-conflict programming. The need for some kind of core of gender analysis is clear:

  [Cambodia:] Gender analysis especially respecting the economic circumstances of widow-headed households, deserves particular attention in project design
  [...Eritrea:] vulnerable groups, and women in particular, did not emerge as a priority target group [...Lebanon:] The needs of vulnerable groups and women in

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particular, have no been a priority in Bank assistance [...] The Bank must give higher priority to gender issues in Rwanda.\textsuperscript{85}

Thus, the evaluation conducted on the Bank’s post-conflict activities in many countries highlights the lack of, but need for, attention given to gender issues. This series should be developed in conjunction with the Bank’s gender staff to ensure coherence with the organization’s overall mainstreaming strategy.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{85} These excerpts were taken from \textit{op. cit.} Kreimer et al. (1998b).

\textsuperscript{86} The Bank’s post-conflict literature tends to focus on ‘vulnerable groups like women’, and emphasize ‘women-specific programs’. However, this is in direct contradiction to the new Bank strategy which places the emphasis on women as agents in development and the need for gender mainstreaming, rather than projects only targeted towards women. Policy coherence with reference to gender is extremely important and measures should be taken to ensure that all sections of the Bank are advocating the same strategy.
VI. GENDER MAINSTREAMING, POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This paper has presented a number of different threads of analysis that must now be brought together to assess the potential for gender mainstreaming in war to peace transitions. The theoretical analysis presented in the first two chapters explained the profound and complex relationship between conflict and gender roles and responsibilities during conflict and in the post-conflict phase. The institutional case studies based on this analysis examined how effective UNHCR and the World Bank have been at integrating gender perspectives into their post-conflict activities. This concluding chapter will summarize the main obstacles these organizations have discovered. Also, a strategy for implementing gender mainstreaming will be outlined. The two components of the approach suggested here will be to implement a pre, during and post-conflict gender analysis of any given situation, and then to apply a 'gender checklist' to project planning, implementation, and monitoring in post-conflict countries. It is beyond the scope of this paper to present a thorough and comprehensive solution to the problem of gender mainstreaming in war to peace transitions, if, indeed, there even is one. This chapter is intended simply to provoke debate on the issue in the hope that international organizations will take more seriously their capacity and responsibility to adopt some of the issues outlined below.

VI.1 OBSTACLES TO MAINSTREAMING IN WAR TO PEACE TRANSITIONS

International organizations appear to either completely lack a coherent strategy for integrating gender into policy, or they have a significant problem with translating policy into practice. The problems range from theoretical (there is no clear understanding what gender mainstreaming should achieve), to practical (resources are not sufficient to fully implement a gender mainstreaming strategy), to operational (there are no accountability mechanisms). Briefly, this section will summarize the major findings in the previous chapter, highlighting a few main obstacles.
The prioritization of activities in war to peace transitions prevents adequate attention being focused on the need to integrate a gender approach. Gender mainstreaming is not seen as an immediate priority in the initial phase of the transition to peace. Many actors see it as a process that evolves over time. Although this is true, if gender-inclusive measures are applied at the outset of post-conflict reconstruction, then it is far more likely that these measures will take hold and lead to more successful long-term planning, as well as benefiting women and men in the short-run. Nevertheless, the perceived ‘survival needs vs. gender issues’ conflict tends to overwhelm many aid agencies, with the former usually winning over the latter, despite their proven inter-relationship. Along with this problem, the actors that are easily accessible and who wield authority in the immediate post-conflict phase are most often male, and thus the point of entry for international organizations is rarely gender-sensitive.

There is a lack of coordination within a donor organizations’ sectors and between organizations themselves. As Forman and Salomons point out, a major problem for international organizations is that

“most of the [post-conflict] units remain fairly marginal within their respective organizations, have to negotiate terrain with regional and country desks, and possess small budgets and staffs. While such post-conflict units can offer valuable ‘venture capital’, their limited resources restrict them to responding to targets of opportunity on an ad hoc and uncoordinated basis, rather than as part of an integrated strategy for recovery.”

When this is combined with the difficulties of moving gender issues into the organizational mainstream, it is easier to see why the important linkages between gender and conflict can be missed out. Due to the scale and complexity of their tasks, many international organizations are highly sectoral, operating in self-contained units either in headquarters or in the field, and there can be reluctance to adopt a more cooperative approach. However, it is crucial that agencies work together to develop a unified gender-sensitive post-conflict strategy. Attempts have been made in many situations to form Consultative Groups or Working Groups, such as the IASC Sub-Working Group on
Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, and these should be built on and encouraged in post-conflict settings. If the international organizations themselves do not have a strong, well-formulated approach to gender mainstreaming, then it cannot be expected that the projects implemented in cooperation with partners in the field will have one either.

**International organizations do not capitalize enough on existing local structures and resources or focus enough attention on building capacities and skills of local men and women.** Repeatedly, consultative and participatory mechanisms have been shown to be the most effective way to design sustainable post-conflict interventions. Despite the evidence, they are rarely used by international organizations, usually due to the excuse of lack of time and resources. In the case of UNHCR, time is often of the essence when it rushes in to deal with conflict-related refugee flows, but this should not compromise the value of its interventions. Aid agencies must find a way to conduct rapid assessments and profiles of the beneficiary population, and to include their input in project design and implementation.

**There is often a lack of domestic and international political and institutional commitment to the process of integrating gender into post-conflict programming.** For the reasons discussed above, many of the key actors in post-conflict reconstruction are reluctant to accord gender mainstreaming the resources and dedication it requires. In any case, not all staff members possess the skills and capabilities that would allow them to do this. Fostering commitment is a major challenge, but it is likely that strengthening monitoring and accountability mechanisms would enforce at least some minimum commitment to this goal. It is essential that there is clear policy guidance from senior levels within the organization, and that this policy is accompanied by strategies, best practices, and guidelines of how it should be implemented at field level. If this implementation is tied to performance in some way, then it is more likely that staff will buy into the process of gender mainstreaming.

Finally, one of the most difficult challenges that international organizations face is that there is often a lack of (or weakened) domestic political, legal and economic structures in the post-conflict country. Without strong institutions and laws in place it is extremely difficult to encourage positive trends in gender mainstreaming. Enforcing or fostering institutional change within wartorn countries is a long and political process, one that often falls outside the mandate or funding cycle of aid agencies. As discussed previously, conditionality mechanisms could be used to strengthen post-conflict governance structures in a gender positive way. However, it is not certain that this strategy is feasible in a post-conflict situation where there are many competing concerns, and many complex dynamics and relationships to negotiate. Although the options for addressing this problem are limited, if the international organizations integrate gender into their own post-conflict policies and programs, then they will increase the credibility of the strategy in the eyes of the international community.

VI.2 A FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING THE GENDER IMPACT OF POST-CONFLICT PROGRAMS

Post-conflict interventions, whether in the form of food aid or support for civil society participation in peace negotiations, do not occur in a vacuum. They have complex effects on the community and post-conflict political, social and economic context, just as these factors affect the interventions themselves. Some of the key obstacles preventing international organizations from establishing gender mainstreaming approaches to post-conflict reconstruction have been presented in this paper. However, these obstacles are, for the most part, complex and far-reaching and finding possible solutions to these problems would require far greater consideration of the issues than can be given in this paper. Instead, an alternative first step towards achieving solutions is presented in this section. The experiences of UNHCR in the World Bank have highlighted that there is a serious lack of accountability and knowledge within the pool of staff of how to implement a gender perspective in post-conflict programming. Also, it is evident that time and resource constraints are often an obstacle to a comprehensive mainstreaming of gender into these programs. To solve these problems, this paper presents a two-pronged
framework that could be used in post-conflict situations to ensure that even in the presence of obstacles, a bare minimum of gender sensitivity is adopted.

**Gender analysis**

Gender analysis can help illuminate the various ways in which men and women are accorded power and resources through their different identities, access and entitlements. In the context of emergency and crisis situations, a gender framework enables the examination of the differential impact of crisis on men and women and enables the examination of the impact of interventions on gender relations.²

The first important element of this framework is the use of simple gender analysis throughout the entire time that an international organization is engaged in a country. Although it requires some level of gender training, it is assumed that most organizations fulfil this condition already, and where they do not, it is recommended that all staff receive at least basic gender awareness skills training. A gender-reporting requirement should be institutionalized at all levels of activity, the format depending on the program and funding cycle of the organization. For example, if a field office submits quarterly situation reports to headquarters, then it should produce a gender mainstreamed document. Where this is not possible, a section on important gender dimensions should be included. This also applies for project proposals, where the gender impact of activities should be elaborated on.

The need for gender analysis is four-fold. First, it draws attention to inequalities present within society and can lead international organizations to implement gender-sensitive interventions to address these inequalities. Second, it will allow the organization to have a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in which it is operating. Third, if these analyses are conducted regularly in all countries and in all areas of operation, in the event of a conflict situation erupting, the post-conflict reconstruction process will be more effective and targeted if the shifts in political, economic, and social roles of men and women can be quickly identified and addressed. Fourth, the process of conducting gender analysis is, by necessity, consultative. This can allow the organization

to build up networks and points of contact within the local population of men and women, improving its long-term opportunities for successful program implementation.

Another important prerequisite for the effectiveness of this strategy is a high degree of coordination amongst international actors. It is crucial that organizations, especially those working in fast-paced post-conflict environments, share their gender-related information to increase the general understanding of the situation in a given country. There are several analytical tools available to help development and emergency workers to develop a gender analysis of the situation in which they are working. Some of these are the POP framework used by UNHCR, capacities and vulnerabilities analysis which emphasizes building on the strengths of a community, and the Longwe hierarchy of needs that assesses equality by looking at gender-differentiated access to key development indicators. Although there are many significant difficulties with implementing this kind of analysis in the field, resources and resistance being two of the major ones, it is important that international organizations appreciate the necessity of gender analysis. If a gender lens is constantly applied to a situation, then it makes project design and implementation much easier in the post-conflict context.

**Checklist for international organizations**

The following list suggests some basic questions that international organizations should answer in the various stages of project design, implementation and monitoring in a post-conflict context. It is beyond the scope of this paper to develop a new strategy in detail, but this brief checklist might offer some directions for further research on how to improve institutional approaches to gender mainstreaming in the field.

**Project design**

- What is the intended impact of the project? Is this impact likely to be the same for women as men?
- How will the post-conflict context impact the project?
- How do gender relations influence the sector the project is to be implemented in?
• Could this project contribute to tensions between men and women? Does it benefit one over the other?
• What input have local men and women had into the project design? If women have not yet been consulted, how could this be encouraged?
• How will this project interact with other priorities of the organization?
• Have local mechanisms or capacities been identified and utilized in the design of this project?

Project implementation

• Ensure that the intended beneficiaries are the ones who will benefit from the project
• Try to minimize any negative gender impact that might be brought about by the project. Address gender-related side-effects at this time.
• Ensure any implementing partners understand the need for gender sensitivity in project implementation
• Conduct ongoing assessments of the gender impact of the project through consultation with men and women, collection of data, and regular information exchange with other partners
• Ensure all project reports are written in a gender-sensitive manner

Project monitoring and evaluation

• Have women had access to and more control over resources and decision-making structures as a result of this project?
• Collect gender-disaggregated data to determine how effective the project has been in addressing men and women’s needs
• Did the project contribute to conflict? Did the project address some of the underlying causes of conflict?

• Hold consultations with local men and women to obtain their assessment of the project
• Disseminate lessons learned to other staff and incorporate any important findings into training, policy, or operational guidelines of institutions

If international organizations are able to successfully use a gender perspective throughout the course of their engagement in a post-conflict country then they can make a major contribution to the achievement of gender equality. Each situation of conflict is governed by a unique set of factors, and each post-conflict intervention should be as innovative, inclusive and sustainable as possible. This paper has only succeeded in briefly examining parts of the debate about gender mainstreaming in post-conflict reconstruction, and more research in this field is desperately needed. Conflict is a time of opportunity for gender and development to undergo a transformation. International organizations must not let this opportunity pass them by.
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