

# Rethink!

A Handbook for Sustainable Peace



**KVINNA TILL KVINNA**

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS

Agneta Söderberg Jacobson

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**The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation** addresses the specific needs of women in areas affected by war and armed conflict. The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation cooperates with women's organisations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Israel/Palestine, Kosovo, Macedonia and in Serbia and Montenegro.

Rethink! A Handbook for Sustainable Peace  
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# Preface

“Our challenge is to ensure we have the rules, instruments and institutions to deal with all these threats – not according to some hierarchy of “first order” and “second order” issues, but as a linked set of global, **cross-border challenges** that affect, and should **concern, all people.**”

UN SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE,  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2003.

**THE KVINNA TILL KVINNA FOUNDATION** has been strengthening women in regions affected by war and conflict for ten years. We build on the knowledge and experience gained by women over the past years, from the first United Nations women’s conference in Mexico in 1975, to the UN Conference in Beijing 1995 when 189 countries unanimously approved the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action. The Beijing Declaration maintains that women’s rights are human rights and that it is essential for the peace process that women be given the opportunity to fully participate in all areas of society and have equal access to power as men.

In many parts of the world women seldom have sufficient resources to actively organise nor the time to care about anything else than daily survival. This is particularly evident during and after war and armed conflict. Women get caught in an endless circle where the lack of time, money and self-reliance makes change close to impossible. Societies are too often characterised by traditional and patriarchal values that accentuate the belief that women are incapable of taking part in political power structures and decision-making bodies. Often, men are not aware of their own oppressive methods that have been fine-tuned for generations and the structural inequalities are not visible.

In order to break this pattern, women must be given the opportunity to participate in, and take responsibility for, shaping societies. Women are particularly vulnerable during and after armed conflict, but the situation also creates a unique opportunity for them to take part in creating new societies from the ruins of the old. Women possess valuable knowledge of the needs that exist based on their own experience, which must be utilised if justice and stability are to be achieved. Men must be taught to understand women’s reality, learn to see and make use of the expertise that women possess and acknowledge their right to participate in decision-making. Sustainable development and lasting peace are not possible without co-operation between women and men.

This handbook is meant to be a tool for people working in areas affected by war and armed conflict and in the peace and rebuilding process. A great deal of knowledge and experience is going to waste because women are not seen as essential actors in this process, which leads to loss of time and money and has a negative impact on the lives and future prospects of both women and men. Gender equality as a tool in conflict prevention and peacebuilding has not yet been tested in a measured and constructive way. There have been many good, individual contributions but an overall perspective has been missing. With this report we try to show what a holistic model for peacebuilding would look like, a model where gender equality is an indispensable instrument for sustainability.

We hope that *Rethink! A Handbook for Sustainable Peace* will contribute to inspire more work that encompasses equality and gender-awareness in regions ravaged by war and armed conflict. We also hope it will function as a handbook for long-term work towards sustainable peace and justice.

*Kerstin Grebäck*

PRESIDENT

THE KVINNA TILL KVINNA FOUNDATION

# Introduction

“It is not that the world would have been a better place if women had run it, but that the world will be a better place when we as women, who bring our perspectives, share in running it.”

BETTY BUMPER, FOUNDER OF PEACELINKS, USA. <sup>1</sup>

**ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE PEACE** and democracy in post-war societies is one of our greatest challenges. There are many theories as to what is required to achieve this. Research and experience show that democratic institutions and civil society are vital components but not sufficient in themselves for achieving lasting peace.

Some research shows a connection between the status of women in a society and its level of conflict. Violent conflict is more common in countries with a low representation of women in parliament and where domestic violence against women is more widespread than in more gender equal societies.<sup>2</sup> Utilising the knowledge and expertise of women is therefore a peace promoting activity in itself.

The subordination of women and their lack of power is particularly evident after war and armed conflict. Despite women making up more than fifty per cent of the population, their knowledge and experience is consistently ignored at peace negotiations and during the rebuilding process. Old patriarchal structures and lack of insight deny war-affected communities the knowledge, energy and expertise of women.

Women are important actors for peace because of their experience, but women, like men, are individuals in their own right and are shaped by the values of the society in which they live. Women also take part in conflict as soldiers, as in Sri Lanka and Liberia for example, and there are examples of women who have led wars and that are driven by the same nationalistic sentiments as men. Women are not peaceful by nature, but tradition casts women and men in completely different roles even during war and conflict situations.

Women hold the main responsibility for keeping the everyday life running during war. Almost all conflicts follow the same pattern: the men march off to the front line and the women are left to maintain social functions. When peace comes, the women have to step back. Women are almost never invited to participate in peace talks or discussions on rebuilding. The experience that women gain during war is ignored, which prejudices the peace talks and the opportunity for lasting peace.

Many international declarations affirm the right of women to participate in politics and the development of society. Among them are The Conven-

tion on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a UN convention from 1979, and the Beijing Declaration from the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, which states that women's access to positions of power is a prerequisite for democracy and peace. UN Security Council Resolution 1325, approved in October 2000, was the first resolution to declare that war affects men and women differently. The resolution demands the involvement of more women in peacebuilding and conflict mediation work and promotes women as advocates of peace with indispensable knowledge.

Declarations are vital instruments for women's organisations throughout the world, but so far the UN has not lived up to its promises. This is highlighted in The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation's previous reports *Engendering the Peace Process*<sup>3</sup> and *Getting it Right*<sup>4</sup>, which comment on the lack of a gender perspective in the peace agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina and within the UN administration (UNMIK) in Kosovo.

But progress has not completely ground to a halt. Research shows that investing in women not only leads to quicker and more sustainable development but also aids economic growth. Research has shown that the lack of investment in education for women results in a lower gross national product (GNP), while reducing sexual discrimination at the workplace can lead to improving women's salaries and GNP.<sup>5</sup>

The need to outline the different needs and conditions of women and men is a subject under continuous debate within the international community. The goal should be to incorporate gender awareness into all areas of development work. Some international organisations already have gender equality focal points, but not enough policy and guidelines have actually been implemented.

International donors also put pressure on recipient countries to consider the needs and roles of women, but genuine progress requires a comprehensive change of attitude throughout society and a range of different efforts.

This handbook is intended to assist in this multi-faceted work. By collecting examples of successful contributions by and for women we hope to inspire others to continue the work for global gender equality and for a just peace. Primarily, we want to target actors within the international community, both large organisations such as the UN and smaller relief organisations.

As a guide to the practicalities to rebuilding, conflict resolving and other peacebuilding activities, this report provides a model for women's participation at various stages and levels of the peace process. The model is pre-



sented in its entirety in the final chapter and is basically a compilation of the various efforts and experiences described in the report. The model is divided into three stages: during conflict, during peace negotiations and during the rebuilding process. Each stage is analysed at three “levels”: within civil society, at the national level and within the international community. The model demonstrates that contributions are required throughout all the stages and at all levels at the same time. Individual projects risk being wasted if they are not part of a larger context. An all-encompassing gender perspective is vital for accomplishing real change.

“We [the Governments] reaffirm our commitment to: **The empowerment and advancement of women**, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, thus contributing to the moral, ethical, spiritual and intellectual needs of women and men, individually or in community with others and thereby guaranteeing them the possibility of **realizing their full potential in society** and shaping their lives in accordance with their own aspirations.

We [the Governments] are convinced that: Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace;

**Women's rights are human rights.”**

PARAGRAPHS 12, 13 & 14 OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION,  
APPROVED AT THE UN FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN BEIJING 1995.

# Peace, Democracy and Gender Equality


**THE TERMS PEACE AND DEMOCRACY** are closely interwoven. In the late 18th century the German philosopher Immanuel Kant declared that democratic states do not wage war against each other. Democracies were few and far between in those days but once democracy spread around the world Kant was proven right: according to modern research, democracies generally do not wage war against each other.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, this only applies between democratic states. There are many examples of democratic states declaring war on non-democratic states, such as dictatorships and semi-authoritarian states.

A common argument against the aforementioned idea is that it does not apply to conflicts within states, the most common form of armed conflict today. In these conflicts a democratic government does not seem to help, as has been noted in India, Spain and Northern Ireland. The idea that a democratic society in itself is sufficient for resolving conflicts is not completely accurate. In a democracy where the political power is tied to ethnic affiliation, for example, ethnic minorities constantly risk being ignored.

A deeper analysis shows that the quality of democracy carries importance. Democracy entails more than democratic institutions and fair and free elections. When women are denied access to decision-making bodies democracy ceases to function. The needs of the civilian population are easily neglected, which in turn creates an unbalanced society.

In building sustainable, democratic progress we cannot confine ourselves to ceasefires and the status quo, says peace researcher Johan Galtung, who coined the phrases "negative peace" and "positive peace". Although negative peace means that hostilities are stopped or suspended, the underlying structural inequality that caused the war in the first place still lives on. Positive peace, on the other hand, is only achieved by changing the underlying structures of inequality and in particular gender inequality.

If democracy is the goal, and gender equality a vital means of achieving this objective, then equality between women and men must be given top



"As countries emerge from the rubble of war, women must be equal partners in rebuilding. **Men alone cannot rebuild war-torn societies.**"

ELISABETH REHN & ELLEN JOHNSON  
SIRLEAF, WOMEN WAR PEACE, 2002.

**GENDER** The social dimension of the sex. The term can be used to highlight the variable roles and characteristics attributed to men and women by society as opposed to innate biological functions. Gender is also used to describe the social relationships between women and men. Lack of equality is a result of a gendered system where male qualities are the norm and the knowledge and experience of women hold little value.

### **GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

Gender equality permeates all actions. All guiding principles and political decisions are analysed with an eye on their effect on women and men. Because women and men have different opportunities, political decisions affect them differently. Gender equality is not just a range of issues that can be managed by one, single department, but must be a part of all policy making.

priority at all levels of the peacebuilding process. A few contributions here and there are not sufficient. Gender awareness must permeate all political and policy decisions (so-called "gender mainstreaming"). Actually, it is quite simple. In all situations, one must ask if a decision affects women and men differently. If so, what can be done to ensure one or the other party is not discriminated against or disadvantaged?

One could say that gender mainstreaming is a strategy for integrating gender equality in all facets of political work. Gender equality is not a special interest subject to be handled in its own particular way by separate departments, but the property of all and should be an integral part of all planning, implementation, control and evaluation. By analysing the situation for both women and men it is possible to plan projects so as to benefit both sexes on an equal basis. This perspective can lead to a complete re-assessment of the design of guiding principles and implementation processes; extensive work that requires knowledge and awareness as well as high-level management to ensure the gender perspective is not lost.

## **WAR AND GENDER ROLES**

War often brings about a temporary change in gender roles. Women get new roles during armed conflict such as breadwinners, entrepreneurs and activists. When women realise they can manage their new roles they seldom want to return to living as they did before the war.

Women sometimes manage to change their position permanently after the war, but generally everything returns to as it was before, or the gender roles become even more conservative. Women could, for instance, be denied rights that they previously held, this could be done in the name of religion or political beliefs. War is often followed by a new wave of domestic violence when men act out the war traumas they have not been able to heal. Such a development is evident in Bosnia and Herzegovina where domestic violence has increased since the war.<sup>7</sup>

In Eritrea, women lost their newly won freedom with the end of the war in 1993. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front pursued a radical gender policy during the war but this changed when the country won independence and elections took place. Rural areas in particular revived old discriminating traditions against women. Similar developments took place in Algeria where women played a vital role during the struggle for independence. When the war ended in 1962, the rhetoric about Islam as the "liberator" of women proved to be little more than just rhetoric. The few

women's rights reforms that have actually been implemented have had very little impact. Islamic fundamentalism has taken an increasingly firmer grip on Algerian society during the past thirty years and has led to further restrictions on women's rights. Among other things, the fundamentalists are against mixed schools and feel that women should wear clothes that completely cover their bodies.

This type of peace, when governments and warring factions sign peace agreements or create new constitutions without considering the needs of women, or where women's political, economical and legal rights are restricted, could be described as "gender-blind" peace.<sup>8</sup> The opposite, gendered peace, considers the different frames of reference of men and women and is designed to benefit both sexes.

## WOMEN AS ACTORS

The traditional image of women in war and armed conflict is that of the victim. This description is partly correct and has become even more apparent during recent years. The proportion of civilians affected by war is constantly rising. A century ago, five per cent of war fatalities were civilian, a figure that had grown to 90 per cent by the turn of the last century.<sup>9</sup> But the fact that women are physically vulnerable in war and conflict does not mean that they are weak and passive, on the contrary, women have often shown a great capacity for taking action in times of war and conflict.

Women's resistance to war is historical; from the women's sex strike in the Greek drama *Lysistrata* to the Women in Black vigils in Israel and Serbia. Women in Black emerged from the Israeli peace movement during the first Palestinian intifada of the late 1980s. It was a group of women looking for a feminist alternative to the peace demonstrations of the time that often ended in fighting between demonstrators and counter demonstrators. They wanted to be seen and convey a clear message but not to enter into debate with the slanderers. So Women in Black was born, a movement where women demonstrate in silence, dressed in black with a clear message on black placards.

Women in Black have been active in Israel for twenty years and still demonstrate every Friday at selected places around the country. When Yugoslavia fell apart and war broke out, a Women in Black group was also formed in Belgrade. This group demonstrates against war and for peace and reconciliation in exactly the same way as Women in Black in Israel. This method, where women convey their message in stubborn silence and become a burden to those in power, has been used in many places around

the world. A well-known example is the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, also known as "the crazy mothers of the Plaza de Mayo", who stubbornly demonstrate for information about the people who "disappeared" during the military junta.

Northern Ireland is another example where women organised themselves and therefore came to set a standard in the peace process. Women were actively building bridges between the Catholics and Protestants long before the official peace negotiations began. Instead of focusing on old injustices they discussed solutions and strategies for healthcare and education etc. The women developed a common cause that in time influenced public opinion. By cooperating they became a peaceful alternative which showed that coexistence is possible despite a bloody history.

Today the given arena for women is civil society, in both war and peace. It is here that women emerge as actors. Decision-making levels within the state and other institutions of power are often handed down between men so women have to seek alternative routes to power and influence. Resistance movements such as Women in Black and other women's initiatives within civil society are vital as visible alternatives to armed struggle in conflict regions. By uniting, women gain in strength and influence events from below. Many times it can seem very insignificant – women meeting to exchange experiences over a cup of coffee and even perhaps some needlework – but these everyday meetings have great potential; when women share their problems and experience it often leads to them together trying to change the course of events in their societies.

One of the most effective ways of supporting women is to create the possibility for them to organise and to provide places where they can meet. One example of this was the cooperation between women's organisations in Macedonia in 1999 that set up a meeting place for women in the town of Kumanovo. Many of the organisations were humanitarian and activities initially focused on cultural evenings. When armed conflict broke out in 2001 emphasis was put on supporting the women in nearby villages.

The women's meeting place in Kumanovo is multiethnic and functions as a forum for discussions on how the women's movement can counteract the ethnic tensions in the country. The centre is becoming increasingly political due to the variety of issues being debated. For the local elections in 2004, support and education is being planned for women active in party politics to improve their chances of getting elected. The centre will also run a campaign to get women to vote, focussing on rural areas in particular.

► **THE TOWN OF TUZLA** was given a near mythical status during and after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Against all the odds the town leaders managed to keep Tuzla more or less out of the war and the town witnessed little ethnic cleansing. Page after page has been written about the miracle but nobody has been able to explain how Tuzla managed to avoid the worst nationalistic warmongering.

“The good relationship and the trust that existed between the leaders and the citizens of the town was one of the crucial factors,” says Melvida Kunosovic-Vlajic, who worked with communication and infrastructure at the mayor’s office during the war. “The town leaders promoted an open spirit and citizen commitment.”

Before the war, civil society in Tuzla was not particularly well developed and consisted of a few recreational societies. But things changed rapidly when war broke out; women in Tuzla realised there was work to be done and became active within civil society. This gave them the chance to voice their opinions. According to Melvida Kunosovic-Vlajic, women had a built-in resistance against the war and the nationalistic propaganda and during the war they always tried to keep an open dialogue between the various ethnic groups.

“The contacts with international organisations have been important in the development of civil society in Tuzla,” emphasises Melvida Kunosovic-Vlajic.

Many international organisations were active in Tuzla during the war but were gradually replaced by local organisations as the war ended. Commitment to civil society has also paved the way for women to become actively involved in politics. Female political representation is high in Tuzla with more than 30 per cent women on the municipal council.

Melvida Kunosovic-Vlajic sees many positive signs for the future. She believes there will not be war in Bosnia and Herzegovina again because there is a totally different preparedness – and a stronger civil society.

“We will never let it happen again,” she concludes.

## What happened in Tuzla?

“I was one of several women who held leading positions in the municipal office in Tuzla during the war. It was obvious that we were more interested in the work of local NGOs than our male colleagues. We realised that women had special needs and **we supported women who organised themselves**. Thanks to the women, civil society in Tuzla grew strong. Today there are more NGOs here than in any other town in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

MELVIDA KUNOSOVIC-VLAJIC WORKED FOR THE TUZLA MUNICIPALITY BETWEEN 1994-96. TODAY SHE WORKS AT TALDI, A CENTRE FOR NGO DEVELOPMENT IN TUZLA.

## SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

Women in conflict areas organise themselves for a variety of reasons. Often women meet to discuss issues they find of concern in their society, but also because they want to empower themselves and others. Forming or becoming a member of an organisation can be a way for women to heal their war traumas. Sharing painful memories makes it easier to lessen feelings of hatred and start to think of the future. Becoming involved in an organisation is also a good stepping-stone into politics. Discussing problems and possible solutions helps women become better equipped for making proposals for changes within society.

There are many different types of women's organisations. Some possess great knowledge and experience of human rights issues and others offer a wide variety of social services, particularly to internally displaced persons, returnees and in refugee camps. Other women's organisations focus on topics like conflict resolution and reconciliation by bringing together women from the contending groups or states and there are those who work to counteract all forms of oppression against women, to name a few.

Regardless of their approach, these organisations play a significance part in highlighting the shortfalls in the various stages of the peace process. This could involve basic issues that bring attention to the needs of women and children, political campaigning for the representation of women in local, national and international bodies or changing patriarchal structures and institutions.

Organisations that start with a will to change things are best equipped to grow strong and gain influence within society. Initially, major financial support is not the most important factor but in order to develop and implement their ideas, organisations require international long-term financial and moral support. It is critical that the international community recognises local organisations active in the area, as they possess great knowledge of the problems and needs in society. These organisations need support and encouragement but must not be deprived of their initiative, which happens when the international community seeks rapid results. Achieving sustainable change in attitudes and societies is never a rapid process.

► **WHEN JERUSALEM LINK** was formed after the Oslo Agreement in 1994 there was hope for peace in the region. Much has happened since then and today the situation has greatly deteriorated. Many peace initiatives have failed or been put on ice and there are hardly any joint efforts undertaken by the two groups. The network Jerusalem Link is one of the few exceptions. It is made up of the Israeli women's organisation Bat Shalom and the Palestinian Jerusalem Centre for Women. The network has drawn up ten points for peace that proposes two independent states with Jerusalem as the joint capital city.

How is it possible for a group of Palestinian and Israeli women to succeed where so many others have failed, i.e. to define joint objectives for the peace process and work together towards a peaceful and just solution to the conflict in the region?

A vital instrument for the work of Jerusalem Link is power analysis, a feminist perspective on working politically, coupled with asking simple, practical questions such as: Who gets to attend a meeting? Who is invited to international seminars? Who makes the decisions?

"This has probably saved the initiative," reasons Terry Greenblatt, former spokeswoman for Bat Shalom. "Being aware of how power is structured in society is in itself a way of preventing conflict."

Jerusalem Link strives to influence public opinion and decision-makers, both locally and on the international arena. When the current Middle East peace plan was drawn up in 2002, women's organisations were not approached. This is contrary to UN Resolution 1325, which states that women shall be involved in all peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes.

In autumn 2002 representatives of Jerusalem Link were invited to speak before the UN Security Council in New York. They presented a proposal for an international women's commission to act as an independent body in the peace negotiations.

"Our aim is for the women's commission to become a permanent body engaged in other conflicts as well," says Amneh Badran, head of the Jerusalem Centre for Women. "This would ensure that the women's perspective is automatically part of formal negotiations. As women we not only want to come with recommendations but also take part in influencing peace processes."

EXAMPLE FROM  
ISRAEL/PALESTINE

## Feminism as an instrument for peace

"It is extremely difficult to cooperate when both sides live such different lives. When we meet we have completely different points of reference. I climb into an air-conditioned car and drive to the meeting and arrive like a lady, but the Palestinian women are tired and sweaty after having to climb over piles of rubble. **We manage to stay united because we work from a feminist perspective.** If we only focussed on the historical or nationalistic issues it would never work because of the enormous differences."

TERRY GREENBLATT, FORMER SPOKESWOMAN  
FOR THE ISRAELI WOMEN'S ORGANISATION BAT SHALOM.



## SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL WOMEN

Supporting individual women is an important instrument for promoting the peacebuilding process. Women employed within traditional male structures, such as women mayors, politicians and trade union representatives, are particularly in need of support. The stronger and more capable women are within a community, the better chance they have of taking part and influencing the various stages of the peace process. Strong women role models are also important to inspire other women.

Those who take part in peace negotiations are often leaders of institutions and political organisations. This automatically discriminates against women because they are seldom represented at these levels of society. The most common argument for excluding women from peace negotiations is: "there are no women who are competent enough". The capability of men is seldom or never questioned. Traditional patterns ensure that women are neither seen nor heard, regardless of their expertise.

Training is often required to get women more politically involved. Prior to the election in Timor-Leste, 145 potential women Members of Parliament (MPs) were trained through the United Nations' Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The women studied democratic rule, leadership and women's rights. A number of other projects were also implemented such as campaigns to inspire women to vote, which led to 27 per cent of the seats in parliament going to women.<sup>10</sup>

In Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, two women's organisations, The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and United Women, support politically active women. They provide media training to teach women how to formulate their message in the press and broadcasting media, and seminars for women representatives of the various political parties to help create cross-party networks to support the individual women politicians.

However, just supporting women is not enough; the entire fabric of society must be changed in order to facilitate true gender equality. One method is to educate men in the competence of women so as to counteract the discouragement of women in male-dominated areas of society.

# New Perspectives for Peace

## THE CONFLICT

### Initiatives in refugee camps

An unconditional consequence of war is the sight of women, children and elderly refugees. In every war or conflict people are forced to abandon their homes and seek refuge in another region or country. Large numbers of people are herded into camps that are often poorly equipped to serve even the most rudimentary needs. According to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), three quarters of all refugees living in refugee camps are women and children.

Refugee camps can be insecure places, particularly for women. Lack of insight creates unawareness of the security issues surrounding women in refugee camps. Seemingly simple things such as secluded areas for women to wash themselves, lighting at the latrines or the grass being cut around the latrines minimises the risk of women being subjected to assault and violence.

Many of the problems could be avoided or alleviated if the vulnerability of women was taken seriously. Very little is required to change bad conditions and avoid physical and mental pain that lives on for many years after the war. Work carried out by the Motrat Qiriazhi (MQ) organisation in refugee camps in Macedonia during the Kosovo conflict in 1999 is a good example of how seemingly small contributions directed at women can make a big difference (see page 18).

## Vulnerable women get their own meeting place

“When we first came to the camp it was terrible to see how depressed everybody was. We started by buying three tambourines and began playing, singing and crying with the women. We put up tents that became meeting places with a women’s hairdresser’s, a café and discussion groups for women. The UNHCR didn’t understand what we were doing but The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation gave us their support and put their trust in us. That is how all international organisations should work, **local organisations know best the needs that exist.**”

IGBALLE RUGOVA, FOUNDER OF THE KOSOVO ALBANIAN  
WOMEN’S ORGANISATION MOTRAT QIRIAZI (MQ).

► **WHEN ETHNIC CLEANSING** was at its worst level in Kosovo more than 700,000 Kosovo Albanians fled. A large refugee camp was built on the mountain-side in the village of Cegrane in neighbouring Macedonia but it was not prepared for the stream of refugees that arrived. The camp was built to take 8,000 people but 40,000 arrived. There were many international organisations at the camp, including staff from The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation who were evacuated from their office in Kosovo.

Cooperation between the international organisations was very slow in getting off the ground and the work in the refugee camp stood still. Women refugees were particularly vulnerable. There was, for example, no outdoor lighting in the camp and criminal elements could operate in the dark. Women risked being raped or kidnapped to be sold into prostitution. A visit to the toilet at night could be a life threatening danger for a woman.

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the Kosovo Albanian organisation MQ were aware of the women’s vulnerable situation and when they heard that the German rescue services had extra tents left over they saw a possibility of creating conditions for the women to help each other. They asked the women in the camp if they wanted special tents where they could meet. The response was overwhelming and two tents were soon erected.

The need for a special meeting place for women was an experience that The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation gained from working in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Being able to share grief and problems with others has a healing effect and is part of the reconciliation process after war and armed conflict. Solidarity between women is particularly important for women who have been subjected to sexualised violence, something they find difficult to share with men, especially in societies with strong traditional gender roles where women risk being condemned if they have been victims of such crimes.

The tents were used for counselling and also became information centres where much of what happened in the camp was aired and discussed. Women discussed their concerns and brought up problems that took place beneath the surface of the camp that appeared safe. MQ and The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation found solutions to many of the problems that were brought up. Outdoor lighting was installed and guards began patrolling the camp after it was revealed that young women were kidnapped at night.

During recent years the vulnerable situation of women in refugee camps has begun to attract attention. In 1991, the UNHCR adopted special guidelines for the protection of refugee women that included equal access to humanitarian aid and the right to protection in the camps on the same basis as men. It is important to separate the specific needs of women and not regard the refugee group as homogenous. To ensure that women are also reached, it is necessary to find new strategies for food and water supplies for example.

The guidelines have not yet had the required effect but many good projects have been created in their wake. One example is the UNHCR Burundi refugee camp in Tanzania, where two specialists in gender based violence and two lawyers were engaged to deal with the violence against women, including domestic violence. In Kenya, the UNHCR supports mobile courts that move around the various refugee camps. Residents of other refugee camps have set up their own tribunals to counteract violence against women.<sup>11</sup> It has also come to light that those entrusted with helping, for example the aid workers, sometimes abuse women, which is a problem that has to be counteracted (see page 40).

“The Security Council,  
... Urges Member States  
to ensure **increased**  
**representation of women**  
at all decision-making levels  
in national, regional and  
international institutions  
and mechanisms for the  
prevention management,  
and resolution of conflict; ...

## PEACE

### Women as advocates for peace

During the First World War when combat was at its height in the trenches, a group of women met in The Hague to try to put an end to the violence. The year was 1917 and more than 5,000 soldiers lost their lives every day. There was total resignation and peace seemed a long way off but the women wanted to influence its development. More than 1,000 women from twelve warring and neutral countries organised the first international women’s conference.

The conference resulted in a programme of action that urged global disarmament and an end to the war. The programme also demanded gender equality and equality between nations and recommended the creation of an international organisation for conflict resolution between countries. Representatives from the conference delivered the programme to Europe’s leading politicians and The US president, who were impressed, and the programme was used when forming the League of Nations, later to become the United Nations (UN). After the conference, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was formed and is now represented in 37 countries. Over the years the notion of a connection between gender equality and global peace has become more widespread and the issue is now debated within peace and conflict research as well as in the international community.

The United Nations Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 approved the Platform for Action, requiring member states to take the appropriate measures and modify laws and praxis to eliminate all obstacles to gender equality. Five years later, at the Women 2000 Conference: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty First Century (also called Beijing +5) in New York, representatives from governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from around the world met to follow up the Platform for Action from 1995. One of the aims was to evaluate if any advancements had been made with regard to women and conflicts. The result was disheartening; hardly anything had changed during the five years that had passed. It was clear that further measures were required in order for women to participate in peace processes on the same terms as men.

## UN Resolution 1325 – a vital instrument

Thanks to pressure from the women's movement, the UN Security Council approved a resolution in October 2000. Resolution 1325 is a legally binding document that deals with the issue of the affects of war on women and the participation of women in conflict resolution and in the work for sustainable peace. Among other things it established that the international community must be aware of, and show special consideration to, the vulnerable situation of women during war and that the UN member states must urge women to become involved in the peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes. The resolution also urges the international community to listen to, and support, the peace initiatives of local women by utilising the know-how of women's organisations and individual women, and directing aid to them. By adopting the resolution, the international community acknowledged the demands of the women in The Hague back in 1917.

Resolution 1325 has had an impact. During recent years increasingly more policy documents within international and bilateral organisations have taken up the role of women in peace processes, rebuilding and in societal processes in general. For example, it helped to spread awareness of the situation of women leading up to the rebuilding process in **AFGHANISTAN** in connection with the so-called "Brussels Declaration" of 2001.

The "Brussels Declaration" is a progressive document that highlights the important role of women in the rebuilding process and was drawn up by Afghan women's organisations. UNIFEM initiated the meeting in Brussels, which laid the foundation for the declaration, but it was the Afghan women who formulated the document. The "Brussels Declaration" received a positive reception at the donors' conference in Tokyo where the general feeling was that it was of vital importance to support Afghan women. Resolution 1325 was of great significance for women in Afghanistan because it inspired them to draw up the declaration, but there is clearly a long way to go before we see the results of the women's efforts. Despite the positive reception among the donors in Tokyo, according to UNIFEM figures only one per cent of the total aid to Afghanistan goes to projects directed at women.

... Measures that **support** local **women's peace initiatives** and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements; ...

... Expresses its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions **take into account gender considerations and the rights of women**, through consultation with local and international women's groups."

FROM UN SECURITY COUNCIL  
RESOLUTION 1325, APPROVED  
ON OCTOBER 31, 2000.

In **GEORGIA**, Resolution 1325 has come to play a vital role, in particular for the Georgian organisations that are in contact with women from the Abkhazian separatist province. Women try to influence the peace process by cooperating over the borders. With the backing of Resolution 1325, they have been able to work towards including more women in the peace process in a number of ways. A coalition of women's organisations, the Women's Peacemaking Council, has taken an initiative to start discussions with parliamentarians and NGO representatives on the role of women in the peace process. The coalition points out that since Georgia is a member of the UN it must comply with any resolution that the Security Council has adopted, like Resolution 1325.

Another good example is the cooperation between Cultural Humanitarian Fund Sukhumi, composed of internally displaced Abkhazian women who live in the Georgian town of Kutaisi, and the Association of Women of Abkhazia. In 2003, they held a joint meeting in Moscow where they decided to work together and initiate joint projects. This is the first peace initiative from civil society representatives on both sides of the conflict and it will hopefully lead to increased contacts and normalised relations between Georgian and Abkhaz people.

Resolution 1325 also states that women should take part in international civilian and military peace operations. Organisations such as the UN and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) still do not employ enough women in their missions. In 2000 for example, women made up only four per cent of the UN Police Force. This is the reality despite the UN Secretary General declaring in 1996 that half the UN workforce would be women by the new millennium. In addition, in 2003 only one of the UN Special Representatives of the Secretary General, acting in conflict regions, is a woman and only three women have held the post in the past. The UN Security Council is made up entirely of men. Since 1992 only two of the 88 UN ambassadors in the Security Council have been women.

► **CIMIC IS A SPECIAL** unit of the UN-led peacekeeping forces that takes part in both civil and military operations. Åke Thörringer got the job as company commander within CIMIC in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002. The mission was to help internally displaced persons around the town of Dobož to return home and to support those who had already returned, practically and morally by showing that the international community was in place and actively involved.

Åke Thörringer knew that because an overwhelming number of internally displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina were women, it was crucial for the peacekeeping forces to include women. From previous experience he knew how difficult it was to work “single-gendered” in a traditional patriarchal society where men and women often live in different worlds so he looked for women officers.

It was not easy recruiting women, as the two women out of a total of 22 officers in the company proves. Together with their male colleagues, Anna-Carin Hortlund and Susanna Ditzinger travelled around the villages meeting refugees and assisting them in various ways. It was soon apparent however that it was not always the best way to work.

“Many women did not want to talk about their problems if men were present,” says Anna-Carin Hortlund, who is back at her job as captain at the Amphibian corps in Vaxholm. “But when I was alone with my woman interpreter they came and talked. It was then the idea of a special women’s patrol was hatched and we started Athena. Two days a week Susanna and I travelled out alone and many women took contact.”

But local politicians were not that interested in talking with women officers. If it was required in order to achieve results then male officers took the discussions, but the women officers always went with them.

“As representatives of the international community it’s important that we try to put across the value of gender equality,” continues Anna-Carin Hortlund. “We also have the task of showing what a democratic society looks like in our home countries. In this way we can perhaps have an influence on developments in the long-term.”

## EXAMPLE FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

### Better results with gender- balanced peacekeeping forces

“When I travelled down to the region to prepare for the task ahead I realised the company needed women. Unfortunately we didn’t manage to get more than two women, but thanks to them we found openings in the community and could get access to information we would never have received otherwise. This type of peacekeeping force should be made up of **half women and half men.**”

ÅKE THÖRRINGER, COMPANY COMMANDER WITHIN CIMIC  
(CIVIL MILITARY COOPERATION) IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 2002.



International peacekeeping forces have been given an increasingly vital role within global security policies. Around the world, military personnel are working under the international flag to build or maintain peace. There are many examples that prove that it would be beneficial to the peace process if women were more engaged in this work. Peacekeeping forces that have close contact with the local population and are made up of both women and men make these meetings much easier. To be legitimate, troops should reflect the whole population and act as role models for both women and men. Research carried out within this area shows that peacekeeping forces that include women and men have a more calming effect in conflict situations. This is true if the proportion of women is 30 per cent or more.<sup>12</sup>

As stated above, women are also underrepresented in civilian peacekeeping missions. As in other spheres of society, women find themselves in the lower orders. When women actually make it to a higher level it can have a great significance for developments. At one point there were three women in high-level positions within the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which among other things led to the formation of a gender coordinating group. The aim was to coordinate the various gender projects carried out by international organisations to avoid competition and duplication of work. The group also acted as a vital link between civil society and international organisations (see page 25).

► **THREE WOMEN IN** high positions within a peacekeeping mission is rare indeed. After the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina Elisabeth Rehn was first appointed UN human rights rapporteur in the Balkans and then Special Representative to the UN Secretary General (SRSG). At the same time, Elisabeth Rasmusson was the Deputy Head of the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the spring of 1998, British attorney Madeleine Rees began as new head of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR).

For local women's organisations it soon became apparent that women were now sitting in key positions within the international community. From being almost ignored after the war, they were now invited to discussions and were given the opportunity of taking part in the rebuilding process. Women's rights issues, violence against women and women in politics became regular items on the agendas of the international organisations that, in practice, ruled the country.

In 1999, the Gender Coordination Group (GCG) was formed to coordinate all the projects within the international community that were directed at women. The GCG functioned as a referral body for new laws.

"The excellent cooperation between the organisations in the GCG and local NGOs paved the way for Bosnia and Herzegovina today having the best gender equality law in the world, at least on paper," says Madeleine Rees.

A further example of successful cooperation are the many efforts to bring about an end to trafficking in human beings. The work began within the GCG but has since been branched off into a separate coordinating group. Cooperation between local authorities, NGOs and the international community is well developed and the Bosnian government has drawn up a national plan of action against trafficking in human beings. Madeleine Rees, who has been in Bosnia and Herzegovina for many years, has followed the developments:

"Nobody spoke about trafficking in human beings a few years ago and women victims of trafficking were regarded as a bunch of prostitutes. Regarding the problem, the international community has put a great deal of pressure on the country's politicians. Today the attitude has changed and everybody is aware of the problem."

EXAMPLE FROM BOSNIA  
AND HERZEGOVINA

## Women at the top

"We saw there were strong women in leading positions. They invited us to talks and actually listened to what we had to say. We felt we could turn to them, the men didn't ask about our experiences in the same way. The existence of a few women high up in the international community has meant a lot for local women's organisations. **They gave us hope – if they can, so can we!**"

JADRANKA MILICEVIC, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE BOSNIAN WOMEN'S ORGANISATION ZENE ZENAMA.

## Peace agreements and the future

War and hostilities lead to women taking over the traditional male tasks within society but when peace negotiations begin, the established gender roles take over again. When peace is negotiated it is nearly always exclusively men who participate, often with the argument that the warring factions should negotiate peace. What is forgotten is that a peace agreement is not only the end of hostilities but also the beginning of the future. Without the experience of women, vital knowledge is by-passed when planning the post-war rebuilding process.

Despite repeated EU Parliament and UN declarations regarding the importance of women's participation at all stages of the peace process, women are still excluded from arguably the most crucial stage, that of defining peace. In an environment with a high concentration of power, prevailing social attitudes are strengthened and women are excluded.

Local organisations sometimes accept help from international actors to ensure that women are permitted to partake in peace negotiations. The peace talks in Burundi in 2000 is one example. After being ignored at peace negotiations for several years, Burundi women's organisations were invited to give their opinion of the peace agreement. Thanks to pressure from UNIFEM and other international organisations, six women with observer status were allowed to take part in the peace talks. In addition, a women's conference was arranged with participants from all political parties to discuss gender issues in the peace agreement. The conference agreed upon a joint declaration with recommendations for improving equality between the genders.<sup>13</sup>

In Somalia, peace negotiations were held in the town of Arta in May 2002. Around 100 Somali women were invited to take part thanks to pressure from international organisations, among them The Life and Peace Institute in Uppsala, Sweden. The women were invited as representatives of the six traditional clans but on arriving at the conference they declared themselves as a seventh clan, created above the prevailing clan orders and with gender equality as a common agenda. The aim was to rebuild the country after the war to benefit all, regardless of ethnic, political, gender or clan affiliation.

At the conference the women tried to introduce a quota system to the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). The proposal met with great resistance from Somali men who claimed that no man would ever accept being represented by a woman. The quota system was not included in the new treaty but a section was included that guaranteed women 25 of the 245 seats in parliament. The treaty also included protection for women, children and minorities. Despite women only making up ten per cent of MPs, the treaty is regarded as one of the most progressive in the region with regard to gender equality.<sup>14</sup>

## Women make an impact on the peace agreement

► **THE THEORY THAT** women make a difference during peace negotiations is seldom put to the test. Women do not often make it further than observer status at peace negotiations, where the contending parties are generally always represented by men. One exception to this rule was the peace process in Guatemala in which Luz Mendez took part as the only woman in her role as representative of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG).

Through Luz Mendez, women's organisations were given a greater opportunity to influence peace negotiations. The Assembly for Civil Society (ACS), a network of NGOs and political parties with an advisory role during the negotiations, had a special women's section involved in getting gender equality issues included in the peace agreement. As representative at the negotiating table Luz Mendez could promote the proposals of the women's section. Even women from the "low status" indigenous population managed to make their voices heard at the negotiations. During the war, women from the indigenous population became involved in the peace movement and demanded their rights. Their network is also part of the ACS.

The work of the women's section within the ACS resulted in several chapters on women's rights being included in the peace agreement. Among other things, women are entitled to housing, land and credit loans. The agreement also prohibits sexual harassment and agrees to create institutions for the protection of women's rights.

But the peace agreement has not been fully implemented, and in particular not the statutes regarding women's rights, but Luz Mendez says the statutes have nevertheless brought about change:

"Taking part in peace negotiations was an enormous challenge. **I was discriminated against because I was a woman** and felt alone in a world run by men but three things gave me the strength to continue: taking part in the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, my studies in gender theory, and last but not least the sense of belonging and solidarity between the women of the UNAMG (National Union of Guatemalan Women)."

LUZ MENDEZ, GENERAL COORDINATOR, UNAMG.

"The statutes have given the women's movement the courage to push for changes in society," she explains. "The statutes legitimise issues taken up by the women's organisations and help spread gender awareness among women in general. For society as a whole, the peace agreement has provided the important message that women's rights must be respected!"

## THE REBUILDING PROCESS

### The power of civil society

After peace comes the laborious job of rebuilding society. Physical and mental scars need to be healed and infrastructures rebuilt. At this stage governments are generally very fragile and a great responsibility is put on civil society for the rebuilding process. Non-governmental organisations have to step in for a transition period and fulfil governmental functions such as providing free legal aid, education and trauma healing.

An unfortunate consequence of war is the large quantities of weapons that remain and which cause an increase in violence and criminality. Disarmament is a complicated process and governments often fail despite support from international and regional organisations. This situation becomes intolerable for the population in the long term and they often have to take their own initiatives. Women are often subjected to violence, which is why they often are anxious to see something done about disarmament.

In Cambodia, women activists began a weapons collection to restrain the armed violence against women. In Congo-Kinshasa, women declared a general disarmament on International Women's Day in 2001. Liberian women carried out a weapons collection campaign and the elimination of weapons prior to the 1997 elections, and within the framework of the UNIFEM Weapons for Development Programme in Albania several local women's organisations were involved in disarmament. In the town of Diber alone, women collected 2,400 weapons and 855 tonnes of ammunition.<sup>15</sup>

Even with regard to the physical rebuilding work, women sometimes have a heavy task. After the genocide in Rwanda, when many women lost their husbands, the widows got together to form an association called "Let us Console Each Other". More than 300 women met to grieve together before going on to tackle the concrete problems that needed solving. Most of the women were homeless and they formed teams to build houses for each other. In the beginning people laughed at them – women in Rwanda do not normally carry out construction work and climb upon rooftops – but they gradually got used to the "mad widows".<sup>16</sup>



## Would you move back to Bratunac?

► **THE TOWN OF BRATUNAC** is on the border with Serbia in the part of Bosnia and Herzegovina known as Republika Srpska. For several years after the war Bratunac was a closed town with no contact with other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. All the Bosniaks (Muslims), who had made up half the population of the town, fled during the persecution and only Bosnian Serbs remained in the town.

In 1998 a small group of women in Bratunac sought contact with women in other areas of the country. They hardly knew what a non-governmental organisation or a civil society was. "We just knew we wanted to change things!" In 1999, the Forum Zena organisation was formed.

More women joined and Forum Zena began working actively with returnees. By seeking contact with internally displaced persons in other parts of the country they managed to convince people to return. For those who had moved it was important that women from their hometown had made contact. They described what home looked like and said: "We want you to come back!" So far 2,700 of the 15,000 internally displaced persons from Bratunac have returned.

Returning is not free from problems. Many houses have been destroyed and most refugees have no homes to return to. When the villagers around Bratunac were offered building material from the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA), surprisingly few showed any interest. It was not until the SRSA got in contact with Forum Zena that they realised why: most returnees were women headed households who were not aware that help was at hand. There were no women on the village council so information had not reached any women. Through Forum Zena

the SRSA took contact with those in need and could also change the way in which help was mediated. From only supplying building material, the SRSA began helping with construction as well.

When Forum Zena was founded there were no women in local politics in Bratunac. Today five out of 31 municipal councillors are women and Forum Zena has the role of referral body for municipal decisions. Women politicians have organised education for children with special needs, something that was previously neglected, and the women of Bratunac are planning to start their own political party for the next elections.

"When we returned to Bratunac after the war I was first very afraid. I remembered fleeing, and the hate that was everywhere. At Forum Zena **I met women of all ethnic origins and we gave each other support.** When I was feeling down and didn't dare go to the authorities, one of the other women came with me. I now attend a sewing course arranged by Forum Zena and I hope to get a job. I don't feel uneasy anymore when I walk on the streets.

I am very happy to be home again."

JASMINA IBRAHIMOVIC, RETURNEE LIVING IN BRATUNAC.

## A stronger women's movement

Part of the post-war rebuilding process is the change in attitudes. If nationalism and prejudice are allowed to flourish then conflicts will easily rise to the surface again. In most societies affected by war and hostilities the gender roles are very conservative. The key to sustainable peace could therefore lie in changing stereotype gender roles and improving gender equality within the various sections of the community.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina a large number of women's organisations were formed during and directly after the war. During the war years it was impossible for women from the different parts of the country to meet, but when the war was over they managed to find various ways of cooperating and meeting each other. Several new women's organisations were formed and by June 1996, just six months after the peace agreement, they managed the impossible by arranging a women's conference with participants from all over the country, despite widespread scepticism on collaboration with "the other side". The conference gave women the opportunity to discuss joint issues and possible solutions. Several of the women's organisations have since been successful in arranging roundtable discussions on important issues, to which the media, experts and politicians are invited. In this way sensitive issues can be brought to the surface, for instance, violence against women, which has often been a taboo subject. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is now a law against domestic violence.

Prior to the parliamentary elections in 1998, the Bosnian women's movement was united around the "Nas je vise" (we are more) campaign. A large number of organisations worked throughout the country for the common cause to convince women to vote for women. According to the new temporary election law a third of the candidates should be women. The result was a record turnout of women voters; 65 per cent went to the polls. Twenty-one per cent of those elected to parliament were women. This increase in influence meant that women parliamentarians, in cooperation with women's organisations, managed to stop a proposal for reduced parental leave. Without financial support and logistic help from international organisations the Bosnian women's election campaign would have been difficult to implement.



## If it were up to you what would the world look like?

► **THE ORANGE POSTERS** caught the eye all over town: “You have a choice!”, “Your vote counts!”, “If it were up to you (woman) what would the world look like?”. Leading up to the Serbian presidential elections in 2000, women’s organisations mustered all their energy into persuading women to vote. Women’s mistrust of politics was widespread and statistics showed that they voted on a far lesser scale than men, especially in rural areas.

Three large campaigns directed at women took place simultaneously. The campaign, which was run by the Group for the Promotion of Women’s Political Rights network, a group made up of NGOs and trade unions, focused mainly on women in smaller towns and rural areas. More than 500 women were trained to carry out a door-to-door campaign. Many of the activists had never previously been involved in political issues. They went from door to door, distributed information material and talked about the importance of voting, especially in such a crucial election.

While street demonstrators in Belgrade were being met with violence, the door-to-door women were left to their own devices. It was not forbidden to knock on other people’s doors so the police did not disrupt the campaign. Even if those who hold power had known what was going on they probably would not have seen the potential of the action. Around 50,000 women were visited by the activists and according to an evaluation approximately 600,000 women were persuaded to vote by the campaigns as a whole. Turnout rose from 50 to 70 per cent, which could have been decisive for the fall of President Milosevic.

The campaigns continued prior to the parliamentary elections later the same year. The aim was to increase the number of women MPs to at least 30 per cent but that figure was not achieved. Today only 13 of 250 MPs are women but on the other hand there are more women active at municipality level and within party organisations.

“Three months before the election a nationwide campaign got underway to persuade women to vote. We knocked on doors and talked politics. Serbian women have always had a bad turnout; even when they do vote they vote the same as their husbands. But this time it was different: **the women voted for their children and the future**. The 2000 election was crucial for us all. After twelve years of misery we were finally ready to get rid of Milosevic.”

ANDREJA ARAMBASIC, ACTIVE MEMBER OF ZENE NA DELU, WHICH TOGETHER WITH OTHER WOMEN’S ORGANISATIONS ORGANISED THE 2000 ELECTION VOTING CAMPAIGNS.

## Gender equality within politics

It is difficult for women to reach decision-making positions within established political structures. Existing institutions are usually so sluggish that women give up. The strength of the peace process is that it offers a chance for change at many different levels at the same time. When a society is being rebuilt after war it offers the opportunity to re-examine old truths. However, the insight that gender equality is a vital factor for peace and democracy does not find its own way into war-torn societies. This is where international organisations have a unique opportunity to influence developments by promoting women with know-how. They must also review their own organisational structures to include a gender policy and to increase the number of women in decision-making positions.

One of the after effects of war is the increase in the number of women headed households, as was seen in **RWANDA** after the genocide in 1994. The sudden increase brought the problem of women's right of ownership to the surface. Women had no rights to own the land they cultivated and lived on. The Rwandan government had to find a solution to the problem and established a parliamentary gender equality unit, in partnership with The Forum of Women Parliamentarians and UNIFEM.

The unit was given the task of reviewing laws that discriminated against women and providing new proposals. This resulted in a new law on women's right of ownership that gave women the right to inherit after their husbands or male relatives. On paper the law is a success for women's rights in Rwanda, but as in so many similar cases it has had very little impact. Rwandan women activists maintain that a nationwide information campaign on women's rights is required for the law to have a widespread effect.<sup>17</sup> The Rwanda example highlights the need for contributions at all levels in order to achieve a positive result.

Developments in **TIMOR-LESTE** after independence in 1999 is another example of how women have managed to change their positions of power and gain more influence at national level during a peace process. When the country won independence, the women's organisations, which had grown in strength during the conflict, initiated an intensive campaign to get women involved in building the new nation. The crucial factor was in ensuring that the new constitution was based on gender equality.

The women's lobbying work was a success and several paragraphs on gender equality were added to the new constitution. Women's organisations were not however successful in their demands for a quota system to

parliament (a minimum of 30 per cent women), but the result of the first election was not far behind at 27 per cent women. The first government had several women in top positions, among them The Minister of Justice and The Minister of Finance. A further improvement was the creation of a special gender advisor to the Prime Minister.

The success in Timor-Leste has several explanations. Timor-Leste women had actively participated in the liberation process and held a strong position in society during the final stages when the foundation was laid for the new free Timor-Leste. International declarations, such as the CEDAW and the Platform for Action from the UN Conference on Women in Beijing, were also crucial in providing the women's movement with something to build upon. In June 2000, the women's conference in Timor-Leste approved their own blueprint for action: The Platform for Timor Loro Sae. International organisations also did a great deal to bring attention to the situation of women in Timor-Leste, 125 women's organisations worldwide signed a petition demanding a tribunal to investigate rapes and other forms of sexualised violence against women during the hostilities.<sup>18</sup>

Gender equality was not given a great deal of leeway in the **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA** peace agreement of 1995<sup>19</sup>, but in 2001, after pressure and support from the Finnish government, gender equality centres were set up in the country's two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The centres act as ombudsman offices that are intended to carry out work for gender equality within government and administration. The Bosnian government pays for the premises but the centres are still operating on Finnish aid. When the identical centres opened, they were the first authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina to exist in both entities.

One of the most important tasks of the centres is to educate people responsible for gender equality issues at all levels of public administration. Even judges and police officers have attended gender equality courses to enable them to promote the subject within their own organisations. There is an aim to foster cooperation between the gender equality centres and civil society organisations but so far this has been difficult to achieve. Historically, Bosnian non-governmental organisations have an inherent distrust for government initiatives.

All 33 municipalities in **KOSOVO** have set up gender equality offices. The Office of Gender Affairs within The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) opened the offices with the aim of incorporating a gender perspective into all municipal activities. The offices act as co-

ordinators for gender equality issues, monitor municipal legislation, draw up guidelines and carry out evaluations.

The aim is for the offices to cooperate with local organisations, which are given an advisory role. The gender equality office in Gjilan municipality chose to cooperate with the women's organisation Liria. If the municipality, for example, plans to build a road, the gender equality office examines the project and listens to the views of Liria who can point out the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme for local women. Work is still at its infancy and it will be interesting to see how the partnership between the gender equality offices and non-governmental organisations develops.

Kosovo has recently adopted a national action plan for gender equality. It is based on the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. The action plan was drawn up by a group of women from various sectors of society in cooperation with UNIFEM and includes thirteen strategic goals to be implemented within a five-year period including special support to women politicians and a quota of 30 per cent women in all decision-making positions.

After the Kosovo conflict and the bombing of Serbia in 1999, The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe was established to foster economic and democratic development in the region. Being concerned that the gender perspective would be brushed under the carpet, the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in partnership with a network of women's organisations, took the initiative for a gender proclamation within the pact. 150 women's organisations from ten countries in the area signed a joint petition demanding that women participate in drawing up the pact.

The action gave results and led to the formation of The Gender Task Force within the Stability Pact whose main task has been to organise training programmes for women who are active in party politics. One of its projects brings women MPs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro together to discuss joint issues and strategies. Since 2000, the Stability Pact also includes a Trafficking Task Force to counteract trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

## THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The post-war rebuilding process has to take place on many different levels. Finding justice on a personal level is probably the most difficult part of the process. War leaves in its wake traumatised people, and women are a particularly vulnerable group that risk being subjected to rape and other forms of sexualised violence, just because they are women.

The victims of war – both female and male – need to work through their traumas in order to be able to continue with their lives. Women are often better at seeking assistance for self-help trauma healing than men. They organise in groups and share their traumatic experiences with others and open women's centres where they can solve their problems together, sometimes with international help, in a secure environment. Experiences from Bosnia and Herzegovina show that women who attend counselling groups cope better than women who do not. The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation report *War is not over with the last bullet*, based on interviews with Bosnian women five years after the war, shows that women who were looked after at women's centres suffer a lot less from post traumatic stress, such as insomnia, depression and guilt feelings, than women who did not receive any help.<sup>20</sup>

### Courts and tribunals

During recent years increasingly more special courts, tribunals and truth and reconciliation commissions have been set up to investigate and report on war crimes. These legal bodies also investigate violence against women, but women do not always dare to witness, partly due to the lack of protection afterwards. If impunity for acts of sexualised violence is not challenged and crimes not investigated then the wounds of society will not heal.

One interesting example is the "Gacaca" process in Rwanda. The Rwandan government transferred more than a hundred thousand cases of physical assaults committed during the genocide to traditional law courts, the so-called Gacaca Courts. The Gacaca Courts are only permitted to deal with minor crimes such as violence and destruction of property and cannot pass prison sentences. Violence against women committed during the genocide period was also transferred to these courts, something that was greatly criticised by women in particular. Thanks to the commitment of a few women politicians, these crimes were re-evaluated to count among serious crimes and are now prosecuted in a ordinary court.<sup>21</sup>

All crimes cannot be judged within national borders, the international community must occasionally step in and lift the process to another level. After the wars in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda special international tribunals were established: The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

International tribunals and courts have neglected violence against women for many years. It is not until recent years that immunity from punishment for this sort of crime has been seen as reducing the chances for building a stable and peaceful society. If violence against women is allowed to pass unpunished then it legitimises the continued use of violence. It is not only about finding the perpetrators and sentencing them but about creating a sound judicial system that applies to everyone and reduces the risk for new conflicts.

Rape as a part of warfare was first seriously discussed with the war in the Balkans during the 1990s. As early as 1992, during the first year of the war in Bosnia, reports were made that women were being raped systematically. The reports were mainly from women's groups who compiled the information and documented the events. When the ICTY was formed in 1993 rape was not regarded as a crime under international law. When one of the ICTY judges, Elizabeth Odio-Benito, first raised the issue of defining sexualised violence as a war crime she met great resistance from her colleagues. It was not until the courts, with pressure from the women's movement, finally began investigating sexualised crime against women that they realised the extent of the problem. More and more reports started coming in from women and in November 1998 the ICTY issued the first court judgment whereby comparing sexualised violence to torture it appeared as a war crime.

By persuading the ICTR to begin investigating rape as a war crime, without having to link it to torture, Judge Navanethem Pillay became a pioneer defining rape under international law. She was one of the judges on the case against Jean-Paul Akayesu, the former mayor of Taba in Rwanda. In 1998, Akayesu was tried for human rights violations after permitting murder, torture and sexualised violence to be committed during the genocide period. There were no initial charges of sexualised violence in the indictment but thanks to Judge Pillay's continual pressure, rape was included. The rules of the Rwanda tribunal were modified and a definition of rape was entered into the case against Akayesu. This was the first time a definition of rape appeared under international law and it created a legal precedent for prosecuting it on an international level.

A great stride forward was taken with the setting up of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002. Thanks to intensive lobbying by women's organisations and others, sexualised violence was defined as a criminal act under the Court's statute. The Rome Statute for the ICC defines rape, sexual slavery, and forced prostitution, pregnancy and sterilisation as crimes against humanity and as such a war crime.

Furthermore, with lobbying from the women's movement, the ICC now has an unprecedented number of women judges on its bench. The Statute of Rome requires a fair representation of both men and women among ICC judges.<sup>22</sup> Of the eighteen judges, seven are today women. They equate nearly 40 per cent of the bench, which is quite an increase, since in previous international tribunals and courts of law only 13 per cent were women.<sup>23</sup>

Of course, while it is a great advancement that sexualised violence is now defined as a crime under international law, it is important that progress does not grind to a halt with this newly established legal definition. Women who are summoned to courts and tribunals to witness must be given support and protection. This could involve gynaecologic examinations, AIDS/HIV tests or psychosocial support in the form of trauma counselling. Support must be offered women from the very first contact with an investigating officer and continue through to when they return home after witnessing.

► **"SEXUALISED VIOLENCE NOW** being defined as a war crime is truly revolutionary," says Gabriella Mischkowski, who has worked with women subjected to all forms of violence during war and conflict for many years.

The Rome Statute for the ICC defines sexualised violence (rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, pregnancy and sterilisation) as a criminal act. The statute also guarantees witness protection for both men and women. A special unit, the Victims and Witnesses Services, guarantees this. The statute also requires an even balance of men and women among the judges and that they should be trained on issues such as violence against women.

"Sexualised violence has always occurred during war, but there is no unwritten law of nature that says that women should be subjected to humiliating treatment during war," continues Gabriella Mischkowski. "Military commanders and governments can stop sexualised violence if they so wish and there are examples of this. If violence against women and children does not fit in with the military strategy then it is stopped by the military and politicians."

"Sexualised violence could be a military order or just happen 'automatically' and is legitimised by prevailing peacetime values. The definition of violence against women as a war crime adopted by the international community is a great step forward."

The reason women's rights has had such great success within the ICC is due to endless lobbying by women and peace movements. The Women's Caucus for Gender Justice has played a vital part. Gabriella Mischkowski is extremely satisfied with the results and hopes it will have a knock-on effect:

"The ICC can become an extremely powerful weapon! It can ensure that rape is regarded as one of the worst war crimes and even contribute to a new view of rape within the judicial system in general. But we must also change the image of rape in national laws and education for relief workers and the military."

**"Now that the International Criminal Court defines rape as a war crime, women in many countries can change discriminating national rape laws. They can refer to the ICC and put pressure on governments to live up to the international agreements they sign."**

GABRIELLA MISCHKOWSKI, FORMER EMPLOYEE AT THE GERMAN ORGANISATION MEDICA MONDIAL, WHICH HAS RUN TRAUMA CENTRES FOR WOMEN IN MANY COUNTRIES INCLUDING BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, AFGHANISTAN AND KOSOVO.<sup>24</sup>



## The need for codes of conduct

The poverty and social problems that follow in the wake of conflicts form a breeding ground for trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, which chiefly affects women and children. But trafficking in women and children and prostitution in the aftermath of war is far from being a local problem. It is often the international civilian and military organisations stationed in the area that create the demand. There is a great risk that the culture of prostitution that emanates from the presence of international actors becomes a permanent fixture, as in many places including Bosnia and Herzegovina where married men visiting brothels is now accepted in a totally different way than before.

The connection between prostitution and trafficking in women and children is well documented today. Many of the women and children subjected to trafficking are forced into prostitution with false promise that they will be offered a regular job. This means that those who buy sex are likely to contribute to organised crime and thus undermine the democratic process.

Those stationed abroad with an organisation or company often have a unique position, particularly in poor and conflict-affected countries. Much too often this power is misused to infringe on other people's dignity and rights. A comprehensive change of attitude is required to deal with the problem. Codes of conduct for employees working abroad is one way for organisations, companies, authorities and institutions to ensure that they contribute to counteracting trafficking in human beings.

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation has drawn up a list of recommendations for codes of conduct.<sup>25</sup> The list emphasises the prohibition of brothel visits and the purchasing of sex and the rules surrounding relationships with locally employed people or people from the local population. The recommendations also contain proposals for the consequences of violating the codes of conduct and point out that employers are responsible for informing and training staff in the codes of conduct before they serve abroad. Group pressure and existing cultures within companies and organisations are also important issues for debate.

# Closing words

**WE HAVE A VISION** of a better world based on gender equality and justice, a world where men and women live side-by-side sharing responsibility and solving conflicts in a peaceful manner. Utopian? Maybe, but if we don't allow ourselves to dream then the world would never change. If we just let our imagination run riot, what would the best of worlds then look like? What would the world look like if the desires, experiences and needs of men and women carried the same weight? Even though it is difficult to imagine, we are convinced that a just and gender equal world would be a more peaceful world. In this context, constructed images of the enemy do not carry as much weight. If men and women were permitted to be human beings first and foremost without stereotypical gender roles forced upon us, the destructive forces within society would diminish.

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation has been supporting women's organisations in conflict regions for ten years, and has time and again come across unfair power structures that belittle the knowledge and potential of women. This not only concerns the other countries, the recipient countries, but to a great extent ourselves, the donor countries of the proud international community. It is strange to see how reactionary, and sometimes even dangerous, our contribution is to those we say we want to help.

Gender equality is now regarded as a vital ingredient of all development work, which is a giant stride forward regardless of whether it concerns conflict resolution or the struggle against poverty. The standards are set at a high level, on paper at least, and there are countless contributions that actually improve opportunities for both women and men. The problem is that they are often single contributions. Achieving greater change requires more than that. We must think big, place the individual contribution in its right context, cooperate across the borders and dare to believe in our vision. If we really want a gender equal society and are serious with our declarations, then we must work even more purposefully.

If we chose to invest money, as for example to retrain women guerrilla

soldiers in Guatemala, then individual training programmes are not sufficient. When these women return to their villages there is no place for them. Because of their new knowledge and experience from the war they run the risk of being alienated from the village community. If we do not manage to change the attitudes prevailing in the villages then the initial contribution could be a total waste of time.

Always consider an overall perspective. Let this be the first commandment. If gender equality could just leave its insecure ad hoc existence and become a natural part of all strategies and activities then much would be achieved. This is no less important in a peace process; if we manage to establish gender perspectives at several different levels of society then this will have a much greater impact than all the small contributions by themselves.

Taken together all these measures have a chance of actually making a difference and this is how things should be done if we are to achieve the best results. Consider the enormous power that is available in all the individual contributions when put into a gender balanced context. If we can ensure that women are included at all the stages of the peace process, i.e. during peace negotiations and the rebuilding process, then the vision of a just and gender equal world will no longer be just a pipedream.

## 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE PEACE

1. Always consider the overall perspective.
2. See to both women and men.
3. It is never too early to consider the needs of women during war and armed conflict.
4. Never assume that a vulnerable woman is helpless.
5. Women shall be both protected **and** empowered.
6. Choose local expertise whenever possible.
7. Provide resources to local women's organisations, they have ideas themselves.
8. Always assume that women's organisations are connected with each other through well-functioning networks.
9. Empower women and educate men.
10. More women are needed as role models within the international community.

# A Model for Sustainable Peace

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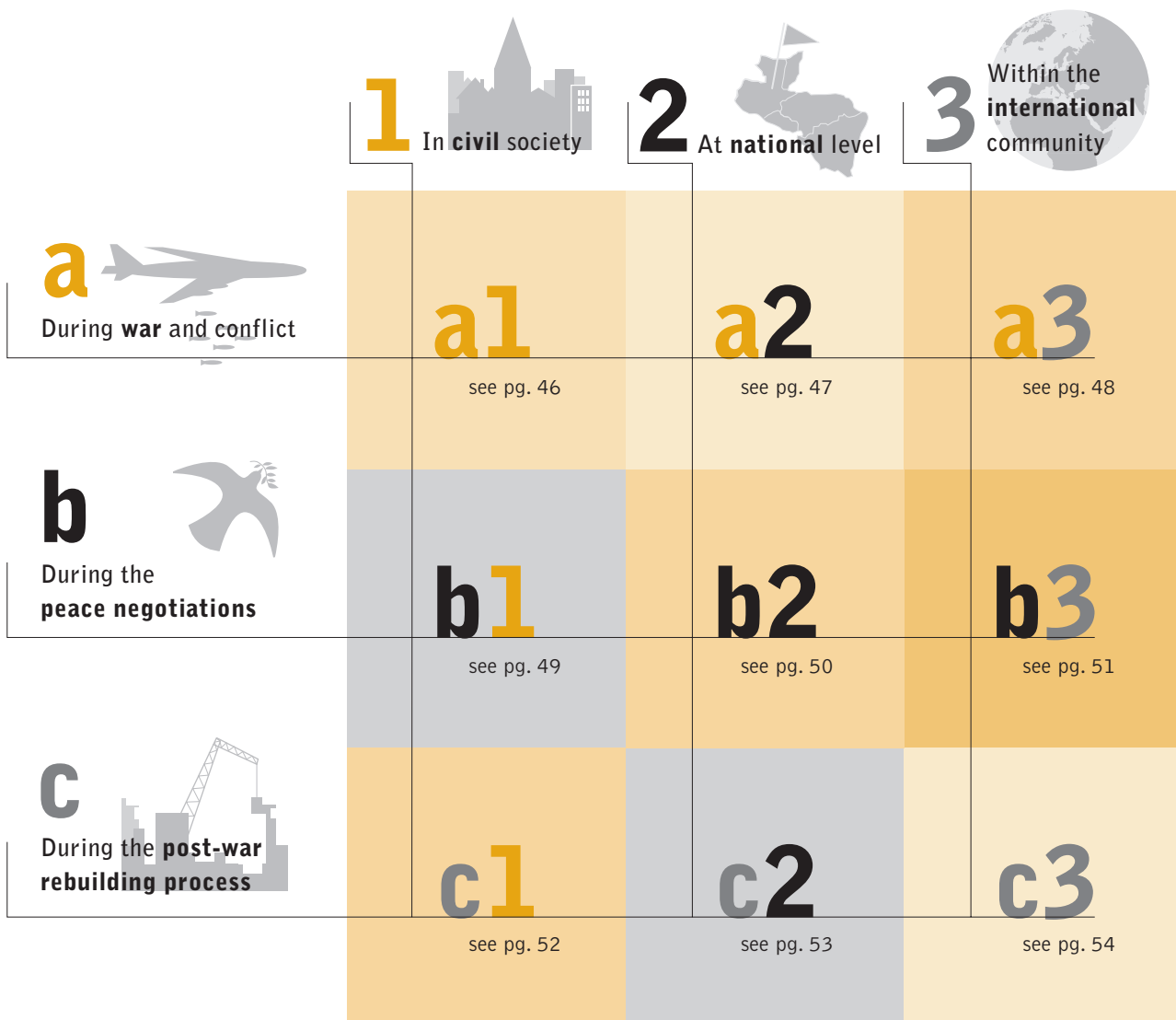
**I**N ORDER TO ACHIEVE gender equality and sustainable peace, new, and more importantly, coordinated, efforts are required in conflict and war-ravaged regions. No matter how good an individual contribution is it will never have the required impact if it is not in harmony with activities at all levels of the peacebuilding process and followed up with supplementary measures. An overall perspective is indispensable for sustainable development.

An example: during conflicts women who have been subjected to rape or domestic violence must be given support and a chance to heal their traumas. But it is not enough. For a society to achieve real change, contributions must be made simultaneously at different levels, for a long period of time. In a society undergoing a rebuilding process, vulnerable women must be offered sheltered housing and laws must be passed on violence against women. For a new law to be applied correctly those who implement the law must be trained. In addition, the taboo subject of violence must be taken up for debate in society. These contributions can together lead to progress.

With the aim of inspiring international actors in post-conflict rebuilding, conflict resolution and other peacebuilding activities, the following pages present a model for the participation of women in the various stages and levels of the peace process. The model provides concrete recommendations based on the contributions previously presented in this handbook. The model will act as a practical instrument for actors within the international community and is divided into three periods: during war and conflict, during the peace process and during the rebuilding process. Each stage is analysed at three levels: civil society, national level and within the international community. In order to illustrate the importance of work being carried out during all the periods and at all levels of society, the work is divided into nine different groups. The "civil society level" explains how to act in dealing with local organisations and the civilian population; the

”national level” describes work that supports national and regional institutions and the third level, ”the international community”, proposes measures for engendering the structures and working methods of international organisations.

The aim is for all the levels to coordinate and empower each other, which is why some of the measures appear at several levels and periods.





## DURING WAR AND CONFLICT

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### In civil society

b1

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If contributions are made at an early stage during the conflict or war it facilitates the future reconciliation and rebuilding process. Civil society is made up of a string of alliances, both formal and informal, that have unique opportunities to provide support to large parts of the population. Empowering women and improving gender equality requires significant contributions within civil society, both in refugee camps and war-affected communities in general.

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#### Things to bear in mind:

- Compile and make use of information from local organisations who see the needs within the community and can suggest measures to be contributed by the international community.
- Seek advice from women's organisations of how best to ensure that women also receive relief (e.g. food transports).
- Cooperate with local women's organisations on how best to reach out to women who live isolated from the refugee camps and towns.
- Support the efforts of women's organisations such as women's centres and support activities for women in refugee camps. Private sanitary areas should be set up in all refugee camps.
- Ensure that current information such as the security situation reaches women's organisations. This information is then passed on to individual women.
- Ensure that women get access to healthcare and trauma healing.



## At national level

The work of local decision-makers is often rendered impossible during conflict. Hostilities in the community and/or unstable institutions means it can take years for measures to be implemented. This gives the international community the chance to influence national decision-makers and help guide developments towards democracy and gender equality after hostilities.

### Things to bear in mind:

- Facilitate contact between the politicians and civil servants and the women's organisations, in order to improve the flow of information within society. Encourage the spreading of alternative information to counter political propaganda.
- Contribute to ensuring that more women participate in decision-making bodies. This ensures that women get to be part of peace negotiations.
- Whenever possible, develop strategies to ensure that information from municipal councils and institutions also reaches women.
- Spread knowledge about the effects of trauma on women and men among officials, politicians and the general public.

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## DURING WAR AND CONFLICT

a1 a2 **a3**

### Within the international community

International organisations play a crucial role during war and armed conflict. They are involved in mediating, preparing peace negotiations, humanitarian aid and much more. Considering the central role played by these organisations it is vital that an analysis be made of the ways women can, and should, participate in this work. Special UN envoys and negotiators within civil and military peace missions and other projects in which international organisations are engaged should be made up of just as many women as men. To ensure that support is fairly divided between women and men and girls and boys, international organisations must analyse each situation from an overall gender perspective.

#### Things to bear in mind:

- Plan the support consciously with strategies to reach women. Distributions from food transports for instance should be planned to ensure that they also reach women and therewith entire families. Women's needs should also be met through relief consignments of sanitary items such as sanitary towels, tampons etc.
- Listen to local organisations because they possess crucial knowledge of the needs of society.
- Ensure female staff is present in refugee camps and when distributing aid. They greatly contribute to women daring to turn to organisations for support, advice and help. All staff in refugee camps must be taught the importance of treating women and children with respect with emphasis on their security.
- Make a list of all the women who are active as preparation for the coming peace process.
- Set a goal for equal gender division in all international missions.
- Appoint women to decision-making posts within the international community. Women in high-level positions are important role models.
- Educate representatives of the international community in CEDAW, UN Resolution 1325 and other relevant documents.
- Train all staff prior to official visits to, or stationing in, war-affected areas on the importance of treating the civilian population with respect.
- Draw up codes of conduct for all staff.



### In civil society

During the peace process, when negotiations begin and the warring factions have to agree on a solution to the conflict, representatives of women's organisations and civil society are seldom invited and useful knowledge is therewith not utilised. Civil society possesses a great amount of knowledge which if utilised would significantly improve the peace process. For this reason it is necessary to open the peace process to more groups, something the international community should advocate. A peace treaty is just as much about putting an end to hostilities as drawing up a blueprint for building a new society.

#### Things to bear in mind:

- Invite representatives of women's organisations to peace negotiations and give them decision-making status. Women's organisations can provide useful information about the needs of civil society and provide sustainable solutions to the problems.
- Ensure that information about the peace process reaches the civilian population. It is particularly important that internally displaced persons receive information as it reduces their uncertainty about the future.
- Provide women's organisations and other civil society actors with the means and opportunity for compiling information and witness statements about war crimes.
- Offer trauma treatment to the civilian population. War trauma lives on long after the hostilities end.
- Cooperate with local women's organisations. They provide information on how best to reach out to women who live isolated from refugee camps and towns.

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## DURING THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

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### At national level

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If peace negotiations are to provide a foundation for sustainable peace then women and men from all groups of society, with different backgrounds and competence, must take part. Female politicians and high-level officials can contribute with specific expertise. It is not enough to just focus on individual women, a gender perspective must permeate negotiations, agreements and guidelines. The international community, which often plays a leading role in peace negotiations, has an obligation for ensuring that gender equality plays a significant role in the peace process.

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#### Things to bear in mind:

- Ensure to include active women, politicians as well as representatives from civil society in the peace process from the outset to formulate peace and a political agenda. Women's experience can lead to radical changes in what otherwise could have been considered a complete agenda.
- Ensure that women's rights and human rights are included in the documents that are used to draw up the agenda for the rebuilding process. International documents, such as CEDAW and UN Resolution 1325, must be adhered to during negotiations to ensure that the peace agreement complies with them.
- Ensure that new constitutions are built on the principle of gender equality.
- Promote a clear strategy for reaching out to the civilian population with the contents of the peace agreement.



### Within the international community

The international community plays a vital part in ensuring that peace negotiations get underway. Women do not often participate in negotiations and their expertise is seldom utilised despite a large number of international documents stating that women are entitled to, and should, participate.

#### Things to bear in mind:

- Develop a strategy for ensuring that civilian organisations and politically active women participate in negotiations.
- Create the opportunity for women to participate in negotiations. It is particularly important for women to be informed of their rights and empowered to demand them. Men, on the other hand, should be educated in the importance of a gender perspective.
- Maintain a coordinating function where local organisations can receive information about the prevailing peace process and the possibility of making demands and supplying information.
- Develop a strategy for a gendered rebuilding process.
- Ensure that the contents of the peace agreement reaches the civilian population.
- Appoint a gender-aware representative for the international community with the mandate to guarantee that a gender perspective permeates the entire peace process.
- Set a goal for achieving gender balance in all international missions.
- Appoint women to decision-making posts within the international community. Women in high-level positions are important role models.
- Educate representatives of the international community in CEDAW, UN Resolution 1325 and other relevant documents. Train all staff prior to official visits to, or stationing in, war-affected areas on the importance of treating the civilian population with respect.
- Draw up codes of conduct for all staff.

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## DURING THE POST-WAR REBUILDING PROCESS

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### In civil society

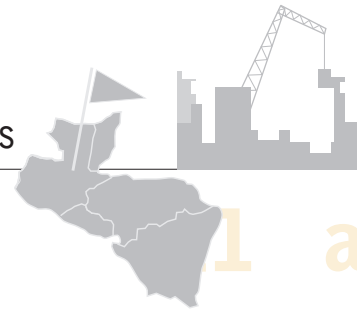
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Civil society, in which women's organisations exist, plays a vital role in the rebuilding process. The organisations that existed before and those that were established during the conflict possess important knowledge of the conditions prevailing within society. It is therefore of crucial importance that international actors recognise the potential that exists among actors within civil society.

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#### Things to bear in mind

- Provide resources for women to organise without being controlled by the international community.
- Ensure that support primarily goes to local initiatives.
- Provide resources so that women are given the opportunity to partake in the public debate and receive training in their rights, obligations and opportunities.
- Ensure that women are given the opportunity to formulate their demands for the rebuilding process. A broad strategy is required here: women ought to work both in groups made up only of women and in mixed groups.
- Provide resources to allow women the security to move freely in their communities. Rumours often circulate about threats and assaults, which isolate women in their homes and makes it difficult for them to participate in the rebuilding process. This can be counteracted with information.
- Stimulate networking between women's organisations. Forums should be created to facilitate meetings between women's organisations and political parties.
- Create opportunities for women to support themselves.
- Open the same doorway to education for both boys and girls and women and men. This improves women's chances of a livelihood and economic independence.
- Set up SOS telephones and sheltered housing as support for women subjected to domestic violence, a problem that tends to increase after war and conflict.
- Ensure that women have access to free legal aid. After war, confusion usually prevails as to which laws apply. Many widows are homeless because their husbands had the right of ownership to the joint home.
- Ensure that women who witness against violence and assault are given support and protection.
- Ensure that women are given access to psychosocial support and trauma healing.



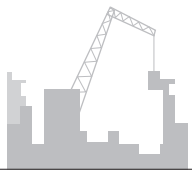
## At national level

When building a new society, obsolete attitudes and values must be changed because they could have contributed to the conflict in the first place. At national level it is important to promote gender equality issues. Gender equality work should not only be delegated to special units but be incorporated into all planning and decision-making. Women must gain access to political power and awareness of the needs of women must permeate national policy and legislation. It is vital for the international community to stimulate developments towards gender equality. It is particularly important to increase the number of women politicians and to participate in the development of a gender-aware national policy.



### Things to bear in mind

- Demand a gender equality policy of recipient countries as a condition for receiving development assistance.
- Demand that women be given positions within decision-making bodies.
- Ensure that women politicians receive training and support (e.g. media training), and are given prominent positions within their respective parties.
- Create channels between women's organisations, political actors and officials.
- Include women in legislative bodies. Ensure an explicit gender perspective in all new laws.
- Introduce a quota system to decision-making bodies to improve women's opportunities for becoming politically active.
- Stimulate efforts to improve women's turnout at elections by supporting the campaigns run by women's organisations and by highlighting the situation of women in public debate and the media.
- Facilitate for the authorities to take over the financial responsibility for shelters, free legal aid, trauma healing and psychosocial work for women. Police training must include the problem of domestic violence and trafficking of human beings.
- Draw up long-term strategies for the participation of women in all parts of society.



## DURING THE POST-WAR REBUILDING PROCESS

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### Within the international community

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Support and resources from the international community are often crucial for the post-war rebuilding process. International organisations provide both financial and moral support to local actors. The international community has a particularly important role to play as a role model. The international community must be gender-aware, both internally and externally.

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#### Things to bear in mind

- Develop gender-aware programmes for rebuilding work.
- Coordinate assistance with the emphasis on gender equality. Communication between local and international organisations must be coordinated to avoid duplication of work.
- Include gender-aware staff in peace missions and development aid organisations. Those responsible for gender equality should have a sufficiently high status to be given the means and the mandate to attain a gender perspective throughout all activities. A gender equality programme must be drawn up.
- Set a goal for equal gender division in all international missions.
- Ensure that all reports and consultancy assignments are gender-aware.
- Ensure that programmes and measures are implemented by local organisations as far as possible. The task of international actors is to provide support, legitimacy and know-how.
- Set up special units to counteract violence against women. Violence tends to increase in post-war societies so the problem should be given more attention.
- Appoint women to decision-making posts within the international community. Women in high positions act as important role models.
- Educate representatives of the international community in CEDAW, UN Resolution 1325 and other relevant documents.
- Train all staff prior to official visits to, or stationing in, war-affected areas on the importance of treating the civilian population with respect.
- Draw up codes of conduct for all staff.

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