

**Gender, Peace and Security Civil Society Workshop and
International Alert Research Parliamentary Launch¹
London, UK
20th and 24th March 2014**

1. Background:

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GPS) and many GAPS members have worked on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and used UNSCR 1325 and subsequent WPS SCRs as a foundation for their work. Some civil society organisations, including peacebuilding NGOs, are exploring the concept of Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) and looking at expanding the debate and agenda to take account of broader issues around gender, including addressing masculinities and femininities, the vulnerabilities of men and boys, and women and girls, and men as allies on W-and-G-PS. Some other civil society organisations have been increasingly incorporating working with men and boys into their programming on WPS, notably through VAWG programme as a means to address social norms that perpetuate violence.

Peacebuilding NGOs have undertaken an increased analysis of GPS in recent years, and incorporated this into their programming. This includes International Alert's DFID-funded fieldwork on Gender, Peace and Security; Saferworld research on masculinities, and Conciliations Resources' internal guidance note on gender. As informal discussion on this approach has increased, GAPS organised two International Alert-supported events to explore the concepts of W-and-G-PS. The workshops provided an opportunity for International Alert to launch their GPS research: [Re-thinking gender in peacebuilding](#).

The first event built on the experience and expertise of GAPS members and academics, through a civil society workshop. This workshop assessed concepts and programming on GPS and WPS. Other meetings on GPS are taking place globally, such as a recent event in New York: [Taking UNSCR 1325 to the next level: Gender, Peace and Security](#). The second event took the form of a parliamentary launch of International Alert's GPS research, which provided a platform for the issues to be discussed a parliamentary level and with government officials.

2. Civil Society Workshop:

2.1. Attendees and Format:

The Workshop was attended by civil society and academics from: Amnesty International UK, CARE International UK, Conciliation Resources, Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), International Alert, International Rescue Committee (IRC), King's College London, Oxfam GB, Saferworld, Kvinna til Kvinna (Sweden), Womankind Worldwide, Women for Women International UK and independent consultants.

The workshop was chaired by GAPS and included presentations from six civil society organisations. Sanne Tielemans, presented Conciliation Resources approach and key points from the 2013 Event: [Taking UNSCR 1325 to the next level: Gender, Peace and Security](#). Dr Henri Myrntinen, Senior Research Officer, International Alert, and Hannah Wright, Gender, Peace and Security Advisor, Saferworld presented their research findings on Gender, Peace and Security and masculinities in conflict, respectively. Bethan Cansfield, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Womankind Worldwide, presented a women's rights approach to Women, Peace and Security. Paul Andre Wilton and Carron Mann presented their organisation's approach to Women, Peace and Security programming and engaging men and boys in their work. The groups then went into breakdown sessions to discuss the research findings and approaches, find common ground and areas where approaches and concepts varied and recommendations on how the discussion can be taken further. The Workshop aimed to:

¹ This report outlines the presentations and discussion at the Workshop and Parliamentary Launch. It is not a GAPS position and not the position of all attendees, rather it serves as a workshop outline for participants.

- To discuss the concept of GPS with a broader audience and assess where synergies exist
- An increased understanding of the principles of GPS in UK civil society and academia.
- To discuss a women's rights and peacebuilding approaches to WPS and synergies between women's rights and GPS
- To discuss WPS programming and assess synergies between WPS programming and GPS

2.2. Discussion:

2.2.1. Gender Peace and Security:

The Peacebuilding NGOs asserted that their move to GPS is not meant to devalue work on women's rights and that their organisations are continuing to work on issues affecting women and not initiate an abandonment of 1325. The GPS approach argues that UNSCR 1325 has not achieved as hoped due to an array of factors, which include those shared by the WPS approach, such as lack of political will and limited funding, but also because the WPS approach main focus is on women, whereas, they assert, the GPS approach also looks at the inclusion of men and exploration of masculinity.

Henri's presentation focused on International Alert's research which is not focussed on rethinking gender, but assessing gender and including a socio-political analysis of identities and power structures. The research looks at violence against women, girls, men and boys as well as masculinities, household conflict and excluded groups. International Alert's research is not advocating for moving away from working on women and girls and gender equality but seeing gender through a relational approach. Alert's research focussed on Burundi, Colombia, Uganda and Nepal and addressed theoretical and conceptual issues in addition to peacebuilding, intergenerational factors, access to justice, continuations of violence-different forms. The research outlined that it would be beneficial not to think of women as homogenous category but should address other social identity markers such as class, race, age, urban and rural status.

Saferworld's conflict analyses and country team assessments outline violent notions of masculinity as a factor driving conflict in some of the countries in which Saferworld have programmes. This includes the example of cattle raiding in parts of South Sudan, participation in which is a rite of passage for young men and is linked to the need to obtain cattle to pay bride prices. Research by Saferworld and others shows that women and men contribute to this view of masculinity. Saferworld's recent research has looked at what programming approaches are currently being used to challenge violent notions of masculinity. The research found there were few programmes explicitly addressing masculinity as driver of conflict. The research also highlighted a number of important considerations for adapting existing approaches to address masculinities as a driver of conflict. These include the need for sensitivity to existing narratives around masculinity, including a need to avoid reinforcing colonial narratives around men of particular races. Saferworld emphasises that programming on addressing attitudes of masculinity as drivers of conflict is different to programming on men's leadership for gender equality, and emphasised the need not to divert resources away from the women, peace and security agenda.

2.2.2. Women, Peace and Security:

Womankind Worldwide presented their women's human rights based approach (WHRBA) which moves away from needs and charity to seeing women as rights holders and duty bearers. Fundamental to the approach is empowerment. WHRBA asserts that there needs to be a more holistic approach to WPS. WROs understand the importance of making the international frameworks context specific and applicable and work with communities, including women, men, girls, and boys, however it is important that women's rights and empowerment remains central. Womankind applies a rights based approach which works with women to define their rights, what equality and empowerment means to them and how that looks in a local context. Challenges to WPS work include the lack of funding, power relations, gender roles which impact women's reluctance to enter the public sphere, women's participation remains marginalised, risks to women human rights defenders, and lack of women's participation in peace. Womankind advocate for a holistic and transformative approach to WPS which aims for societal change, participation, support for WROs and ensuring WPS is funded.

CARE presented their work on engaging men and boys in their VAWG programming. The work considered the importance of focussing on broader gender equality issues, attitudes and norms about masculinities and engaging men in post-conflict VAWG programming. CARE worked with a local partner, Promundo who address the drivers of violence, which include economic and employment issues, gender norms, risky behaviours and trauma. CARE used examples of their work in the Balkans and Burundi in ending VAWG and engaging men. Women for Women International (WfWI) presented their work on engaging men in women's economic empowerment. WfWI's men's engagement programme (MEP) was developed in response to requests from women participants for WfWI to work more directly with male community members in 2002 and began with a pilot programme in Nigeria. Whilst WfWI was and continues to, engage with male community members as part of the organisation's general approach, women participants felt that more direct and inclusive effort would reduce some of the challenges they faced in applying their learning from the core programme. Whilst economic empowerment is proven to be an effective entry point for both development and gender equality, it can lead to tensions by challenging gender roles (and power dynamics) within households. It is being delivered in Afghanistan, DRC, Rwanda and Nigeria and follows a 'trainer of trainer' approach. The exact format is different in different contexts and whilst the sources (e.g. national laws) are also different, MEP curricula covers gender equality, gender based violence and women's economic empowerment. In Afghanistan, for example, the MEP is delivered in conjunction with Friday prayers and references the Koran as well as the Afghan Constitution. In some areas of eastern DRC, the MEP is delivered every two weeks and the DRC constitution and international/regional frameworks are referenced. MEP delivery has been dependent on grant funding as it is not part of the organisation's core work and this has meant that it has not been consistently delivered across (and even within) countries of operation. An ongoing challenge is weighing the benefits between working with existing male leaders against the risks of endorsing their authority and legitimacy and not challenging power-dynamics. However, assessments of the impact of the MEP has shown an impact on positive masculinities and increased knowledge of GBV and has helped to support more sustainable outcomes for women graduates. Women for Women have three key lessons: working with women and their communities is essential; providing space for discussions on gender and other related issues is important and women (particularly) need a safe space; and work (including materials) has to be locally relevant.

2.2.3. Summary of Discussion:

The breakout groups discussed the following key issues:

- The Groups agreed that UNSR 1325 and therefore subsequent WPS work, particularly work on women's rights, is founded on a gendered analysis which demonstrated that women are excluded from decision-making and that conflict has a disproportionate impact on them.
- Group members asserted that this analysis of war being deeply gendered was discussed during the development of UNSCR 1325 but not all of it was included in the resolution.
- Group members agreed that masculinities and gender inequality exists in all countries, including donor countries, not just conflict affected countries
- The Groups agreed that the principles of W and GPS should be further adopted by and integrated into the UK military and Ministry of Defence (MOD).
- The groups shared concerns about engaging men and acknowledging their role as agents of change in women's rights and W and GPS work. They agreed that it was important and necessary, but warned against such policy and programming which may uphold and further cement patriarchy.
- The groups discussed male survivors of violence and agreed that reporting is difficult for men and women. As a result, prevalence figures are not necessary reflective.
- The groups discussed W-and-GPS service provision for survivors and agreed that there has been increased attention on sexual violence but that services by different agencies faced practical difficulties in service delivery.
- The groups agreed that work on participation is behind other areas of W-and-GPS work. The groups universally agreed that significant work is necessary on women's participation and agreed that it should be representative of national ethnic, geographical, religious and economic groups. The groups agreed that more capacity building is necessary for women.

- Group members asserted that there is a clear need for more women at top levels of decision making, but also a flatter system of decision-making is needed to develop a more representative system.
- The Groups agreed that civil society should have a more in depth discussion on how to engage men and how we can learn from each other.
- The Groups agreed that funding should not be diverted from WPS to a GSP approach, but rather more funding is needed.

The Group agreed that further workshops on W and GPS would be useful to further explore where the approaches have similarities and differences and to share learning. The Group agreed that the conversations are not always easy, but are important to ensure that the discussion is open. The agreed to keep the discussions limited to the NGOs present and invited and to include more of academics who were invited before expanding the discussion to officials.

3. Parliamentary Launch:

3.1. Attendees and Format:

The Parliamentary Launch of International-Alert's research gained significant and widespread attention. It was hosted by the APG on Women, Peace and Security for which GAPS provides the Secretariat. The event gained Ministerial attention and Lynne Featherstone MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development and Ministerial Champion for tackling Violence against Women and Girls Overseas, spoke at the event. The event was chaired by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger, Vice Chair of the APG, and additional speakers included Dr Henri Myrntinen, Senior Research Officer, International Alert, and Hannah Wright, Gender, Peace and Security Advisor, Saferworld. Attendees included Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democratic parliamentarians, parliamentary researchers, officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Department for International Development (DFID) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) and representatives of civil society.

3.2. Summary of Discussion:

Baroness Hodgson opened the event by welcoming new research in the area and outlining the importance of working together on the issues. She explained that the event would discuss two fascinating new research reports looking at gender and peacebuilding. International Alert's research presented innovative analyses of gender and conflict, emphasising the importance of looking at both the causes and consequences of conflict through a gendered lens. Saferworld's research will be published imminently and International Alert's research has now been published.

The Minister outlined DFID's commits to Women, Peace and Security and importance of the new National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. She outlined DFID's work on Violence against Women and Girls and highlighted the importance of increasing the representation of women in peace processes. The Minister outlined the importance of women's role in peace building and the role women have in developing a sustainable peace. She emphasised the lead role participation will have in the UK's National Action Plan on 1325, including women's civil and political participation. The Minister addressed PSVI and the Call to Action on VAWG in Emergencies as key programmes the Government is undertaking, as well as work on FGM and education. She highlighted DFID's Strategic Vision for Women and Girls and the gendered causes of conflict and stability. She stated the gender equality is key for stability. International Alert and Saferworld's presentations focussed on their organisation's research, which is outlined in section 2.2 Civil Society Workshop – Discussion.

The presentations of DFID, International Alert and Saferworld research were followed by a short Question and Answer session. This included discussion on the importance of cross-government working to achieve women and gender, peace and security aims, the importance of working with women's rights organisations and building and capacity of civil society who are key to achieving these aims. The discussion also addressed the importance of women's political participation, including participation of women who are representative of social, ethnic and economic groups. The Group agreed that 'traditional' social norms are a barrier to women's social, economic and political participation.