

Stabilisation Issues Note

Gender

Purpose

Issues Notes provide a short summary of what the Stabilisation Unit has learned to date and what we think is good practice. They have been developed in consultation with other government departments. They are aimed primarily at the Stabilisation Unit's own practitioners and consultants, and those of other HMG departments. They are not a formal statement of HMG policy, and they draw on and amplify other UK Government policy and thinking on conflict. They should be read in conjunction with other stabilisation notes.

This document outlines the approach to gender that stabilisation unit promotes to its staff. It explains why gender is important to our work, key lessons, ways to implement the approach and how a gendered perspective helps us deliver the 4 P's of Stabilisation with examples. The approach fits within a broader framework for engaging with communities and promoting respect for human rights, complementing the unit's stabilisation guidance.

Key Messages

- Fundamental to the planning of any stabilisation activity is an understanding of the stakeholders involved and the cultural context. This involves understanding as much about the roles of men and women in conflict affected societies as it does ethnicity, religion and membership of other political or social groups.
- Violence and discrimination is often perpetrated along lines of gender as well as social affiliations. Violence against women is often intended to undermine the role of men and inflict fear on the population as a whole as well as to harm women.
- Improving the capacity of the host government and indigenous security forces to establish and maintain security and justice should include efforts to increase their responsiveness and accountability to all sections of the population. These efforts will be undermined if security forces are perceived as threatening rather than protecting particular groups. Women and children can be disproportionately disadvantaged within security programmes and therefore special efforts should be made to ensure they have recourse to justice.
- A gendered perspective can improve stabilisation outcomes when applied in the following ways: Incorporating gendered indicators and analysis within monitoring and reporting, the collection and securing of evidence where gender based violence occurs, supporting indigenous organisations that work to improve access to justice for those groups denied their entitlements within the national legal framework.

Introduction

Stabilisation is support to places emerging from violent conflict in order to:

- Prevent or reduce violence
- Protect people and key institutions
- Promote political processes which lead to greater stability
- Prepare for longer term development and non-violent politics.

Stabilisation activities aim to support a move from violent to peaceful political processes. They generally require a combination of military and civilian inputs support and focus on improving the legitimacy and capability of the state, providing tangible benefits to the population to underpin confidence in the state and the political process.

To understand conflict dynamics, and adapt our own behaviour, planning and response to the environment, we must first have a sound analysis of cultural context, social tensions, coping mechanisms and gender relations.

Gender analysis informs us of how men and women;

- are motivated to take part in violence
- the roles they play in negotiations and resolving conflict
- how they respond to difficult situations
- how they adapt coping strategies in times of crisis
- the ways in which gender roles change in conflict

People experience conflict in different ways so it is important not to fall into assumed stereotypes. Culturally acceptable roles vary for men and women of different groups in different places and change over time. It is equally dangerous to overlook or tolerate predatory or suppressive behaviour towards men or women by interpreting it as part of indigenous tradition. Assumptions, for example that all perpetrators are men and victims are women or that people less visible to international representatives are less influential in the community are often inaccurate and feed dangerous misunderstandings of the complex social dynamics underpinning a conflict

The UK has prioritised specific policies to reduce violence against women and incorporate a gendered perspective within its work in conflict affected countries.

HMG Policy Commitments

HMG's international obligations are enshrined in:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979)
- UNSCR's 1325 and 1820 which relate to Women, Peace and Security

The UK Government has made policy commitments to gender within:

- Human Rights Act
- HMG's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.
- Commitments to reduce Violence Against Women.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution's 1325 and 1820 call for women's full participation in peacekeeping, security and stabilisation. It also calls for an understanding of the particular impact of armed conflict on women and girls, and the specific needs this gives rise to. Effective institutional arrangements must be established to guarantee the protection of women and girls during and after conflict. The UK Government has been a strong supporter of the resolutions and launched the UK Action Plan on implementation of 1325 in March 2006, recently updated in 2010. DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office the Ministry of Defence and Stabilisation Unit all have commitments for action.

Gender Principles

Gender is a particular aspect of identity. Alongside ethnicity, religion, occupation, kinship groups and belonging to a range of social and belief systems, gender helps us understand what motivates actors in conflict and the impact of conflict on people and communities. Gender and broader social analysis of identity can enable the development of more effective responses to stabilisation by strengthening local capacities and solutions for peace.

Gender cuts across our work and therefore decision makers in stabilisation contexts should consider how their actions will affect men and women of different social groups within a community. The concept of gender cannot be viewed in isolation. It is not a stand alone 'subject'. Broadening the base of stakeholders in any stabilisation activity can improve local ownership and sustainability.

Country (and sometimes provincial or district) specific gender, social and conflict analysis underpins effective assessment, planning and response in stabilisation. Gender analysis is one element of a broader framework of tools and techniques for understanding conflict. Culturally appropriate gateways for engaging both women and men exist within every environment. They will be different in each context and need to be recognised if external assistance is to support stabilisation outcomes. The decisions we make will impact on both women's and men's lives so we must understand different perceptions, needs and where and how to engage.

Gender is a critical aspect to our understanding of relationships within and between groups. Relationships between men and women give us an insight into a society's cohesion and customs as well as sources of friction. Relationships between women of particular groups and men of those same groups do not always overlap. Women are sometimes able to meet across groups and divides at times when men can not and vice versa. It is equally important to recognise that women (from privileged urban areas) do not always support the interests of other women (from rural pastoralist communities for example) in the same way that men do not represent the views of all men.

Relations within the private and public spheres interweave. The decisions that people make regarding conflict are influenced by factors in both spheres, and those decisions change over time as people move continuously between public and private. Gender relations within the private sphere can indicate how households access resources, use public services, provide resources to others or support particular actors in a conflict. In areas where media is tightly controlled, perspectives in the public sphere might not reflect perspectives in the private sphere. Therefore assumptions about gender, as well as other relations and public opinion can be easily miss-understood, therefore miss-informing conflict analysis.

Scale and type of approach to gender. Incidents that may at first appear isolated can provide a critical picture of broader conflict patterns. The level and type of re-sourcing for gender will vary depending on context. Areas of Eastern DRC where sexual violence towards women is pervasive across a wide cross section of tribal, kinship and social groups will require a different approach to areas where women or men of one particular group are being targeted.

Supporting the capacities of people to resolve their own conflicts, whatever their gender, social, religious or ethnic origins is a key aim of Stabilisation Unit's approach. We also consider Do No Harm Principles and may decide not to support initiatives if we feel there are considerable risks to those involved.

Assistance to those affected by gender based violence must be based on sound analysis. Sexual violence often exploits gender related social taboos, which mean that men or women become victims of social ostracism by their families and communities in addition to coping with the physical implications of the violence they have experienced. Women experience sexual violence differently to men and may have to cope with pregnancy resulting from rape, however assistance programmes solely targeting women often preclude men from seeking support, for example, with readjusting their male identities from military to civilian roles

How to Implement a Gender perspective

Analysis. Utilise existing secondary research and prepare before arriving in-country by reviewing political and social analysis (include country analysis, social and political reports, strategic conflict assessments and gender and social exclusion assessments). Turn to websites and resources that give a perspective on gender such as UNIFEM. Recognise our own gaps in knowledge on arrival in country and invest time in speaking with representatives of different social groups to build understanding. Don't rely on other international representatives to give you this insight. Where gaps in understanding are evident, or areas of concern emerge, request additional support and commission specialists, for example to conduct perception surveys. It may be necessary to do more detailed analysis at a provincial or district level or to analyse the needs of specific groups. Analysis should be ongoing and contribute to monitoring and evaluation in conflict.

Protection. Protection of civilians from deliberate or disproportionate armed violence in conflict is a corner stone of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and therefore of International Humanitarian Law. The term "protection" usually relates to specific risks faced by vulnerable groups; children, minorities, displaced persons, women and men. Stabilisation personnel should request specialist support when protection dilemmas emerge. Protection advisers not only assess who is vulnerable but also the degree of vulnerability. Responses can include working to protect women and young people within the justice system, corrections services or police custody if there are specific risks to their safety. Protection can also involve investigating violations and collating evidence. Without gender sensitive investigation methods the gender dimensions to violence can be misrepresented. For example some killings of women in conflict have been incorrectly identified as so called "honour killings" when they have actually been conducted by insurgents from outside the community as part of a wider campaign to incite fear and suppression. Violence often utilises symbols relevant to a particular target group, or includes messages to deter certain behaviour or activity. These symbols may not always be recognisable to internationals unfamiliar with local ways and customs.

Conduct. We must at all times be aware of our own conduct and how it relates to the local context. Respect and Dignity for all people irrespective of their identity is a key principle in the UK's Human Rights Act and International law. All Stabilisation Unit

personnel have a responsibility to maintain a high standard of conduct themselves and also to ensure that misconduct is challenged and handled appropriately in which ever operation they are working. One person's miss-conduct can undermine an entire operation.

Promotion. Stabilisation personnel are expected to work in a way that is compatible with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which specifies that everyone has the right to "life, liberty and security" and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. Personnel are encouraged to promote awareness of the principles with partners whom they are working alongside; be they government, religious leaders, civil society, international or national. This will require understanding of how the principles relate to cultural context and a nuanced understanding of customary law or codes such as Pashtunwalli. Seeking advice from national Human Rights organisations such as the "Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission" will help personnel identify the best approach and culturally appropriate gateways. Promotion can be incorporated into all interactions; from being deferential to others to designing programmes that addresses specific rights such as preventing "arbitrary arrest, detention or exile" or supporting vulnerable families with income generating opportunities to reduce underage marriage for girls.

How Gender Relates to the 4 P's of Stabilisation

The following sections explain how gender relates to the four key principles (The 4 P's) outlined in the Stabilisation Unit's Guidance.

Prevent – or contain - violent conflict

To prevent or contain conflict requires firstly a sound assessment of the drivers of conflict and secondly a carefully planned response that supports local actors to resolve tensions without resorting to violence. To understand and address the underlying causes of conflict requires an awareness of where power is located within and between communities and how discrimination, exclusion and tensions impact on people's lives.

Stabilisation Unit supports the identification and prevention of conflict through its assessment and planning work and mechanisms to prevent or contain conflict through programme design and delivery. Conflict, social and gender analysis provide important tools to inform these processes and identify sources of tension before they turn violent.

Gender and Property Resolution Iraq and Kosovo

Property claims commissions are one example of a mechanism supported by the UK's Conflict Prevention Pools to prevent conflict. Where communities have been displaced and property forcibly misappropriated, resolution of property disputes can be an important mechanism for preventing further violence. Sometimes local social structures are able to manage these disputes but on other occasions it may be necessary to establish an independent claims process. The Kosovo Property Claims Commission and the Iraqi Property Claims Commission are two such examples. In both contexts women and children were identified as groups at risk of being denied their property entitlements and were provided legal assistance to realise their claims.

Protect people and key assets and institutions

During conflict people, assets and institutions are manipulated in a range of ways. Ownership and access to assets and institutions becomes contested and therefore protecting access to public resources “for the benefit of all” is difficult. In some contexts public facilities may need protection from looting or protected zones may need to be established for particular communities or institutions. Targeted interventions that deliver essential services to particular groups may be required, for example clean water for internally displaced people (IDPs).

Institutions and Assets. Failure to uphold institutions (from financial institutions to local government), assets (from oil installations and government buildings to schools and home fuel supplies) and services (from justice to water supply) leads to disproportionate suffering and exclusion for different groups. Displacement and lack of access to livelihood resources may disadvantage women and children more than men. Men and women make context specific decisions to avoid violence and survive in conflict as well as to access public services, resources and opportunities for their families. Gender analysis can inform our understanding of local priorities and coping mechanisms and ensure appropriate support reaches those in most need. This approach can build confidence in indigenous structures, thus re-establishing a sense of normality and stability in conflict.

People. While men and boys are also targets, women and girls suffer from violence in very specific ways, particularly where armed groups use violence against civilians as a deliberate tactic for intimidating the local population, and where violence can include rape but also forced miscarriage and sexual slavery. It is also important to understand that gender focused violence can be used as much as a means of undermining men’s gender roles as of women’s. So for example, systematic campaigns of sexual violence against women of a particular ethnic group can be intended not only to harm the female victims, but also to demean and humiliate the men of that community. This can reinforce existing conflict dynamics. Preventing or reducing sexual violence in this context can be one way of helping to reduce the overall level and longevity of conflict.

Gender and access to Citizenship in Iraq

The importance of social and gender analysis in understanding ways to protect people, institutions and assets is highlighted by this complex example. In 2003 and 2004 over 800,000 refugees returned to Iraq from Iran, many of whom were constituents of Shiite political parties. Their citizenship documents had been erased by the former Baathist regime therefore every aspect of their reintegration depended on them gaining access to new documents; from misappropriated land, to public services, employment to mobility. Their re-establishment of their rights in Iraq inevitably affected political dynamics and power relations with other groups and intense competition for access to assets, resources and institutions ensued. The reintegration tensions were not only evident along religious lines but were also connected to tribal affiliations, and other identities for example between hereditary leaders that had fled the country and leaders who had replaced them and governed in the interim. Men and women managed these reintegration challenges and tensions differently, prioritised different services and re-established social networks in different ways. The complex socio-political framework affected the delivery of services within every government Ministry who had to grant access to returnees while maintaining and improving services to those that had stayed in Iraq. The return brought with it different sources of tension and disputes which communities required support to resolve; for example by increasing access to fuel supply, constructing new public facilities, in the approach for delivery of security and employment of police and in the provision of social security for the large number of female headed households and veterans from the Iran-Iraq wars.

Promote political processes which lead to greater stability

A political framework that takes into account the interests of a broad range of interest groups and which is accountable and responsive can reduce the likelihood of disenfranchisement and lead to a more cohesive as well as stable political settlement.

Women and men represent different interest groups; often have different priorities and can form coalitions and bridges over different family, tribal and political divides. Their representation in political negotiations at community and national levels can therefore provide a broader range of solutions than might be available if one or other group is excluded from political process.

Ensuring the views of women, men and excluded groups within political processes can:

- Improve support for indigenous peace initiatives.
- Increase effectiveness of mechanisms for implementing peace agreements.
- Contribute to longer term recovery from conflict and social renewal.
- Ensure services are accessible and responsive.
- Improve accountability.

However, although political process can gain longer lasting benefits from more inclusive approaches, times of political change can also be deeply unstable, especially where access to resources and ownership rights are hotly contested. Participation can threaten traditional decision making structures and exasperate tensions if enforced without due attention to local social and conflict dynamics. Negotiations can put men and women of different groups at risk. This means that while Stabilisation Unit believes in supporting the capacities of people to resolve their own conflicts, and we will endeavour to support those who propose initiatives to resolve conflict whatever their gender, social, religious or ethnic origins, we also consider Do No Harm Principles at all times and may decide not to support initiatives if we feel there are considerable risks to those involved.

Efforts to improve the participation of excluded groups may need to begin by supporting culturally appropriate gateways for participation and by building wider support for participation gradually over time. Gateways for improving the participation of women, men and socially excluded groups in political processes can include; peace agreement negotiations, constitution writing, drafting of laws, rebuilding public administration and service delivery.

Gender and Political Participation in Sudan

A Stabilisation Unit supported programme, the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation, has strengthened women's engagement in the Darfur Political Process. The DDDC has supported women from both North and South Darfur to discuss a range of solutions to the conflict through a series of consultations in Sudan over the past two years. In June 2009 women presented their recommendations to the African Union Panel for Darfur, lead by former President Mbekki of South Africa and later to "The Technical Workshop on Darfur Peace" held in Qatar in October 2009, which informed the peace process by convening civil society with movement and government representatives under the auspices of the AU-UN Joint Mediator. The gradual approach of building support for women' to articulate their views has helped overcome resistance and achieve endorsement of their proposals at the Technical workshop that women should constitute at least 25% of participants in peace talks and conferences and 30% in justice, compensation and reconciliation committees. This proposal was endorsed by all parties at the conference. Around 35% of representatives at the technical workshop were women.

Prepare for longer-term development

At all stages of a conflict it is important to consider the social and gender implications for longer term development and to establish conditions that will prevent further resurgence of conflict. Once a peaceful settlement has been established the maintenance of that settlement will rely on the capacities of all people to keep the peace within their communities.

Factors during conflict that inhibit longer term development and restoration of normality include fragmentation of social structures, forced migration, degradation of infrastructure, delays or inhibited access to education, poor health and psycho social trauma. Poorly designed quick impact initiatives that unintentionally reinforce suppressive power dynamics or undermine existing social and governance structures can also impede longer term development.

Violence during conflict can have delayed repercussions, for example years after the Rwandan conflict the death rate for women infected by HIV Aids from sexual violence rose dramatically. The experience of violent conflict in the public sphere can become fused with increased incidence of domestic violence within the home, during conflict and for many years afterwards. The psycho social affects of conflict impacts on communities for generations after peace is established, inhibiting the development of human capital as well as economic recovery.

Adapting responses during conflict can lead to more effective recovery and longer term development. Gender relations can change during conflict when women and men take on different roles to adapt to the difficult environment, shocks and trauma experienced. As stabilisation improves, women and men may not want to loose the economic and social space they have gained during conflict, however changing expectations of masculinity and femininity can cause frustration and despair in ways that can exasperate violence. Maintaining or improving access to services, social networks, economic opportunities, justice mechanisms and political processes for men and women during and after conflict can enable a smoother recovery. Gender analysis can ensure responses recognise and adapt to these changing dynamics and strengthen the transition to longer term development approaches.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Programmes, which support combatants to put down their weapons and reintegrate into the community, require both an understanding of the motivations of the former combatants and the needs and fears of the communities absorbing them.

Gender and social exclusion analysis play an important part in developing strategies for effective DDR by enabling programmes to recognise the different requirements of men, women and children and by adapting strategies for the needs of different combatants depending on their involvement in conflict and the challenges they face reintegrating from military to civilian roles in society.

People are involved in combat in a range of ways; some enter combat to seek retribution for crimes committed against them and their families, others follow relatives into the fighting or are forcibly recruited. Certain groups can be denied assistance for example those that perform support functions in armed conflict including logistics and

communications may be excluded from DDR programmes for having not carried a weapon. On other occasions former combatants are unable to return to their communities because of negative stigmatisation. DDR that enable women, men and children to seek different strategies to reintegration and support community abilities to absorb demobilised combatants contribute to a more lasting peace, recovery and conditions for longer term development.

Supporting the Ministry of Women's Affairs

In Afghanistan a gendered approach has been instrumental to establishing The 10 year National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA). The government of Afghanistan has committed itself to gender equality and eliminating violence against women in key documents including (i.) The Afghan Constitution, (ii.) the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (iii.) The Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals, (iv.) The Afghanistan National Development Strategy and (v.) the Afghanistan Compact.

However, at the provincial level implementation of national plans can be complex and support needs to reflect local priorities and cultural norms. Our approach in Helmand has therefore focussed on identifying entry points for positive action. Stabilisation Unit personnel are working with the Justice Sector and the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Helmand to deliver on key objectives of the NAPWA, for example by supporting a "Justice Shura" with the Police and Civil Rights departments to discuss handling of cases involving women. At the district level, the opportunities for women to access both formal and informal justice structures vary. In some areas, and under certain conditions, women are successfully raising cases for resolution to district justice committees; case examples include marriage and land disputes. By understanding and relating local level opportunities to the broader frameworks for development, stabilisation support can contribute to longer term goals. However, they need to be based on a very sound local level analysis of the opportunities and risks if they are to genuinely contribute to longer term processes and not put people at risk.

Resources and further information

General Stabilisation Documents

UK Approach to Stabilisation <http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/>

Stabilisation Issues Notes:

Security Sector Stabilisation and Rule of Law

Human Rights

Key HMG Resources on Gender

FCO Gender Toolkit:

FCO Conflict Toolbox: International Policing, Building the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict Situations: Prison Reform, Transitional Justice – Amnesties, Truth Commissions, Vetting and Lustration, Housing, Land and Property Issues in Post-Conflict Situations.

DfID Gender Manual

DfID Briefing Note on Violence against Women

HMG Contact Points

In country: The FCO and DFID will have gender focal points, normally working out of the embassy or Country office.

UK based:

Stabilisation Unit Lessons and Planning Team

FCO Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance Group

FCO Conflict Group Peace building Team

Research Analysts

MOD Defence Cultural Support Unit

Military Stabilisation Support Group

DFID Equity and Rights Team

DFID Politics and State Team

DFID Security and Justice Team, Conflict and Humanitarian and Security Team

Training

MSSG Course on Engaging with Women

SU one day course on 1325 and 1820 Women Peace and Security

International Alert Conflict Foundation Course

International Alert Gender and Conflict Course

Recommended Reading and Websites

- Stabilisation Unit Lessons Site - www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk
- Institute of Development Studies BRIDGE: Gender and Armed Conflict - www.ids.ac.uk
- DCAF: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces - www.dcaf.ch
- International Centre for Transitional Justice - www.ictj.org
- UNWOMEN - www.unwomen.org
- UNIFEM: Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence - www.unifem.org
- DPKO Best Practices Unit - www.peacekeepingbestpractices.org
- EU Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls - www.consilium.europa.eu
- NATO: Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspectives into NATO Command including Measures for Protection in Armed Conflict - www.nato.int
- International Alert – www.international-alert.org