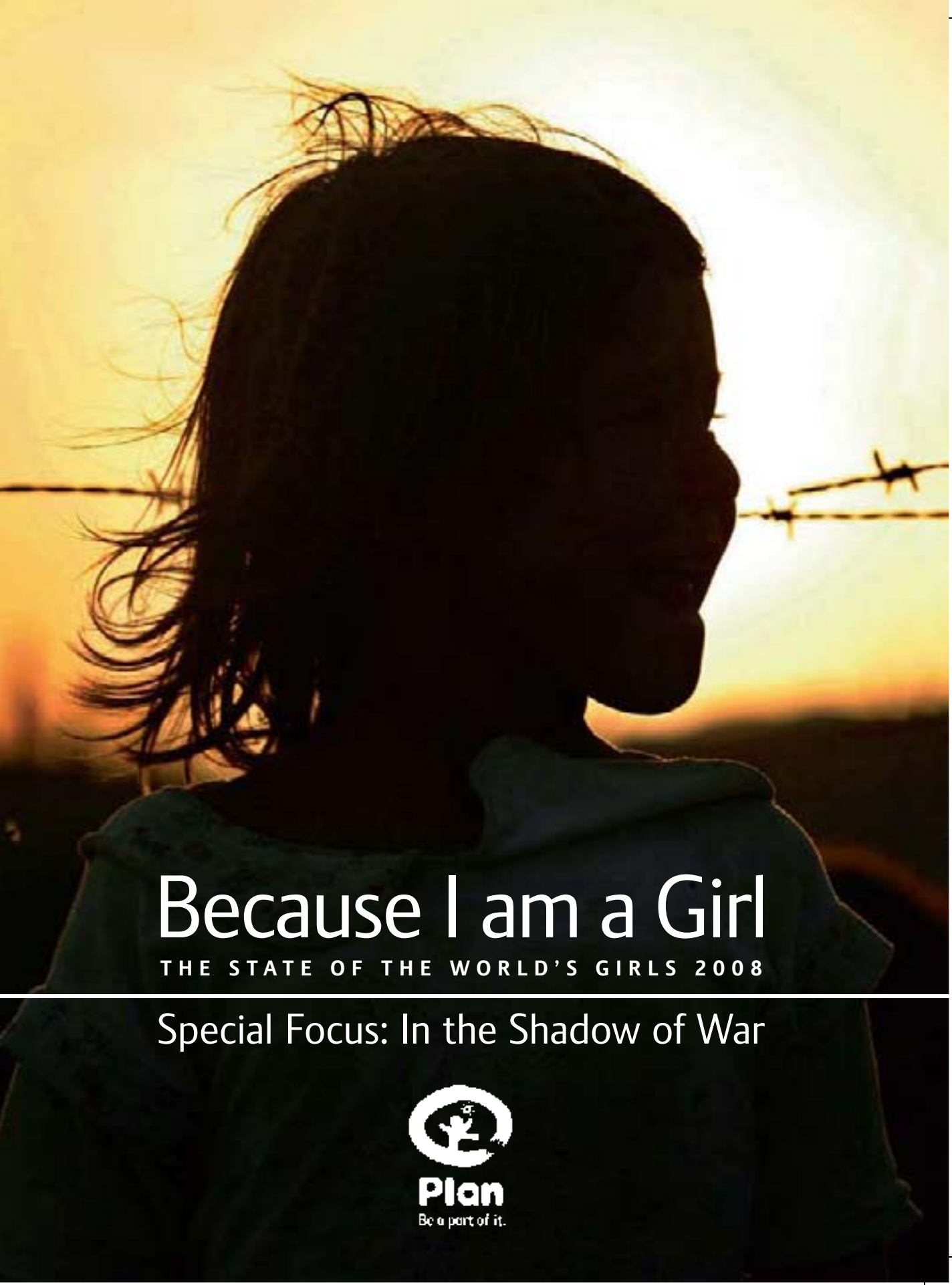

Because I am a Girl

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2008

Special Focus: In the Shadow of War

Plan

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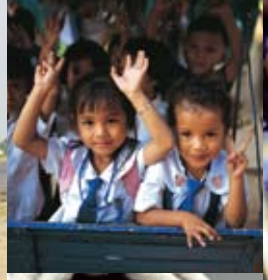
THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2008

Special Focus: In the Shadow of War



Because I am a Girl

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2008

Special Focus: In the Shadow of War

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A girl displaced by Colombian violence stands during a sunset in her neighbourhood in Barranquilla, seen in this picture taken on May 11, 2005.
Reuters/ Jose Miguel Gomez, courtesy www.alertnet.org

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Unless otherwise indicated, names have been changed in case studies to protect identities.

"The change will start with myself...to be united I have to start with my friends.....we have to work together."
Maram (17), West Bank

"I think girls should launch a revolution to obtain the real changes they have been expecting. Lawmakers should contribute accordingly."
Amédée (19), Haiti

ANNIE HESLOP

A family from a refugee camp in Sri Lanka.

REUTERS/ STRINGER (SRI LANKA), courtesy www.alertnet.org

This report is dedicated to the 200 million girls and young women living in the shadow of war and published in memory of two people who inspired the State of the World's Girls reports - Professor Elisabeth Croll, Chair of the United Nations University Council, Vice Principal School of Oriental and African Studies, and pioneering anthropologist who shaped the focus of the report series, and Lord Deedes, journalist, politician, soldier, and feminist whose belief that investing in girls and empowering women is necessary for countries to recover from war, build prosperity and prevent further conflict inspired this volume.

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Preface

The public images of war focus almost exclusively on young men – armed forces, suicide bombers, young men throwing stones at soldiers. The fact that girls remain invisible casts a long shadow on their involvement in war, particularly as the changing nature of war and conflict means that increasingly, civilians are affected as war is played out closer to people's homes. The numbers of civilians killed or injured in war has risen astronomically in the last century. There are now more than 200 million girls living in countries that are either at risk of, in the midst of or emerging from armed conflict but rarely do we hear stories of how they experience war.

Girls and young women have unique experiences of armed conflict because of their age and overwhelmingly because of their gender.

The story of girls and conflict is not limited to the horrific sexual violence and exploitation they can be exposed to in times of insecurity. It is a story of girls taking on responsibility for whole households, missing out on school and growing up with limited opportunities. It is also the story of displacement, loss of childhood, early marriage and giving birth without access to medical care. Once war is over, the potential of girls and young women to help rebuild their broken communities and societies is, more often than not, overlooked.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is one of a number of human rights instruments aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of women and of children. It calls for the rights of women and girls in armed conflict to be protected and for their active participation in conflict prevention, peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction. Sadly, this is often not the reality experienced by girls and young women in conflict. As I highlighted a year ago, to discriminate against girls is not only morally indefensible, it is also economically, politically and socially unsupportable. Nowhere is this more crucial than in societies that are unstable or in countries that are emerging from

conflict, where to ignore a substantial proportion of the population makes little sense.

This report, the second in a series of nine on girls' rights, makes an important contribution to the calls for increased global momentum around the world's commitment to halve world poverty through the Millennium Development Goals. Without gender equality, these goals simply cannot be met. In addition, the report gives voice to the millions of girls who live every day in the shadow of war.

I therefore welcome Plan's urgent call for the world to take girls and young women into account. It recognises that the distinctive needs of girls and young women require distinctive responses.

We all have a responsibility to listen to what young people, in particular girls and young women, are saying. Communities, civil society, governments, and the international community must utilise the opportunities presented during post-conflict renewal to develop policies and programmes that address the experience of girls and young women affected by conflict. This is how we will break the cycle of insecurity and poverty that so many are facing today.

Graça Machel
President of the Foundation for Community Development
Chair of the GAVI Fund Board

Foreword

The State of the World's Girls is a welcome and timely report as it sheds an important and critical light on the often overlooked plight of girls in post-conflict countries. These environments are rife with hostile conditions that threaten girls' survival and potential. Urgent intervention is required to give girls a chance to lead normal lives that include obtaining an education and access to health care. Post-conflict environments present opportunities for change but also consist of all of the variables that fuel the cycle of extreme poverty. Liberia is a country emerging from conflict with about 50 per cent of its population under 18 years old, and girls make up more than half of this group.[1] Liberian girls experience sexual harassment and gender-based violence by older men in their neighbourhoods and by their teachers on a daily basis. A high rate of teenage pregnancies, school drop-out and increasing prostitution as a source of income to support themselves, their children and/or their younger siblings are the result. This violence pervades our society today resulting in an increased risk of HIV and AIDS in this vulnerable group with minimum or no access to healthcare and other social services.

When I was inaugurated in January 2006, I promised the Liberian youth that my Administration would do its utmost to respond to their needs. We have focused attention on the particular needs of girls by introducing anti-rape and inheritance legislations that begin to address these needs. The rape law, passed in 2007, imposes harsher penalties on perpetrators of rape and other sexual crimes against girls. The inheritance law makes it a felony for anyone to force girls under 16 into marriage and enables girls of legal age to exercise a choice in marriage decisions that affect them. Together with a National Education Policy which ensures free compulsory education for all primary school children, all Liberian girls now have access to education. Moreover, through my own personal initiative the Liberian Education Trust was established and has generated more than $2 million from private sources to build schools, provide direct scholarships to thousands of girls

and provide literacy training to market women.

But challenges still exist for our girls. Education is central to those challenges. According to statistics compiled by UNICEF of Liberian children of official primary school age currently enrolled in primary school, only 58 per cent of girls are enrolled compared to 74 per cent of boys. We need to bridge that gap by improving the environments in which girls learn, by training and hiring more female teachers and providing critical after-school educational programmes for girls.

My inauguration as the first woman President in Africa has brought hope to girls in Liberia and throughout Africa. I am heartened and encouraged by a story told to me by a UNESCO representative who visited a school in a remote village in Liberia and observed a girl running around and playing with the boys in the school yard. The male Principal was appalled and reprimanded her for being rowdy by saying, "you are a little girl; you should be quiet and not running around making so much noise". The little girl pondered for a few seconds and said quietly: "Teacher, be careful how you talk to me. Don't forget our President is a woman."

It is a well documented fact that women contribute tremendously to national development but suffer untold miseries particularly during conflict situations, which lead them down the poverty trap.

I believe that securing the future for our girls is critical to achieving national development. The popular saying, "when you educate a man you feed his family but when you educate a girl, you educate a nation" is profound. Making a positive change to the state of the world's girls through educational and economic opportunities will lead to a decline in poverty around the world.

The key is in taking action NOW to make a difference to the lives of millions of girls around the world.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President of Liberia

1 *The State of the World's Children (2007)*

ANNIE HESLOP

Introduction

From Plan UK's Director, Marie Staunton

Plan is publishing the *State of the World's Girls* report series to bring global attention to the fact that progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the goals set by the world's governments in 2000 to halve world poverty by 2015 – is being hampered by a continued lack of investment in girls and young women. We believe that drastic legal change will make a difference for girls, as will an increased focus on their education.

This is the second of nine annual reports. In each, we will provide a wealth of data and case study material on a major issue of concern for girls. The reports will also demonstrate what is being done at local, national and international levels, and highlight the concerted effort needed for real progress. The reports have an advisory panel and a group of partners – UN agencies, international non governmental organisations (NGOs), academic institutions, girls' organisations and others working to secure girls' and women's rights.

The report series is aimed at those who have the duty and power to ensure that girls survive, develop to realise their potential, are protected and can participate in decisions made about them. These are rights that almost every country in the world has agreed to by ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). These are governments, NGOs, corporations, communities, parents, and girls themselves.

In the first *State of the World's Girls* in 2007, we gave an introduction to the situation of girls around the world, and showed how they were generally worse off than their brothers. We examined their rights throughout their childhood and adolescence and as young women, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of the world's girls. We concluded that girls are getting a raw deal because they face the double discrimination of gender and age so that in many societies, including those affected by armed conflict, girls remain at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. And we made a number of recommendations.

The focus on this year's report is on girls living in the shadow of war. Girls are affected differently from every other section of society in countries teetering on the edge of conflict, during war and in its aftermath. They need different services and support, but in fact it is precisely at these times that girls can become invisible, and both their contributions and potential ignored. The report is organised into two sections – the first is a comprehensive overview of secondary data and an analysis of why girls experience war and conflict in the way that they do. It includes the voices of girls from three countries, who we met with to discuss their experiences and to gain their insight. Girls suffer regardless of which side of the conflict they are on, yet their voices are rarely heard. The second section of the report demonstrates that despite progress in some areas, e.g. the actual numbers of girls now in primary school has increased, there is much to be done to improve the situation for girls. The global figures we are monitoring every year show how girls are faring – we are following a cohort of 135 girls until 2015, tracking legal changes, and tracking global data and indicators. Professor Geraldine Van Bueren begins this section by outlining additional legal protection that is needed.

It is the responsibility of us all to change the state of the world's girls. By the last report in this series in 2015, we will know if we have.

1 Why a report on girls in conflict situations?

"Children do not start wars. Yet they are most vulnerable to its deadly effects. Millions of innocent children die in conflicts, which is no fault of theirs, just because some greedy leaders rob powers with the barrel of the gun. During such times everything freezes, no education, no drinking water, no electricity, food shortages, no shelter, and most of all some girls are raped leading to HIV/AIDS."
Girl (17), Ghana[1]

"Why girls? Because girls, in Liberia, in Africa, are the ones that have been left out… The emphasis on girls is to correct many years of neglect… We have got to touch the lives of these young girls and boys. We have got to make a difference in their families. Because if we… don't make a difference in a relatively short amount of time, one to two years, chances are that the country slips back into chaos and back into conflict."
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia[2]

Over 200 million girls are living in poverty in states teetering on the brink of chaos. Up to ninety per cent of victims of modern war are civilians; a substantial proportion are women and children. 100,000 girls are child soldiers.[3] Millions of girls affected by war are unprotected, voiceless and invisible, ignored by their own governments and by international donors. Yet in some countries fragility and conflict can give girls new opportunities, reveal new strengths and alter their status both inside and outside the family.

Policy discussion and action at either national or international level rarely takes into account the specific needs and rights of girls and young women. There is some recognition that investment in girls' education and health is vital to build up a strong, resilient and secure population but not enough is being done about it.

Being young and female means that girls experience discrimination through both age and gender: their health is at risk when clinics and health centres become inaccessible and unsafe, they are taken out of school, they are vulnerable to rape, violence, and economic exploitation. Girls entering the labour market for the first time, trafficked as domestic workers to help their families, or forced to flee their homes, are exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse. And as conflict develops, girls disappear from public places.

Increasing numbers of girls and young women join the army to secure food and protection. Being a member of a fighting force is preferable to being the victim of one. Many fight like boys but remain subject to sexual abuse, not only during the war but also afterwards – from the peacekeepers. It is all the more remarkable that in countries recovering from conflict – like Liberia – we found so many girls and young women who were creating a new life, moving from being victims to survivors. "If they (my children) can be educated, they can stop the bad things happening to them which happened to me. That is my dream." (Princess, Liberia, ex-girl combatant, currently a carpenter.)

This report records girls' voices and stories as they call on governments and the United Nations (UN), on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and on their own families and communities to fulfil their rights and recognise their particular needs. They want to contribute to the society they live in and seek the means, capital and legal protection to become economically self

SEX AND GENDER
People often use the word 'gender' as a synonym for the word 'sex'. But these are two different terms, with very different meanings.
Sex is the biological differences between males and females (what we are born with).
Gender is the set of roles, behaviour patterns, values and responsibilities women and men, girls and boys have learned, or end up playing, in their family, community and in society at large. These gender specific roles are socially constructed and therefore changeable as they depend on historical, cultural, political and social contexts.

sufficient and politically visible.

In recent years, academic studies and the media have both drawn attention to the most obvious ways in which violent conflict affects girls and young women – as victims of physical attacks and rape, or forcibly drafted into military forces. The real story is more complex. And it is one that has not been told in its entirety before.

Girls and young women experience conflict, its build-up and its aftermath differently according to their age. This may be a matter of life and death: a female baby or toddler may be left behind if her parents have to choose between saving her or her brother; a girl just into her teens may find herself in charge of the whole household, and adolescent girls may be suddenly thrust into a very 'adult' world of sexual violence and coercion, early motherhood and having to find the skills they need to ensure their own survival and that of a family on a day-to-day basis.

We still know far too little about the unique and particular roles that girls play in the build-up to, during, and after conflict. This report aims to provide a comprehensive picture of girls' experiences. It shows how conflict affects girls differently from boys; how their rights are ignored, their responsibilities changed, and their lives altered forever by war. It describes how discrimination against girls is in place before the fighting begins and long after it is over. The impacts vary from area to area, even within the same country, but the cost in terms of girls' well-being is profound.

Few statistics collected about girls look at them separately, rendering them 'invisible' in official reports and studies. Even when data is collected on females, it is rarely disaggregated by age. "The lack of data in many key areas reflects not the difficulties of data collection but rather the significant discrepancy between the resources invested in the excellent and careful collection of data in some areas and lack of data in others," says UNICEF.[5]

This report also reveals how many girls and young women play an active part in war – as combatants and as peacemakers – and how they often find the strength to support others and contribute to peace-building, even in the most difficult of circumstances. It makes the case for investing in girls not just because it is the 'right' thing to do for the achievement of equality, but because it makes sense in terms of helping countries build peace and recover from war and preventing further conflict. The impact of continued underinvestment in girls and young women on already fragile economic and social fabric can be devastating.

In this report, we focus in on the condition and position of girls in some of the poorest, most difficult situations in the world, where poverty and discrimination are compounded by violent conflict. The challenges they experience demand attention from the world community. Without this attention, the Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved by 2015 and especially not the important targets on gender and equality that the international community set itself. Crucially, we will fail the millions of girls whose lives are so severely impacted by war and its aftermath. As Graça Machel said in her report to the UN on the impact of war on children (see box 'Talking is not enough'): "War violates every right of a child – the right to life, the right to be with family and community, the right to health, the right to the development of the personality and the right to be nurtured and protected."[8] As we shall see, this is especially the case for girls.

WHO IS A GIRL?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 unless the age of majority is lower.

A young person is someone between the age of 10 and 24. An adolescent is between 10 and 19, divided into 'early adolescence' (10 to 14 years) and 'late adolescence' (between 15 and 19).

For the purposes of this report, a girl is anyone up to the age of 18 and a young woman up to 25 years.

Sex-disaggregated data is not available for key indicators[4]

	Countries with data	Countries without data
Primary school enrolment	187	17
Occupation	108	96
Literacy	81	123
Participation in local government	70	134
Unpaid work and time use	67	137
Informal employment	60	144
Wage statistics	52	152
School attendance	41	163
Violence	38	166

FRAMEWORK

The report uses five 'lenses' to look at girls in conflict situations. Each lens is explored to varying degrees within each chapter.

1 **Participation and empowerment** – how fragility and conflict affect opportunities for girls' participation and empowerment, both positively and negatively. The absence of adults often means that girls and young women take on increased responsibilities and leadership roles, both in and out of the home.

2 **Security and protection** – how girls and young women are among the most vulnerable when security breaks down and different forms of violence are conducted with impunity. One of the first casualties of any conflict situation is the visibility of girls and young women in public places.

3 **Access to basic services** – how the breakdown in state systems and services impacts on girls and young women. Girls' particular needs for reproductive

TALKING IS NOT ENOUGH

The 1996 United Nations report 'The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children', widely known as the Machel study, for the first time brought the issues faced by children in armed conflict to international attention and discovered that one third of all combatants are young women.[6] Ten years later, a strategic review has been convened to assess progress and look forward to identify key challenges and priorities for the future. Alongside the report, another document, 'Will you listen? Young voices from conflict zones' compiled the views and recommendations of 1,700 children and young people in 92 countries recently or currently affected by armed conflict. This is their view:

"We are from Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Haiti, Iraq, Kosovo (Serbia), Liberia, Nepal, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda and many other countries.

We won't tell you our names because it could be dangerous for us.

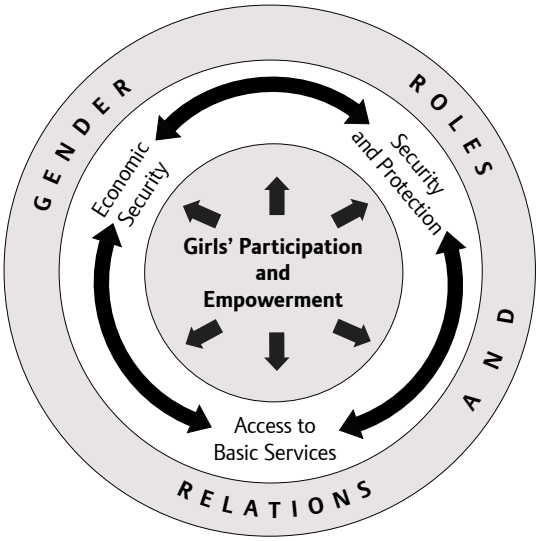
We all have one thing in common: Our lives have been affected by armed conflict. That is why, even though we come from different places and our problems are not always the same, we speak with one voice.

We have not given up all hope yet. We still want to go to school and play with our friends. We want to help build peace in our societies and make this world a better place. We still have big dreams.

For some of us, getting together for the sake of this report gave us a rare opportunity to sit with our friends and share our stories. It has also been an opportunity to finally tell you what we feel and think.

But talking is not enough. Will we see any change after you meet to talk about us? Will you hear our voices and act on what we tell you?

We have tremendous energy and a strong will to fight for our futures. Many of us are already taking action. Will you join us?"[7]



health services, coupled with the fact that they might be the first in the family taken out of school, means that they are particularly disadvantaged by the breakdown of these services.

4 **Economic security** – how difficulties for families in making a living during and after conflict have particular effects on girls. Increased poverty impacts first on girls' opportunities and may affect them long after they have left the immediate conflict zone.

5 **Gender roles and relations** – how men and women behave towards each other even before the fighting begins affects girls during and after a conflict.

The diagram above demonstrates how these different perspectives are interconnected. Gender roles and relations influence and shape the other four perspectives. Economic security, basic services and security and protection all create, or hinder, opportunities for girls' participation.

By exposing the range of risks girls face before, during and after conflict, we hope that international agencies, governments, communities and families will take the specific measures necessary to protect girls and ensure that their rights are respected, their voices listened to, and their skills built upon. Girls and young women have a right to live without fear; with support, they have the capacity to help the world build a better future.

2 The context of conflict

"We don't want war. We want to feel safe, we are afraid of kidnappers. We want to be able to play without fear, to walk to school without fear."
A group of Afghan children[9]

War does not happen in a vacuum. Many of the countries where conflict occurs are already in a fragile and unstable situation, with the government unable or unwilling to provide basic services, ensure protection or secure human rights for its citizens. A quarter of the world's poorest people live in such situations.[10] As a result, governments do not ensure security, safeguard human rights or support the basic functions for development. Countries in this situation are sometimes known as 'fragile states'.

FRAGILE STATES

The fragile states agenda as it relates to international development emerged during the 1990s. Although there is no single agreed definition of what constitutes a fragile state, it is variously defined in terms of the functionality of governments, of their challenges (including insecurity), or of their relationship with donors.[11]

Functionality: several donors define fragile states as those that lack the capacity and/or will to perform a set of functions necessary for the security and well-being of their citizens. In essence, this means that such states may be unable to secure the rights of their citizens or to project administrative and regulatory power over their territory.

Challenges: fragile states are perceived as likely to generate (or not respond adequately to) poverty, violent conflict, global security threats, refugees, organised crime, epidemic diseases, and/or environmental degradation.

Relationships: some donors – governments who provide aid – place emphasis on their relationship with Southern governments. In these cases, the definition of a fragile state includes the extent of that state's ability or willingness to work in partnership with the donor.

6 out of 8 Millennium Development Goals are in jeopardy

MDG 1 Eliminate extreme poverty and hunger

Target: Reduce by half the number of people living on less than a dollar a day
Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
The majority of those living on less than $1 a day are female. Girls and young women are not fulfilling their potential and this is impacting on the world's poorest economies in particular. An extra year of education can boost a girls' eventual wages by between 10 and 20 per cent.

MDG 2 Universal Primary Education

Target: All children will have a full primary schooling by 2015
This target will not be reached unless MDG 3 is met and initiatives that encourage girls to remain in school are implemented. 62 million girls are out of school.

MDG 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

Target: Ensure gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005
Although there has been some progress towards reaching this goal, the target was not met by 2005.

MDG 4 Reduce infant mortality

Target: Reduce by two-thirds by 2015
Despite girls' natural resilience at birth, more girls than boys die before the age of five in many parts of the world. If action is not taken, MDG 4 will not be met. An important factor here is that the preference for boys is a major concern in the two most populous countries on earth, China and India.

MDG 5 Improve maternal health

Target: Reduce by three-quarters by 2015 the maternal mortality rate
Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death among young women aged 15 to 19 in the developing world. The younger girls are when they give birth, the higher the risk of complications that could lead to death.

MDG 6 Tackle HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target: Halt by 2015 and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Young women have less knowledge than young men on HIV infection, yet are more at risk of becoming infected in the first place. Reversing the spread of AIDS is dependent on reducing the infection rates of young women and tackling the gendered behaviour which determines their lack of choice in decisions about sex.

The UK Government's Department for International Development (DfID) views fragile states primarily as a threat to poverty reduction goals and sustainable development, and secondly as a threat to security. According to the World Bank, "Fragile states are different from better performing developing countries in that they are confronted with particularly severe development challenges such as weak governance, limited administrative capacity, chronic humanitarian crises, persistent social tensions, violence or the legacy of civil war." [11]

Most of the countries labelled as 'fragile states' are also poor. They are among the least likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Children living in these countries are particularly vulnerable: in 2005, they made up nearly one third of all child deaths and 29 per cent of primary school children who did not finish school. These countries are least likely of all poor countries to achieve equal numbers of girls and boys going to school.[12] In addition, the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education – MDG3 – in fragile states is estimated at 82 per cent. Globally, this figure is 94 per cent.[13]

The table on page 18 lists under the main Millennium Development Goals some comparative statistics between fragile states and all developing countries. It shows just how much more difficult life is in fragile states. Although they account for only 14 per cent of the population of developing countries, they include nearly 30 per cent of those who live on less than a dollar a day.

Over 70 per cent of fragile states are, or have been, caught up in violent conflict.[14] And even once it is over, people are not safe – countries in a post-conflict period have nearly a 50 per cent chance of falling back into war within 5 years.[15]

Violent conflict is not a random or mindless phenomenon. Conflict of one kind or another exists in all countries and cultures – between families, children and adults, at home and in the streets. But organised violent conflict of the kind that may eventually evolve into war results from the failure of institutions such as the government or from organised efforts to promote violence for political, religious or material gain. Young people who are poor may be

A young girl from Sarajevo escorted by a soldier.

MIKKEL OSTERGAARD / PANOS PICTURES

drawn into this type of violence because they feel they have no other choice; fighting becomes a means of survival when all other options seem to have run out.

Violent conflicts do not happen suddenly or without warning. They are usually a result of long-standing problems.

ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is an example of a fragile state where, over the past decade, insecurity has led to a deterioration in the quality of life for most people. Families have been forced into poverty through hyperinflation and food shortages. For several years unemployment has been reported to be over 80 per cent.

Zimbabwe has changed from being one of Africa's most prosperous countries into a state of significant economic decline. A country that had made rapid progress in the 1980s and 1990s towards universal primary education, health, food security and economic well being is now burdened by hunger and an unprecedented erosion of the previous gains.

The human development indicators for Zimbabwe have dropped dramatically in recent years. Recent developments have affected women, children and vulnerable groups in particular. Over the last decade, there has been an increase in the number of girls dropping out of school due to economic hardships or to take care of sick parents. Life expectancy for women has plummeted from nearly 55 years in 1970 to 34 years in 2006, the lowest in the world, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Zimbabwe Demographic Survey Report of 2006 also reported that 29 per cent of children under five have stunted growth. Stunting affects a child's mental development and physical health and is irreversible after the age of two. UNICEF has estimated that there are up to two million orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe, primarily due to AIDS.

On a positive note, the government has enacted the Domestic Violence and Prevention Act. The purpose of the act is to protect victims of domestic violence and provide long-term measures to prevent domestic violence.

Comparison of Development Statistics for All Developing Countries and Fragile States

World Bank 2007, Global Monitoring Report

Indicator	Total in developing countries (millions)	Total in fragile states (in millions and % share)	
Total population (2004)	**5,427**	**485**	**(9%)**
MDG1 – Poverty (2004)			
Extreme poverty	985	261	(27%)
Malnourished children	143	22.7	(16%)
MDG2 – Universal Education			
Children of relevant age that did not complete primary school in 2005	13.8	4	(29%)
MDG4 – Under-Five Mortality			
Children born in 2005 not expected to survive to age five	10.5	3.3	(31%)
MDG5 – Maternal Health			
Unattended births	48.7	8.9	(18%)
MDG6 – Diseases			
TB deaths	1.7	0.34	(20%)
HIV+	29.8	7.2	(24%)
MDG7 – Environmental Sustainability			
Lack of access to improved water	1,083	209	(19%)
Lack of access to improved sanitation	2,626	286	(11%)

The nature of violent conflict has changed significantly over the past few decades, especially in terms of the toll on civilians. Most violent conflict now occurs within states – and particularly within fragile states – not between them. Wars are no longer fought by armies on battlegrounds far from the homes of citizens, but in streets and around homes by rival groups. These types of internal civil conflicts can last for many years, often without a clear end point. These are often lower in intensity than conflicts fought between countries, and they are the most common form of violent conflict that exists today. The number of low-intensity conflicts within countries rose from 30 in 1996 to 56 in 2006.[16]

Ordinary people are increasingly affected by internal conflict. The percentage of civilians killed and wounded as a result of armed conflict has soared from five per cent of all war casualties at the turn of the 20th

century to an estimated 90 per cent today, an increasing number of whom are women and children.[17] Even those who live a long way away from the actual fighting may be caught up in the ripple effect, for example, loss of infrastructure and basic services, or an influx of refugees and internally displaced people.

Young people are more likely than younger children or older people to be affected by war. Partly this is because there are simply so many of them – almost two and a half billion worldwide. There are 1.17 billion girls and young women between the ages of 0 and 19 and 1.24 billion boys and young men. A United Nations report notes that: "Despite the international legal framework to protect minors and prevent their engagement in conflict situations, there has not been an improvement on the ground."[18]

Many of the countries experiencing conflict have a very high percentage of young people in their populations, a further reason for a closer examination of their specific needs. In some, the number of young people is more than half the population. In Africa as a whole, 41 per cent of the population is under 18. In Liberia, it is over 47 per cent, in Burundi it is 45 per cent.[19]

Regional distribution of youth, 2000 (in millions)

	Total population	Youth as % of total	Youth (15-24)	% of world youth total
Asia	3,672	17.8%	654	61.5%
Africa	793	20.3%	161	15.1%
Europe	727	13.8%	100	9.4%
Latin America & the Caribbean	519	19.5%	101	9.5%
Northern America	314	13.5%	42	4.0%
Oceania	31	15.6%	5	0.5%
Total	6,056	17.6%	1,063	100.0%

CHRISTIANA'S STORY

Christiana* from Sierra Leone is one of scores of young women who were abducted by rebel fighters who attacked the district during the country's decade-long civil war. This is her story:

"I was 14 years old when I was captured by rebels. This was in 1998. I was a virgin back then and then one of the rebels raped me. After that I was used as a sex slave. I was held captive for three years from the time the rebels attacked Makeni up until the end of the war. There were other girls there and they were all treated the same as me. We were all treated very badly.

The soldiers kept moving us around all the time. I tried to escape but it was difficult as there was always a bodyguard watching me.

I became pregnant in 2002 and gave birth to a baby boy. He is now five years old. After war ended and the soldiers gave up their arms, the rebel who captured me abandoned me. I had no home to go to for a while until I found my parents and returned to them.

When I returned home my parents were supportive about my pregnancy because they knew it wasn't my fault. Some parents rejected their daughters who had been captured and had returned pregnant. They called their babies 'rebel children' and threw their daughters out on to the street.

There was one girl I know whose parents threw her out when she tried to return home. They said that if she ever tried to return again they would throw her

REUTERS/ STRINGER (SRI LNAKA), courtesy www.alertnet.org

A young girl in a bus heading for a refugee camp in Sri Lanka.

REUTERS/ ANTONY NJUGUNA, courtesy www.alertnet.org

A Sudanese refugee family escaping the violence.

baby into a pit latrine.

I told my mother and father I wanted to go back to school but they said they could not afford to help me. We were living in poverty. It was then that a friend told me about Help and Needy Children [an NGO working with Plan in Sierra Leone to improve the lives of girls and women who were abducted by rebels during the conflict]. I registered with them and they helped me to return to school. They have been paying my school fees and bought my uniform for me. I have also been involved in peace marches and radio debates to fight the stigma faced by the girls who had been raped and had babies by rebels.

I think that fighting for the rights of children, young mothers, and victims of rape is very important. It has helped young women like me who have been badly treated to develop pride in ourselves. Before, we used to be ashamed about what happened to us, even though it was not our fault, and of the babies we had by the rebel soldiers. Today we are no longer ashamed and we have helped to fight the stigma in our local communities."

Christiana is now a 23-year-old business and accountancy student.

***Name of the interviewee has been changed to protect her identity.**

3 The impact of conflict on girls

"War forces girls into unfamiliar roles and calls for them to strengthen existing coping mechanisms and develop new ones. The lives of girls can be changed completely by armed conflict, particularly with regard to their role in the family, the community and public sphere."
International Committee for the Red Cross.[20]

In fragile states, weak public institutions and limited access to basic services have different impacts on the security and well-being of boys and girls, men and women. In situations of conflict, girls may take on new and unexpected roles and responsibilities. Sometimes this gives them independence for the first time in their lives. But these changes

can bring girls significant loss, poverty, deprivation and stigma. For example, their workload may increase, and they may be forced to earn money in whatever way they can to supplement family income. Girls may even find they have become the head of their household, in charge of younger siblings and relatives. Young women can then become more vulnerable to violence or even to threats from their community for not conforming to traditional roles.

Although more men and boys are killed in fighting, the impacts for women and girls are often brutal, as ethnic hatred, oppression and intolerance are played out on their bodies and in their lives. In recent years, numerous reports have highlighted the use of rape as a weapon of war, and the sexual exploitation of girls and young women by peace-keeping forces and humanitarian aid workers.

Violent conflict can lead to young women and men being forced into stereotypical roles to serve political ends – for example, when men and boys are encouraged to be 'real men' by fighting or by encouraging their sons to fight. This leads to the reinforcement of traditional and stereotypical models of femininity, encouraging women to look after their male family members to prepare them to fight, to produce more babies to increase the population, and to take on additional tasks and responsibilities to support war efforts.

In other situations, however, young women may be encouraged to break with traditional roles and to assert their ability to fight, to be activists and sometimes to participate in activities that destabilise their communities.

One thing is clear: girls are likely to be doubly disadvantaged, both as children and as females. This can play out in a number of ways, as this report will show.

GIRLS AND CONFLICT: FACTS AND FIGURES

There are few statistics specifically related to girls and young women caught up in armed conflict, but we do know that:

- **The percentage of civilians killed and wounded as a result of armed conflict has soared from five per cent of all war casualties at the turn of the 20th century to almost 90 per cent today, increasing numbers of whom are women and children.[21]**
- **At the end of 2006, there were 32.9 million refugees and internally displaced people in the world.[22]**
- **Armed conflict can increase death rates by up to 24 times in poor countries,[23] where children under 5 are at particular risk.**
- **In the past decade, over two million children were killed during wartime, while six million were injured and more than one million were orphaned or separated from families.[24]**
- **There are approximately 300 million young people under 25 living in countries affected by armed conflict.[25] 130 million are girls.**
- **There are at least 300,000 child soldiers. Young women make up around 30 per cent of child soldiers. From 1990 to 2003, girls were part of government, militia, paramilitary and/or armed opposition forces in 55 countries, and were involved in armed conflict in 38 of these.[26]**
- **Thousands of girls and young women – no-one knows exactly how many – have suffered gender-based violence in times of war and it is often used as a deliberate tactic in ethnic or religious conflict.**
- **Over 39 million children do not have access to education in conflict-affected countries. More than half of these are girls.[27]**

4 'Remember this girl'

"You will recall that I began my address with a reference to the girl born in Afghanistan today. Even though her mother will do all in her power to protect and sustain her, there is a one-in-four risk that she will not live to see her fifth birthday. Whether she does is just one test of our common humanity – of our belief in our individual responsibility for our fellow men and women. But it is the only test that matters.

Remember this girl, and then our larger aims – to fight poverty, prevent conflict, or cure disease – will not seem distant, or impossible. Indeed, those aims will seem very near, and very achievable – as they should. Because beneath the surface of

states and nations, ideas and language, lies the fate of individual human beings in need. Answering their needs will be the mission of the United Nations in the century to come."
Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General (1997-2006), Nobel Lecture, Oslo, December 10, 2001 [28]

The fact that they are young and female affects the ways that girls experience conflict, and the changing roles they play before, during the war and after it is over. It is important to understand this in order to plan programmes that support the specific needs of girls and young women. This involves not just addressing the visible effects of conflict on girls and young women, but the less visible ones such as the impact of loss of healthcare and education on girls' physical and mental well-being and development at a critical stage in their lives.

Otherwise, all too often, girls and young women risk falling between the cracks as programmes target children but do not take account of the differences between girls and boys, or target women but fail to make provision for the different needs of older women and younger girls.

The different needs of girls at different stages of their lives are not always taken into consideration when organisations and governments that work in the field of conflict and reconstruction are looking at their policies and programmes. Most organisations have become at least conversant with gender analysis. However, there is a tendency to what one study calls a 'womenandgirls' approach, where the differences that come from both age and gender, and the specific needs of girls and young (particularly unmarried) women are rendered invisible.[29] This approach fails to recognise the distinctions between women and girls which vary from one context to another, and misses a gender and age analysis which considers the specific experiences and impacts of girls, adolescents and young women.

Gender is rarely fully integrated within the agendas of donor governments on good governance. Their policies on fragile states pay only limited attention

A girl in Nepal takes care of her little brother.

ANNIE HESLOP

PLAN INTERNATIONAL, GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD-CENTRED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (CCCD)

Founded more than 70 years ago, Plan is one of the largest child-centred community development organisations in the world. Plan is present in 68 countries, working on programmes and initiatives that address the causes of poverty and its consequences for children's rights and their lives.

Plan's approach to development is based on strengthening the capacity of communities, families and children so that they can become more active citizens, capable of meeting their own development needs. This approach is called child-centred community development (CCCD).

Our work at all levels is based on a common understanding that there is a strong link between gender equality and children's rights. Girls and boys have the same rights but face different obstacles in accessing these rights as a result of gender inequality. Through our daily work, we see the negative impacts on girls and boys of gender-based discrimination, gender power relations and the denial of women's rights. Therefore, Plan's programme principle of gender equality is central to the foundations of child-centred community development.

Through child-centred community development, Plan actively encourages girls and boys to analyse their own situations and raises awareness of the fundamental rights to which they are entitled. We then support communities to build the skills and access the resources needed for positive change in children's lives. Through this approach, Plan's role is as facilitator, and ownership of programmes belongs to the communities. As a result, communities are more able to challenge power structures and to 'break the silence' that causes gender inequality and other forms of discrimination.

Through implementing child-centred community development, Plan is better able to recognise that girls and boys have specific realities, interests and perspectives. Therefore gender analysis is at the core of our analysis of child poverty, and Plan actively promotes gender equality in order for all children to realise their full potential.

to gender, and have almost no focus on the specific experiences of girls, despite having detailed plans to incorporate gender equality in other areas.[30] They often do not recognise that women and men in conflict situations have different needs, let alone that girls and young women need particular support. Without this, the current underinvestment in girls will be perpetuated. As we demonstrated in the first *State of the World's Girls* report, this underinvestment is impacting progress towards meeting key development targets, such as getting all children into primary school, reducing the global maternal mortality rate by three-quarters and halving the number of families living on less than a dollar a day, all by 2015.

Girls are more than 'women in waiting'. Their particular social positions and experiences speak to both vulnerability and possibility.

ALF BERG

1 In peace as in war: the price of instability for girls

This chapter provides an analysis of the underlying vulnerability of girls and young women that is further exposed when countries are on the brink of conf ict or where there is endemic low level violence. It shows how the gradual disintegration of society can affect girls long before war fully breaks out.

1 Introduction

"Stop depending on others and believe in yourselves. Take a stand – since that is the only way your lives will ever improve and move forward."
Sumera Zafar (20), Pakistan[1]

"All States and the international community [should] respect, protect and promote the rights of the child, taking into account the particular vulnerabilities of the girl child in pre-conf ict, conf ict and post-conf ict situations," and [there should be] "special initiatives designed to address all of the rights and needs of girls affected by armed conf icts".
The United Nations General Assembly, 2003[2]

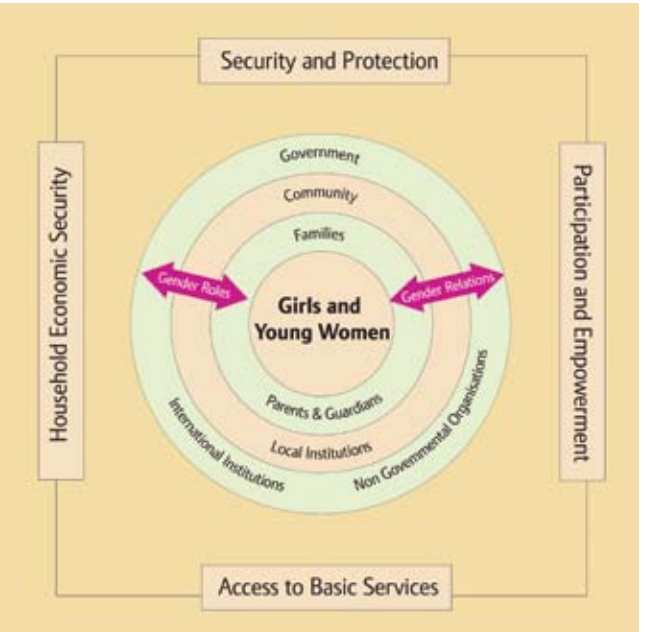
We have seen in the introduction how girls are particularly vulnerable in countries that are fragile and unstable – a study by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) points to the strong relationship between high levels of gender inequality and instability.[3] Increasingly, peace and conflict can exist along a continuum where it is often difficult to say when one stops and the other begins.

2 Lapses in duty: the institutions intended to protect

Girls and young women have a right to life and to protection from harm. Surrounding children, like the layers of an onion, are the institutions – family, community, government, and national and international organisations – responsible for protecting them and ensuring that they are able to realise their rights and have the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. These institutions have a duty towards girls.

However, the capacity of these institutions to fulfil their role is often compromised in situations of poverty, and all the more when

Institutions to protect girls



states are fragile. Prior to any outbreak of violence, state fragility can aggravate the breakdown of key institutions in ways that mean they can no longer protect girls. In addition, these institutions are often already deeply gender biased.

Family

The family has one of the most important roles in a girl's life. Yet in many communities vulnerable to conflict, a number of factors can disrupt the family structure and leave children without adequate care, protection or support. These include decreased ability to secure regular income, food and other commodities, increased time needed to collect water or fuel, and security concerns. Fathers, mothers and older brothers may become preoccupied, detained or may join an armed force, and therefore be unable to contribute to the family's welfare any longer.

The implications for girls are immense, especially as many girls find themselves having to take on new roles in order to fill some of the gaps in the household, and to ensure family survival through, for example, taking up petty trading and other income generating tasks which make them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. A preference for boys is also likely to become more entrenched when resources are limited, so that for girls, their own individual survival is at risk. In some circumstances, families will seek to reduce the burden on their meagre resources and to ensure the protection and future security of their daughter through an early marriage.

FORGIVENESS

Kolsom Ahmady lives in a Kurdish village on the Iran-Iraq border. As a young girl, 40 years ago, she was forced to marry a man she did not love. She was determined the same thing would not happen to her own daughter.

"My first child was born a year after my so-called marriage began. I named her Zolegha, and she was followed by another five boys and girls. I watched Zolegha growing up, and every now and then I used to tell her stories from my past, the sweet days back in the town. I knew she had fallen in love with a young man, Ahmet, from the village. But Ahmet had only a mother to speak for him and my husband's family did not approve. In some ways, it was just like it had been for my mother's family after my father died; without a man as a family head, we had no say over our own futures.

Thinking back about what I went through and how I was forced to marry someone I had never met and didn't feel

Teenage girls 'hanging out' in Nepal.

any love for, I couldn't allow the same thing to happen to my daughter some 20 years later. One evening, I asked Zolegha's boyfriend to meet me in a hidden spot outside the village. Zolegha and I went to see him, and I told him there and then that I gave them my blessing. I did this at great risk, but I did not want my daughter to live a loveless life. The three of us knew that Zolegha would not, after that moment, enjoy any support from her family, and that is the decision she made. My only valuable possession was a pair of earrings, which I gave to her that night. Then I sent them off, with my tears f owing down my face. After a few years, I pushed for a reconciliation between our family and Ahmet's; it began with us, the women, who would try to socialise. Eventually, my husband came to accept his daughter again.

Maybe what I did wasn't something women do, or at least not those from the Kurdish tradition in those days. I knew that I would be looked down upon by other families because our girl had run away. I knew it would be hard to take all this tension within the family itself, where men are quick to blame mothers for not raising their daughters 'properly'. But how could I allow my little girl to suffer in the way I did for so many years?

Looking back on those days, who should we blame for this? My uncles? My brother Karim? Or the tradition and religion I come from? For so many years I have lived with this man and looked after him, and he looks after me. We are like one unit now. I know how much anger I stored within me for much of that time… Having somehow, after all this time, got used to my husband, I guess I found a way to forgive them all."[4]

Community

Communities that function best in times of conflict or fragility are those which already work together well, where neighbours share resources and there are organised groups such as children's clubs or women's organisations. Research has shown that social cohesion is critical to preventing conflict and ensuring peace, especially when strong social relationships are connected to political and economic structures.

If communities are to be resilient, they also need to be supported by the outer layers shown in the diagram on page 27 – institutions, such as local and traditional government, religious institutions and civil society organisations. But it is in times of insecurity when communities fragment along ethnic, religious or political lines that these institutions begin to break down, and become less capable of ensuring girls' protection and the realisation of their rights.

As community structures begin to collapse girls and women lose social power. They are less able to move about freely outside the home without concerns about personal safety. Weak and dysfunctional governance structures at both local and municipal levels mean that birth registration and other public activities that can give young women power, or at least identity, are also likely to disappear. There are already 48 million children who were not registered at birth and as a result do not have the right to vote and take part in political processes and sometimes are not able to go to school or register for health services.[5] "It's a small little paper," says South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "but it actually establishes who you are and gives access to the rights and the privileges, and the obligations, of citizenship."[6]

"It is for this reason that some young girls get discouraged with school and drop out at a lower class in the primary school as they cannot write the class seven final examinations for lack of a birth certificate. They then choose to accompany their mothers to the farms or marry. What fate awaits these young girls at this age when they are not able to continue school because of the birth certificate? Knowing that educating a girl is educating a nation;

what type of a nation are we building if the young girl is not educated?"

Nan (15), Cameroon.[7]

The State

Under international agreements, national and regional laws, the government has the primary responsibility of ensuring that obligations to children are met, through providing basic services, legal protection and a system of legal recourse when rights are violated.

But once again, in states experiencing instability or on the brink of war, the government is often plagued by weak public institutions, poor governance, corruption and/or an inability or unwillingness to provide basic services like education or healthcare. These are the very services that protect and support girls and young women. Public institutions are often biased against women and girls. Even in peace time many women cannot access justice systems due to inherent gender discrimination, leaving women and girls without an avenue for dealing with divorce, inheritance or child maintenance issues. This existing gender bias is often heightened in times of pre-conflict fragility. Marriage, inheritance and nationality laws in particular may limit the rights of girls and women. Conflict also affects the way that informal institutions such as the family or civil society organisations can operate. When the the rule of law, enforced by police and the legal system, begins to break down, girls and young women become especially vulnerable.[8]

BURMA

In Burma, the military government has been unable to protect girls. This has led to human trafficking, documented as a major problem for girls and young women. The government's economic policies, widespread human rights abuses, and policies of forced labour are cited as the key causes of Burma's trafficking problem.

Lack of job opportunities is pushing Burmese to migrate to one of the five neighbouring countries. This has created opportunities for traffickers who lure girls to other countries with false promises of jobs and good wages. The official ban on overland emigration of most young women drives some seeking to leave the country into the hands of 'travel facilitators', who may have ties with traffickers. There are reports of military and civilian government officials complicit in trafficking children to serve as child soldiers. Non-governmental organisations also report that individual police officials extort money from economic migrants and others leaving the country. During 2006, the Burmese government took no action against military or civilian officials who engaged in forced labour.[9]

Where public education and health systems are weak and do not meet public need, girls suffer most. They are usually less able to travel long distances to school, especially in insecure conditions, are more likely to drop out of school and therefore not fully develop basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. The weakness of state institutions before conflict means that educational programmes to help people avoid or deal with the consequences of violence are at their lowest capacity to protect girls. At the same time, the responsiveness of basic services such as health and education to the particular needs of girls and young women is likely to be limited by, for example, minimal staff training, support and supervision, few resources, and increased workloads.

The international community

International institutions like the United Nations or international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a duty to ensure that appropriate legal and policy mechanisms are in place to protect girls' rights and security, especially in places vulnerable to conflict. International NGOs can never replace the role of governments, but in times of instability, states often lack the means to fulfil their duties to their citizens. In this situation, international organisations must build the capacity of local organisations and communities to demand government resources as well as provide those services that are crucial for survival. International NGOs can also lobby for more effective and gender-responsive humanitarian and development assistance and legal protection mechanisms that work in favour of girls. (See chapter 4 for more detailed recommendations.)

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN GUIDELINES

The Sphere guidelines is a humanitarian charter with a set of minimum standards on how international NGOs and relief agencies should respond to disasters. It was developed in the late 1990s in order to improve the quality of assistance provided to people affected by conf ict and disasters. However, despite extensive consultations at the time on how to address gender issues in such situations, there is insufficient detailed guidance on the specific needs of girls. The guidelines do not address the needs of infant girls in particular contexts, for example, where there is an explicit cultural preference for boys and baby girls are more likely to be malnourished. Neither do the guidelines adequately address both the immediate and long-term of girls affected by war and conf ict, in particular the need for psychosocial support for girls who become pregnant as a result of rape, a common occurrence in times of war and instability.

3 Gender roles and relations

"The extreme violence that women suffer during conf ict does not arise solely out of the conditions of war; it is directly related to the violence that exists in women's lives during peace time."
UNIFEM[10]

What happens to girls in times of conflict, and the roles that they play, is part and parcel of their lives before and after the fighting. This may include gender-based violence, trafficking and negative attitudes about girls' and young women's sexual activity, which limits their access to preventative measures and health services. Violence against women and girls is a major concern for girls in countries at risk of conflict. The violence is often sexual in nature, creating not just long-term physical harm but also psychological and social damage. As a country or community becomes more unstable, the risk of violence increases for girls and young women. For example, the mobilisation of armed forces during a pre-conflict period of instability is often accompanied by an increase in commercial sex between girls or young women and men in the military.[11]

JENNY MATTHEWS

Household chores in Mali.

Some girls choose to join armed forces to protect themselves. Joining a fighting force can be a way of gaining a degree of protection and social status, and may even be a matter of survival. To some, bearing a gun seems the only way to ensure access to security, food and protection.[12]

PRINCESS'S STORY

Princess is 19 years old and a mother of three children. Her father died when she was three and her mother married another man, who did not care for Princess' welfare or education. Princess was sent to live with her grandma where she was comfortable and sent to school. When she got to class six she had to take the National Primary School Examinations, and her grandmother and mother could not afford to pay the charges so she did not take the exam. She dropped out of school and married a man she had already started a relationship with. She had her first child at the age of 14 and now has three children she and her husband find it difficult to care for.

Story told by Konima C Kpanabom, aged 18, Moyamba, Sierra Leone

In times of political, economic and social uncertainty, there is a strong tendency to revert to traditional values which appear to offer protection for women and girls (such as purdah, a practice which includes the seclusion of women and girls from public spaces) but which may also exclude them from external activities such as meeting friends, going to clubs and even going to school. Religious, judicial and secular traditions can institutionalise inequalities in the legal system that discriminate against girls.

In addition, the conduct of conflict is traditionally masculine, with men and boys under pressure to defend their claims or community in a male-dominated world. This does not mean that men are inherently violent, but that expectations of the behaviour and responsibilities of men and women are imposed by society and often used by governments for their own political ends.[13] Gender stereotypes are often used as propaganda to increase public 'buy-in' towards the armed conflict or action. Women may be pressured to allow their sons to join an armed group and to ensure that they are well fed and looked after in preparation for war. They may be given strong messages about having more babies to 'replace the fallen heroes'. Such messages entrench gender stereotypes – what it traditionally means to be a boy or a girl – and particular definitions of masculinity and femininity.

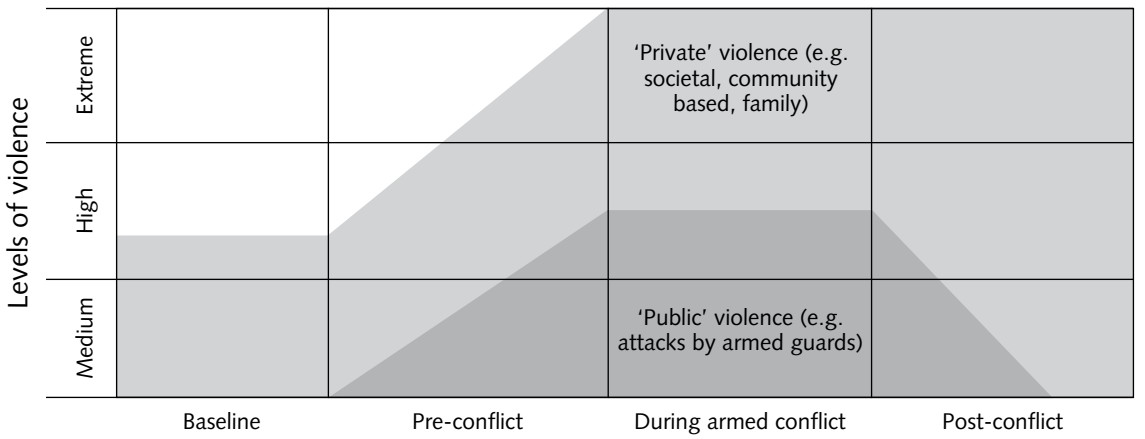
4 Access to basic services

"I don't have a future… I can't write and I can't read. But if I had the opportunity to read and write and be a student, I would want to learn to be a teacher – to teach the next generation. I would like to send my children to school, even in wartime and in difficult times. I wish that Iraq could be the same as other countries, that children could live the same lives as other children… I wish that the war would end."
14-year old Kurdish girl, Iraq. Her family has been displaced for two decades, ever since the Iran-Iraq War. She is not able to attend school.[14]

In fragile states before conflict begins, the provision of basic services such as health and education is often poor. Recent research shows that of all the children out of school worldwide, over 50 per cent live in fragile states. And as we highlighted in the first *State of the World's Girls* report, the deterioration of such services has particular impacts on girls and young women.

Even where the infrastructure is not damaged by escalating violence, it will often deteriorate due to lack of funds for repairs. Insecure governments, fearing or preparing for conflict, often choose to invest resources in military spending rather than basic services. Teachers and health workers leave their jobs due to the lack of salaries, threats of violence and inadequate supplies. Sanitation systems fail, adding

Violence trends during various stages of conflict



to the work of women and young girls who may have to walk many miles each day to fetch water for the household. This also increases infections and risks of serious illness. The lack of resources for dealing with women's health, including reproductive health and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and the effects of violence, increases the physical and psychological impacts of these problems (see chapter 3 for more).

Education is crucial for girls' empowerment. In fragile states, fewer girls than boys go to school, anyway. In times of war, this situation can get worse – in southern Sudan, girls are more likely to die in childbirth than to finish primary school.[15]

But even if girls get to school there are many overt and 'hidden' ways in which the education they receive preserves male domination and male values even when there is an official commitment to gender equality in education.[16] It is rare for a country in an unstable state to give its attention to providing the kind of education that girls need and which will encourage them to attend school.

A sick child in war-torn Liberia.

REUTERS/ LUC GNAGO, courtesy www.alertnet.org

THE GIRLS OF BALOCHISTAN

Amna, Qudsia and Areeba look no different from other Pakistani schoolgirls. The trio of nine-year-olds with neatly braided hair and pressed uniforms giggle at a private joke as they walk through the gates of their school in the town of Sibi in Balochistan Province. However, in the context of Balochistan, Pakistan's least developed province, they are unusual: they are among the very few girls who go to school.

Balochistan's female literacy rates are among the lowest in the world, with most girls not enrolled in a school. The province's literacy level – 37 per cent – lags behind that of Pakistan's three other provinces and the national average of 53 per cent. The literacy rate for Balochistan's women was estimated at 20 per cent, with only 10 per cent of rural women receiving schooling.

Some districts in Balochistan have among the lowest enrolment and literacy rates in the world, with one district recording only two per cent enrolment at the primary school level, according to Naveed Hassan Naqvi, a World Bank education economist who also heads the Balochistan education support project. The project has helped provide a US $22 million loan to set up community schools for girls.

But there are numerous challenges to progress. Social attitudes are a problem but the ongoing conf ict between the Pakistani military and local tribes is also detrimental.

Fighting that f ared in the Dera Bugti and Kohlu districts southeast of the province's capital, Quetta, in 2006 killed at least 300 and forced thousands to f ee. Children's education was disrupted for at least six months.

"We moved to Sibi eight years ago from our village in the Dera Bugti district because there were no schools there and we wanted our children to be educated," says Akbar Ahmed, 34, whose three children attend school in the town.[17]

5 Economic security

In the period leading up to, and also during and after conflict, it becomes increasingly difficult for families to find ways of supporting themselves. Food and other commodities may be in short supply, causing prices to rise. Not only have basic services broken down, but fear of violence prevents people going to market, working in their fields and generally carrying on with their life. Parents may keep their daughters at home because they are afraid they will be attacked. Or girls may have to spend additional time and energy on household chores. In any case, roads may not be maintained and public transport unavailable, which makes travel difficult or impossible. Under these circumstances, ways of earning a living become very limited. Those who had enough become poor and the poorest become even poorer.

When families find it difficult to make a living, girls may be forced into the labour market. This can mean unsafe paid work, commercial sex, or joining the armed forces (see chapter 2).

They may have to take on additional household tasks as other family members seek or engage in work. They may be forced into an early marriage to secure a dowry payment and/or to reduce the family burden of economic responsibility. This often leads to health problems when they become pregnant too young for their immature bodies. It is also likely to mean they drop out of school.

GIRLS LIVING IN POVERTY

Girls living in poverty are at risk in peacetime, but even more so in unstable situations. While we do not know the numbers of girls living in poverty, a study commissioned by UNICEF estimated that more than half of all children in developing countries experience severe deprivation and that one third, or 674 million children, live in absolute poverty.[18] Over 200 million young people, or 18 per cent of all youth, live on less than one dollar a day, and 515 million on less than two dollars a day.[19]

6 Participation and empowerment

It is not easy for girls and young women to participate in life outside the home even in stable societies. When societies are unstable it is even more difficult as institutions tend not to be publicly accountable and government has few systems for consulting its adult citizens, let alone its female children. In addition, community-level institutions, including children's clubs and activities specifically for girls, may not be able to function, denying girls the chance to participate, learn new leadership skills, and have their voices heard in the community.

Many girls feel that they have little freedom to choose what they want in their lives, as the table on page 35 shows. Even early warning and conflict prevention initiatives involving women tend to ignore the potential contribution of girls.[20] Exclusion of girls from conflict monitoring, early warning and prevention initiatives means that the specific issues which affect them are ignored. Furthermore, during post-conflict rebuilding, youth activities tend to focus on issues of unemployment among young men.

This lack of voice has serious implications. Girls are the ones who know the risks they face during times of instability and have ideas about how to protect themselves. Families,

Girls in a tent school in Pakistan.

LORNA ROACH

communities, agencies and governments should listen to them and act on what they say. This report is full of stories of girls who have survived, run households, learned new skills and even represented youth in international forums after their experience of having lived through a war.

"BEING A WOMAN ISN'T A CURSE" – THE GIRL CHILD PROJECT IN PAKISTAN

The Girl Child Project empowers girls within their own families and communities. The project is designed for 500 villages and cities within Pakistan. Girls attend a five-day orientation workshop where they learn practical information about health, hygiene and nutrition of use to their whole family. The girls who have received some formal education are given home-school kits, including a blackboard, chalk and wall posters. This enables many of them to set up mini-schools for girls who are out of school, where they can pass on vital information, enhancing their own self-esteem and sometimes generating a small income. They are also extending empowerment further into the community. Others choose to receive first-aid training or learn other income-generating skills. One of the most successful aspects of the programme is that girls discover their own capacities and new possibilities in life, and become role models for others, beginning the long, arduous process of breaking down traditional barriers to female participation.

"I wasn't quite like this a few years back," says 20-year-old Sumera Zafar. "I was actually quite awkward and extremely shy… But people trust my judgement now. Girls from all over the neighbourhood come to me with their various problems and ask me to help resolve serious domestic issues. The Girl Child Project really helped girls like me to believe in themselves. It enlightened us that being a woman wasn't a curse or a bad thing. It taught us to love ourselves and to be proud of what we are. Now I actually feel that women are as good as men…"

She has her own message for the girls and women of Pakistan: "Stop depending on others and believe in yourselves. Take a stand – since that is the only way your lives will ever improve and move forward."[21]

A study recently published by Plan based on research in eight different countries asked groups of poor and marginalised children about the notion of resilience.[22] Discussions with street children in Manila showed that resilience depended on the following:

Personal resiliency traits

- Internal strengths: self-confidence, belief in self, self-monitoring, self-control, easy temperament
- Externally directed traits: leadership skills, altruism, empathy, going along with the group
- Something bigger than oneself: morality, religion.

Family and peer protective factors:

- Family responsibilities, traditions and positive and supportive relationships with parents and siblings
- Positive adult modelling, positive peer relationships.

External protective factors:

- Involvement in school and the community, agency assistance.

The study noted that: "Children's feelings of confidence and self-esteem are particularly reinforced by opportunities to meet together and develop solidarity with other children. Children, however, also look to adults to support them."

In the lead-up to conflict, girls may not have these opportunities for support and solidarity. The adults around them are either indirectly involved in the war or in fighting itself; they may have been killed or they

Percentage of young women ages 15-25 who feel they themselves have influence on their lives

	Work	School	Marriage
Albania	60	82	77
Bangladesh	50	18	4
Ethiopia	79	39	55
Iraq	43	52	65
Malaysia	89	82	82
Romania	84	65	96
Tajikistan	53	32	25

may have fled. They may simply be trying to survive. If they have young children, the focus for survival may well be on saving and protecting sons – who will carry on the family's line – rather than daughters. In times of conflict in particular, children's needs come after adults' and girls are likely to be at the bottom of the priority list. With support, however, many girls have shown that they can emerge stronger and more confident.

Kim Phuc – the girl in the photo
The photo of Kim Phuc, running naked down the road, covered in napalm burns on June 8 1972, became the symbol of the horrors of the Vietnam war.

"I am the little girl in the picture. I was nine years old and running down the road to escape the napalm fire in Vietnam. My life was changed forever that day, in ways no one could have ever predicted. I had burns over most of my body and was not expected to live. After 14 long months in the hospital and 17 surgeries, I was finally able to go home.

My body was slow to heal, but my spirit was even slower. I prayed a lot. I spent my time reading about religions, but nobody could ease my suffering. Eventually, I realised that it was the fire of the bomb that burned my body and the skill of the doctors that mended my skin, but it took the power of God's love to heal my heart. I let the feeling of forgiveness grow in my heart until a great inner peace came over me.

Today, I want to encourage people to love and help one another. We need to learn how to become more tolerant, how to look at the individual, to listen, to help others instead of getting carried away by anger and hatred, which give rise to revenge and violence… War causes profound suffering. That is why I show the little girl in the picture. Because she tells my story and the consequences that war has had on my life. No mother or father in the world wants what happened in that picture to happen again. I want to give people a new way of looking at my picture. It is not a cry of pain but a cry for love, peace and forgiveness."

Kim Phuc has set up her own organisation to help children and has become a UN Goodwill Ambassador.[23]

NICK UT / AP/ PA PHOTOS

Nine-year-old Kim Phuc fleeing in terror.

7 Girls' voices

"I think girls should launch a revolution to obtain the real changes they have been expecting. Lawmakers should contribute accordingly."
Amédée (19), Haiti

"Once we know what our mind needs we can find the way to our hearts because the most damage is damage in the heart. It takes more time and hard time to recover from than any damage in society. Once our hearts recover, it's the time for us to rebuild the other."
Girl (19), Vietnam[24]

"It is very important to develop leadership skills in women as they are the very foundation that a society is built on. Increasingly, girls and young women study, work, and run a home at the same time. If they are successful leaders in their chosen areas, their society will be successful as well."
Ruchira, young woman from Sri Lanka[25]

Voices from the Frontline
Haiti

Conversations with Girls and Young Women

In October and November 2007, informal interviews with twelve girls and young women were conducted in Jacmel, south-east Haiti, Croix-des-Bouquets, western Haiti and Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital.

The respondents were interviewed about their perceptions of the risks of gender-based violence in Haiti, and opportunities for girls' voices to be heard, particularly in times of crisis and disaster.

Because I Am a Girl

The respondents described issues of sexual and psychological sexual violence, as well as widespread harassment of women and girls.

"I came across violence against girls and women in my area during my life. But the authorities did not care about our [female] opinion. Whenever there would be a crisis in Jacmel, the authorities would not even try to find out whether we are victims or not. Physical and psychological violence are recurrent."
Joassaint (19)

"To me the most common type of violence affecting children is sexual violence. The negative behaviour of some women has a negative impact on others. Some girls are raped while others are [working as] prostitutes. But a couple of rough guys may have a love affair with one girl and then allow their friends to use her. Girls who take care of themselves are usually abused by boys who disagree with their independence. Culturally, boys are fond of criticising girls."
Myrline (18)

"There is a male-oriented psychological violence. For instance, boys usually harass girls who behave with harsh words. I don't like it, even though I have never been personally affected, but those who have suffered from this harassment are girls like me."
Vania (20)

No Understanding, No Respect

The respondents described a widespread culture of male violence in Haiti, giving examples of graphic violence towards girls and young women. They highlighted the fact that women are not involved in decision-making processes, which would give them opportunities to raise issues of gender-based violence.

"Historically and culturally speaking men in Haiti have looked down on women for ages. They have been the key holders and decision makers. If women were involved in this process, there would be more understanding and respect for them. They would achieve their potential to change their situation."
Joassaint (19)

"I present a radio programme on violence against children and girls at a local radio station. I was particularly shocked by [the case of] a man who kicked a pregnant woman repeatedly. The child was aborted. I witnessed this violence and could not believe my eyes."
Caroline (16)

Being Heard

The vast majority of respondents felt that girls' voices are not heard. However two said they felt progress has been made regarding male decision makers starting to listen to girls'

CAROLINE IRBY

A young girl in a home for AIDS orphans in Haiti.

voices. The overall picture painted of their lives is bleak. But even here, where conflict, poverty and violence is a long term reality, there are some glimmers of hope. The girls themselves felt that they had potential; they might be ignored but they were not incapable.

"In my community women are sometimes not fairly treated. Their opinion is never taken into account. There is some negligence because nobody cares about them. On one hand, I think women ought to take some drastic measures to avoid such problems. On the other hand I believe some young people should be trained as first-aid workers so they can respond sensitively. Decision makers do not realise that girls are more vulnerable to violence, so they don't make decisions that will benefit women and girls."
Emmanuela (18)

"I know a young girl whose house was destroyed by the storm. She had to stay at a neighbour's house. Honestly, I think that if her voice could be heard by decision makers, she would ask for support to have her house rebuilt instead."
Joassaint (19)

"Our voices are never heard. Girls are never informed about the final response [from government officials]. Gender discrimination directly affects women. All decisions are taken by men, and hardly involve women."
Josepha (17)

"If women were given the opportunity to speak, they would. If the [Haitian] government could help them organise themselves, they would have the tools they need. If women's rights were respected, there would be an improvement."
Vanela (20)

"Little strokes fell great oaks. Girls'

voices are beginning to be heard. Haitian men should know that women also have rights as well as young girls. Women's associations are working hard."
Ginette (17)

"I do not agree that girls' voices are being heard. My mother works with the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Port-au-Prince. She usually tells me that every month they receive reports on violence against women and girls. There is still a long way to go."
Joassaint (17)

"There have been a few women's organisations whose objective has been working towards improving women's participation in public affairs, as well as advocating for equal opportunities and against violence against women. Men are becoming more conscious of this. I would like the young girls to take over this activity, which has been carried out solely by adult women. We need to involve girls too."
Myrline (18)

Girls should launch a revolution

The respondents emphasised the importance of families empowering girls by encouraging their education, and of girls, boys and their families being educated about equal opportunities.

"The generational differences in perceptions affect young women negatively. Some traditional families still strongly believe education is just for boys, while girls are destined for housework and farming. Young girls should take action by themselves and not wait for men to act for them. Parents should be informed about issues regarding gender equity and gender based violence."
Camille (18)

"In most cases it is men's voices that are heard. They are the decision makers, the chiefs. My main concern is that children may not have equal opportunities in their education. We live in a male dominated society. There are things that we can do, but we are never given the opportunity. But there are now more girls going to school than ever."
Mica (33)

"I think girls should launch a revolution to obtain the real changes they have been expecting. Lawmakers should contribute accordingly."
Amédée (19)

YOUTH NATIONAL FORUM

Joassaint Gloussenette, aged 18, is attending Célie Lamour High School in southeast Haiti. She is also chairwoman of the Youth National Forum on Violence Affecting Children.

She has participated in a series of activities addressing violence against children. She also took part in a door-to-door survey in her local area, part of a national initiative which enabled the Youth National Forum to learn more about how violence affects children's lives. The survey results highlighted widespread physical and psychological violence and the fact that girls were more severely affected than boys.

During a three-day meeting held in November and supported by Plan Haiti, young people from across Haiti discussed what could be done to stop violence against girls. The participants made a series of recommendations and met both the President and Prime Minister of Haiti to discuss their ideas for a solution. This was a rare opportunity for them to address the government and to speak out in the media about violence against children in Haiti.

HAITI – BASIC STATISTICS

- Capital city: Port-au-Prince.
- Population: 8.1 million (July 2005 est.)
- Infant mortality rate: 76 per 1,000 live births.
- 23% of children under 5 are chronically malnourished (2004 figure)
- 1 in 14 infants die before reaching their first birthday.
- Life expectancy: male 50.8 years; female 52.4 years
- The Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.529 ranks Haiti 146th out of 177 countries
- Approximately 65% of the population live below the national poverty line.
- 40% of children never attend school.
- Less than 15% of students graduate from secondary school.
- 5,000 babies are born with HIV infection every year.
- Haiti currently has the highest rate of HIV and AIDS infection in the Caribbean. Just over 50% of 15-49 year olds who are HIV positive are female.
- Approximately 1 in 10 children is engaged in domestic work away from their families. Girls account for three-quarters of these workers.
- Female participation in the labour force is higher than male. 37% of women in the labour force work in agriculture.

(Sources: UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UNDP Human Development Report 2007, UNAIDS country profile, World Bank, US Department of State Country Profile, UNICEF Child Alert: Haiti 2006, WHO country profile, Haitian Government statistics)

Background

Haiti is one half of a Caribbean island named Hispaniola by European colonialists, who populated the island with enslaved West Africans until Toussaint Louverture led a historic rebellion against the slave-traders. A century later, in 1804, Jacques Dessalines proclaimed the western half of the island as the independent Republic of Haiti.

But Haiti's independence was turbulent. More than 20 national leaders were killed or violently overthrown before François 'Papa Doc' Duvalier was elected President in 1957. Duvalier's regime was brutal: he terrorised ordinary civilians, and crushed dissent through his private notorious militia, the Tontons Macoutes. When Duvalier died in 1971, his nineteen-year-old son, Jean Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier took over. Haiti imploded into the poorest and most violent country in the Western Hemisphere.

The Duvalier regime eventually collapsed in 1986 and a local priest, Jean Bertrand Aristide, was popularly elected as President in 1990. Haitians were hopeful life would improve. Just one year later, Aristide, too, was violently overthrown and fled the island. He returned in 1994 accompanied by US and United Nations troops. But street violence escalated, fuelled by chronic poverty and a severe economic crisis. At the same time, Haiti emerged as a major regional drug trafficking centre.

In 2006, after a decade of political deadlock, violent clashes, extra-judicial executions, torture and brutality, René Préval was elected as President. From 2004 to 2006 his government was supported by the United Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) which had almost 9,000 UN peacekeepers based in the country. But the UN mission was tainted by substantiated allegations that peacekeepers had been sexually abusing Haitian girls and young women and paying young girls for sex.

Haiti's infrastructure has virtually collapsed, and it has the worst health indicators of the Americas, including the highest infant and maternal mortality rates, highest malnutrition rates, and the highest number of people living with HIV and AIDS.[1] Sixty per cent of the population, primarily in rural areas, lack access to basic health

care services. Approximately 5.6 per cent of people aged 15-49 years old are living with HIV and AIDS. This includes around 19,000 children. Antiretroviral drugs are extremely scarce. These factors all dramatically affect girls' health, and their access to appropriate health services.[2]

Numerous schools and hospitals have closed in recent years, because teachers, social workers and health providers fear violence at work. Endemic levels of violence have severely affected girls' access to education. Just over half of primary school-age children are enrolled in school, and less than two per cent currently finish secondary school.

From 2004 to 2006, armed violence on the streets has created an environment where criminal gangs, many with apparently strong links to political parties, systematically targeted children. These gangs frequently controlled territory and recruited children as fighters, spies, informants, and gun and drug carriers. Children were being murdered, maimed, raped and abducted by these gangs.[3]

Haitian girls and women face escalating gender-based violence and sexual coercion. Haitian rights organisations like the FONKOZE initiative – dedicated to supporting women's economic activities – claim that chronic poverty is forcing increasing numbers of women into vulnerable and compromising situations, including coerced sex.[4] The Haitian National Labour Movement, *Confédération des Travailleurs Haïtiens*, also alleges that more women are now being forced into sex work.

The government has completely failed to tackle violence against girls and women, rendering them even more vulnerable.[5] The rise in apparently politically-motivated rapes indicates girls and women are being sexually abused due to increasing insecurity. Testimony from rape survivors has highlighted patterns in these pre-meditated attacks: perpetrators are often masked and heavily armed and frequently beat women into submission, striking their eyes so the women cannot identify them. Children conceived during rape are deeply stigmatised in Haiti. They are taunted, bullied, and sometimes nicknamed 'little rape' by other children. There is virtually no institutional support for rape survivors and their families.

Because of the ongoing chronic economic crisis, Haitian girls are often compelled to work to support their families. There are an estimated 400,000 '*restavek*' children in domestic service in Haiti. The majority are girls aged nine and under.[6] In addition, as many as 2,000 children a year are trafficked to the Dominican Republic, often with their parents' support. Trafficked girls are seriously at risk of sexual abuse.

REUTERS/ RADU SIGHETI, courtesy www.alertnet.org

Caught in the crossfire: conflict

2

This chapter looks at the effects of violent conflict on the health, education and wellbeing of girls when the attention of the world is focused on the war and not on the people affected by war. It also examines some of the new possibilities that are created for girls out of chaos and catastrophe – war can sometimes force girls into unfamiliar and non-traditional gender roles.

1 Introduction

"We laugh because the politics is bigger than us. We hope that when we grow up, we will be able to be the new leaders and bring change."

Manar (15), West Bank

"While entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex."

Beijing Platform for Action[1]

A third of all child soldiers are girls and the numbers are increasing.[2] It is remarkable that although girls and young women are disproportionately affected both at home and in the community by war and the havoc it creates, their rights are largely ignored. Girls remain, in the jargon, 'invisible' during violent conflict, either ignored in humanitarian responses or treated simply as the victims of sexual and other types of violence. This lack of focus on girls increases their vulnerability to violence and reduces their access to the very services and support they need during such insecure times.

Why are girls vulnerable in times of conflict?

We have seen how power imbalances between girls and boys, women and men, create discrimination long before war breaks out. During conflict, girls are affected in ways which compound those imbalances: throughout history conquering armies have raped, captured and enslaved the female populations of their enemies. Young women have participated in conflicts too, as soldiers bearing arms, camp supporters and followers, cooks, messengers, munitions makers, medical assistants, porters and sex workers. Or they have taken over jobs in factories and fields when men have gone to war.

The nature of war, especially in relation to women and girls, has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Violent conflicts now tend to last over a number of years, with varying levels of overt violence and very little certainty of lasting peace. This contributes to greater poverty and vulnerability, and increasing numbers of people becoming internally displaced. Sexual violence and rape has become not just a by-product of conflict but a deliberate tactic to destroy another's culture and change its future population. Young women bear the brunt of this. In Darfur, Sudan, the United Nations noted that: "Girls have been targeted in inter-ethnic conflicts as a deliberate form of humiliation of a group, and as a means of ethnic cleansing. Some 40 per cent of the victims have been under 18 years of age."[3] Many young women are forced to bear their rapist's child and may also have contracted HIV from their assailant.

A DIFFERENT PERSON [4]

At 12, Lucy Aol was clutching a rifle in an ambush of government soldiers. At 13, a rebel commander made her his wife. At 16, she was a mother. Now 21, Lucy is studying environmental health at college and planning to use her knowledge to improve the health of her war-torn nation…

Lucy was 12 when she was abducted by Uganda's feared Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), forced to walk hundreds of kilometres to a base in Sudan and taught to use a gun. The LRA is estimated to have abducted 25,000 children in its 20-year insurgency.

"We were used like slaves," said Lucy. She said most of the fighters at her base ranged in age from 10 to 15. "You get trained in guns for one or two weeks, then you are sent to a battle, but most don't know how to fight, so they are killed. The rebels tell you: 'Don't surrender, don't run' or they will kill you."

At 13, Lucy was made the third wife of a commander. She suffered sexual abuse and was beaten by her older co-wives. She considered suicide. Three years later she persuaded her 'husband' that a better life awaited them back home. One morning, fearing for their lives, they fled Sudan.

Back in Uganda, government soldiers killed her 'husband' and took her captive. She was taken to a centre for former combatants, where she received counselling and learned she was pregnant. Her family welcomed her home, but her neighbours, whose daughter had been killed by the rebels, were less accepting. "People say we have ghosts attached to us because we have killed," Aol said.

Lucy Aol is now a bright and talkative 21-year old. With help from her mother, a small inheritance from her father who died last year, and her own hard work and determination, she saved enough money to enrol at Mulago Medical College, based at Uganda's most prestigious hospital. Her daughter, now five, is cared for by her mother while she studies.

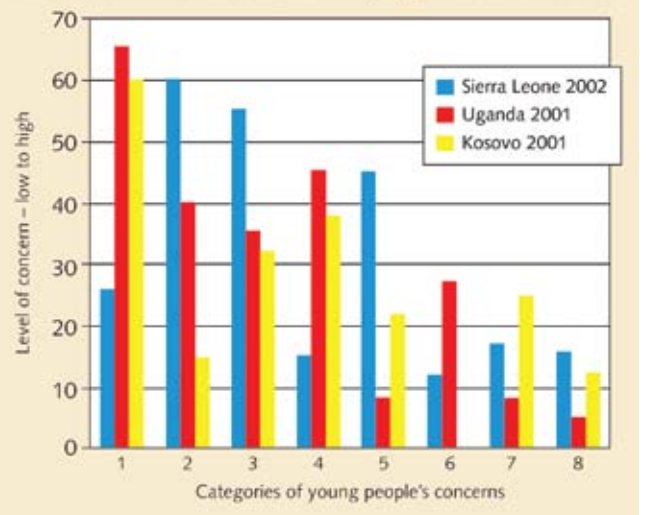
"There is no money to send Winifred to school while I am studying so she has to wait. I have one more year, then I can get a job and she will go to school," Lucy said, beaming. "I want my daughter to have all the opportunities I never had. Her education is very important to me. I think she might be a lawyer."

What young people want

When asked about their concerns during and after conflict, young people's first priority is peace. But education and health services often come a close second.[5] If a girl has not been to school prior to being caught up in conflict, she is likely to see it as even more of a priority once the fighting stops and she needs to build her own future. And comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare is also a priority for young women, especially for the many who experience sexual violence, fall pregnant, contract diseases or suffer injuries due to the conflict.

In one survey of young people in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Kosovo, education and health were the top priorities after survival, a recognition of needs that were not being met

Comparison of top concerns among young people across conflicts in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Kosovo [6]



1 = Violence & Insecurity
2 = Education
3 = Economic & Material Needs
4 = Psychosocial
5 = Health
6 = Displacement
7 = Gender Issues
8 = Social Roles & Relationships

in the short or long-term. Education came very high up the list of girls' priorities in Sierra Leone and Uganda – less so in Kosovo probably because the education system was already well established there before war began.

2 Education: the key to success

"Education is the key to success... if nations are compelled to break treaties we should build a conscience within the inhabitants of a nation... we are the future and people should be aware of that... Right now, we are inheriting a very unstable world."

Girl, 16, Colombia[7]

'Education is particularly important at times of armed conflict. While all around may be in chaos, schooling can represent a state of normalcy… The ability to carry on schooling in the most difficult circumstances demonstrates confidence in the future: communities that still have a school feel they have something durable and worthy of protection."

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, Graça Machel's report to the United Nations, 1996

The world has made many commitments to the importance of education for children. Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines the right to education, and Article 29 states that education should develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, 180 countries committed to "ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances [including those affected by war] and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality". Since then, there have been significant efforts made to improve access to and quality of education in emergencies, with particular attention to differences between girls and boys.[8]

And yet in nine conflict-affected countries where 20 per cent of children die before the age of five, there is an average net primary school attendance of 51 per cent for boys and 44 per cent for girls, well below the corresponding averages of 60 and 55 for the least developed countries as a whole.[9] In Afghanistan in 2002, only 37 per cent of boys and 18 per cent of girls were in school.[10]

And the figures are as worrying for girls and boys who are under special protection: only six per cent of all refugee children are enrolled in secondary education. The number is even lower in situations where they are internally displaced.[11]

FRAGILE STATES, CONFLICT, AND GIRLS' EDUCATION

A recent report on fragile states by the British government's Department for International Development (DfID) shows how conflict hurts girls most, especially when it comes to education:

"Girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse and unequal access to schooling in fragile states. States can be fragile for a range of reasons, including conflict, lack of resources and people, high levels of corruption, and political instability. What sets these countries apart is their failure to deliver on the core functions of government, including keeping people safe, managing the economy, and delivering basic services. Violence and disease, as well as illiteracy and economic weakness, are most intensively concentrated in these areas. Of the 104 million children not in primary school globally, an estimated 37 million of them live in fragile states. Many of these children are girls" [12]

In Somalia, which has suffered from a lack of national administration for 15 years as a result of armed conflict, the net primary attendance rate is 12 per cent for boys and 10 per cent for girls.[13]

A SOMALI GIRL'S DREAM

Murayo Badel Ibrahim, 11, grew up in Askar camp, along with seven siblings. Askar has seen its population swell as Somali refugees returned from Ethiopia and Kenya. People who had previously fled the area also poured back in from the more unstable areas of central and

REUTERS/ LUC GNAGO, courtesy www.alertnet.org

Leaving a refugee camp in Liberia as war gets closer.

southern Somalia.

Murayo goes to Daryell Primary School. The school was founded in August 2004 by the Youth Development Organisation, and Tadamul, a local non-governmental organisation. The two groups built the temporary shelter that houses the school and UNICEF provided them with training and supplies – such as chairs, benches, desks, exercise books, slates and pencils.

The school has four classrooms made of mud that has been caked onto stave and twig frames with an orange tarpaulin as a roof. It has 170 students, of whom 92 are girls, and four teachers. Murayo goes there from 7.30 – 10.30 am.

"The children are from families who need income and other help. Unfortunately, this means that they have to break early because they work as shoe shiners and manual labourers," says Mohamed Ali Yusuf, a UNICEF Education Project Assistant in Bossaso.

Fatuma, a UNICEF staff member, asks Murayo: "How did school go?"

"I learnt Somali and Arabic," replies Murayo. "In Arabic, I learnt the words 'I came to school'."

"What would you like to be when you grow up?" Fatuma asks.

"A teacher," she replies.

In Somalia today only about 11 per cent of primary school-aged children have access to formal education, one of the lowest gross enrolment ratios in the world. Significant progress has been made in the past few years, however. A new lower primary school curriculum was developed in 2002 as well as a curriculum for grades 5 to 8. New schoolbooks have been printed. Over 7,000 teachers received standardised, in-service training in 2002. A pilot mentoring project for 1,751 teachers resulted in improved classroom practices and children's learning levels.

Most Somali schools are concentrated in and around urban areas and do not adequately serve children in these camps. They also effectively exclude children in remote rural locations, particularly nomadic children. Girls constitute slightly

more than one third – 35 per cent – of primary school pupils; female teachers make up about 13 per cent of the total number of teachers.[14]

In situations of conflict, girls are often as likely as boys to be in school at pre-primary and lower grade levels. However, attendance rates usually drop off sharply after this and at secondary level there are often far fewer girls than boys attending school in many countries.[15]

Although conflict may have a negative impact on education systems and structures, there may be some positive impacts for girls. In refugee situations, some may be given the chance to attend for the first time, as schooling is supported by the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and partner NGOs. Schools may be located near to students' homes, teachers recruited and trained and parents sensitised to the importance of education especially for girls.

Education is often prioritised by conflict-affected populations as a future-oriented activity that will help individuals, families and communities out of what may feel like a desperate situation. In this way, access to education brings hope to girls, their families and communities. Children and youth are often keen to go to school, to be with their friends, to apply their minds to something other than the conflict situation and to aspire to future careers and possibilities. This is especially so for girls who may, because of security concerns and household responsibilities, have few opportunities to play and socialise with siblings or with friends and peers.[16]

Why girls miss out on education

Some girls never go to school; others drop out at an early stage while their brothers continue. In times of conflict, premature drop-out is most likely to affect girls and young women. For example, one of the main reasons why parents stop sending their female children to school once they reach the age of puberty is that they fear for the girls' safety. This is true both in school and on the journey to and from home. They may have good reason to do so. Girls have been ambushed by soldiers and raped or abducted; secondary schools may be far away and girls have to go alone and on foot. Girls may be at risk even from their own teachers who take advantage of their own relative power and exploit them sexually in return for giving girls good grades. In such situations, early marriage is a strategy parents may adopt to protect their daughters, but one which usually results once again in premature school drop-out.

There may not be a school to go to. Schools and hospitals are often destroyed by fighting; sometimes they are one of the few available buildings for storing arms, billeting soldiers or hosting refugees. Approximately 80 per cent of the schools that existed in Liberia prior to 1989, for example, were destroyed during the civil war.[17] During the ongoing unrest in East Timor (Timor Leste) in 2007, schools, learning spaces and play areas were destroyed and vandalised. "UNICEF is deeply concerned that children are once again the ones who suffer," said Shui-Meng Ng, UNICEF Representative. "We urge the adults to consider the future of all their children before they continue their destruction of public properties and create further unrest. Without a safe environment, and without proper classrooms or learning spaces, all your children will be adversely impacted."

A 2006 UNESCO study identified the lack of school buildings and a number of other factors which prevented girls going to school in situations of conflict and disaster.[18] Some of these relate to supply – external reasons such as schools not being available or considered suitable for girls – and some to demand – from the family and girls themselves. While many schools are destroyed during a conflict, under Article 8 of the Rome Statute, intentionally bombing or attacking an education facility is a war crime.

Supply Factors

- When schools are destroyed, and children have to travel long – and possibly dangerous – distances to attend the nearest functioning facility, girls are more likely to stay at home.
- When schools are damaged or just not maintained and no sanitary facilities exist, girls – and especially adolescent girls – are disproportionately affected; they may have

to miss school during menstruation.
- Boys may be at risk of abduction and forced recruitment by fighting forces at school or on their way to and from school, but girls may be at increased risk of abduction, forced recruitment and of sexual violence and exploitation.
- In emergencies, there are usually far fewer women who are able to work as teachers, and girls are disadvantaged when schools are dominated by male teachers.
- Schools are not neutral places in times of conflict. Attending school should be a positive step for girls, but it may also be a place where ethnic, religious and even gender divisions are reinforced.[19]

Demand Factors

- Where parents are unable to pay school fees and buy the necessary supplies, boys may be more able – and it may be safer for them – to go out and engage in income-generating activities to pay their own school fees than girls.
- For refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and others affected by crises, the symbolic power of education as a force for change and as a passport to a different and better life is particularly strong; children often want to go to school, whatever the costs. Girls who are desperate to attend school and to get good grades may have to engage in transactional sex with older men – including their teachers – in order to pay their fees, cover the costs of supplies or ensure good grades, thus exposing them to higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV infection.
- Children who are separated from their families and living in temporary conditions with relatives or foster families may lack the support and encouragement to continue their education. This is especially the case for girls who are often expected to do household chores and have no time to study.
- Teenage pregnancy rates are often very high in refugee camps, and girls with their own babies may not be able to attend school because of exclusionary policies, social stigma, no extended family to provide childcare, and lack of appropriate facilities.
- Girls who are disabled, disfigured or severely mentally affected by the crisis are likely to be kept at home, possibly even hidden from outsiders, and very unlikely to be able to go to school.

GIACOMO PIROZZI/ PANOS PICTURES

Some of the luckier ones, young girls at a primary school in Iraq.

LOSING THEIR FUTURE OR LOSING THEIR LIVES…

Education specialists in Iraq are worried about the low school attendance of girls.

"The fear of losing their children through violence has led many families to keep their children at home but the number of girls kept at home is higher because in addition to the security problem, they are being forced by their families to assist in household chores," said Sinan Zuhair, a media officer for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

"Many families have lost their fathers or mothers and girls are asked to stay at home to help to cook, wash and clean. They are the ones paying the price of the violence since they have to forget about their future to be able to help the lives of their brothers," said Zuhair. "The problem is worse in the rural areas where religion is being used by fathers as an excuse to justify why their daughters no longer attend school."

According to Mustafa Jaboury, a spokesman for the Ministry of Education, in the southern provinces the ratio of girls attending school has dropped to one girl to every four boys.

"The situation is slightly better in the northern provinces but even there it is

only in the main towns; in many villages, either girls have never attended school or they have been forced by their parents to leave school. In Baghdad the situation was relatively balanced last year but since the school term began in September, we have observed that the number of girls at primary and secondary schools has dramatically decreased, raising serious concerns for the future of women in this country," he added.

Mayada Marouf, a spokeswoman for the local NGO Keeping Children Alive (KCA), said that girls are becoming disadvantaged compared with boys in schools and this might affect the country's future. Um Nour, a mother of two girls, says she had no choice:

"This year I was forced to take my two daughters out of school. The main reason is violence. I cannot have one of them killed or raped as has happened with many of their colleagues. Since my husband died I need to work outside the home and someone should stay at home to take care of the youngest children and I have no one but them. It is sad to see my two girls losing their future like this but it is better than losing their lives."[20]

In times of such insecurity, the few women who are qualified and able to teach may stay away from schools and girls in school, especially in the upper grades, are taught mostly by male teachers. Such situations, especially where there are very few girls and few checks and balances in place to ensure the professional conduct of teachers, create particular vulnerabilities for girls. It was in recognition of these challenges that the Classroom Assistant programme was initiated by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Guinea in 2002, and soon afterwards, adopted by the IRC in Sierra Leone in their education programmes for Liberian refugees. Its aim was to recruit more women into schools in order to address the male domination of classrooms and the risks of sexual exploitation of girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Classroom Assistants have an explicit mandate to mitigate abuse and exploitation of students, but more broadly the programme was also designed to create more conducive, girl-friendly learning environments and support quality learning for all students.[21]

We know that education, more than anything else, can give a girl or young woman the chance to gain the skills and confidence that can change her life, and the lives of her children, for the better. In times of conflict, it is crucial that she does not lose that chance. It is also crucial that schools and learning spaces are ones in which girls are safe and are able to access quality, relevant learning.

3 Repairing the damage: health

"Because of the sexual violence and sexual slavery during the war we had very serious health problems. We need special care to treat infections such as syphilis and HIV and AIDS. Many of us need surgery to repair the damage to our bodies caused by rape and early pregnancy."

Youth Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone.[22]

"Conflict and instability are significant impediments to achieving the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals): in many countries they have reversed earlier gains from childhood interventions and undermined livelihoods, leading to greater poverty and adverse health. Addressing this challenge to child health is urgent."

The Lancet [23]

More women and children die from malnutrition, preventable diseases and complications of childbirth during conflict

Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Country	Conflict
282	Sierra Leone	1991-2000
260	Angola	1975-2002, and ongoing
257	Afghanistan	1978 – ongoing
256	Niger	1992-1997
235	Liberia	1989-2003
225	Somalia	1978-2006; ongoing
218	Mali	1990-1994
208	Chad	1988 – ongoing
205	DR Congo	1996 – 2001
205	Equatorial Guinea	No armed conflicts

UNICEF, State of the World's Children 2007; Uppsala Conflict Database: (www.pcr.uu.se/database/index); State of the World's Mothers 2007; Save the Children.

than die as a direct result of fighting.[24] And the health of girls and women may already be compromised by poor nutrition and healthcare due to their lower status in society. Pre-existing gender bias means that the needs of girls and young women are not a priority within the health services on offer. Undernourishment at an early age affects not only the woman concerned, but all of her children, and especially her daughters, leading to a cycle of poor nutrition that can last a lifetime. Girls' health is further exacerbated by food shortages and micro-nutrient deficiencies, compounded by the culture of male preference, which can result in hunger and malnutrition for girls.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) notes that "overall women and children [were] the most common long-term victims of civil war," and that this is due to "war-related disease, disability and death including elevated infectious disease, HIV/AIDS (from rape), cervical cancer (likely from rape), homicide and transportation accidents".[25]

It is not easy to collect statistics during conflict and emergency situations. Separate data for boys and girls are rarely collected. Few studies look at data according to both age and sex. So, apart from isolated studies, we do not really know much about, for example, the difference in survival rates between girls and boys. In one refugee camp in Bangladesh, however, the death rate for female babies under one year was found to be almost twice that of boys, and among girls older than five it was three and a half times. The issues for older girls and young women may be even harder to understand as they often fall between the gaps in statistics collected on women and those on children.[26]

What we do know is that young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and assault and that there are then repercussions on their reproductive health. The strains put upon them as girl mothers or as heads of households may cause acute and long-lasting mental distress. The children of girls raped during conflict may also be affected, creating a cycle of hardship that continues for generations. The health of girls and young women not associated with fighting forces may also be affected, for example, they may have to walk much longer distances to collect firewood and water or work even harder both inside and outside the home.

At the very time when they most need them, clinics and hospitals, doctors and nurses and medicines are likely to be in short supply due to the instability of war. If they are in a refugee camp, girls may have better access to healthcare and education than back home, because they come from regions with few resources. Access to better healthcare may also be one of the reasons why girls become soldiers, as this young combatant from the Philippines points out: "If you got sick and you needed medicine, they gave you what you needed if it was available and they would care for you... It felt good to have people who understood me and cared for me." [27]

More often, however, violent conflict causes healthcare systems to break down, and the government is unable to fulfil its responsibility to its citizens. Even after the conflict is over, it may take many years for public health services to return to a basic level.

a) Reproductive health

Eight out of the 10 countries with the highest adolescent fertility rates are conflict or post-conflict countries – the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Angola, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Chad, Guinea-Bissau.[28] More than 60 per cent of the world's maternal deaths occur in the ten countries where under-five mortality is highest, nine out of ten of which are in the middle or the aftermath of war.[29] (See Table 3 in Section 2.)

Conflict makes pregnancy and childbirth even more dangerous than it already is for girls and young women. Even in peace time, it is dangerous for a young girl to become a mother before her body is fully developed. Complications arising from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for girls aged between 15 and 19.[30] And the younger you are, the more danger you face. Girls aged 15 to 20 are twice as likely to die in childbirth as those in their 20s. Those under the age of 15 are five times as likely to die.[31] Pregnant girls and women are unlikely to have antenatal care or the presence of a qualified midwife at birth – two things which are key to safe delivery. The risk of a woman

LIBA TAYLOR

Health services for young girls frequently break down during war.

dying as a result of pregnancy or childbirth during her lifetime is about one in seven in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone compared with about one in 30,000 in Sweden.[32]

SAVING LIVES: MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS FOR WOMEN IN NEPAL

After a decade of civil war in Nepal, 'Advantist', a Nepalese development agency, set up a mobile health service which operates in areas where health services are no longer available. In the project's first eight months, the team treated 20,000 men, women and children at temporary camps in more than 40 locations.

Bacha is 22 and pregnant for the sixth time. She has never received skilled pre-natal care before and her previous pregnancy ended when Bacha gave birth at home alone – the baby was stillborn. In March 2007 the mobile clinic spent three days in her town. Everywhere they go, the mobile units are in demand, because in the district, doctors and paramedics are unavailable; in cases of emergency, people simply die without any medicines.

The decade-long conflict has affected access to reproductive health services which has had severe consequences for the Nepalese population. For young women it includes a high rate of maternal mortality. Among those who survive childbearing, many suffer from a prolapsed uterus or fallen womb. The condition, which is widespread in Nepal, is usually treatable but only a few Nepalese women have access to the necessary surgery.

Mrs Nepali, aged 43, has suffered from uterine prolapse for over 20 years. Married at 15, she developed the condition whilst giving birth for the fifth time, aged 21. She says, "I am in pain everywhere from the neck down, I can hardly walk but I have to go to the forest to get wood, tend to the animals and carry manure to the field". The condition is caused by giving birth too early, too frequently, and without skilled assistance, or from resuming hard work too soon after childbirth. It is curable with surgery but before the mobile units existed, few had access to it.

The mobile team also provides training to local health workers, which helps maintain a long-term healthcare system. However, it is also important to meet immediate needs because otherwise women who are poor, socially excluded or affected by conflict may have to wait five to ten years for treatment.

For young women who may have lost homes and families, experienced rape or forced marriage or been driven to sex work, sexual and reproductive healthcare in times of conflict may literally be a matter of life and death. In Sierra Leone, girls resorted to self-induced abortions using herbs or other methods and many died during pregnancy or childbirth because of lack of care or difficult circumstances.[33]

b) HIV and AIDS

"War is a strong ally of HIV. It means we say goodbye to our communities and prevention strategies and we say hello to HIV and AIDS."

Save the Children health worker in Burundi

War and AIDS both destroy lives – particularly children's lives. Globally, between eight and 10 per cent of people living with HIV are affected by conflict, humanitarian crisis and/or displacement. This rises to 14 per cent among young people under 15.[34]

HIV and gender inequality are linked together in a vicious cycle. One UN study notes: "…the AIDS epidemic cannot be understood, nor can effective responses be developed, without taking into account the fundamental ways that gender influences the spread of the disease, its impact, and the success of prevention efforts."[35] In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 61 per cent of adults living with HIV in 2007 were women.[36]

The biological risk of HIV transmission during vaginal intercourse is higher for women than for men. Girls and young women often do not have the power to decide when and how they have sex or whether their partner uses a condom. Most importantly, girls may have sex with a much older man who has had many partners and is himself infected. Inter-generational sex and early marriage is one of the critical issues related to girls' particular vulnerability. The power imbalances that make girls and women disproportionately vulnerable to HIV infection become even more pronounced during conflict.

This vulnerability is directly related to the breakdown of communities and family life, and the disruption of social norms that govern sexual behaviour. Social cohesion is a key factor in a community's resilience to HIV. Conflict disrupts community institutions and the social support structures. This affects all relationships in the community gender relations, those between older people and children, as well as the community's ability to fulfil its role in protecting children. Many communities affected by conflict face economic hardship and psychological trauma which has been shown to increase high-risk behaviours as a means of coping with the impacts of war.[37]

Percentage of women aged 15 – 24 where less than 10 per cent have a 'comprehensive and correct' knowledge of HIV/AIDS', selected countries

	Percentage of women 15 –24	Country in conflict, post conflict or fragile state
Albania	0	Yes
Tajikistan	1	Yes
Azerbaijan	2	Yes
Turkmenistan	3	No
Equatorial Guinea	4	Yes
Central African Republic	5	Yes
Chad	5	Yes
Niger	7	Yes
Armenia	7	No
Indonesia	7	Yes
Benin	8	No
Guinea-Bissau	8	Yes
Uzbekistan	8	Yes
Mali	9	Yes
Haiti	16	Yes
Sierra Leone	18	Yes
Burundi	23	Yes
Rwanda	22	Yes
Uganda	30	Yes
Cambodia	35	Yes

GROWING UP ALONE

Orphaned girls are among the most vulnerable to the impact of AIDS, especially girls who have lost their mothers. If a young mother dies, it puts her baby at risk too: children who have lost their mothers are up to ten times more likely to die than those who haven't. Indeed, a girl who has lost her mother is emerging as the most vulnerable child in Africa.[38] These girls are less likely to have access to education and social support systems that can protect them from sexual exploitation. They are also more likely to be pushed into sex work to ensure their own survival and that of their siblings. There is emerging evidence of a complex relationship among the numbers of children orphaned, extreme poverty and the threat of instability.[39] Thirteen of the 17 countries with over 100,000 children orphaned by AIDS are either

REUTERS/ ANTONY NJUGUNA, courtesy www.alertnet.org

A Sudanese refugee family trying to survive.

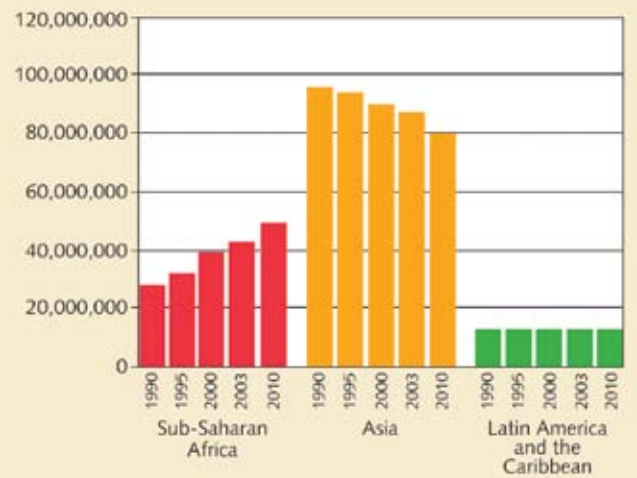
in the midst or on the verge of armed conflict.[40]

Rape is a major contributing factor to the spread of HIV, and has become a common tactic of modern day conflict. UNAIDS says: "Because of their social and economic vulnerability, young girls are more exposed to coercive sex, especially in conflict situations."[41] This girl in Burundi was clear about the link between rape and infection: "They threatened to rape me. I tried to put them off by telling them I was HIV-positive but they said it didn't matter and they brought people who they said were also HIV-positive."[42]

HIV may also be spread by soldiers, sometimes deliberately. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is estimated that more than 50 per cent of military personnel are HIV-positive.[43] The government itself can be the perpetrator of violence against children – as has been reported in Darfur – and then the role of the state in protecting children becomes meaningless. The collapse of health and education facilities may mean that infected young women cannot get tested or access treatment once they have been raped.

While the vulnerability of girls to HIV transmission in conflict situations is high, this doesn't always result directly in high HIV infection rates. This is because communities in conflict situations are often cut off from contact with other populations and sexual networks are often disrupted as a result. Camps for refugees and internally displaced people, for example, are often located in isolated sites well away from local

The number of orphans is decreasing in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV/AIDS has hit the hardest



populations. However, it has been observed that there is a rise in HIV prevalence once conflicts are resolved, as in Angola,[44] because communities are no longer isolated and violence against girls often continues for years after a culture of violence has been established. The impact of conflict remains, long after the fighting is over.

MARIE'S STORY

Marie, a tall and quiet woman of 24, lives with her two-year-old and her baby on the edge of a frontier town in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The area has changed hands among rebel groups and foreign troops a number of times in the past few years, each time via armed attacks during which civilians were caught in the middle. It is not a town that many of its residents would choose to live in – it is simply a place they have run to in order to escape worse fighting somewhere else.

The three-room health post is pockmarked from mortar fire and nearly empty of furniture and supplies. The one trained nurse can provide advice, but little else. There are only occasional medicines and supplies, brought by charities when it is safe to visit. When Marie delivered her babies at home in her hut, she got help from a traditional birth attendant.

The town is mostly filled with women and children. Many of the men from the region have fled or been killed or have gone to the bush with rebel groups. A recent Human Rights Watch report has documented frightening levels of violence in the town and the surrounding region.

Many of the women that Marie knows have been raped by soldiers from one group or another. Marie also was raped when she was 20 years old but she considers herself "one of the lucky ones – it wasn't gang rape, and I wasn't hurt badly and it was only once." Given the experiences of many women she knows, she is thankful for this.

There are no jobs for Marie or her friends and they have no family left to help them, so quite often they resort to selling sex for money, food or even to 'buy' protection from rebel leaders. Marie is embarrassed about this, but feels she has no choice. "I am only thankful that my mother and father cannot see the way I am living now because they did not raise me to do these things. But what else can I do? There is no one to help. I must take care of my children."

Marie knows that sex with many partners can be unhealthy but she doesn't really know any details and she has no access to information about sexually transmitted infections or HIV. Nor does she have access to basic supplies such as condoms or contraceptives to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. She has no power to negotiate protection with the men who come to her hut.

The odds are very much against Marie. Almost 1.3 million adults and children are living with HIV in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Marie will probably live long enough to watch her baby die and maybe even to bury her two-year-old. She will almost surely suffer extended illness and pain and die alone, without any family to care for her. The immediate cause of the deaths in this young and fragile family may be AIDS, but the real causes would be poverty and neglect, war, ignorance, greed, discrimination and exploitation. And even if peace comes, AIDS will continue to kill.[45]

c) Seeing the sky: mental health

"Some conflicts leave behind dreadful nightmares that remain as scars on the minds of the sufferers and this in turn affects the society in which these frightened people live."

Girl (14), India[46]

"There is such a high percentage of young people who see the future as something totally black… If you open even a small window for them to see the sky, it will be a tremendous force for change. But they have to be able to see the sky."

Mahmoud, Egyptian community activist[47]

Conflict has a huge effect on children's mental health. If they have not been directly physically affected, they may have witnessed terrible things from which it is hard to recover.[48] While little research has been done

specifically on girls, we know that:

- In Sarajevo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 55 per cent of children had been shot at, 66 per cent had been in a situation where they expected to die, and 29 per cent felt "unbearable sorrow." [49]
- In Rwanda, 56 per cent had seen children kill people, nearly 80 per cent had lost immediate family members and 16 per cent had been forced to hide under dead bodies. More than 60 per cent of the Rwandan children interviewed said they did not care whether they ever grew up.[50]
- In Darfur, a study found that girls and women reported that the psychosocial consequences of sexual violence for them included: "shame, depression, stigma, illness, difficulty coping, and at the worst, suicide. In addition to direct physical harm women and girls may experience in conflict, research has linked traumatic events with poorer daily functioning, physical limitations and chronic medical conditions."[51]
- In Iraq, the Association of Iraqi Psychologists estimated that in 2007 over 90 per cent of 1,000 children studied had learning difficulties, mainly due to the current climate of fear and insecurity.[52]
- In the West Bank in 2002/3, among boys and girls aged six to 16 years, girls were more affected than boys, with 58 per cent suffering from severe PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).[53]

Relatively little is known about the long-term psychological effects of girls directly or indirectly involved in violent conflict. Adolescent girls may develop feelings of shame and helplessness after experiencing sexual violence and abuse and sometimes being rejected by their families as a result. One report from Sierra Leone noted that: "Girls reported experiencing anguish, flashbacks, persistent fears, difficulty re-establishing intimate relationships, a blunting of enjoyment in life, shame, and being unable to have normal sexual or childbearing experiences. Girls forced to carry and bear the children of their aggressors sometimes suffered serious mental, physical and spiritual harm."[54] In the longer-term, girls reported depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem, and anger. One girl said: "I feel depressed most of the time. I sometimes feel there is no hope for me… I just think of ending my life."[55]

Teenage life in Northern Ireland

Aside from the stories of sexual violence and rape, the effects of living in a conflict zone on every day teenage experiences cannot be underestimated. This is Mary's story.

"I was a teenage girl growing up in the 1960s in Northern Ireland. It was a tense time but like most girls of my age, I tried to live as normal a life as possible. The reality, looking back on it now, was rather different.

I'll always remember him, sandy haired Sammy, big blue eyes and dimples. We met on the school bus. We attended one of the only 'mixed' (Protestant and Catholic) schools in the region. We used to meet every lunch time; it was quite safe to talk within the school grounds. Occasionally we would meet after school to go to the cinema – it was one of the only places we could go without being seen. Just like any couple, we argued about whether to watch a romantic film or a comedy. However, there was always the fear that someone from home would see us. This was because I am Catholic and Sammy was Protestant. We never visited one another's family homes.

We managed to keep our relationship a secret for months, but like in any small community, word got out. The death threat was the final straw. It was posted through my letterbox, scrawled in pencil: 'If you carry on with that fella, there'll be a death in your family'. It also mentioned the shame I had brought upon my 'good Republican family'. After that we drifted

The Bogside area of Londonderry in 1969.

PA/ PA ARCHIVE/ PA PHOTOS

apart; we were scared of the neighbours.

My friend, Clare, also Catholic, was going out with someone from the British Army, until he was captured and stripped by the IRA, while Clare was made to watch. They told him that he would regret the day he ever lay a hand on one of 'their' girls. His body was later found riddled with 42 bullets. Clare wasn't alone – many Catholic girls were left to live with the same tragedy and guilt."

All names have been changed to protect their identities

Despite the daunting level of damage done to children, much can be accomplished even with limited resources. In Colombia, displaced girls are three times more likely than their peers to become pregnant before the age of 15. The United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA) and its partners have adopted an innovative approach to reaching these young people: projects that draw on artistic expression by adolescents as a release and remedy for the violence in their lives. The programme uses drama, role playing, music and dance to encourage adolescents to recount the trauma they have experienced. Health providers visit twice a week to talk about reproductive health and prevention and offer services. Participants in the programme have acquired the tools to challenge harmful aspects of gender relations, resist peer pressure and address sexual violence. They have received information and services to prevent disease and ensure maternal safety. The project has raised the self-esteem of displaced adolescents and given them a sense of control over their lives.

Even the re-establishment of daily routines such as food preparation, laundry, gardening and going to school can foster a sense of purpose, self-esteem and identity. Getting together with others in a similar situation is also an important way of healing. As one study noted: "The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatises; the group bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanises the victim; the group restores her humanity."[56]

Graça Machel's 1996 report on the impact of armed conflict on children notes that any such support needs to be appropriate to the individual and to their culture. Western-style psychotherapy may not always be appropriate. "In cultures which make few distinctions between body, mind and self, and in which spirits and ancestors are perceived to play an active role, those who

JACOB SILBERBERG/ PANOS PICTURES

Ceasefire day in Liberia: but the longterm effects of war on girls are little understood.

wish to help with healing in such societies must understand the local culture, including ceremonies related to growing up, death and mourning."[57] Plan has implemented psychosocial support programmes across West Africa that have adapted traditional ceremonies and helped children – in particular girls who are victims of violence or sexual abuse, or affected by war – and their families to overcome trauma.

In the midst of so much trauma, girls can be resilient and many have demonstrated an incredible ability to come to terms with their past, to invest their time and energy in the future and to become involved in different skills-building and development activities. Research shows that most children, if living in an environment of care and compassion, will be able to draw on their own resources, and those of their family and peers, to cope with past trauma and to continue with healthy development.[58]

There are some innovative projects allowing children to draw what they have seen, what they would like to see, how they feel and to talk to counsellors (see chapter 3). But in many cases, children receive little or no support. Girls who have been child soldiers, wielding a gun during the day and sexually abused at night, face particular problems and may not be included in demobilisation programmes which offer psychological support. Such programmes in general are not specifically focused on girls or their needs, although the recently agreed Paris Principles on children in armed conflict specifically require it.

4 Girls in fighting forces

"I'm not afraid. We are prepared to fight. We don't do the cooking here, we fight with our friends."

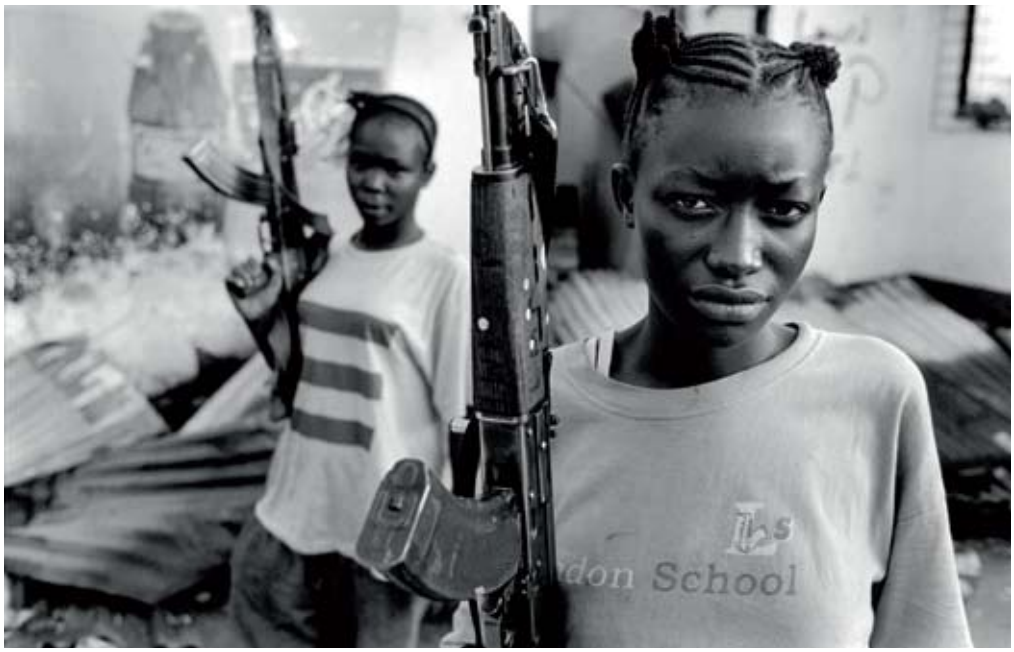
"Koshe" (14), fighting with the Kosovo Liberation Army in 1998-99[59]

Though it is impossible to know the exact numbers, it is generally agreed that there are at least 300,000 child soldiers in the world today. The popular perception is that girls do not participate as soldiers in battle. But if this were ever true, it is less and less so today. One study shows that between 1990 and 2003, girls were part of the fighting forces in 55 countries. They were actually bearing arms in 38 of these conflicts, all of which were internal. "In case studies from El Salvador, Ethiopia, and Uganda, it was found that reportedly a third of child soldiers were girls. While girl soldiers are most commonly used by armed opposition groups, in many places they are also recruited – voluntarily or forcibly – into government armed forces."[60]

Girls in Fighting Forces in Situations of Armed Conflict, 1990–2003[61]

Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Middle East
Angola	Colombia	Burma	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Iraq
Burundi	El Salvador	Cambodia	FR Yugoslavia	Israel
DR Congo	Guatemala	India	Macedonia	Palestine
Eritrea	Honduras	Philippines	Northern Ireland	Turkey
Ethiopia	Philippines	Nepal	Spain	Lebanon
Liberia	Nicaragua	Sri Lanka		
Mozambique	Peru	Timor Leste		
Rwanda		Uzbekistan		
Sierra Leone				
Somalia				
South Africa				
Sudan				
Uganda				

http://www.ddrd.ca/site/_PDF/publications/women/girls_whereare.pdf Where Are The Girls?: Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their lives during and after war, Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana, 2004



TEUN VOETEN / PANOS PICTURES

Young female fighters stand guard in Liberia.

An African study found that "between 1990 and 2003, girls served as active combatants in armed conflicts in ten African countries. While evidence shows that boys make up a slightly larger number of child soldiers, girls are nevertheless well represented and play an important role for armed groups."[62]

Beyond victims: girls' different roles in conflict

Girls are often categorised as playing one of three roles in fighting forces – as combatants, supporters or dependents.[63] Many play all these roles and more besides. They are camp followers, 'wives' of male combatants and commanders, they care for the sick and wounded, they cook, and act as looters, porters and spies. In addition they may provide sexual services or even take part in suicide missions. Girls may also abduct and train other children.

The concept of what it means to be a child soldier now includes these different roles. The NGO Working Group on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF held a symposium in 1997 in South Africa, which resulted in the Cape Town Principles. These were reinforced and updated in 2007 by the Paris Principles, which replace the term 'child soldier' with 'child associated with an armed force or armed group'. The definition is "any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes". It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.

The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms. This has important consequences for demilitarisation and demobilisation programmes, which still often exclude girls who have not carried arms (see chapter 3).

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SRI LANKAN GIRL SOLDIER

"The training schedule was seven days a week and was strict and demanding. Those who did not keep up were punished by doing more exercises. If you could not keep up you were given a heavy rifle to hold above your head while performing sitting-to-standing exercises. At the same time you were randomly hit and kicked. These body blows were delivered without mercy."

4:00 or 5:00 a.m. Morning ablutions: Older sisters of the movement oriented the girls and told them where they should go for morning ablutions. They were under orders to use water sparingly and to protect the water supplies at all times. The older sisters acted as guards over them and enforced the policies of the movement.
7:00 to 8:00 a.m. Breakfast
8:00 to 12:00 noon Demanding physical exercises that included: weight lifting, jumping, running, crawling over sharp terrain, karate, rope climbing and practice in climbing heights. (One short break was permitted for a drink of water.)
12:30 p.m. Lunch Foods at different times included: soup, marmite, eggs (swallow them raw), bread, lentils, rice and curry, apples, water and, on some special occasions, ice cream.
1:30 to 4:00 p.m. Training in special skills that included: map reading, identification of particular geographical locations, use of the compass, knot tying, use of special codes, use of the walkie-talkie and how to shoot and kill animals. Each girl was also asked to write a personal report about herself.
4:00 p.m. Tea
5:00 to 6:00 p.m. Parade
6:00 p.m. Gather to say oath
10:00 p.m. Sent to bed. They slept in small sheds on the ground in sacks (fertiliser bags) without pillows. Sometimes they used their clothes bag for a pillow.

"When sick or injured, girl soldiers were taken care of and given medicine. They would be taken to see the doctor and might even be sent to a camp hospital. The girls also said that nobody could have love affairs or sex. It was considered a major offence and severe disciplinary action would be taken if these rules were broken."[64]

a) Why do armed forces recruit girls?
There are a number of reasons why armed forces recruit girls, on either a voluntary basis or forcibly:
Symbolic power Having girls and women in their ranks may "add legitimacy or symbolic power to their war efforts."[65] Boys may want to fight in order to assert themselves. One girl combatant in Liberia said: "Girls can encourage the boys on the frontline. Like when the men are tired, they don't want to fight, they are scared. You add a woman, the men see they are fighting on the front line. You get encouraged to join and to fight."[66]
Different roles The fact that girls can perform so many different roles is a big incentive for armed forces to recruit girls.
More malleable Armed forces may think that girls are more likely to do what they are told than boys. In Mozambique, women and girls were considered more receptive than men and boys to army discipline and new values, and thus more obedient and easier to train.[67]
Lighter guns Until recently, guns were heavy and difficult to use. But the production of new, lighter firearms and the proliferation of the small arms trade means that today there are many which are light and easy to use. One study in Sri Lanka found that girls were initially issued with 'dummy guns', a piece of wood that they had to get used to carrying at all times and sleeping with. Once they had passed this test, they would be given a real gun. This gave them a new status and prestige, as this girl soldier in Sri Lanka pointed out: "Before we were given guns to carry we had to carry a piece of wood, a dummy… The day I got the rifle I was thrilled and happy."[68]
Sexual services Girls are recruited for the sexual services they are forced to provide. In Sierra Leone, 25 per cent of male fighters in the Revolutionary United Force said that they received 'wives' as a reward after a military operation.[69] In Uganda, girls as young as ten forcibly recruited to the Lord's Resistance Army were given to rebels as a reward through a ritual in which the men threw their shirts in a pile. Each girl had to take a shirt and be given as a 'wife' to the man who owned the shirt. In some cases, a young woman may decide to agree to be the 'wife' of a commander who will then protect her from assault by other soldiers. This may give her status and control over other girls, who may be allocated to be her servants. Sometimes this turns into abuse and this makes relationships after demobilisation very difficult.[70] In all cases, what happens to these girls is rape.

b) Why do girls fight?

"When it's the war, you don't choose. Because if you have weapons, you can defend yourself, if you don't have any, you are beaten, one kills you and one rapes you, even the boys."

Christine, Democratic Republic of Congo[71]

We know that girls take up arms and serve armed groups in a variety of different ways. It may be their choice to leave their homes and take up such new roles. But these are complex issues and we have to understand that for many girls there is little choice and the alternatives are very limited. Children rarely become soldiers willingly. If they are not abducted, circumstances force them to choose being a combatant as the 'least harmful' option. This is closely related to their situation and pre-conflict status. One report notes that: "the same factors that make girls vulnerable to other forms of child abuse and exploitation also lead them into child soldiering."[72]

The distinction between 'voluntary' and 'forced' recruitment assumes that girls have a choice, which is often not the case. It is now illegal in more than 100 countries to actively recruit a child under 18. Human Rights Watch reports that in Chad: "Though some child soldiers appear to join the FUC (United Front for Change), a rebel movement, of their own accord, it is difficult to assert that they made free decisions given the lack of other options. Most child soldiers are poor and uneducated, and many were eager to escape difficult home environments. Above all, the climate of insecurity and armed violence led many children to conclude that it was safer to be with the FUC than in the countryside."[73]

The reasons why a girl might leave home to become a child soldier relate to her own family circumstances and the environment in which she grew up. Often she has had little education and sees becoming a soldier at a young age as a way out of poverty or an escape from an abusive or difficult family situation. She may seek safety, shelter, medicine, or just enough to eat, especially if institutions have broken down. If her own family has been killed, she may seek revenge. She may join for religious or political beliefs, or simply as an escape route. One report said: "While children rarely go looking for a war to fight… for adolescents, war is also an opportunity: for employment, to escape from an oppressive family situation or humiliation at school, for adventure, or to serve a cause."[74]

AIMERANCE'S STORY[75]

Aimerance joined the armed forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo through a friend. Though she originally did so willingly, she soon found that her situation deteriorated.

"My father and mother are farmers – they cultivate other people's fields and then people pay them something. Our grandparents left a field for us but when they died, the rest of the family took the land back for themselves and my father was left with nothing. I was in the third year of primary school. I left because my father had no money to pay for me.

After leaving school I spent my time at home. I was 14. One day a girl friend who I studied with visited me at my house and told me to join the armed forces. My friend was in a Congolese rebel faction in 2002. She said that she was doing well, and that I would do well if I also joined. So, that's why I joined.

We suffered a lot. I had lice in my hair. In the morning they would take us to guard places like the houses of a military authority. We also had to do all the cooking for lots and lots of people who were there. It was a lot of work.

The men took us as their 'wives' – they treated us very badly. They didn't start to rape me at the beginning, for the first year. It was later on that it began. There were lots of little houses in the military camp. They put girls and men in the houses. Then, the military men took us as their women; they didn't consider the fact that we were still children. At any time they wanted, they came and had sex with us. There were so many men. You could have one man who had sex with you and then he left. Then, a second came and talked to you and then had sex and went back to his home. Then a third would come to you, talk and have sex with you and go to his home. So, they did

what they wanted with me. We were only there to do what they wanted. Even if you refused, the men took you anyway – they would insist.

I felt like I had no more energy left within me. I felt so weak and feeble and like I had lost all of my intelligence. There were seven of us girls who were treated that way. We all experienced the same thing. Now, I feel very bad here [pointing to her lower abdomen/reproductive area].

There was no way for me to escape and come back here. We were in Kisangani. It is far from here. One day, when they sent me to the market, I saw that my uncle was driving a car in the village. I hid in the car and he drove to Bukavu. From Bukavu I took another car from there to my home village." [76]

Other studies highlight how girls whose lives were shaped by discrimination became susceptible to the arguments of recruiters in fighting forces.[77] Like boys, poverty and lack of opportunities are 'push' factors for girls into fighting forces. But domestic physical and sexual violence are more gender-specific factors which contribute to girls' voluntary participation in fighting forces. This girl from the Philippines joined a fighting force at the age of 13 because her stepfather was beating her mother: "I couldn't do anything to stop my stepfather because I was just a kid. But he stopped beating Mama when he learned that I joined the NPA (New People's Army). Maybe he got scared. If I ever hear that he's hurting Mama again, I'll beat him and kill him."

This girl from Sri Lanka left because she did not want to marry a man her parents had chosen for her: "About ten days before the day of the marriage, I started to plan to leave the house. I waited, tried to convince my parents, they were very adamant and would not listen to me. They never listened. The day before the marriage everything was ready. I ran away."[78]

In order to be equal to men…

"In the army we were equal to the men. We were fighting as well. So we proved to the men that we could do it. What men can fight women can fight, even better!"

Girl combatant, Liberia[79]

"We were enthusiastic and happy during the war, not because we were killing people, but because… we knew we were keeping danger away. My tank was mine, I was responsible for it, like my own car, and I was fighting for our land and helping our brothers. In the beginning everybody would ask: how can a woman or a girl do this? Then the idea began to sink in and they began accepting it. Later my family, because of my achievement, were showing off that I did this or that."

Ahlam, a young Druze woman in Lebanon who fought during the civil war.[80]

In the Philippines and Colombia, one study noted that "girls felt the armed movement provided them with enhanced possibilities for their life – they learned valuable skills. If it were not for the violent battles, many of the girls would have elected to stay in the movement."[81] The girls experience a measure of equality that is new to them. One soldier said: "Women and men become comrades as soldiers".[82] In sharing danger, they may also have the same access as boys to training, education and healthcare. In Mozambique, the call to engage in armed conflict with the FRELIMO forces included messages about gender equality, about the powerful role of women and girls. Such messages appealed to girls' desire to reshape the existing gender relations of society and so in enlisting they felt they were making strategic actions for women and girls.[83]

RED SHOES
INTERVIEWS WITH GIRLS SOLDIERS IN LIBERIA

Girls interviewed gave two main feminist reasons for taking up arms: the first was to protect themselves and other women from (particularly sexual) violence, and to avenge such violence.

The conflict situation, and within that the prevalence of gun ownership amongst males, was accompanied by increasing incidence of rape. This eventually played an important role in girls' decisions to enter fighting forces. Civilian girls were left with no other option than to flee or to join the fighting forces themselves, if they wanted to escape the rapes.

Liberian women are known as relatively

Typical factors contributing to decision to enlist among 'voluntary' young combatants [92]

Typical factors	Reasons common to boys and girls	Of particular relevance to girls	Generic prevention strategies
Insecurity	To save self or others	To protect against rape and to protect others	Create safe zones for civilians; specific protection for girls
	To avenge self or relatives	To avenge rape and murder	Access to justice, support grass-roots justice, demand adherence to and prosecute violations
	Violent environment	Growing up with war	Security sector reform with involvement of the community especially girls
Economic Motivation	Hunger	To survive	Create conditions of food security, provide relief
	Need for money	To provide for siblings and family	Economic development, research *girls'* aspirations, job creation, training, apprenticeships
Family and friends	Abuse	Particularly among girls	Social protection
	Relocation	Recruitment common in refugee camps	Conflict prevention, minority rights, protection for IDPs, refugees *with special focus on girls*
	Insecurity of relatives	To protect family	Conflict prevention, security sector reform
	Relatives enlisted	Following their example	Provide alternatives, life skills training, alternative family placement, foster-care, support to community and team-based activities eg sport
	Primary family is armed group	'Marrying' a male combatant	
	Poverty	To support family	Economic development, poverty relief
	Ill-health	Sexual and reproductive health needs	Provision of healthcare specifically *reproductive health for young women*
	No family	Need to survive and take care of siblings	Social protection
		Following friends	Positive role models, life skills training

Typical factors contributing to decision to enlist among 'voluntary' young combatants

Typical factors	Reasons common to boys and girls	Of particular relevance to girls	Generic prevention strategies
Education	No access	Schools closed; girls not able or allowed to go	Provide/demand access to education, free school meals/water, child care in schools
	Segregated		Offer non-partisan education
	Abuse	By teachers or peers	Social protection *with a specific focus on girls' vulnerability*
Politics/ideology	Nationalist or religious		Intercommunal/confessional exchanges, confidence building *especially for girls*
	Grievance	To attain gender equality; to avenge human rights abuses	*Listen to girls' voices*, include young people's concerns in peace settlements, create non-violent channels for addressing grievances
Adolescence	Independence	To react against strict parental discipline	Social protection, skills training, *support girls' initiatives and confidence building*
	Excitement	Peer pressure	Sports, recreational activities, *activities for girls outside the home*
	Power	To attain status, power, equality through gun possession	Youth *and girls* advocacy *and confidence building*
	Attraction to guns, soldiers, fighting	Marrying a male combatant	*Present alternatives; confidence building*
Culture/tradition	Of fighting	Surrounded by long-running conflict	
	Excitement	Peer pressure	
	Partisan media		Objective media, youth media *in which girls can participate*

strong and independent… The very fact that this generation of girls notice and criticise their inequality is in itself proof of a certain level of independence and strength, reflected in the second key feminist motive for joining up cited, which was to attain gender equality in a general sense. Girl soldiers proved to be at least as effective as their boy colleagues and the female units were feared by many.

In contrast, distinctly non-feminist motives for recruitment were widespread. Many girls willingly sought or were forced to form relationships with male combatants because they needed protection. Some girls stayed with a particular male combatant after being

raped by him, in some cases stating that the relationship was based on 'love'. This phenomenon is complex: it may reflect a way of coping with the experience, such as resignation in the face of an unchangeable situation.

For others, the motive for entering fighting forces was purely economic, deriving sometimes from severe poverty but also the wish for material luxury items such as make-up and red shoes. In contrast to the more 'feminist' combatants, these girls mainly ended up in supporting roles in male units." [84]

Politically motivated

In some countries such as Timor-Leste, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Eritrea and Ethiopia, girls and young women join fighting forces, sometimes as young children, as a process of 'politicisation'. Sometimes large numbers of women joining can challenge the structure of gender relations in the country concerned. In Nepal, the insurgent Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) specifically target adolescent girls and their mothers, who are believed to comprise up to 30 per cent of their forces. One of the positive effects of the recruitment of women by the Maoists has been a change in gender relations. Seventy per cent of women guerillas are from indigenous communities. Fighters wear uniform, cut their hair and do not wear jewellery or the red vermilion mark on their forehead which indicates that they are married. In this way they are subverting traditional Hindu gender roles. A 2005 World Bank report also notes that: "Villagers report that in Maoist-controlled areas, there has been a decrease in domestic violence, polygamy, alcohol abuse, and gambling." It continues: "Of course, it is too early to say whether these positive changes would develop into sustainable social norms and values in Nepal's post-conflict rural society, since they are currently enforced under the threat of violence."[85]

In Timor-Leste this woman combatant, aged 19, said: "Many women joined the clandestine movement because they were searching for the right way to help their country and to get independence… there were more women than there were men. This was because when we called men to join us they were afraid. Even though we were youth, we gathered together to discuss independence and self-determination. We discussed how we could live in peace and respect each other so that the youth would understand how to love each other." She joined when she was 15.[86]

Suicide bombers

Another phenomenon that is on the increase is the use of women as suicide bombers. This has often been linked to Islamic militants in groups such as Hamas in the West Bank, or Al Qaeda, but young women in Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Lebanon, Turkey and Kashmir have also died for a cause. During a four-month period in 2003, six out of seven Chechen suicide attacks were carried out by women. Some 50 women have carried out suicide attacks worldwide between 2001 and 2006.[87] Most of them are young: one survey found that the average age varied from 21.5 in Turkey to 23 in Lebanon.[88] Margo Harakas, who has researched female suicide bombers, commented: "I have a great fear that, if this continues, they will pull in younger and younger women. Once they break the boundaries of what is accepted on a human level, there are no boundaries." [89]

Many of the young women have no dependents; others have lost brothers or fathers and are seeking revenge, or are motivated by religion and hatred of 'the enemy'. Twenty one-year-old Wafa Samir al-Biss was a paramedic who detonated a 22-pound bomb filled with nails and metal objects in a shopping district in Israel in 2005. She killed an 81-year-old man and injured more than 100 other people but failed to blow herself up. She said: "My dream was to be a martyr. I believe in death."[90]

Little is known about female suicide bombers, but it is likely that one of the reasons militant groups use female suicide bombers is because they get more media attention.

c) Forced recruitment and its consequences

"I was 11 when the rebels attacked our town in Liberia. I got separated from my parents and was captured. I stayed with the rebels for four years. Seven men raped me at the same time and I was forced to pick up arms. I have one child of the rebels – I

don't know exactly which one the father is. I escaped and went to Guinea. I had no caretaker and started to work as a 'hotel girl' (prostitute)."
Florence (18), living in a refugee camp in Guinea[91]

In times of conflict, both girls and boys may be abducted and forcibly recruited. For girls, this often involves rape and sexual assault.

Thousands of girls and boys in Northern Uganda were forcibly abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army. A study of the three most war-affected districts in Northern Uganda estimates that a sixth of all girls and young women and a third of all boys and young men between the ages of 14 and 30 were abducted when they were still children.[93]

Once they have become part of fighting forces in this way, girls may be made to undertake acts of violence themselves, such as killing a friend or a member of their family. They may make extra efforts to become 'extra violent' to prove themselves and to get to a high enough status that they have bodyguards and 'gofers'. This catapults them out of normal life, crossing the boundaries of morality in a way that makes them feel they have no option but to join their captors.

As one girl quite poignantly says: "It was not the place for a little girl to hold a gun. I was so bitter… I wanted an education, not to know how to fire a gun".[94]

Once a part of a fighting force, both boys and girls are likely to be given alcohol and hallucinogenic drugs to numb their minds and transform them from children into killers. One study in Sierra Leone reported that: "Nearly all of the boys and girls who participated in combat activities reported that to enable them to train and fight more effectively, they were either injected with drugs, or given unknown tablets to ingest. Some children reported that drugs and/or gunpowder were placed in their food. Rarely did children know what drugs they were being administered. Invariably, however, the drugs were effective – they engendered feelings of strength and a readiness to pick up their weapons and kill. Some children reported being given drugs before every battle."[95]

All these 'decisions' are made in a context of very limited choices, of the normalisation of horrific acts of violence and the extreme violations of rights, especially of women and girls.

The leader of Liberian rebel group the Women's Artillery Commandos, known as 'Black Diamond', was gang-raped at 17 by government forces. She says this contributed to her becoming a leader: "If you are angry, you get brave. You can become a master in everything."[96]

Yet, the imperative is surely to ensure that girls have opportunities for active – but peaceful – participation in society, community and family life and that their desire for social transformation is channelled into initiatives such as conflict prevention and resolution. It is difficult to imagine equitable and peaceful futures if girls becoming child soldiers is one of the few opportunities that girls have to play active roles in society.

5 Sexual violence as a weapon of war

Rape is always a demonstration of male power over women. But in wartime it is also a demonstration of the lack of power of particular groups of men (for example men of one ethnic group, one religion) who can no longer protect the women of their community. Young women who are abducted and assaulted may simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time, fetching water or working in the fields when they are surprised by militias or troops, often raped, and given no choice but to go along with them. In one of Save the Children's programmes in West Africa, 32 per cent of all girls in the armed group reported having been raped, 38 per cent were treated for sexually transmitted infections and 66 per cent were single mothers.[97] In Liberia, during disarmament and demobilisation after the conflict, 75 per cent of women and girls associated with fighting forces said that they had been sexually assaulted.[98]

The organised rape of women and girls has been well documented. Often this is by one ethnic or religious group against another.

- In Bosnia in the early 1990s, sexual violence was generally acknowledged to be part of a systematic campaign of 'ethnic cleansing'. Muslim women in particular

were deliberately impregnated by Serb soldiers. They were held in camps and raped repeatedly over periods of many months. Even ten years later, no-one really knows how many women were treated in this way but from witness accounts, an estimated 20,000 girls and women between the ages of six and 70 were raped in the former Yugoslavia in 1992 alone. Croatian and some Serb women were also raped. European Community investigators said rapes were being committed in "particularly sadistic ways to inflict maximum humiliation on victims, their families, and on the whole community".[99] The International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia has found perpetrators guilty of crimes against humanity for the rape and enslavement of women, and noted that it was used as "an instrument of terror".[100]

- In Rwanda, up to half a million women were raped during the 1994 genocide.[101]
- In Darfur, in Sudan, many thousands of women have been raped by Arab militias, again as a deliberate strategy of ethnic humiliation. Many are the victims of multiple rapes. The UN says that around 40 per cent of the victims have been under 18 years of age.[102]
- In Colombia, rape is used by guerillas and paramilitary forces as well as soldiers in government armed forces. The rate of rape of adolescent girls is estimated at 2.5 per 1,000 although only an estimated 17 per cent of sexual violence is reported. Some girls who are raped are as young as five years old.[103] Indigenous women are reported to be particularly vulnerable.
- This is also true in Burma, where women from minority groups such as the Karen are at particular risk and are regularly raped by government soldiers.

NURA'S SILENCE

Nura sits in her family's recently built hut. She leans against the bamboo fence and stays silent. Newly arrived in Duma, a small town in the middle of the barren plains of South Darfur, the 15-year-old girl has refused to come out for two days now.

Her older brother does the talking: "The day before yesterday we returned to our village together." He points at the horizon in the direction of the mountains. "When we had to flee last week, we didn't have time to dig up the money box buried in the yard. So we went back for it."

On the journey they encountered the feared men with machine guns. The men on horseback – he daren't utter the word Janjaweed – forced the two to an abandoned village nearby, where they battered him with their gun barrels. His sister was next. "They dragged her to another house. I could not see what happened, but I heard her screaming and couldn't do anything. The whole way back, Nura cried."

The father of the siblings arrives at the hut, and tells the story to me once more. He is especially keen that the correct amount of money that was stolen from him gets put down on paper. He painstakingly dictates the exact number of Sudanese dinars and adds that he was also robbed of a strong mule. He doesn't say a single word about the fact his 15-year-old daughter was raped by four men.[104]

6 Resilience and empowerment

"Speaking of girls solely in terms of vulnerability does not do justice to the courage, ingenuity and capability that girls display on a daily basis when facing the consequences of armed conflict. At a very young age, they often have to fulfil expectations and obligations incumbent upon them as elder sisters, daughters or even mothers, since they may have children of their own."

International Committee of the Red Cross, 2006.

A review of three studies of girls in conflict situations (in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Mozambique) noted that: "Girls in fighting forces are not simply silent victims, but active agents and resisters during armed conflict. The studies reveal girls' remarkable attempts to defend and protect themselves during situations of severe violence and insecurity, as well as their efforts to bring about change for themselves and by themselves. Challenging the predominant

Girls in Togo share their stories about trafficking.

portrayals of girls as emblematic victims, the studies underscore the resourceful and ingenious ways in which girls attempted to avoid, minimise, or resist wartime abuses, patriarchal power structures, and the culture of violence that surrounded them."[105]

Girls caught up in war have had to develop tremendous resilience and survival skills. They have had to adapt to extraordinarily difficult and dangerous circumstances and have had to develop new ways of meeting their basic needs for food, water, shelter. They have often had to engage in ways of earning a living that potentially expose them to risk but are necessary in order to enable themselves and their siblings or peers to survive and cope. Many of these girls have ideas and aspirations for the transformation of the social, cultural and political realities in which they live. But this is not always recognised by adults.

Research In Northern Uganda by the Women's Commission came to the following conclusion: "Despite these hardships, young people cope industriously with their circumstances, forming activity, income-generation and support groups and caring for one another. Yet their initiatives receive little support from adults, and they find few opportunities to develop their talents or share their ideas with the wider community… The sheer magnitude of adolescents' strength surviving in the bush, finding food and getting to school without adult support is what provides hope for a better future in northern Uganda and a peaceful Uganda as a whole. To make this hope reality, young people's strengths must increasingly be transformed into constructive leadership. Young people themselves must begin to recognise the potential of their survival skills to increase youth-led organising and activism to address their concerns and to further constructive, democratic aims."

THE IMPORTANCE OF PEER SUPPORT

"My friends were really good. There all of us abducted girls lived like sisters, yes… we used to tell our stories… sometimes we just sang church songs… they didn't let us stay together very often, everybody stays in her house because if we are together they think that we are talking about escaping."

Girl, Angola[106]

In a number of recent studies, girls have demonstrated keen ability to support each other when serving as active combatants. For example, girls who were with fighting forces in Uganda managed to set up some sort of tallying system to keep track of each

other when they were with different sub-groups.[107]

One of the most significant actions that girls in the studies report is their risking punishment from commanders for making time and space to sit with each other and to share their different stories, to reminisce and to provide the solace that comes of knowing that hardship, pain, trauma and fear are shared experiences. It also helps them to assert some kind of power in a powerless situation. For other girls, living violently insecure lives, being together with peers and finding female solidarity is highly important. It also helps to diminish the impact of the cruelty and horror of war and creates a space for compassion and emotion.

"Peer relationships became enormously important to young people in conflict-affected areas. As they were regularly failed by adults who could not – or would not – protect them, young people turned to one another for comfort, companionship and support. Young people coped with their circumstances together in a wide variety of ways. These included romance, monitoring one another's protection in camps, income-generation, education and much more… Girls in each area found spaces to talk and relax while waiting their turn to use water pumps, doing laundry and at the market."[108]

Although insecurity often limits girls' ability to participate, there are also instances where girls and young women may have more opportunities for leadership and larger roles in community activities.[109]

"IF I RAN SIERRA LEONE…"

Aminata Palmer has taken part in international summits, lobbied government leaders, campaigned on important social issues, and she has her own radio show. That is quite impressive if you take into account that Aminata is still just 14 years old. She is from Sierra Leone and Aminata's young life began during the years of a civil war that had a particularly severe impact on girls and young women.

"I can remember some stuff," she told the BBC, "houses being burnt.. having to get out from the house and go to a neighbouring house. Having nowhere to stay, no clothes to wear… I lost my aunt whom I loved so much and I lost my uncle." [110]

Since the end of Sierra Leone's ten year conflict, Aminata has gone on to become a vocal and passionate advocate for girls' rights. She is presently in charge of public relations for the Children's Forum Network, a campaigning group led by children and supported by Plan that raises awareness of children's rights across Sierra Leone.

"We go to street children and we go out to centres that help girls that have been raped," she said. "We ask them how they feel and they tell us – so we go back to our network and sit as a group and make plans on what should be done, present them and take them to the leaders and make sure that there is something being done.

"Girls are being misused and abused in Sierra Leone. Their rights have not been acknowledged, not to think of respecting them. They are being tortured physically and emotionally. For example, some are being forced into early marriage."

Aminata is outspoken and eloquent and her ambition is to be a lawyer.

7 Girls' voices

"At the age of 13, I joined the student movement. I had a dream to contribute to make things change, so that children would not be hungry, later I joined the armed struggle. I had all the inexperience and the fears of a little girl. I found that girls were obliged to have sexual relations 'to alleviate the sadness of the combatants'. And who alleviated our sadness after going with someone we hardly knew?"

Girl soldier from Honduras[111]

"I could not go to school in Afghanistan, and this is my first time in school. I want to earn by myself, to provide food for myself and eat. I don't want to be under the hand of men."

Young woman, Afghanistan[112]

"The rebels attacked my school in Freetown and we fled. We tried to escape in my uncle's car but they ambushed it and he was killed in front of me. I was forced to have sex with two rebels and they kept me as a wife when I was just 12 years-old. After disarmament, I went to stay with another family member but she didn't have enough money to send me to school. There was nothing to do. I tried to get enough money selling goods to go to school but things were difficult, all I could earn was enough to eat.

Young woman, Sierra Leone

"I was at home with my family when the rebels came. They made my father choose between his life and those of his children, and then killed him. The rebels captured me and one forced me to be his wife. I fell pregnant but after the war my mother didn't want to know me because I had a rebel's baby.

Young woman, Sierra Leone

"I've been living in the camp for about a year. I'm not happy here because the living conditions aren't very good. At the moment, I am still in school which I'm pleased about. When I'm not in school, I help my sister with the cleaning. I'm not happy about where we live because we share the tent with another family. There's not much room and I lie down to sleep on a mat on the floor. I enjoy school and I want to learn more so that I can be a doctor when I'm older and help sick people."

Young woman, IDP Camp Timor-Leste

"I used to go to school when I still lived in the district but now I don't go anymore. That makes me unhappy because I used to like learning. I like mathematics, Portuguese and Tetun. I miss school a lot and all we do in the camp is play around. I miss learning new things. I help my mother with the cooking by boiling the water for her. I do this two times a day. I live here with my mother and father, one brother and seven sisters. I also help my sisters to sweep the tent and wash the dishes. My brother is only a baby and too young to help with the chores. I don't like living in the camp because the living conditions aren't very good. I have to sleep on the floor. Sometimes I feel unsafe in the camps because it's really noisy. Sometimes men come and throw stones. If I am unhappy about something, I talk to my family about it. I wish the government would help to look after us so that we can go back to our district and I can start back at school."

Girl, aged 9, IDP Camp. Timor-Leste

Young mother in an IDP camp in Dili, Timor-Leste

FABIO DE PAOLA

Attending a girls' club in Monrovia, Liberia, as part of a post-war recovery programme.

ABBIE TRAYLER-SMITH/ PANOS PICTURES

Voices from the Frontline
Liberia

Conversations with Girls and Young Women

Fifty Liberian girls and young women were surveyed in two locations, Montserrado County and Margibi County, using a close-ended questionnaire. The respondents were asked about traditional gender norms in Liberia, their views on recent developments in Liberia since the end of the civil war and on the challenges facing girls and young women, and their visions for Liberia's future.

Montserrado County is on the north west coast of Liberia. The Liberian capital Monrovia is located within the county. Margibi County lies directly south of Montserrado – the capital of which is a small city called Kakata. Outside of the urban areas, rubber production, diamond prospecting and subsistence farming are common.

Traditional Gender Roles in Liberia
Although Liberia has a female President and women now occupy other key public positions, the discussions held with the girls and young women confirmed that men are still very dominant, especially in rural communities. The respondents identified submissiveness, dependency and responsibility for household chores as the traditional gender norms for females in their communities. They highlighted sexual abuse within the family and lack of access to opportunities as major issues.

- **Submissive**

The group who discussed this issue were mainly young married women in their teens. In general, they said they live at the beck and call of their husbands. One respondent said: ***"We do whatever our husbands tell us to do. If we disobey, they will refuse to feed us or beat us up. Our parents train us (girls) to be good wives."***

The interviewees also pointed out that within the family, the girl is expected to always submit to the wishes of her father. Fathers choose their daughters' husbands and decide when they are to marry. Boys on the other hand are given the freedom to choose their own spouses and to decide when to marry. The respondents said that some fathers force their daughters to have sex with them.

"Fathers deflower their daughters and continue to rape them with the justification that they would not 'fatten the pig for the market without tasting some of the meat'," explained one young woman.

The young women also highlighted cases where fathers had threatened to kill girls who became pregnant after such incestuous encounters. "They [the fathers and abusers] would hold our noses and ask us to choose between life and death."

SAFE (SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE EFFECTIVELY)

This Liberian project focuses on the reintegration of girls and women seriously affected by the civil war. SAFE works in ninety local communities, mostly in North Western Liberia.

The staff at SAFE use community dialogue to raise awareness of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, domestic violence and harmful traditional practices. They also aim to highlight the long-term consequences of violence

against girls and women.

SAFE has built a number of local centres for girls and women, offering them access to literacy and other skills, health education and counselling services. The centres increase their access to emergency medical care and provide a safe space for survivors of sexual violence. SAFE also trains legal and security personnel to raise awareness of violence against girls and women and to respond appropriately to the legal needs of survivors.

- **Dependent**

"We depend on men to support and protect us. That is what the Bible says."

Liberian women traditionally depend on men for support. In polygamous homes, as well as in nuclear families, the husband is the sole breadwinner while the wife takes care of the family.

In the words of one respondent: "We depend on men to support and protect us. That is what the Bible says. This helps to explain why girls from poor homes very often prefer Papays (wealthy older men) as boyfriends. We want men who are capable of taking care of us and our families. What is the use of going out with a poor boy who cannot even buy his own clothes?"

This cultural and economic dependency provides some insight into the dynamics of transactional sex common among young Liberian women in urban areas, who offer sex in return for economic security.

Dependency is reinforced by traditional inheritance law, which favours the male child. The respondents unanimously agreed that family property is frequently passed onto the male child in the hope that he will support his sisters and the rest of the family. One respondent added:

"In most cases, he ends up using it [the inheritance] to support his own wife and children, so the sisters are left poor and suffering."

Alongside a distinct lack of economic power, Liberian girls and women shoulder full responsibility for running the household. Mothers and their daughters perform household chores, ranging from cooking, laundering and sweeping, to fetching water. It is usually the girls who get up early in the morning to help their mothers.

"We get up very early in the morning to do all the household work, while our brothers stay in bed until they are ready to have breakfast and go to school. We are like slaves for our brothers. In the morning, we go to school late because we have to do all the work at home before leaving. When we are late, we are beaten by the teachers. Sometimes I don't want to go school at all."

Respondent (15)

- **Deprived**

"Girls hardly ever complete school. They become pregnant along the way."

It is traditional for families in Liberia to prefer boys to girls. According to the respondents this is because: "The boy will live at home [after marriage] and take care of his family, while girls are married away to make new homes."

The result of this preference is that both families and communities devote more resources to boys while limiting girls' access to education, a balanced diet, healthcare and even adequate clothing. According to the respondents, this explains why there is gross gender imbalance in school enrolment, and among those who complete their education, especially at secondary and tertiary levels.

"Our parents stop supporting us in school the moment we reach puberty. So we are compelled to go out and look for helpers [boyfriends] to support us, or else we will not complete high school. Worst of all, once the family discover that you have a helper, they begin to transfer some of their burdens onto you. This forces us to look for more helpers at the expense of our school work."

17-year-old respondent from Monrovia.

The respondents agreed that over the years these traditional preferences have helped to shape the general attitudes of men towards women in Liberia and are one of the main reasons for the high incidence of gender-based violence against girls and women.

LET (LIBERIA EDUCATION TRUST)

LET was launched in Monrovia in 2006 to construct and reconstruct schools across Liberia. The Trust finances literacy programmes for Liberian girls and women, as well as providing scholarships at primary, secondary and tertiary level. In addition, LET offers teacher training programmes to improve the quality of education in Liberia.

Champions for Change

"We do not allow any man to ride us like a horse: we have rights like any man."

In some areas, the traditional roles ascribed to females are changing. This is especially true of urban communities, where greater access to education, information, and cultural diversity is gradually reducing the male-female economic and social divide. Also, civil society organisations have played an important role in advocating for girls' and women's rights. In direct contrast to the views of respondents from rural areas, those living in urban communities generally believed that men and women have equal capabilities. One respondent from Monrovia said:

"In this city we do not allow any man to ride us like a horse: we have rights like any man. If a man treats me like the woman I am, I will treat him like the man he is!"

Many respondents said they had been encouraged to challenge male domination because of the example set by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her female colleagues in the government.

"Look at what Ma Ellen is doing in this country" said one. "She defeated all the men in the elections, and she is succeeding where [former Presidents] Tubman, Doe and Taylor failed."

The vast majority also agreed that the current unequal access to opportunities is gradually receding as girls prove that, when given the same educational opportunities, they are at least as talented as boys:

"With good education, any girl can copy the examples of [former Justice Minister] Frances Johnson Morris, [National Police Chief] Munah Sieh and the Finance Minister."

The young women described a growing trend of female economic self-reliance. They highlighted the fact that some women were forced to provide for their families during the civil war when, in the words of one respondent, "Most non-combatant men used to hide under their beds." These women are no longer prepared to depend on men economically.

"My business sense is the only husband I need," said one respondent. "It provides everything my children and I require. Man or no man, I can do more than just survive."

In general the respondents agreed that male dominance is gradually being challenged and the status of Liberian women improved through education, economic development and advocacy.

Taking Action

The aftermath of the war, the election of a female President and civil society advocacy have all acted as catalysts to challenge gender roles and expectations. But in spite of this, girls in Liberia still face serious challenges. The respondents identified the following areas where they believe action is necessary:

- **Debilitating poverty, which forces girls to engage in demeaning activities, including sex work, in order to gain economic security**

ABBIE TRAYLER-SMITH / PANOS PICTURES

Female peacekeepers on the streets of Liberia.

- Limited access to basic services, such as healthcare and education
- Teenage pregnancy and motherhood
- Gender-based violence, mainly perpetrated by male relatives and friends
- Exclusion from decision-making on issues that directly affect the lives of girls and women
- The threat of HIV and AIDS and other STIs
- Lack of parental care and guidance.

RECENT EVIDENCE

Recent data from the Liberian National Police Women and Children Unit illustrates that gender-based violence remains a major problem in Liberia. Between January and September 2007, the unit received 540 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children and women. Rape and statutory rape were the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence. More than a quarter of the rapes reported (142) were child rape.

The prevalence of child rape in Liberia is also reflected in recent data from THINK, a Liberian NGO that supports girls and women who were forced to fight as combatants during the civil war (see examples of local Initiatives outlined in this section). From January – September 2007, THINK supported 91 female rape survivors in its two rehabilitation homes. Fifty-two of the rape survivors (almost 65 per cent) were girls aged twelve and under.

THINK (TOUCHING HUMANITY IN NEED OF KINDNESS)

This Liberian NGO was established in 2003, to support girls and women who were forced to become combatants during the civil war. THINK runs two rehabilitation homes where female ex-combatants are gradually reintegrated back into Liberian society. Each home supports twenty-five girls and women, and their young children, and provides food, legal aid, social services, counselling and medical care.

THINK also provides advocacy services for girls and women who have survived gender-based violence, ensuring they receive appropriate legal advice and services. THINK coordinates with the Liberian police, Médicins Sans Frontières (MSF), and other NGOs to provide psychosocial care and support to girls and women.

To date THINK has supported more than 200 Liberian girls and women.

BASIC STATISTICS

- Capital City – Monrovia
- Population 3.3 million (1.7m male), (1.7m female)
- Age group 0-14 as percentage of total population: 46.89%
- Age group 60+ as percentage: 3.6%
- Urban population: 47.9%
- Life expectancy men: 43, women: 45
- Children under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 births: 222
- The infant mortality rate (137 deaths per 1000 live births), maternal mortality ratio (760 deaths per 100,000 live births) and total fertility rate (6.8 lifetime births per woman) are among the highest in the world.
- Population growth rate: 2.7%
- Population below poverty line: 80%
- HIV prevalence: 2-5% (potentially higher)
- Access to clean water: urban 72%, rural 52%
- Literacy rate: men: 72%, women: 39%
- Doctors/people: 0.03/1000
- Displaced people: 5,494
- Refugees: 140,793 Liberian refugees
- Human Development Index: N/A

Background

Liberia is the oldest Republic in Africa – founded by freed slaves in 1847. It struggled to assert itself as an independent nation and its first elected President, William Tubman, was repressive and unpopular. After a political power struggle and widespread food riots, Samuel Doe seized power in 1980 but he proved a ruthless tyrant and many Liberians fled over the border into neighbouring Côte D'Ivoire. At the end of the 1980s, rebel leader Charles Taylor marched from Côte D'Ivoire into Liberia with his troops, unleashing a major civil war.

For Liberian girls and women, the thirteen year civil war was a living hell. Atrocities were committed on all sides and they bore the brunt of them. They were gang raped, enslaved by combat units, and forced to fight as combatants. Those who became pregnant after rape were sometimes murdered by being disembowelled. Those who survived were traumatised and often physically injured or disabled. Seventy-five per cent of the girls and women associated with fighting forces who came forward as part of disarmament and demobilisation programmes reported that they had been sexually violated.[1]

The Economic Community of Western African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) placed peacekeepers in Liberia to monitor the civil war. But a significant number preyed on the girls and young women they were sent to help. The Liberian government registered more than 6,000 children fathered by ECOMOG peacekeepers. Many of these children were subsequently abandoned and forced to live on the streets.[2]

According to reports from the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies, girls and women experienced high levels of gender-based violence, including coerced sex work, in the camps established for refugees and internally displaced people during the civil war. Some of these abuses were committed by UN staff themselves.[3] In 2003, peacekeepers for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) arrived in the country. Following widespread allegations that UNMIL soldiers and aid workers were sexually abusing girls as young as eight, the UN was forced to launch a major investigation which confirmed the charges and tainted the entire mission. The widespread culture of gender-based violence in the often squalid camps exposed Liberian girls and women to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

After a civil war that killed more than 250,000 civilians, Liberia is now finally enjoying relative peace under a democratically elected government led by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – the first female head of state in Africa. Under her administration, the Liberian economy is gradually recovering and social services are being restored. Human rights organisations and other civil society groups have worked hard to highlight how girls and women are struggling to recover from the long-term effects of the civil war – and have passionately campaigned for public awareness of gender-based violence and other abuses of the rights of girls and women.

Despite this strong advocacy, the challenges facing girls and women in post-conflict Liberia remain enormous. It has been estimated that between 60 and 70 per cent of the population endured some form of sexual violence during the conflict. This figure is composed predominantly of girls and women, although findings indicate that some boys and men were victims of similar abuse.[4]

Liberia remains one of the poorest countries in the world with an annual per capita GDP of just US$185.50,[5] compared with US$37,023 in the UK. Over three quarters, 85 per cent, of the adult population is officially unemployed and many rural areas have only basic access to education and health care including safe drinking water.[6]

Young people, especially females, have been systematically excluded from full participation in Liberia's economic, social and political life. Girls and young women continue to suffer pervasive and institutionalised gender discrimination, reflected in both customary and statutory law. Increasing numbers of young people are migrating from the countryside to towns and cities in search of better opportunities and higher living standards. And while some young women do very well, the majority remain trapped in a cycle of urban poverty and violence, and continue to struggle for control over their own lives.

REUTERS/ RADU SIGHETI, courtesy www.alertnet.org

War is not over with the last bullet[1]

3

This chapter argues that there can be no sustainable peace or economic recovery without involving girls and young women. It examines how, in an environment where governments and the international community work to re-establish rule of law, deliver basic services and provide jobs, the needs, rights and potential of girls and young women is so often ignored. It also looks at how girls' roles and status change after conflict is over.

1. The context of post conflict for girls

"I want to live happily and peacefully, with all the things that I need. Now there are still displaced people, poor neighbourhoods and problems for the people. I want to change all this, and move beyond this crisis."

Isaura (16), Timor-Leste

"While many children are killed by weapons, many more die from the catastrophic impact the conflict has on their communities' infrastructure (often already weak to begin with) and families' access to food, healthcare and their ability to maintain their livelihoods."

UNICEF[2]

Even after peace declarations are signed, a country that has experienced conflict has a high probability of falling back into conflict. A sustainable peace settlement depends on resolving the issues that fuelled the violent conflict in the first place. Even without further outbreaks of violence, states are usually 'fragile' for a number of years as they transition from conflict to stability. There are various ripple effects as a country is rebuilding itself after a war that affect everyone, but which have specific impacts on girls and young women. For example, conflict over ethnic and religious identities leaves communities torn apart; there is a breakdown of trust that can cause deep divisions, and girls become particularly vulnerable to exploitation and retribution. Healthcare may not be available at a time when young women most need it. There may still be few functioning schools. If they are functioning, the education of boys is prioritised over that of their sisters, or security concerns may prevent girls from going to school. When schooling resumes, the quality of teaching, infrastructure and materials is likely to be poor.

The absence of conflict is not necessarily 'peace' in terms of well-being and security for girls and there are different effects during the immediate period after a war and then when a country is trying to rebuild. Young women may be in as much danger immediately after conflict as during the war itself. For example, demobilised soldiers may be roaming the country and police and other legal and security services may still not be in place.

The collapse or weakening of state institutions due to the impact of a violent conflict is usually a process that takes several years; poverty worsens, infrastructure is destroyed, and social cohesion continues to unravel. Various forms of community co-operation may survive conflict, but they

are often understandably weakened. Others may have been entirely destroyed and therefore the ability of such organisations to contribute to reconstruction is often limited. Community-level organisation and activities may be possible, but higher level advocacy and changes to systems and structures may be beyond their capacity. Yet the need for action is usually great: new governments often fail to set up legitimate administrations and cannot effectively provide services for the population. Other private or public institutions may also still be so weak that they are unable to fill the gaps in terms of service provision. Donor governments and other international institutions can become so focused on providing humanitarian assistance and on meeting the immediate assistance needs of people directly affected by conflict, that the reconstruction of livelihoods, the rebuilding of community social fabric, and the transformation of gender relations are considered less important – with particular consequences for girls.

2 Healing the wounds – girls acting for change

"Young people can promote dialogue between the two parts involved in the conflict; they should be allowed to participate at peace conferences and they should be given the opportunity to work with youth 'from the other side' in common social and cultural projects."

Girl (19), Romania[3]

"Neglecting women and girls in crises makes no sense from a development perspective. Not only do we fail to address the needs of half the population, we also fail to gain from their insights and resourcefulness during the critical stages of the recovery process."

Kathleen Cravero, United Nations Development Programme.[4]

During conflict, girls and young women may have been forced to play new roles that demand previously unknown depths of courage and confidence. There are many instances of this in violent conflicts of the past: women, young and old, who had not ventured outside the home before, working in munitions factories during the Second World War; Algerian women and girls smuggling guns and messages when their country was fighting French occupation; women's organisations in Northern Ireland playing a key role in building peace. In some cases, such new gender roles did not survive once the conflict was over, creating frustrations for women. But in other cases, these new roles resulted in fundamental changes to the gender division of labour.

When peace agreements are signed and weapons handed in, girls and young women are often expected to return to the same roles they played before war began. Once again, they are marginalised on account of both age and gender. During this period, girls are vulnerable because existing inequalities between girls and boys are exacerbated while people begin to rebuild their lives and communities again. Girls may find they still cannot access desperately needed health and education services, or, most importantly, ensure the survival and well-being of their dependants without putting themselves at risk. They often remain unprotected as institutions are rebuilt and legal systems put back in place.

If it is hard for women to construct new roles and lives, it is even harder for girls. This is partly because men and some women, particularly those who gained increased political and military power during the conflict, may not make space for young women to be involved in planning and carrying out peace-building or reconstruction activities; they may not recognise that girls do have the capacity, experience and insights to contribute. Adults are not used to listening to girls, even about the things that concern their own lives, let alone about the future of the nation. Once again, girls become invisible.

The impact of post-conflict changes and uncertainty varies greatly from person to person and situation to situation. Some young women, desperate to make ends meet, exchange sex in return for money or food. Others experience a sense of hopelessness and a few even commit suicide. But many girls find new confidence in themselves and are able to connect

with other girls and young people to work together towards a world where violent conflict no longer exists. A UNICEF report notes: "Girls and boys… have been successful in leading political discussions and debates, testifying in truth and reconciliation processes, providing psychosocial support to younger children and raising awareness of HIV/AIDS. Their energy, enthusiasm, resilience and strong desire for justice and peace can be a catalyst for peace-building in their families and communities."[5]

D. WATTS

Young people raising awareness about HIV/AIDS in Uganda.

SEEDS OF PEACE

At age 13, Bushra Jawabri began representing schools in Arroub refugee camp in the West Bank, in meetings with Israelis, presenting the Palestinian perspective on various issues of the conflict. Julia Resnitsky left Russia at age seven when her family moved as refugees to Jerusalem. In high school, she organised non-violent conflict resolution workshops for junior high students.

Bushra and Julia have been involved in Seeds of Peace, an international organisation that helps teenagers from conflict regions learn peace-making skills. In November 2001 Bushra was part of the official Palestinian delegation at the New York City International Youth Conference on uprooting the causes of hatred and terror that was organised in response to the attacks of September 11. Julia's leadership in peace issues is challenged by her community, friends and family, who do not support her beliefs, yet she continues to volunteer with disadvantaged Palestinian and Israeli youth and mentors friends to work towards peaceful co-existence regardless of the obstacles they face.

Both girls were among those awarded the Voices of Courage award by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children in 2002. Bushra said on receiving the award: "keeping faith and staying optimistic towards peace have not been easy. But truly what kept the hope of peace alive in my heart is exchanging emails and phone calls with my Israeli friends, friends who I met through the Seeds of Peace camp. They kept me optimistic towards peace, towards a better future, people like Julia. It was very important for me to hear Julia condemning inhumane actions done by anyone, no matter what his or her nationality is. And I always ask myself, why do I have to witness innocent civilian Palestinians getting killed every day? Why do I have to witness innocent Israeli civilians getting killed every day? Why did I have to witness three thousand Americans killed on September 11? The answer is this, I believe. It is my task, my mission, a task that we all have to follow, which is to work for a better future, if not for ourselves, for our children."[6]

In order for girls to move on with their lives and to learn from the positive and negative experiences they have been through, an holistic approach needs to be taken that recognises their unique experience as girls without treating them solely as victims, and gives them the respect and the space they require to participate in society. They have a right to be listened to, to be recognised as having legitimate knowledge and experience to contribute, given space to engage with their peers as well as with adults, and given support, education and training appropriate to their lives. One report on girls who were ex-combatants noted that: "Girls and young women who return to their communities need to be able to see that there are adults in their lives who will have a positive influence over them, and that they will no longer be controlled by violent men, as they were during captivity." It also noted that: "They need to see that, although they have

changed, they have a place and a future in the community they have returned to, and that they can make meaningful contributions to that community."[7] This second point applies to almost all girls in conflict situations, whether they have been directly engaged in combat or not.

For this to be possible, adults and adult institutions must recognise the contribution that girls and young women can make in these circumstances, while at the same time ensuring that they are not made to feel responsible for solving the problems that the adults in their societies have created. While young women may have been involved in peace-building and reconstruction, they are rarely targeted for action as a specific group. Often – as is called for in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – activities are designed to support the participation of women in peace-building. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child promotes the participation of young people in the decisions affecting their lives and children's views have been gathered in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Colombia. But understanding girls as thoughtful and insightful actors who have the strengths, skills, and capacity to effect change can also help create new societies that reflect their actual needs and experiences.

PETER BARKER / PANOS PICTURES

Language class for young women at a trauma centre in Bosnia.

The lack of quality education can also have serious consequences not only for girls but also for the future of the country. For example, even where it is widely accepted that women's contributions are crucial to reconstruction efforts, the fact that many women and girls are denied access to education is a long-term obstacle to their participation in society and to peace-building. In Afghanistan, where girls were widely denied education until the Back to Schools campaign of 2002 and still face many problems today, women are not considered by men in the family and community to be able to participate in decision-making processes.[8]

It is not only literacy and numeracy that are critical if young women are to be able to play active roles in development and peace-building, but also the knowledge and the confidence to be able to speak out. Access to school is therefore highly significant – symbolically as much as practically – in efforts to ensure that young women can contribute to positive change and to help break the cycle that can so easily lead back to violence in a post-conflict period.

Refugee enrolment by grade and sex, 2002 (%)

Grade	Percentage boys	Percentage girls
Pre school	50	50
Grade 1	55	45
Grade 2	58	42
Grade 3	58	42
Grade 4	59	41
Grade 5	62	38
Grade 6	64	36
Grade 7	64	36
Grade 8	64	36
Grade 9	66	34
Grade 10	67	33
Grade 11	71	29
Grade 12	66	34

UNHCR 2002 Education statistics, quoted in Global Survey on Education in Emergencies, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. February 2004, http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Ed_Emerg.pdf

SCHOOL IN A BOX

The Rapid Education Programme was developed to provide children with a fast track to a basic education after

conflict. In Sierra Leone, the Rapid Education Programme provides children and young people with a basic primary education in two years, as opposed to the five years it would have taken in a mainstream setting. In Liberia, working together with the Foundation for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Plan has developed a similar programme providing young women, many of whom became mothers during the recent conflict, with a basic education and skills.

Through their own experiences, girls may have gained confidence and been exposed to new ideas and skills. But they will not have the chance to use them unless there is also a debate in society about how former ways of expecting girls and boys to behave need to be transformed. For this to happen, there needs to be political commitment to change, and discussion within communities and families about their vision of the new, post-conflict society; a society where there is not just peace at national level, but also peace between women and men and girls and boys in the home, the community, and at school.[9]

OPENING DOORS IN COLOMBIA

Young people in Colombia face huge challenges. There are few social, educational or employment opportunities or chances to participate in society in a meaningful way. Often families and communities are not easy places to live in – many young people are trapped in a culture of violence, making them vulnerable to recruitment by the various armed groups.

As a response, Plan's project on Conflict Resolution for Adolescents in Colombia helps young men and women avoid becoming participants in the violence, and more importantly, enables them to become active participants in conflict resolution and peace-building processes. Young people are trained to become peace educators and to take positive messages into their classrooms, home to their families and back to their neighbourhoods. As well as learning about conflict resolution, better communication and citizenship, they attend sessions on gender relations, including having healthy relationships and tackling gender-based violence. The project allows young people to develop their communication, negotiation, and leadership skills.

This young woman who had taken part in the project said: "before I joined the project I was shy, I was embarrassed to say what I felt and I was ashamed that others would reject my ideas. I am not scared anymore. I speak my mind whether it is right or wrong. The truth is the project has opened the doors for us."

BUILDING NEW LIVES

The Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation project in Sierra Leone works with children in four centres who have been caught up in the civil war. Victor Fornah from the Sierra Leone Red Cross says: "Many were abducted, conscripted or raped. These boys and girls are accustomed to fighting and shooting. If they were left to their own devices, there could well be a resurgence of violence."

The project gives children up to the age of 18 numeracy and literacy skills. Younger children are integrated into schools while older children are taught professional skills from which they can make a living.

"Those aged 14 to 18 can learn bricklaying, carpentry, tailoring and handicrafts. After the programme, we help them find apprenticeships to use what they've learnt," says Victor.

In addition, the project focuses on supporting the children through counselling. "Some children have witnessed attacks or run from gunshots. We get them to open up and let them talk," he says.

"Communities vowed those children would never be allowed to come back. They think these children will never do anything beneficial. So we work with communities, raising awareness of what we're doing," says Victor.[10]

3 Coming 'home'?

The end of war is not always a time for rejoicing. There is no going back to the same life as before. Friends may have become enemies, parents, brothers and sisters and relatives may have been lost or killed. Homes may have been destroyed or it may still be too dangerous to return. In addition, most countries emerging from conflict often experience large movements of people attempting to return home or resettle. However, in many cases this takes a number of years. For example, in Sierra Leone, even three to four years after signing the peace agreement, only ten to 20 per cent of the population of most communities had returned.[11]

Girls who were actively part of the fighting are rarely participants in the DDRR programmes for child soldiers. Many, especially those who have given birth to children, may face rejection by their family and community. They may have suffered rape and sexual assault. Girls who have lost or been separated from family members may be running a household and looking after their own babies and remaining siblings on their own. Or they may face living with a disability or dealing with a sexually transmitted infection. They are still in danger of assault, whether in the home or outside. The importance of girls' education in enabling them to support themselves and to take part in peace-building activities cannot be overemphasised. It is certainly recognised by those who strive to put an end to girls' schooling. In Afghanistan, for example, girls' schools have been deliberately targeted in order to terrorize girls into leaving and staying at home. Many have been burned and girls have died. As of July 2006, the UNICEF School Incident Database counted 99 cases of attacks against schools, including a missile attack, 11 explosions, 50 school burnings and 37 threats against schools and communities.[12]

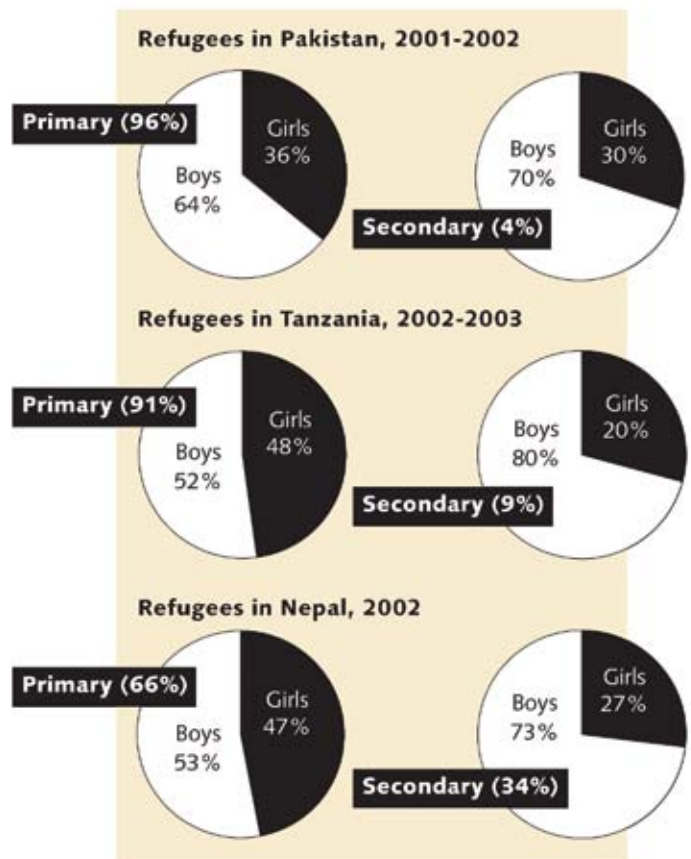
THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN SUDAN[13]

Many years of conflict have had a devastating effect on education for all children in Southern Sudan. For girls, however, displacement, destruction of schools, isolation and poverty converge with perceptions that girls are fit only to be future mothers and homemakers. Fewer than a quarter of all school-age girls in Southern Sudan are in primary school. Dropout rates are high and few girls ever complete primary grades and continue to secondary school. Just six per cent of teachers are women.

This is why it is important for prominent women in communities to be role models to girls and to encourage them to continue with schooling; women like Hellen Maya, who is known throughout Southern Sudan as a vocal advocate for girls' education.

"Parents are not always aware of the importance of girls' education… We have a group here called 'Promotion and Advocacy for Girls' Education' (PAGE). We formed this group at a county level,

Refugee boys' and girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education, selected countries



so we move around together and we often go to churches, to talk with the parents concerning the importance of girls' education. We also have a programme taking us into schools to talk with the girls and with the teachers. Also we go to the offices of education officers, the County Commissioner and chiefs with issues concerning girls' education. All these meetings help promote change for girls' education. We are hoping that if we have free education for girls, it may also change things. You see, by 2015 we want all of our children in school!"

As a result of such awareness-raising at the community level, and of policy and programming developments by the Secretariat of Education, enrolment of girls in the early years of primary school is increasing. Demand is outstripping supply and in many cases, girls' enrolment is higher than boys. Efforts are now focused on ensuring that girls can successfully complete school.

a) Never the same again? Changes in gender roles

"The [Truth and Reconciliation] Commission asked the children of Sierra Leone what impact the war had had on their lives and what we had lost. The story of each child is unique but our stories repeat the same losses… Over and over again we told how we had lost our families, our homes and our education… But the biggest problem was returning to a life that didn't exist any more."

Children's voices from the Truth and Reconciliation Report, Sierra Leone[14]

Once war is over, those in power – mostly men, whether at home, at work or in the government – usually expect things to return to 'normal'. At its most basic level, this means that husbands and fathers expect their food cooked and their homes cleaned, and employers to give jobs back to male breadwinners. But during the war, women and girls, who have been shouldered with the economic and social burdens of their communities, have often taken on new roles as breadwinners, decision-makers and community leaders. Although this may

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Concentrating at school in Cambodia.

involve hard work, girls and women become used to these new responsibilities and some of the opportunities they may create, and find it hard to go back to the more traditional roles they were playing before the war. One study in West Africa notes that: "In the aftermath of war, girls and women are usually urged to resume traditional gender roles instead of using the strengths they have developed to make new choices and seek broader opportunities."[15]

For men, the changing dynamics of gender relations can be threatening, especially if they feel that they have lost their old roles and are now unemployed.

One study in Uganda noted that: "[i]n the internally displaced camps, men have lost the power to provide for and protect the family, or to exercise authority, leadership, or control over resources (including wives and children). The resultant frustration may be channelled into aggression in various highly destructive forms."[16] In Eritrea, women had played a major part in the military, but found that when they returned home they were expected to lead the same lives as they had before the war. This led to high levels of frustration.[17] This chief in Uganda did not like women's new-found independence after the war: "What makes most women not submissive to their husbands is the issue of gender equality or women's rights… Women

who are educated and employed are the worst group of people because… after they get pregnant, they throw out the man. They have enough money to look after themselves."[18] This resentment can lead to a backlash against women, which may mean that girls feel they must return to the roles they played before war began, as a girl in Liberia pointed out: "During the war I was equal to men. But my present fiancé doesn't want me to be too independent. In Liberia men are still the head. If I want to keep the relationship I should change according to what he wants me to be."[19]

Studies have also found that a shift in gender roles for women and girls usually comes with additional economic responsibilities outside the home, and also more labour demands inside the home. The gender division of labour can shift dramatically as a result of conflict, but this does not necessarily come with increased and lasting power in the household or the community. Enhanced economic independence of girls and young women has not translated into any sort of sustainable shifts in power relations, or in any visible decrease of gender discrimination. Girls' new roles during conflict may not be sustainable during peace-building or reconstruction, because of the ways that traditional patterns of gender relationships are reinforced. After a conflict is over, ideas of what it means to be feminine and masculine do not necessarily change. One report notes that: "there is a risk that old, oppressive and discriminatory patriarchal institutions and practices will be re-established, as opposed to transformed, in the aftermath of conflict".[20] This is a serious issue and may in fact be one of the factors contributing towards a return to conflict.

The following table shows how gender relations change as a result of war. It shows that even when gender roles and identities have changed because of conflict so that women or girls take on new responsibilities, this does not necessarily alter underlying values or power structures. The table also suggests some of the implications of these changes.[21] It shows the ways that conflict can create opportunities for the redefinition of gender relations, as happened in Western Europe, North America and Japan after the Second World War, but also how ideas about gender may not be transformed in the long term: "Conflict may create some space to make a redefinition of social relations possible, but in so doing it seems to rearrange, adapt, or reinforce patriarchal

REUTERS/ LUC GNAGO, courtesy www.alertnet.org

Carrying water from a public pump in Sierra Leone.

Elements of gender relations	Definition	How they may change as a result of conflict	Possible implications for women	Possible implications for girls
Gender roles	Everyday activities of women and men: the division of labour	Women take on more responsibility for providing for the family; men's work is reduced	Women gain confidence in their ability to take responsibility, while men feel 'lost', with their masculinity undermined	Girls gain confidence but may face violence and ostracisation from the community as a result of the new roles they have taken on
Gender identities	Expected characteristics and behaviours of men and women ('masculinities' and 'femininities')	Survival strategies or exposure to new ways of living may lead to change, but values remain unchanged	Gap between expected behaviours and ability to meet expectations	Adolescent, older girls and younger women may fall into a gap between programmes and support for 'children' and those for older women. They are at a time of transition from girlhood to womanhood but may have to face very 'grown up' responsibilities and issues at a young age
Gendered institutions	Institutions (household, community, state, etc.) which shape attitudes and behaviours and which control resources	Women gain some new decision-making power within the household as a result of increased economic responsibility, but structures at community, local government and national level remain male-dominated	Women have responsibilities but limited power. Their experiences may lead them to organise and work towards establishing their rights and yet they may still not be able to impact systemic change	Girls who have become heads of households or have been able to access education and other opportunities may gain some responsibilities but often most are expected to return to their former roles. Girls gain limited power in their new roles
Gender ideologies	Culturally determined attitudes and values (including those manifested in religion, language, the media) established over a long time and woven into the fabric of society, which provide justification for the prevailing gender roles, identities and structures	Attitudes and values change very slowly. In some cases they may become more hard-line and more oriented towards male control over women	The tenacity of patriarchal ideologies may lead to the gains women make being abandoned after the war is over. In some cases there may be a 'backlash' against women's empowerment, resulting in their increased vulnerability	This backlash also includes girls, perhaps even more so than women as they have even less power in the household and the community. Protection concerns may limit access for girls to education and other potentially important services and opportunities

Adapted from El-Bushra (2003), Fused in combat: gender relations and armed conflict

ideologies rather than fundamentally alter them… However, we cannot conclude that there is no scope for lasting change: changes in consciousness among women and men are in evidence and could be built upon."[22]

After conflict girls and women may have the opportunity to challenge the dominant status quo. Empowerment can be understood in terms of four distinct types of power relations:

- **Power over**: the ability to coerce and influence the actions and thoughts of the powerless.
- **Power to**: the capacity to act, to organise and change existing hierarchies.
- **Power with**: increased strength from collective action, social mobilisation and alliance-building.
- **Power from within**: increased individual consciousness, self-dignity and awareness.

In some post-conflict situations, girls and young women gain 'power with' (through collective organising) and 'power within' (through new found self-awareness) which may eventually help them have 'power to' (bring about change to their communities and societies). This can have concrete consequences. In Liberia, for example, both female genital cutting and dowry practices were generally less common after the war as a result of women and girls challenging traditional institutions.

This displaced woman in a camp in Khartoum, Sudan, sees positive changes that have taken place in gender attitudes and roles: "I think people's thinking has changed. We came to Khartoum with different perceptions and traditions. Our old customs and traditions prohibited men from entering certain places such as the kitchen. Men also thought that women could not think, were useless, and had no right to have their voice heard. All these are things of the past; they have changed. This is one benefit of the war, if wars have benefits."[23]

Governments and international organisations preoccupied with emergency reconstruction efforts often fail to pay enough attention to promoting gender equality and specifically to enhancing opportunities for girls. There is a tremendous need for support and resources for promoting sustainable gender equality in all aspects of post-conflict reconstruction – but a powerful argument is that this is a critical 'window of opportunity' to effect change. Failure to address unequal gender relations will fundamentally impact the success of post-conflict reconstruction programmes, and may increase the likelihood of a country falling back into conflict. Gender equality is not just about social justice but also about increasing the chances for sustainable peace.

GULU YOUTH FOR ACTION

Akello Betty Openy and Ochora Emmanuel, adolescents displaced by the civil war in northern Uganda, served as researchers for a participatory study on displaced adolescents. The teenage researchers interviewed more than 2,000 adolescents and adults to identify their needs and concerns.

Subsequently, Betty and Emmanuel co-founded Gulu Youth for Action, a group that works to involve young people, especially girls, in issues of concern to them, such as adolescent health and education advocacy. GYFA hopes that through its work, adolescents will learn how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and know where to go for prevention information, condoms, counselling and treatment. The group also mobilises youth to work on peace and conflict resolution.

Betty is one of eight young people chosen by Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Children in Armed Conflict, to work with him to develop a youth advisory council with representatives from both war-ravaged and peaceful countries. The group will advise and help shape the policies of his office.

"Girls in my country keep to themselves and are quiet," says Akello. "Doing the study and advocacy with the Women's Commission and my peers was helpful because a girl like myself can stand up for herself and advocate for others. I now have the confidence to talk to policy makers about girls' rights. I want to continue to help other girls gain the same confidence."[24]

b) Facing stigma

"The people in the village did not like me when I first came home. They made my life very difficult. I could not speak to them or spend time with other people my age. Because I have a baby and the father is not from my village and people do not know him, they think I am to blame. They do not understand that I was forced to be with him. They think I am a prostitute and that I will encourage their daughters. No one speaks to me."

Rose, Liberia[25]

Demobilised girls returning home often face a different kind of conflict: the stigma and shame within their families and communities. During the war, they may have become mothers, or contracted HIV as a result of rape, or have become disabled. They may be coming home to very traditional families, who believe, rightly or wrongly, that their sisters and daughters have been sexually abused, have brought 'dishonour' on the family and are therefore no longer marriageable in a society where being an unmarried woman is in itself considered a shameful thing. Marriage is often the best option for girls to obtain economic security and protection, being 'unmarriageable' often leaves girls marginalised socially and economically.[26] They may of course also be returning to homes where violence was prevalent in the first place.

This feeling is particularly acute if the girl in question has been a combatant or been abducted or raped. It is the girl, and not the rapist, who is punished by her community. Girls like Hawa, aged 18, who now lives by herself in a refugee camp in Darfur, Sudan. She still remembers the day she was raped by the Janjaweed. Three months later she still has pains in her stomach and cannot sit for very long. But she has an even greater pain: her family refuses to see her because she has been raped.[27]

This group of ex-child soldiers in Sierra Leone face the same kind of stigma: "Those of us who were abducted or forced to fight had to face the bad feelings of our families, our friends and our communities. Some of them called us *rebel pikin* or *soja pikin*, meaning 'rebel children' or 'child soldier'.

ABBIE TRAYLER-SMITH/ PANOS PICTURES

Back at school in Liberia after missing out on years of education during the war.

They didn't trust us to behave."[28] Some returning girl soldiers, especially if they feel they have violated codes of morality, struggle with fitting into the community and with learning how to behave in a non-violent way in society: "Sometimes we didn't behave. We had been taught to use violence. We didn't remember how to respect others or show kindness. No one seemed to understand the terrible shame and sadness that possessed us."[29]

Many are therefore reluctant to say that they have been fighters. This girl combatant in Liberia explains her reluctance to show her ID card which proved she has been through DD – demobilisation and disarmament: "I can show you my ID card so that you can see that I did the DD… just a moment… I put it far away in my pocket. I don't want others in this refugee camp to see it. I don't want them to know that I'm an ex-fighter. People in the camp don't like ex-fighters."[30]

ZAINA'S STORY

"I was going to school and a soldier raped me while I was walking there. I was 14 years old. The men were from the Mai Mai [pro-Congolese government militia group in the Democratic Republic of Congo]. I was very scared. I cried out for help but no one came because I was in a forest and no one heard me. Despite my cries, they carried on doing what they were doing to me. It's a habit here. Men in militias or in the military take women by force and no one talks to them about it, and no one stops them. It's commonplace.

After being raped, my life became

unbearable in my family. When I got home I told my family what happened. Directly afterwards they asked me how I could have accepted what had happened to me, and they drove me away. They refused to let me go back to school and they kicked me out. So, I came here to my maternal aunt's house. I do not understand how they could treat me like this.

There are two of us – my sister and myself. We were both raped. When we eat, we eat separately from the other children. Normally my aunt doesn't mistreat us. But when a member of our immediate family came to her house, she would begin to mistreat us. For instance, when I touched my aunt's things in her house she insulted me. But the community network visited us and gave advice to my aunt. And sometimes they give us cabbage seeds so that helps us with our farming. Except for the community network no-one comes to talk to me or to give me advice. What I want is for my parents to accept me again. That is my main worry that hurts me."

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After any war young girls need help.

HEALING RITUALS

In some communities, one of the ways in which girls, their families and communities can be helped to come to terms with what has happened and allow the girls to be reintegrated into their communities is through healing rituals.

One study in Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda found that rituals helped the child to reconnect to their community and to help heal the trauma of war.[31] Sometimes these rituals combined traditional and religious practices such as prayer, song and dance. Examples of such rituals for girls included:

- A girl in Northern Uganda "was made to step on an egg. Then they slaughtered a goat for her, and the community gathered to rejoice, and they took her to church. For four days they had a fasting in the church, showing her gratefulness to God for bringing her back home. After some time, they took her to town, and she was taken back to school."
- In Sierra Leone, rituals vary by region. In some parts of the country, girls returning from a fighting force were given herb baths by traditional healers as a way to cleanse them.
- When girls in Mozambique who were abducted by RENAMO forces returned to Josina Machel Island, they received advice along with a ritual: "We would make a special braid for the girls and give them some advice about not having sex with lots of men and only to have sex when they are married. The braid would help them forget their bad experiences and memories and relieve their anger."

The study also sounds a note of caution: "Some rituals violate the human rights of women and girls, reinforce patriarchy and oppressive gender roles and support gender discrimination and sexism – such as the belief that women are the property of men." This caution implies the need for sensitive work to support women, and especially women leaders, working together with girls in their communities, to design and conduct appropriate healing rituals.

c) Girl mothers and their babies

Young mothers face new responsibilities, often within a context of stigma and exclusion by the community, and without the skills and training needed to secure sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their children, as this study pointed out: "Young mothers report that because they are often cut out of family and social networks, they struggle to provide education, food

and healthcare to their children born due to forced marriage. Many of these young mothers have lost many years of education and lack the skills to pursue productive livelihoods, which are exacerbated due to the stigma they face from their past experiences and their exclusion from social networks."[32]

Girl mothers have difficulty being accepted in communities, because they have returned with a child. According to one study, these young women "appear to have higher rates of rejection by community members and more problems reintegrating than do their male counterparts."[33]

This young mother in Guinea said: "The adult women treat us as children and make us feel we do not belong to their group. The young and single girls of our age who have no children make us feel we are dirty because we did something bad and they feel if they are with us the men will not like them, so they do not like us anymore. We are lonely most of the time."[34] The reasons why families reject returning girls who are new mothers are complex. Perhaps the family somehow blames her for breaching the rules that society has laid down for female sexual conduct. Perhaps they cannot feed two more mouths. They may be afraid that the father of the child will pursue their daughter and might be violent.

Many young mothers need help looking after their children – if they are born of rape, the mother herself may feel negatively towards them. Children of young mothers who have been raped are also likely to face stigma that may endanger their health or even their lives. They may not be registered at birth, they may be abandoned or even killed.

In one study, 65 per cent of participants described children of rape as particularly vulnerable to social exclusion or stigma on the basis of their origins. Such children are labelled: 'devil's children' (Rwanda), 'children of shame' (Kosovo), 'children of the enemy' (Timor-Leste); 'monster babies' (Nicaragua), 'Janjaweed babies' or 'dirty babies' (Darfur, Sudan).[36] The young mothers have a difficult task; but many love their children despite how they were conceived.

Reported Risk Factors for Children born of Wartime Rape/Exploitation

Percentage of individual participants reported at risk[35]

Stigma	65%
Health	55%
Lack of registration	40%
Abandonment	30%
Poverty	30%
Infanticide	29%

GOD'S GIFTS: FOUR YOUNG MOTHERS' STORIES

- ***"I left my family home because my brothers chased me away. But after a while my mother asked me to go back home. My child was sick, but they refused to give me any money to treat him, they said that it wasn't worth the trouble to care for a child who had no known father. He got ill three times and I had to do agricultural work to earn a bit of money to treat him. The last time he got ill, I couldn't provide treatment for him, and he died. Now my brothers and all my family love me and treat me well because I no longer have a child."***

- ***"Problems are arising now that my child is getting older. Father says I should take the child back to his father, although I don't know which soldier I had him with, or where he is at the moment."***

- ***"People considered me to be something less than a woman, for they said a girl who produced a child while unmarried was to be banished from society; no-one could give her water to drink, and even if her child got ill no-one could even lend her 100 francs to buy some pills. They would say: 'Go away, you slut!' No-one could help you in this case."***

- ***"Well, I love this child whose father I don't know, and I love him just like the other children. I love him because it was me who gave birth to him, and to me he's just the same as the others. And as well as that, I thank God for what he has done for me, because I think all my children are gifts which He has given me, because not everyone is able to have children."*** [37]

The experience of becoming a mother while still a child, and in such adverse circumstances, requires girl mothers to become extraordinarily resilient. They can, with help, manage their situations and are prepared to work hard to look after their babies and children. But they have a right to support – perhaps to live with other girls in similar situations, access to childcare and an income so that they do not have to put themselves in exploitative situations.[38]

YOU ARE SOMEBODY![39]

This poem was written for 300 child mothers who marched proudly in the streets of Gulu, their home town in Northern Uganda on 25 May 2007.

You are somebody!

You are not damaged goods
You are not spoilt
You are not a reject
You are somebody!

They use their mouths to break your spirit
Like he invaded your womanhood and broke your body
I use words to build your soul
And bring life to you again...

You matter, you count
You are important, you make a difference
You are here in the today
Despite of the wrongs and pains of yesterday

You can be more than what you are today
You will reach a higher mountain than ever before
You are a survivor, a fighter, a conqueror
Stand on the mountain of pain and stigma in triumph
You are somebody!

Just think it, see it, dream it, become it
You are somebody!
Define her to you.

Janah Ncube

4 Girls left out:
Demilitarisation, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration

"By and large, international assistance operations still effectively neglect the specific needs of women and girls in armed movements as part of the DDR process."
Noleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM[40]

"Most of the girls who were captured by the fighting forces and kept for sex were left out of the reintegration programme… These girls were abandoned and had to fend for their survival. Many have been exposed to further violations and continue to suffer."
Youth report for the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission

After a conflict, many organisations fund and organise what are known as DDRR (Demilitarisation, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration) programmes. DDRR programmes are intended to demobilise soldiers, take guns out of circulation and help ex-combatants to return to civilian life through, for example, training and programmes which give them access to credit. Sometimes the returning fighters are given a sum of money. But more often than not, girls who have been fighters are not included in these programmes. Sometimes, this is because they do not want to be included for fear of stigma, sometimes, their commanders prevent them, and sometimes the programmes are only designed for boys.

DEFINING DDRR

Disarmament **is the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. It frequently entails the assembly and cantonment of combatants; it should also comprise the development of arms management programmes, including the safe storage and final disposition of weapons, which may entail their destruction. De-mining may also be part of this process.**

Demobilisation **refers to the process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation**

into civilian life. It generally entails registration of former combatants; some kind of assistance to enable them to meet their immediate basic needs; discharge; and transportation to their home communities.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration refers to the process which allows ex-combatants and their families to adapt, economically and socially, to productive civilian life. It includes formal education, vocational training and social reintegration. It generally entails the provision of a package of cash or in-kind compensation, training and job- and income-generating projects. These measures frequently depend for their effectiveness upon other, broader undertakings, such as assistance to returning refugees and internally displaced persons; economic development at the community and national level; infrastructure rehabilitation; truth and reconciliation efforts; and institutional reform. Enhancement of local capacity is often crucial for the long-term success of reintegration.[41, 42]

Most DDRR programmes assume that combatants are male. Sometimes they provide separate programmes for children and adolescents, although often this is not gender-specific. Girl mothers are rarely included in DDRR programmes, although they may well have been combatants.

As children, they are often omitted from DDRR programmes, for example, in Guinea-Bissau, only 119 children were officially demobilised out of thousands involved in the armed conflict of 1998-99. After war ended in Papua New Guinea in 1997, thousands of children who fought with government forces and the opposition Bougainville Revolutionary Army were not demobilised. In Colombia only 10 per cent of the estimated total number of child soldiers have been demobilised since 1999. In Angola the authorities did not classify under-18s in the fighting force as soldiers, and so they were excluded from the assistance offered to adults.[43] Girls miss out on two counts: first because they are children, and second because they are female.

- Timor-Leste – more than 10,000 male ex-combatants registered for assistance but females were excluded.[44]
- Angola – females in armies who performed non-military duties were not entitled to any support under the DDRR programme.[45]
- Sierra Leone – among the 6,774 children who were demobilised, only 513 were girls.[46]
- Mozambique – with the exception of a limited number of young women who were officially demobilised from the FRELIMO government force, girls did not participate in official demobilisation processes, and only boys took part in programmes to rehabilitate child soldiers.[47]

REUTERS/ RADU SIGHETI, courtesy www.alertnet.org

Dreaming of the future in Ethiopia.

The consequences for girl soldiers, who in many countries make up a larger percentage of soldiers than previously assumed, can be dire. Many former girl combatants risk being forced into crime or prostitution to survive.

GIRLS LEFT BEHIND

In Sierra Leone, many girls who had been combatants were left out of the demobilisation and reintegration process. Up to 60 per cent of these girls had been abducted. A special project was established to identify and assist some 3,000 girls. In 2003, 724 girls registered,

110 were reunited with their families, and 460 enrolled in skills training and/or income-generation programmes. In 2004, UNICEF launched the 'Girls Left Behind' project, which offered girls and young women basic education and skills training over a short period of time, together with counselling and basic primary healthcare.

The project focused on girls and young women who were either still living with their captors or who had been abducted and had been released or had escaped.

The majority of girls and young women originally said they felt like social outcasts, but after the workshop they felt more confident, respected, more capable of settling conflicts and much happier.[48]

Why aren't girls involved?

"Why were so many girls left behind? Many were afraid to come forward. We knew that the attack on us was also an attack against our communities and we were afraid our families would reject us and blame us for what happened. It wasn't our fault."

Youth report for the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission

There are a number of reasons why girls are left out of DDRR programmes or, when they are included, their needs are poorly provided for. First, gender stereotyping assumes that all combatants are male.

Second, combatants entitled to DDRR are either self-selecting or chosen by their commanders. Both can be problematic for girls. In Liberia, commanders drew up the lists of those entitled to DDRR and excluded girls. In Sierra Leone, commanders did not release girls to the programme. In some cases commanders confiscate girls' weapons before disarmament which means they cannot show proof they have been soldiers and have to stay with the soldiers to whom they have been 'wives'.

Third, because of stigma many girls do not want to be identified by their families and communities as former fighters. One researcher in Sierra Leone noted: "A lot of their strategy is secrecy. They slink back home and don't want anyone to know what has happened to them… they look at various strategies for integration and the best strategy for them is just to go back to their village and downplay what has happened to them. They initially go back to their own family and if that works out, they stay there. But often it doesn't work out, and they go someplace else."[49]

One Liberian ex-combatant said: "Most of my friends don't know that I was fighting. I like to keep it that way. People don't like ex-fighters. After the war I went living with my aunt, only she knows, but for the rest I don't want them to know. If they know and something bad happens they will point at me, saying I did it."[50]

Fourth, such programmes assume that girls will return to the places they came from. This fails to address some of the reasons why they left to become soldiers in the first place – escaping abuse and violence at home, or seeking a less restricted life. To qualify for demobilisation, they may have to hand in a weapon which they likely do not have, and often to live in a camp, where they fear further violence.

Fifth, girls who have been soldiers may be perceived as a threat to their families. Because of what they have been through, they may behave aggressively, "use offensive language, abuse drugs, smoke and kill and eat other people's animals".[51] Returning to their old selves and playing traditional roles in the family and community may just be too difficult.

Finally, governments are too embarrassed to admit that they have used girls in their armed forces – a clear contravention of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – as this makes them look bad among their peers in the international arena.

CELEBRATION

Marie is lucky. Aged 17, but looking much younger, she was abducted from her private girls' school by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda. She said that in the fighting force she was "very cruel" but she had no choice. When she returned home, people sang and danced in celebration. Religious leaders came to her house and told her: "Don't think backwards, only forwards." Marie described how the clan leader had told her she was "… a useful girl, and I should set an example... and keep praying for those in the bush. They believed in me."

In her village, only two of 27 abducted children returned; the rest remained in the LRA or died… Marie's goals are to finish her education, get a job and help her family financially. She does not want to marry.[52]

5 The economic impact of violent conflict on girls and young women

"Most of the children in Afghanistan work on the streets. At the age when they should just study, they are forced to work and earn a living for their families."

Girl (14), Afghanistan[53]

"I now live on prostitution… I live in the street exposed to all kinds of danger and I am tired of living in the street. To cope, I take drugs; either cocaine or brown-brown [crack]. [When I take the drugs] I feel relieved and I don't think of any problems, no bad memories of the war, and no sadness."

Girl, Sierra Leone[54]

It is difficult to make a living, or even to find enough food, water and shelter to survive in war. It is equally so once the violence has ended. Peace requires the re-establishment of community social networks and cohesion in order for markets to function and livelihoods to be possible for girls. During the chaos of conflict, girls may lose their parents and families, find themselves looking after younger brothers and sisters and having to find ways of providing enough for them to eat. The male members of the household may have left home to fight, taken the family's possessions to a safe place, or simply gone to look for work. Girls, and in particular adolescent girls, are often expected to take on a role in maintaining the livelihoods of their families during and after conflict.

Once the fighting is over, finding enough food, water and shelter continue to be urgent priorities. But this is not easy. The economic conditions are often highly insecure, with high levels of poverty and small numbers of people, usually men, able to access new opportunities for income and status, working as a security guard, a translator, or even with a non-governmental organisation, for example. The government is unlikely to have resumed basic services or security. Roads and other infrastructure may remain in a poor condition, crops are ruined, markets inaccessible or not operating. Food is likely to be scarce; jobs even scarcer and the means to make a livelihood – finding and keeping access to the resources needed for survival in both the immediate and the long-term[55] are made very difficult – especially for girls.

JENNIFER'S STORY

"Each morning, Jennifer wakes early to carry the heavy pot of cooked cassava she made the night before to market to be sold. With what she earns, she can barely pay the rent on her hut or feed herself and her younger brothers and sisters. But at 13, she heads the household because her parents were killed in the war in Northern Uganda, and every day she wonders how she will avoid abduction by rebels or if she will ever finish school." [56]

As Jennifer's story illustrates, sometimes war is never really over. A peace agreement or formal ending of hostilities does not automatically stop local or sporadic violence, abductions or criminal activity.

There are many ways in which conflict affects girls' economic well-being and livelihoods. The probability of securing economic livelihoods can be based on the degree to which an individual has access to a number of 'assets'. Linked to these are capabilities (what a person can do or be) and activities (production, consumption, and investment). As the chart on the next page shows, there are specific effects of each of these assets on girls' lives and their ability to find economic security.

Making a living in a country that is just emerging from conflict is not easy, even for an adult man, let alone for a young girl. When the end of conflict is not accompanied by external support for safe and sustainable livelihoods or the re-establishment of markets, there may be reduced employment opportunities for individuals and communities and the vulnerability of girls is increased.

When war is over, girls and young women may find themselves having to leave their

The effects of conflict on girls and their livelihoods [57]

Livelihood assets	Conflict shocks	Effects on girls
Natural assets – agricultural and grazing land, water resources, timber and fish	Looting or destruction	Girls affected in the same way as other members of the household but vulnerable to rape and sexual violence and often responsible for collection of water so lack of water resources can have major time implications
Physical assets – farm equipment, seeds, tools, sewing machines, vehicles, livestock, houses	Burning, displacement, loss of access to grazing land	Again, girls are vulnerable to rape and physical violence
Human assets – labour power within a household, education, skills and vocational training	Death, loss of productivity, disability, school and workplace closures	Girls may become heads of household and may lose access to vital health care as well as education
Financial assets – wages, access to credit, savings	Collapse of banking system, displacement causing unemployment	Girls and young women may not have many financial assets of their own and are therefore highly dependent on others
Social assets – kinship structures, religious groups, neighbourhood associations	Displacement, fighting between groups	Social structures may support girls but may also work against them and restrict their freedoms. The loss of such systems may work against girls but may also work in their favour and give them more choice in their lives
Political assets – citizenships, access to political leadership, recourse to a functioning legal system	Deterioration of state, loss of legal system	The political and legal systems may already discriminate against girls and mean that they are not able to participate in employment or the formal economy. This is exacerbated during conflict. Rights to land and inheritance for girls may not be enshrined in law

home and make a new life elsewhere, either in another part of their own country or somewhere totally new and strange. Their household may have been broken up due to death, abduction, displacement or migration. They may have lost all their possessions. They may no longer be able to travel, to go to the local markets that they depended on for buying and often selling food. Water sources may have disappeared and girls may find themselves having to walk a long way to fetch water that even then may not be safe to drink.

Lack of education, training and regular economic activity may have left a whole generation of youth in many post-conflict countries without formal education, literacy, work experience or proficiencies. While these young people may be skilled in survival, they have only the basic literacy, numeracy and other life skills needed to survive in the modern world.[58] When girls try to engage in some forms of income-generating activity, they are also hampered by lack of capital, lack of marketing skills, and an informal economic sector that is very insecure.[59] A study in a number of African countries in a post-conflict situation found that most girl respondents "were engaged in petty trading, agricultural labour, and odd jobs at very

FABIO DE PAOLA

Reuniting families in Sierra Leone.

low pay."[60] Hardly any were employed in the formal sector. Unless they had another income, "it was almost impossible to generate income or to access education and shelter."[61] Young, single women had better prospects of finding work than those with children but: "while the formerly abducted girl soldiers are proving to be tireless micro-traders, the sustainability of their enterprises is constrained by the lack of capital and marketing skills, not to mention the fact that the informal sector itself is highly insecure".[62]

Girl combatants, marginalised from their communities, unemployed and lacking training opportunities, are particularly vulnerable and can end up in serious poverty. Most of the girls in one study reported hunger and extreme poverty. This Angolan girl noted: "Here there is no-one to help me… And so I go to sleep without eating… I have no-one to go to ask, because people do not give anything… I go to church but just like this [in her one set of clothes]. I go because I want to be buried; I don't want to be buried like a dog".[63]

Lack of livelihood opportunities produces a strong sense of post-conflict disillusionment. Girls, especially former combatants, held many expectations of 'peace' – for security, opportunities, a better life. However the post-conflict period may turn out to be disappointing, leading to frustration, apathy, social marginalisation and loss of hope.[64] This disillusionment in itself can contribute to insecurity.

Sexual exploitation

"Many girls find themselves on the street, going into prostitution because of poverty. It really is a terrible thing."

Young woman (18), Burundi [65]

Unless opportunities for household economic security are ensured, girls' vulnerability to sexual and other forms of violence is very high. Girls and young women may be forced to sell their bodies in order to make a living. "Sexual exploitation of girls is exacerbated in situations where there are few opportunities for displaced or refugee populations to engage in livelihoods that meet basic needs. In such cases, commercial and exploitative sex may be among the few options girls have to generate income or acquire goods to support themselves or assist their families'

survival,", says one report.[66]

In Southern Sudan, for example, where, some time after the peace agreement, most people are still living in extreme poverty, schools can only operate if students pay fees to cover the teachers' salaries. As a result, exchanging sex for money becomes a means for girls to secure the necessary school fees and money for uniform, school supplies, as well as other items such as soap and sanitary pads.[67]

In Sierra Leone, many female ex-combatants turned to petty crime, drug use or prostitution to survive.[68] Soldiers have disposable income and sex work may be the only way to earn money for many girls. But it carries a heavy price. Many young women contract HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. This story indicates that projects like the one below make a real difference to girls' lives and could be replicated.

MARY'S STORY

Mary (not her real name) began her teens as the sole carer for her dying mother. At 14 the girl watched her mother being lowered into a pauper's grave. Unbeknown to her, Mary had become one of Uganda's 880,000 children orphaned by AIDS.

Mary's grandmother, who brewed illicit alcohol and sold it to male clientele for a few cents, agreed to take her in. Soon afterwards, her grandmother decided that touting two commodities was more profitable than one, and she began to sell Mary to men for 20 US cents a time. With nobody to turn to, Mary was trapped. She had two babies by the age of 17. Soon, Mary was experiencing acute abdominal pains. She was at a loss as to where to seek help until another girl suggested she visit Mama Joyce.

Joyce Kintu, a professional nurse, started AMREF's Commercial Sex Workers' Project in the Kampala slum of Makerere III three years ago. Her job is to encourage the slum's 400 sex workers to be counselled and tested for HIV, to practise safer sex through the use of condoms and, ultimately, to abandon the sex trade in favour of less dangerous income-earning activities. The centre's tiny compound, provided by the local administration, has a small patient room for counselling and testing and a meeting room where women hold discussions and talks on a broad range of topics related to HIV, AIDS and women's and children's rights. At one end of the sun-baked backyard a group of young women are bent over sewing machines. They are learning how to tailor.

At first, the stigma attached to the clinic kept the young women away, but Joyce changed tactics, offering mother and child health services. Safe in the knowledge that a family-oriented centre would not attract comment, the girls began to come in their hundreds.

While Mary's first visit to Mama Joyce confirmed her fear that she was HIV-positive, it also gave her hope. Joyce would like to establish Mary in the second-hand clothing business, but whatever she chooses, Mary's earnings must exceed her income from the sex trade or she is likely to return to her former work. Meanwhile, she has a friendly centre where she can go for treatment and companionship.[69]

Girls alone

Any child who is alone and therefore unprotected is at risk. In the uncertain, violence-prone situations typical of post-conflict recovery, they are particularly so. According to UNICEF, in the 1990s more than a million children became separated from their families because of war. Such children, says Save the Children, "are at increased risk of exploitation, sexual abuse, coerced military service, sickness and death."[70] In addition to this, girls often lack inheritance rights and are more likely than boys to have possessions confiscated from them once they become orphaned.

In Rwanda, the genocide left around 60,000 households headed by children – 75 per cent of whom were girls.[71]

In Burundi, the number of children between the ages of seven and 14 who are forced to work to provide for the needs of their brothers and sisters rose to 30.6 per cent.[72]

Many girls are orphaned due to AIDS or other factors associated with years of conflict. According to UNICEF, 13 of the

17 countries with over 100,000 children orphaned by AIDS are either experiencing armed conflict or are on the brink of an emergency situation.

Conflict disproportionately affects girls and women. Yet peace-building efforts are disproportionately male-led and the power to bring change is almost exclusively held by men. Post-conflict livelihoods programmes are often focused on employment creation for young men so that they are not idle and therefore do not pose a threat to security. A post-conflict survey of opportunities in Sudan clearly shows a bias against girls. For example, the larger number of opportunities to gain useful skills and jobs are mainly oriented towards males. When girls are given opportunities for skills development, it is usually in activities such as dress-making or other domestic skills that reinforce dominant gender ideologies and which are not always marketable.

With so many households headed by girls, programmes funded during post-conflict times should focus on the right of girls and young women to find safe ways of supporting themselves and their families. Such programmes would not only enable girls to rebuild their lives but also have the potential to give girls confidence and to change the ways in which they are perceived by their families and their communities. Unless opportunities for economic security are ensured, the potential for community-based and other forms of violence is very high.

"I CAN LIVE BY MY OWN MEANS NOW"

Princess yanked on the cord of a heavy chainsaw, revving it to life and shattering the silence on a hillside outside Liberia's capital Monrovia. Today, the lean, smiling 28-year-old in the red bandana is a carpenter. But at the age of 12, Princess was one of thousands of young girls forced to fight in the brutal conflicts that ravaged this country between 1989 and 2003.

As many as a third of the fighters who rampaged through Liberia during three consecutive conflicts now nicknamed World Wars I, II and III, were women and girls. Princess missed all of her schooling as a result. Today, she can barely read and cannot write. Instead she has learnt her trade in a training programme set up with support from Plan for former soldiers.

"I was the only woman in my carpentry class, but I have worked very hard to make the men realise that they should not treat me any different to them," Princess said, her smile returning as the conversation turned to her future not her past.

Her husband left her last year, angry that she was earning more than him. "I don't mind, I can live by my own means now," she said proudly.

Her wages pay for two of her three children to get the schooling she was denied during the war. "If they can be educated, they can stop the bad things happening to them which happened to me. That is my dream."[73]

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ABBIE TRAYLER-SMITH/ PANOS PICTURES

Training for a new life in Liberia.

6 "No-one seems to care" – the right to protection

For girls and young women, the coming of peace does not necessarily mean they are now safe and protected. As we have seen in Chapter 1, there are a number of international standards and national laws that relate to the protection of girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. Article 2 in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, for example, specifically requires States Parties to protect and care for children affected by armed conflict and promote their recovery and reintegration into society, without discrimination based on gender. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 calls for, among other things, the protection of girls and women from gender-based violence during and after conflict and an end to impunity for war crimes relating to violence against women and girls. The Geneva Conventions and Rome Statute prohibit 'indecent assault', rape and forced prostitution.

However, in some post-conflict countries there are tensions between different types of laws. The legal system of the country may be mixed, with a foundation in common or civil law – based on written laws and their interpretation by courts. Often, these are combined with religious law (developed from a religious text and covering family and similar issues) and traditional law (based on local customs and often unwritten). In terms of protecting girls, it is not always clear how the different systems relate to each other, what their respective jurisdictions are, how much authority they convey in daily life, and what can be done to ensure that the rights of girls and women are not circumscribed.

The reason is that in the short to medium-term, it is unlikely for post-conflict states to possess the capabilities or resources to secure the rule of law and ensure an efficient judicial system. A common law system, for instance, requires that parties to a legal claim are represented by legal professionals, that the state will provide legal aid to those that cannot afford representation in criminal cases, and that the process is accessible. In post-conflict states these are aspirations, not reality. Similar challenges exist with a civil law system, as there is an expectation of adequate numbers of well-trained judges capable of functioning in a formal system.

As a result, most post-conflict justice and security systems are a mix of different types of legal norms. There is a risk in these situations that girls and women will lose internationally agreed protections. The legal structures and court systems are often insensitive to gender issues such as the shame of admitting to rape, and particularly to age-sensitive gender issues for girls such as child-friendly courts. This means that women and girls are unlikely to try to access them.

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE: RWANDAN WOMEN AND JUSTICE FOR RAPE

"For those of us on the road to death, this justice will be too slow. We will be dead and no one will know our story. Our families have been killed and our remaining children are too young to know. What happened to us will be buried with us. The people for whom this tribunal was set up are facing extinction – we are dying. We will be dead before we see any justice."

This young Rwandan woman lives on the outskirts of Kigali in a co-operative set up to house and help rape victims with HIV and AIDS. She speaks for the many thousands of women who have been raped during the genocide but who have seen no redress. An International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was set up to provide a justice system. But by the

A young mother and her baby in an Internally Displaced People's camp in Uganda.

tenth anniversary of the genocide, only 21 sentences had been handed down and 90 per cent of these contained no rape convictions. In fact, there was double the number of acquittals as convictions.[74] This report from Human Rights Watch explains why:

"Ten years after the 1994 genocide, many of the tens of thousands of Rwandan women survivors of sexual violence have remained without legal redress or reparation. Perpetrators of the genocide employed sexual violence against women and girls as a brutally effective tool to humiliate and subjugate Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus.

Mechanisms for legal redress have let down women raped during the genocide. This includes the regular court system (commonly referred to in Rwanda as the 'classic' court system), which has its origins in the colonial period, and the recently instituted *gacaca* system, an adaptation of participatory, community-level truth-telling and accountability intended to handle the overwhelming caseload from the genocide period. Given the massive number of rapes during the genocide, an extraordinarily small number of cases have been heard at a domestic level.

Weaknesses in the legal system include gaps in statutory law, insufficient protections for victims and witnesses who wish to report or testify, lack of training for authorities with respect to sexual violence crimes, and poor representation of women among police and judicial authorities.

Seven years after the genocide, the Rwandan government adopted a child protection law and launched a nationwide campaign against sexual violence. While this law improves protections for child victims of sexual violence, the Rwandan Penal Code is critically flawed with respect to sexual violence: it does not define rape and as a result fails to fully protect adult rape victims.

Many rape victims face urgent material needs: food, shelter, healthcare, and education for their children. Preoccupation with these needs robs them of the time and energy needed to seek legal redress."[75]

Another report notes: "In this era of international justice, it has been remarkable how little of the debate has included the voices of the victims for whom these tribunals have ostensibly been formed. What do the rape victims think of these institutions? What do they want from international courts? What have they gained from them? There is not a rape survivor to whom I spoke who had not heard of the ICTR and who did not have thoughts about the institution. They are watching."[76]

a) Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

There are many ways of working with young people to help them come to terms with what has happened to them during conflict. Truth and reconciliation commissions are often set up to establish what really happened, to give people a chance to talk about their experiences, often in front of their attackers, and to help reconcile people. Over the past 25 years, nearly 20 truth and reconciliation commissions have been set up in post-conflict countries. Very few of these have involved children or girls specifically, although in 2001 the UN Security Council called on States to meet the special needs of girls affected by armed conflict, put an end to sexual violence and address impunity by ensuring "that post-conflict truth-and-reconciliation processes address serious abuses involving children".[77]

In El Salvador, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission noted the impact of conflict on children. In Guatemala it made recommendations relating to children. In Sierra Leone, it was made a legal obligation to include children in the peace process and to hear stories of their experiences. The Statute for the Special Court in Sierra Leone includes a number of child-specific crimes, for example, the recruitment and deployment of child soldiers under 15, and the abuse of girls under 14. This was a recognition of the major role that children, both boys and girls, had played in the war, and the importance of making them part of the peace process.

THE CHILDREN OF THE NATION

A child-friendly version of the final report of Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was prepared with the help of children themselves. Robert and Regina, both aged 12, presented the report to a gathering that included the President and Vice President, Members of Parliament and representatives of international organisations. These were some of their priorities:

- **"We want an end to the recruitment and participation of children in armed forces and groups.**
- **We want support to children both as victims and perpetrators of violence, especially family reunification and reintegration of returnee children and child soldiers including psycho-social support, drug rehabilitation and support to disabled children.**
- **We want to see the needs of war-affected children being addressed in a much more pragmatic way. This includes measures to meet the basic needs of children and their families, including improved access to quality education, healthcare and nutrition, water and sanitation, the elimination of child labour and sexual abuse/exploitation and recreational space for children.**
- **We want to see support to children's organisations at all levels in order to facilitate the participation of children in all aspects of public life affecting them, and this includes policies on children.**
- **We want the role of education in building a culture of respect for human rights, especially in relation to the development of educational materials on peace, human rights and democracy for use in both formal and non-formal educational settings.**

We the children of this nation were the most vulnerable group during the decade-long civil war. In this regard, we want to be the first priority on the Government agenda in terms of implementing the TRC recommendations… We are the future of the nation and you should build a strong foundation for the country through us. Never again must the protection of the children of Sierra Leone be compromised for any reason."[78]

b) Peacekeepers or perpetrators?

"Some of the peacekeepers who had come to protect us became customers for sex. And they were not the only ones. Everyone wanted to use us but no one seemed to care about us."

Youth statement for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone.[79]

"Perhaps most disturbing of everything we saw and learned was the association, in the vast majority of peacekeeping environments, between the arrival of peacekeeping personnel and increased prostitution, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS infection."

"Women, War and Peace", Independent experts' assessment, UNIFEM[80]

Because girls are often in a vulnerable position after a conflict, they may be abused by the very people who are supposed to protect them. This may be family, teachers or the community around them; it is also, sometimes, those in charge of refugee camps, local and international aid workers or United Nations peacekeepers.

This problem came to international attention in West Africa in 2002 when 67 aid workers from more than 40 agencies were accused of offering refugee children money, food, and promises of education in exchange for sex. In February 2002, the UNHCR and Save the Children interviewed 1,500 men, women, and children refugees from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Their report revealed that: "girls between the ages of 13 and 18 were sexually exploited by male aid workers, many of whom were employed by national and international NGOs and the UN, and also by UN peacekeepers and community leaders". "They say 'a kilo for sex'," reported a woman from Guinea about the rampant extortion of sex for food by aid workers who abused their positions of power over the distribution of goods and services. A man interviewed stated that "without a sister, wife or daughter to 'offer the NGO workers', one doesn't have access to oil, tents, medicines, loans, education and skill training, and ration cards". The sexual exploitation of girls, fuelled by the disparity between the relative wealth and power of

the aid workers and peacekeepers and the poverty and dependency of refugees, was most extensive in camps with large, well-established relief programmes.[82]

A peacekeeping operation entails a large number of young men – and some women – coming into an area from outside, along with the bureaucracy needed to run the camp or area they are protecting. Women may find welcome employment as translators, secretaries, domestic workers. Few are hired locally as professionals.

But when a military force moves in, there is also often a demand for sexual services, and peacekeepers are no exception. In Bosnia, it was estimated that international staff – including police monitors, soldiers, mechanics, social workers and aid workers – accounted for about 30 per cent of brothel revenues.[83]

The peacekeeping soldiers have more money than locals, and in conditions where people are desperate and hungry, many young women – and their families – feel they have no option but to sell their bodies. The independent experts for the "Women, War and Peace" report for UNIFEM learned of "starving Kosovar Albanian families who, as the demand for young girls increased with the arrival of peacekeepers, sold their daughters into prostitution. More than 1,000 girls not yet 15 or 16 years old are reportedly working as prostitutes in Macedonian brothels." They noted that in Sierra Leone, the estimates of young girls involved in the sex trade are even higher. "I am the only person who has an income in my family," said a 19-year-old commercial sex worker in Freetown. "Since UNAMSIL's arrival, I have been able to make enough money to support my family. My clients are mainly peacekeepers. Of course I do not like to trade my body for money, but what choice do I have?"[84]

There are also consequences for the peacekeepers, though they are rarely prosecuted. Perhaps the most important is that they may contract and spread HIV. One survey indicates that this is a far greater danger to most than being killed in conflict[85] – not that this is recognised by the peacekeepers themselves. One young Eritrean soldier stated: "I have seen so many of my friends die at the front and I know that I might die. Why should I worry about a disease that would take years to kill me when I might die tomorrow?"[86]

UN Sexual Abuse Scandals[81]

2003 Nepalese troops accused of sexual abuse while serving in DR Congo. Six are later jailed

2004 Two UN peacekeepers repatriated after being accused of abuse in Burundi

2005 UN troops accused of rape and sexual abuse in Sudan

2006 UN personnel accused of rape and exploitation on missions in Haiti and Liberia

2007 UN launches probe into sexual abuse claims in Ivory Coast

UNAIDS said that: "Military personnel are a population group at special risk of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV. In peacetime, STD infection rates among armed forces are generally two to five times higher than in civilian populations; in time of conflict the difference can be 50 times higher or more". "I can hardly think of a better vector than tens of thousands of young men with hard currency roaming around the country," noted another relief worker.[87]

HIV infection rates among peacekeepers are believed to range up to 30 per cent in Tanzania and 40-60 per cent in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Zimbabwe, which has troops deployed in the DRC, may have up to 70 per cent infected.[88]

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

As a result of the reports of abuse in 2002, then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan laid out disciplinary measures that would be taken in such circumstances and a UN Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises was developed. The Task Force clarified minimum standards of conduct for humanitarian personnel.[89]

However, this did not stop the abuse. In 2004, UN military and civilian peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were again accused of sexual misconduct. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, Jordanian Ambassador to the UN, was asked to be Special Advisor on

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Peacekeeping Personnel. His report, in March 2005, recommended reform of the UN systems. The UN General Assembly endorsed the recommendations and said they should apply to civilians as well as military personnel.

Since then, UN agencies and NGOs have been taking steps to apply the standards of conduct. HIV/AIDS prevention awareness skills and advice are now incorporated into training for peacekeeping personnel and some peacekeeping operations have gender advisers.[90] There have as yet been few disciplinary measures: France, India, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Uruguay have taken some form of disciplinary or criminal action against 29 military and civilian personnel. But there are many more who continue to commit sexual crimes against vulnerable girls and women – and still get away with it.[91]

c) Violence in the home

"With the transition from conflict to peace, a shift in Gender Based Violence seems to take place from the public to the private domain through an increase in domestic violence… In the post-conflict period, violence shifts to the domestic sphere."
World Bank[92]

War means that violence becomes commonplace. Even in so-called peace, heightened levels of violence are still latent in society as a whole. Men who have been used to fighting may come home and find it difficult to secure a decent job with a reasonable income. Some may turn their anger into violence against those closest and most vulnerable: the female members of their families. Girls and their mothers may also suffer from a general increase in levels of violence in society as a result of the conflict, which again has direct consequences in the home. Changes in perceptions of femininity and of masculinity which took place during wartime may now create tension and conflict with traditional values and ways of behaving. In spite of disarmament programmes, weapons remain commonplace.

- In the United States in 2002, four Special Forces soldiers at Fort Bragg in North Carolina killed their wives within a period of six weeks. Three of the four had recently returned from overseas duty in Afghanistan.[93]
- In Uganda, women and girls in displaced people's camps are at high risk of domestic violence and of attacks when performing daily tasks such as collecting wood. The police stated that at least 989 young girls had been raped in displaced people's camps in the five northern districts between January and July 2006.[94]
- In the mid-1990s, studies in Cambodia indicated that many women – as many as 75 per cent in one study – were victims of domestic violence, often at the hands of men who had kept the small arms and light weapons they used during the war.
- In Timor-Leste, official statistics for December 2002 showed that nearly 40 per cent of all reported crimes were cases of domestic violence or violence against women, such as rape and sexual assault. While other crimes had decreased, domestic violence was still on the increase. The then Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Sergio Vieira de Mello, said that domestic violence had become a cancer in Timorese society and launched a nationwide campaign against it.[95]

Transforming gender roles is crucial to

FABIO DE PAOLA

Poverty and destruction are bitter results of conflict in Sierra Leone.

healing the trauma of violent conflict and re-building social networks and communities debilitated by fighting.

MORNING CALLS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA

In the West Bank and Gaza, domestic violence has risen as a side-effect of the increased high levels of tension, violence, unemployment, poverty, insecurity, curfews and overcrowding due to the bulldozing of homes by the Israeli army. A study by the Women's Empowerment Project in Gaza indicates that some 60 per cent of the women and girls in the study were subjected to physical or verbal violence in the home.[96] Other women told a UNIFEM team that since the male members of their family had been detained by the Israelis, they were starting to use the same violence against their wives and children as had been meted out to them.[97]

The Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling noted: "With tighter restrictions on the movement of men, many women are forced out of their protected domestic cocoons to seek employment to sustain their families, while their unemployed husbands stay at home. This sudden and involuntary reversal of gender roles disturbs the stability of intra-family relationships, and puts women in a perilous position. Many men resort to violent means to assert their control over the family, feeling insecure about their status in the family, and frustrated by feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. Not surprisingly, male frustration and insecurity have a consequent adverse impact on women, who become victims of increased rates of domestic violence."

PROTECTING GIRLS

Only 45 countries have legislation protecting women against domestic violence. Serbia is one of the most recent. On June 14, 2007, Serbia's parliament passed a new law against domestic violence, as well as establishing inheritance rights for women. According to Brankica Grupkovic, Serbia's Assistant Minister for Internal Affairs, "Family violence was not covered in our laws until recently, and although in our legislation there is a declaration of equality, there was no enforcement mechanism. Now, under heavy lobbying from women's groups, some amendments to the criminal code have been passed that deal with violence in the family." In Cambodia, women's organisations helped inform people about domestic violence and its consequences and to lobby for changes in the law. "After five years of work, people have begun to understand that domestic violence is not a private issue," said Hor Phally, the Director of the Project Against Domestic Violence.

One 2005 report notes: "Existing laws do not afford sufficient protection to women victims of family violence and in some cases encourage such abuses; even the provisions which offer limited protection to women victims are not enforced and there is a lack of institutional mechanisms to enforce the law and protect women's rights."[98]

d) Seeking refuge

An estimated 20 million children have been forced to flee their homes because of conflict and are either living as refugees or are internally displaced within their own national borders.[99]

Girls face specific hardships as refugees and internally displaced people (IDP). Daily life can be challenging. Girls are least likely to find support or assistance or to access vital healthcare in a refugee or IDP camp due to cultural barriers, neglect and lack of appropriate services. Crucially, in refugee camps and camps for the internally displaced, girls may have to abandon their education due to a lack of separate toilet facilities and female teachers.

LIFE IN THE MOTAEL CAMP FOR DISPLACED FAMILIES IN DILI, TIMOR-LESTE

"I have lived in the camp for about two years with my mother, two sisters and three brothers. Before that, we lived in our home in Dili. I used to go to school and play with my friends. I liked mathematics best but now I don't go

FABIO DE PAOLA

to school after moving here. One day our house was burned down and destroyed. People were fighting in the street and throwing stones. I was really afraid. I saw my house on fire and was so frightened.

Now I don't go to school. In the camp, I help my mum with chores. I help her clean the tent. My brothers help too. They carry water and fetch firewood. There have been fights before at the camp. Groups of men come to the camp after they have been drinking. They throw stones into the camp and start shouting. It's dangerous and I get scared.

I hope to go back to school so that I can continue with my lessons and become a teacher someday."
Lucia (12)

FABIO DE PAOLA

"The nurse has told me that she's worried that I am too young to have a baby. There's no family planning in the camp and we're not told about contraception. Having a baby now was an accident, but I'm happy.

We came to the camp about a year ago when our house was set on fire and burned down. I wasn't able to rescue any of our belongings to bring to the camp.

I left school at 12 because my parents were unable to support me. Now I spend my day cleaning the tent, cooking and washing. My husband is a taxi driver and earns money to support me and the child we are expecting. We don't have a bed and we sleep on the floor of our tent which is difficult when you are pregnant.

Sometimes I'm concerned because drunken youths from outside will come to the camp and start throwing stones. They want to start trouble by throwing stones into the camp and it's frightening. I worry about bringing up my child here.

I want to have a big family and for my husband and I to live in our own house with our family."
Lepoldina (17), expecting her first child with husband Joaquim

The majority of children who not only leave their homes and communities but also leave their countries to seek refuge in a foreign land are boys. The UN body for refugees, UNHCR, says that in 2003, of the 9,130 unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum in Western Europe, only 28 per cent were female.[100] This is likely to be because finding a way out of a country in conflict is expensive, and parents may be more willing to send their sons to safety than their daughters. They may also worry more about their daughters travelling alone.

Unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum by age and sex, 2003[101]

Destination Country	numbers	% girls
Belgium	419	37
Bulgaria	152	0.7
Germany	977	36
Ireland	277	53.8
Netherlands	1,058	31.6
Switzerland	1,531	15.4
United Kingdom	2,730	32.9

For those girls who do risk a long and hazardous journey to claim asylum in another part of the world, many only speak the language of their country. It is hard to settle in a new land without friends or family. And often their reception is less than welcoming. But the majority manage to make a life, go to school, make new friends and wait for the time when they can go home and discover if their family is still alive. Micheline was 17 when she came to Britain from the Democratic Republic of Congo with her younger sister. This is her story.

MICHELINE'S STORY[102]

"I came to Britain with my sister Nanou four years ago. I was 17 at the time and she was 15. We didn't know anyone here; we didn't have any money and we didn't speak any English. So when we got to the bus station we waited until we

heard someone speaking French. They introduced us to a friend of theirs from Congo-Brazzaville and said that we could stay one night with them.

The next morning we went to Social Services. They said we would need to see immigration but in the meantime found us somewhere to stay, and gave us some basic things we needed. It was an enormous house and we were the only people there. My sister was afraid to stay in such a big house and we slept in the same room.

The next day we went to a smaller house. We enrolled at school; we got a lawyer. We did lots of window-shopping! I didn't want to be alone in the house and neither did she, so we made sure we went home together each day. We still needed interpreters to go to the doctor, but I wanted to learn quickly. I used to carry a dictionary with me to look up words and phrases. At first my sister wanted me to do all the talking but with the encouragement of her teacher she soon started to learn English as well.

In the four years we have been here, we have been moved six times, sometimes with no notice at all. It was very hard for us. We were living in a house with holes in the floorboards and which had a hole in the roof which dripped water into the living room. One day I came back to find my sister crying and crying. Water was pouring in. I had to pretend I wasn't upset; to be strong for her. But it was hard. We spent another four months in that house despite many people writing to try and get us moved. In the meantime I had a daughter, Yasmin.

Meanwhile the war in the Congo continues. We have no family there any more. What would we go back to? There are things that happened there that it is impossible to tell you. The scale of poverty; the war, the children living in the street. All the people waste their suffering for nothing. Congo has its own riches but the people don't benefit.

Now I volunteer at a playgroup on a Friday. I am going to do a childminding course. I want to work in a hospital to help with sick children. My sister hopes to do a care assistant's course. We want to study. I would like my daughter to study too, like her mother. I want her to have an intellectual basis on which to build her future. It is this I hope for. I don't care about money. If I had two pounds to spare I would send it back to the people in the Congo who are suffering so much."

7 Girls' voices

"Most of all, we need help and advice about how to protect ourselves from further exploitation. We need to know how to earn a living and how to create new opportunities in our lives. We need to recover our dignity and our pride."

Youth report for the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission[103]

"I would like there to be a bit more justice. I wish that people would stop excluding me for having been in the fighting movements. That they should know that we had sufficient reorientation teaching to enable us to be accepted in society. Now, we are like the others. They should not treat us like that: instead, we should all help each other and create a climate of understanding."

Rose Kigeme (19), Burundi[104]

"During the strike against Lebanon in July 2006, I participated in the relief efforts. This experience was one of the richest and most challenging of my life so far. However small our contribution is, it can make a difference. Bringing some joy to the children; helping their parents, however

PHILIP WOLMUTH/ PANOS PICTURES

Taking English lessons at a refugee centre in the UK.

tiny our contribution was compared to the gravity of their situation; defying fear, injustice and deprivation... that was my way of saying no to war; and not doing it would have meant surrender."

Manal, from Lebanon, a teenage Girl Guide who was working with the Lebanese organisation Offre Joie.

"I think young people can help to fight AIDS [after conflicts] by acting as voices for AIDS workers in society. This can be done by encouraging them to educate their families on true facts about AIDS. We can also act as voluntary workers in the societies we live in and we can encourage and be willing to educate our people about AIDS. In societies where it is considered a taboo to talk about AIDS I think we can team up with other organisations at work. This might sound difficult and I know it is, but the motto is 'never give up.'"

Young woman (16), Uganda [105]

Voices from the Frontline

Timor-Leste

Conversations with Girls and Young Women

Three focus groups, comprising a total of eighteen girls and young women, were held in Timor-Leste between October and November 2007. Respondents were asked about the impact on their lives of the recent crisis, the impact of the 2006 crisis on the economic security of their families, and the role of girls and young women in the peace building process. Given the country's recent history and current situation the energy and optimism of this group is remarkable.

- Respondents were aged between 15-23 (average age was 17)
- Nearly a quarter of the respondents live in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

The Cost of Conflict

"This conflict has caused young women to lose their self-belief and self-confidence. They cannot express their ideas and their wishes because they have lost their self-confidence and the courage to express their thoughts."

Saozinha (22)

The respondents described the recent crisis as severely impacting on the lives of Timorese girls and young women. They identified loss of self-confidence, increasing gender-based violence, and restriction on personal freedom as major issues.

In the words of one respondent:

"The crisis created a bad environment for women. It had a big impact, especially for pregnant women and children. The children could not do their normal activities freely because they were afraid. This period could destroy children's desire to help bring their nation forward in future."

Sixteen-year-old Fati, from Externato Sao Jose school, described how some women now have to live in internally displaced people's camps, "because they don't have houses. So now many of them can't take part in a number of normal, day-to-day activities."

One young woman who lives in an IDP camp in Jardim Borja (now closed) described her personal circumstances:

"We, in our internally displaced people's (IDP) camp are sad because we can't walk around safely. We always face problems. And when we try to go back to our home… people always threaten us."

Poverty, Violence and Family Life

"During the crisis, people's kiosks got destroyed, their houses and shops got burned, and [they] had to run away. This damaged the economies of many households."

Sofia (17)

The respondents agreed the 2006 crisis had a "very strong" impact on the economic security of their families. Many gave personal testimonies describing how violence on the streets had wrecked local businesses and forced girls and young women to go to work to support their destitute families.

One respondent, Nelia, aged 17, described the impact on her own family:

"Before the crisis, we had a little bit of money because we picked coffee in Ermera district. We could buy some things. But after the crisis we lived in Jardim Borja internally displaced people's (IDP) camp. We couldn't

pick coffee any more so Dad had to go and look for work in [the capital] Dili – like collecting sand in the Comoro river – in order to make money."

Another, Sofia, aged 17, said her family's business had been destroyed:

"My family opened a restaurant before the crisis. But afterwards we closed it, because people were burning and destroying things."

Despite the major economic difficulties facing most respondents, many of them gave positive examples of how they are currently supporting themselves and their families:

"Before, it was my parents who supported me financially. But since the crisis, I have been doing things such as* tebedai *[traditional dancing], in order to fund my own activities. At my school people who get good marks can win scholarships. I'm working hard so my family won't have to pay for my studies."

Fatia

Another respondent, Romenia, aged 15, described how she supports her family from church and school activities:

"A group of us get financial support from a church singing group. People give us money [for singing] and we divide it up amongst ourselves," she said. "There are also activities at school; I do basketball. When we win money, we divide it up between us. I save this money to give to my family, then when my little brothers and sisters want to eat bread I can buy some and give it to them."

Sixteen-year-old Isaura works as a tennis 'ball-girl' to support her family. She also offers informal tennis lessons to internationals working in Timor-Leste. And 17-year-old Nelia, who lives in Jardim Borja IDP camp, became a part-time traditional folk dancer:

"When there is a festival and important people come to visit our community, we perform dances for the visitors and they put money in the *luhu* (traditional handicraft box)," she said. "When we've finished, our group divides the money up. Then we buy soap to give our little brothers and sisters a bath."

Every single respondent who currently contributes to their families' income felt this created a positive perception of them as girls and young women. One said:

"Before [the crisis] I always asked my mum and dad for money so that I could do my activities but now I use my own. It's only if I don't have any money at all that I ask them for help."

Romenia, aged 15, agreed: "My parents say, ''Why don't you ever ask us for money?' Before, I always asked them. But now I have money so I don't have to."

Other respondents, like 17-year-old Sofia, said that contributing to their families' economic security had changed their perception of them as an adolescent:

"My mother and father say that I can look after myself and pay for my own schooling. I can also help my parents."

But girls and young women still face enormous challenges in helping support their families and extended families. One respondent described how her immediate family had recently moved in with relatives:

"We used to get by on our income. But now we've gone to live with our relatives, so the money we earn isn't enough to support everyone, because we need to pay for their children's schooling as well as buying food."

ALOLA FOUNDATION

Alola is the nickname of a young girl from Timor-Leste – Juliana Dos Santos – who was kidnapped by a militia leader in 1999 and taken to West Timor when she was just 15 years old.

Juliana is still in Indonesia despite a huge campaign for her release that culminated in her being offered safe passage back to Timor-Leste. Her case became a national cause and provided the impetus for local women to establish the Alola Foundation to support the empowerment of girls and young women in Timor-Leste.

The foundation creates opportunities for girls and young women in work and education, strengthens participation of women in their own communities, campaigns for women's rights and also provides humanitarian assistance. Its Maternal and Child Health programmes promote exclusive breastfeeding, mother and child nutrition and safe motherhood

The Foundation has a women's resource centre offering professional support to women in enterprise and

promoting cultural traditions in women's handicrafts.

During the crisis Alola employed local women to produce washable sanitary napkins, which were distributed with underwear, buckets and detergent to women in the IDP camps. Alola also worked with women's groups to establish and support women's committees in the camps. The Foundation continues to provide support to the widows of the crisis.

www.alolafoundation.org

So That They Can Hear Our Voices

"The government doesn't listen to the voices of women."

Herminia (19)

Despite some improvement to their status at home and numerous examples of girls and young women making positive economic contributions to their families, the vast majority of respondents felt their voices were not being heard in Timor-Leste:

"We live in a troubled area, in an IDP camp, so the [national] leaders need to come and sit with us and hold a dialogue to resolve the problems."

Nelia (17)

"I don't think [Timorese] people have listened to the voices of young women yet. First, I want to come together with other young women so that we can put forward our opinions, ideas, thoughts and our demands to the government. So that they can hear our voices."

Claudia (23)

"People haven't yet heard the voices of young women. How can they hear our voices when we still don't have any young women's groups? There needs to be a group for young women so that we can express our opinions. And so that people can hear us and have faith in us."

Saozinha (22)

We Can Change Things

"If we want to make a contribution, we need to improve ourselves first before we can make a contribution to our nation."

Isaura (16)

"We are all Timorese, and we shouldn't look at whether people are easterners or westerners."

Agripina (15)

The vast majority of respondents emphasised the importance of unity between the people of the east and west of Timor-Leste and of education in order for them to contribute to peace-building. Many were emphatic that the government has a responsibility to listen to ordinary people in Timor-Leste, especially girls and women, and to respond to their needs.

"I want to live happily and peacefully, with all the things that I need. Now there are still displaced people, poor neighbourhoods and problems for the people. I want to change all this, and move beyond this crisis. So because of this I want to change the [national] leadership in future."

Isaura (16)

Some of the respondents disagreed with her:

"We don't need to change the government. It's the people who are stubborn and difficult, because some of them could leave the displaced people's camps," argued one young woman, adding: "Some of their houses were not burned down, but they want to stay there indefinitely in order to receive handouts. They should return to their [original] homes."

Others discussed the specific role of girls and young women in peace-building. Rute, aged 17, said:

"We young women can change things but we need to study hard. We need to work together and we can't splinter off into different groups. This nation needs to live in peace. We need to build peace in our families, our communities and our nation."

Fati, aged 16, agreed: "We need to work together to build peace. Young women should hold meetings in order to share information, and the government needs to consider the needs of the people."

Seventeen-year-old Sofia emphasised unity: "We as citizens of Timor cannot think about a division between easterners and westerners. We are all Timorese."

Many agreed with her:

"We need to make contact with other people to exchange opinions. We need to

help people."
Agripina (15)
"We need to make friends with people from all groups. People aren't dogs or other animals: Everyone has the same dignity."
Isaura (16)

And Sofia summed up the general feeling of her group:
"This [unity] could help us to stop hating each other, envying each other. People could become proud of themselves so there wouldn't be a feeling of disliking each other. By working together, women could strengthen unity and stop people from fighting. That way they could help our nation to move forward."

SECURING BASIC SERVICES

Basic sanitation is crucial not only to a girl's day to day comfort, it can also be the very reason why a girl is unable to continue her education. Plan is working together with the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) to provide clean water and sanitation facilities for the thousands of displaced people still living in and around Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. Hundreds of new latrines and washing rooms are being built, and water supply systems are being repaired and rebuilt.

TIMOR-LESTE – BASIC STATISTICS

- Capital city: Dili
- Population: 1,029,000 (2006 estimate)
- Around 60% of the population is under 18
- Life expectancy: 57.1 (female) 51.3 (male)
- Female literacy: 41.2% (male literacy: 53.4%)
- Infant mortality: 83 deaths (under 5 years) per 1,000 live births
- Female enrolment in education (primary, secondary & tertiary): 63.6% (male enrolment: 68.3%)
- Teenage pregnancy rate: 59%
- 40% of the population are living below the poverty line of US$1 a day
- 18% of the population are internally displaced
- Approximately one third of the women in Timor-Leste are officially employed (31.75%)
- Human Development Index 0.514; ranked 150 out of 177 countries

Sources: Timor-Leste 2003 Demographic & Health Survey Key Findings, UNICEF Humanitarian Action Response 2007, Plan 'Because I am a girl', Basic indicators on Gender, The World Bank Country Brief, UNDP 2007

Background

Timor-Leste is the eastern half of the island of Timor in South East Asia. The island has been politically and geographically divided for centuries and the eastern half was formerly known as East Timor. It was colonised by the Portuguese, then invaded and occupied by the Japanese in the early 1940s. By the end of the Japanese occupation, thousands of Timorese had been killed and East Timor lay in ruins.

In 1960 the United Nations declared East Timor a "non self-governing territory under Portuguese administration" and Portugal governed the country for the next 15 years. But in the mid seventies the East Timorese were finally given the chance to form their own political parties.

In 1975 the *Fretilin* independence movement renamed East Timor the Independent Republic of Timor-Leste. But 10 days later, in December 1975, Indonesian forces launched a mass invasion of the island and changed Timorese history.

Indonesia's twenty-four year military occupation of Timor-Leste was brutal in the extreme. Indonesian troops massacred protesters and imprisoned and killed dissidents. People lived in fear. Girls and women in Timor-Leste endured years of horrific physical and sexual violence from Indonesian troops. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) claimed Indonesian troops used rape as a weapon of war by raping Timorese women in front of their families and forcing local Timorese men to rape Timorese

women.[1] In addition, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) reported that between 1980 and 2000 Indonesian security forces forcibly married Timorese girls and young women and forced others into prostitution.[2]

In response to this violence, thousands of girls and young women joined the East Timorese resistance to the occupation. Many Timorese women worked with *Fretilin*, campaigning at grassroots level for education, women's rights, the rights of children and Timorese workers.

Altogether, more than 200,000 Timorese women, men and children were killed during the occupation and nearly half, an estimated 45 per cent, of all married Timorese women were widowed.[3]

Despite international condemnation of human rights violations, it took until January 1999 for the Indonesian government to offer the people of Timor-Leste a referendum on independence. More than three quarters of the population, 78 per cent, voted for independence. Pro-integration factions and the Indonesian military immediately launched a series of reprisals that destroyed almost three quarters of all the buildings in Timor-Leste: homes, schools and hospitals were smashed and a third of the population fled to West Timor and neighbouring islands.

Nevertheless, in May 2002, after a short UN-led Transitional Authority, Timor-Leste formally became an independent state. It was the first new democracy of the 21st century. As part of the reconstruction process a Timorese women's organisation offered support to women in politics. Eighteen of the 65 elected members of Parliament – just over a quarter – are women.

But despite democracy and genuine progress with national reconstruction, violence continues to haunt Timor-Leste. In April 2006, a protest by 600 sacked soldiers erupted into bloody clashes between the police and military. Gang violence escalated across Dili and more than 150,000 people fled their homes. Many ended up sheltering in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. To date, approximately 100,000 people remain homeless, either staying with relatives or in IDP camps scattered around the capital, Dili, as well as in other parts of the country. Girls and young women living in these camps continue to be at high risk of gender-based violence including incest and sexual harrassment. Domestic violence against girls and women is a major problem throughout Timor-Leste, with almost 50 per cent of women reporting abuse from their partner or husband.[4]

According to a 2005 UN study, over 40 per cent of children in Timor-Leste suffer from some form of violence. PRADET TL, a local NGO, completed a study for UNICEF which showed 30 per cent of documented cases being of sexual abuse, 26 per cent physical abuse, and neglect at 11 per cent. Eighty-five per cent of the documented cases in the study were girls.

At the same time, the country is engaged in a battle against chronic poverty. Per capita GDP is just $430 – compared to $42,000 in the United States – and almost 20 per cent of the population are internally displaced. Advocates for women's rights in Timor-Leste have focused on three main areas:

- access to healthcare, social and legal support for those who suffered during the conflict and in the more recent crises;
- income-generating projects for women living in poverty; and
- increased political participation of women.[5]

Meanwhile, Timorese organisations working with girls and young women, such as the Alola Foundation profiled on page 108, argue forcefully that it is vital for girls and young women to become involved in working for peace and reconciliation, justice and economic development.

REUTERS/ BEAWIHARTA BEAWIHARTA, courtesy www.alertnet.org

A child refugee walks near her camp in Dili, Timor-Leste.

Working hand in hand: conclusion and recommendations

4

"At best, international and national actors have helped improve the lives of thousands of young people [affected by war and conflict]. At worst, they have delayed and even deterred support to young people, greatly intensifying abuses against them."
Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children

"Wars are no excuse for violating our rights. We all have rights – the orphans, the disabled, children in prison, children living on the streets, children from remote villages, all of us, girls and boys – and we ask you to raise awareness of these rights and to promote them. We want to learn more about our rights so that we can demand them..."
From the Youth Report of the Graça Machel Strategic Review of young people in armed conflict, October 2007 [1]

Prevent, Protect and Promote

In times of war, in the build up to it and its aftermath, girls and young women are particularly at risk. They are ignored and marginalised – the conditions of war intensifying an ever-present gender discrimination. The impact on girls is far-reaching and goes beyond their roles as either combatants or victims of violence to encompass their health, education and the ordinary everyday detail of their lives and relationships.

This report has revealed why and how girls' rights are being violated in countries at risk of, in the midst of, or emerging from armed conflict. It has also shown clearly what is lost when girls' voices are ignored and their capacities and skills are unrecognised and underdeveloped. Without due diligence given to girls' daily realities before, during and after conflict, poverty and the lack of effective targeted interventions mean that many countries, and the girls who live in them, will remain in a cycle of insecurity for decades.

The following policy and programme recommendations assert that international agencies, donor and national governments, NGOs and other critical stakeholders must improve their practice, change their policies and reform their institutions in order to **prevent** abuse of girls and **protect** them, and take account of girls' particular needs, listen to their voices and **promote** their rights.

1. Participation and empowerment

For states and communities weakened by violent conflict, any commitment to participation and consultation, often not strong in the first place, is easily abandoned.

Girls become invisible. Their opinions are not sought; their skills are ignored.

Empower girls, and provide opportunities for girls' participation in decisions made at all levels.

It is clear that girls and young women have extraordinary skills and resilience even in the most difficult circumstances. Their strengths, capacities, and particular needs and rights must be recognised by all institutions working in conflict situations as well as those working to rebuild societies after war.

Governments should implement their obligations under the UNCRC and other human rights treaties. For example, the UNCRC includes several provisions addressing a child's right to participation and CEDAW emphasises the right of women of all ages to participate in all aspects of political and public life "on equal terms with men".[2]

Girls must be provided with the education and life skills training which will build their resilience, and allow them to participate effectively and equally as agents of change. They should be consulted, listened to and enabled to play an equal role in making the decisions and influencing the policies that shape their societies, for example in early-warning and conflict-prevention activities as well as during post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction.

The Youth National Forum (YNF) in Haiti is a youth-led organisation working to tackle the endemic violence across the country. Currently chaired by an 18-year-old woman, the YNF has met with the Haitian President and Prime Minister to discuss young people's ideas on how to tackle armed conflict in the country.

2. Gender roles and relations

Prejudice is built into the social and legal systems of many societies, even before fighting begins. Discrimination and inequality are so deeply engrained that they go unrecognised and unacknowledged.

Enact policies and programmes that promote more equal gender relations and take account of girls' and women's needs, rights and aspirations.

The promotion of equal gender relations should be an integral part of international efforts to stabilise insecure situations and to support the rebuilding of the economic and social fabric of war-torn societies. The complex and changing gender roles which girls assume during conflict must be recognised; attitudes, traditions, behaviours and practices that do not protect girls or which allow for abuse must be challenged and transformed.

Policies should keep open the 'windows of opportunity' for girls and women that may appear, even in the midst of conflict, due to shifts in gender roles and relations. In all gender-related policies and programmes, the differences between women and girls should be recognised.

The Liberian government has used the opportunity of post-conflict renewal to introduce anti-rape legislation, and to reform inheritance laws in favour of women and girls. Similarly, since the introduction of new anti-rape legislation following the end of Sierra Leone's civil war, girls in Moyamba have used the local children's radio station to publicise the fact that rape is illegal and to insist that the culture of impunity should end. An increase in formal complaints and arrests has followed.

3. Access to basic services

Girls are pulled out of school because of concerns for their safety and increased domestic responsibilities, jeopardising their own future and the future of their country. Pregnant girls and young mothers go without the healthcare they need. At a time when girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and assault, there are few hospitals, doctors, nurses or medicines available.

Ensure girls have equal access to gender-sensitive and youth-friendly education and health services before, during and after conflict.

Girls are entitled to equal access to basic

services, especially health and education, even in times of conflict. Girls have a right to quality education at both primary and secondary levels, in a safe learning environment. We know that investment in girls' education has positive macro-economic growth results and should therefore be a priority for governments and the international community in the immediate post-conflict period. Access to age-appropriate and gender-responsive health services, including sexual and reproductive health, must likewise be a priority for all stakeholders.

The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is a global effort to share best practice in the provision of quality education in emergency situations.

4. Security and protection

As violence increases, girls and their families adopt different strategies to protect them from it. Many girls are kept at home, others join the fighting forces. They look for equality with boys as child soldiers but frequently find abuse and are stigmatised during the post-war period. Violence against girls and young women continues when war itself is over – including abuse perpetrated by international peace-keepers.

Strengthen the promotion and protection of the human rights of girls and young women within laws and policies, and increase the attention paid to the actions of the justice system and social services in implementing these laws.

All national policies should meet international legal standards that respect, protect and fulfil a girl's right to protection and security. In particular, no children under 18, girls or boys, should be deployed as combatants.

National governments must prioritise the implementation of both international standards and domestic laws and policies to ensure their compliance with the international norms which prohibit killing, maiming and sexual violence against girls; abduction of girls; forced marriages and

Young girl at work in Nepal.

ANNIE HESLOP

attacks against schools and hospitals.

The enforcement capacity of state institutions to hold those who violate girls' rights accountable for their actions must be strengthened and these efforts supported by donor governments. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms must be established to ensure that police, judges, prosecutors and social services are responsive to violations of the rights of girls. Justice and support for victims of gender-based violence and abuse must be prioritised. The justice system must be accessible to girls who choose to pursue redress for violations of rights and other abuses.

Training on girls' human rights and gender equality must be provided to all security service personnel and those working in relevant services, including the police and judiciary.

5. Economic security

Economic independence for girls and young women is crucial for them and the societies they can help to build. It is a battle that is hard fought during stable times. But in communities living in the shadow of war, girls are forced into badly paid, low status and frequently dangerous jobs, often as domestic or sex workers, to keep themselves and their families fed.

Ensure that girls have access to education and skills training and the means to earn a living, before, during and after conflict.

All girls are entitled to have access to education, market-relevant skills training and the means and adequate protection to earn a living without undue risk or exposure to violence. Livelihood programmes should economically empower girls. Such programmes need to build on a girl's capabilities (what she can do or be), activities (production, consumption, and investment), and assets (physical, financial, human, and social) within the context of the community in which she lives.[3] Skills training

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Girls in class at a Plan supported school in Sudan.

programmes must build on girls' agency, resilience and capacities. All stakeholders must recognise that access to livelihoods is essential for young women to participate effectively in peace-building processes.

More programmes which address the needs of especially vulnerable girls are necessary. For girls at risk of, or engaged in, commercial sexual exploitation, support can be provided, including alternative income generation activities. For example, in Kampala, Uganda, AMREF (African Medical and Research Foundation) has established a commercial sex workers project which encourages and supports young women to abandon the sex trade in favour of less dangerous ways of earning a living.

Our recommendations

The international community should:

- Implement the code of conduct for UN personnel serving in conflict and post-conflict zones. Particularly, UN personnel who abuse girls must be held accountable under international law and victims informed of the outcome, and UN member states should strictly implement monitoring mechanisms.
- Implement a complaint mechanism for the UN CRC, and ratify any forthcoming Optional Protocol to the Convention to bring it into force. The UN CRC is the only international human rights treaty without a complaints mechanism. Girls whose rights have been violated within conflict could utilise such a complaint mechanism when domestic or regional remedies are unavailable or unworkable. Girls must be made aware of their right to seek justice and appropriate remedies be made available to all girls.
- Amend the Sphere Guidelines – developed in the late 1990s as a set of universal minimum standards of humanitarian assistance – so that they recognise the need for psychosocial support for girls and young women affected by war and conflict, particularly those who have become mothers as a result of rape and for specific nutritional support for girls.
- Ensure that the principles defined in the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness are used to secure girls' and young women's rights, in particular the Paris principles of democratic participation by citizens in developing countries and the inclusion of gender equality indicators in all assessment of aid effectiveness.

Southern and donor governments should:

- Where appropriate, allow for – and promote – the participation of girls in formal peace processes and in reconciliation measures, including truth and reconciliation commissions and the public prosecution of those who violate their rights, as part of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Initiate and support programmes which build the skills and capacity for girls' participation in decision-making, and create spaces for the increased representation of girls and young women in decision-making positions, particularly during the opportunities presented during post-conflict reconstruction.
- Prioritise the re-establishment of rule of law, enactment of international commitments to girls' protection, training police forces and investing in a legal system that is functional and appropriate. Tackle the stigma that girls in particular face once violent conflict has subsided and end impunity surrounding gender-based violence.
- Use the opportunity of post-conflict renewal to overhaul legal structures and introduce legislation that promotes the rights of girls and young women. Legal systems reinforce inequality and gender discrimination. Existing laws which protect girls and young women and promote their rights must be enforced. Donor governments should support efforts to change legal structures, particularly within post-conflict reconstruction efforts.
- Integrate gender equality as a significant dimension in the analysis of state fragility, and ensure that gender equality is effectively mainstreamed within good governance and poverty reduction programmes of donor governments.
- Consider innovate funding mechanisms in order to support education in conflict,

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A young girl speaks out at a demonstration in Cambodia.

post-conflict and in fragile states. Renewed global effort is needed to improve girls' access to quality education, in safe school environments in times of insecurity and conflict.

- Pay attention to the particular health needs of adolescent girls and young women. National health systems must ensure that all healthcare providers working in areas affected by conflict have a strategy to respond to gender-based violence and its health impacts.
- Ensure that youth employment programmes developed in the post-conflict period and widely viewed as a means of securing peace focus on girls and young women, in particular young mothers, as well as young men.
- Ensure that girls have access to education, vocational skills training and the means to earn a living through, for example, microfinance programmes, when moving from humanitarian to long-term development responses.

The private sector should:

- Develop and implement youth employment programmes that focus on girls and young women, in particular young mothers and especially vulnerable girls, as well as young men, as a part of a strategy for securing peace.

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should:

- Work alongside girls' and youth organisations to increase their capacity for advocacy, participation in public life including peace-building initiatives, and influencing policies at local, national and international levels.

Conclusion

In this report, we have outlined the main institutions – from families to international agencies – that are meant to protect girls and young women. We have shown how these institutions are often compromised, and consequently fail to protect girls, in the context of both state fragility and conflict. And we have pointed out that although donor and international agencies have a strong focus on fragile states, they often do not take account of gender and especially not girls' perspectives, despite a proven link between fragility and gender inequality.

These recommendations are made in the hope that organisations and institutions at all levels will no longer ignore girls in their policy and planning. We believe that these are suggestions that can make a significant difference to the girls and young women whose lives have been caught up in or affected by conflict.

We need to listen to young people and to girls when they tell us that:

"We want more opportunities to take part in making decisions that affect us. We ask that you empower us and our organisations to be able to participate in a way that counts in all decisions that affect us. We do not want to be called in when you have already made the decisions. We want to work hand in hand with you".[4]

It is our duty and responsibility as organisations working in conflict and post-conflict zones, and simply as human beings, to build a better future for the millions of girls and young women living with conflict and its aftermath.

Girls' Voices

"We hope that when we grow up we will be able to be the new leaders and bring change."
Manar (15), West Bank

"If women were given the opportunity to speak, they would speak. If the government could help them organise themselves they would have the tools for that. If women's rights are respected, there could be an improvement."
Vanela (20), Haiti

"Before my life was limited to my home, but now I have the opportunity to go to school. This has changed my views about myself. I believe that I can be someone and do good things."
Teenage girl Tereda Village in Siran Valley, Pakistan

"Sometimes the only army against occupation is education. We have to be educated and united."
Nariman (16), West Bank

"We have aspirations and have hope of a better future for ourselves and our country."
Teenage girl, Tereda Village in Siran Valley, Pakistan

"Today's girls should launch a revolution to obtain the real changes they have been expecting. Lawmakers should contribute accordingly."
Amédée (19), Haiti

Eight-point action plan

This action plan is an agenda for the millions of girls living in the shadow of war.

1. Strengthen the skills and capacities of girls' and youth organisations before, during and after conflict and ensure that girls have a say in all decisions that affect them.
2. Ensure that girls have a voice in peace processes and in truth and reconciliation commissions, where appropriate.
3. Reform legislation so that laws in place protect girls and promote their rights.
4. Ensure enforcement by re-establishing the rule of law, training police and investing in a functional and appropriate legal system.
5. Promote girls' education in conflict, post-conflict and fragile states and release funds to ensure a quality education for every child.
6. Prioritise the particular health needs of adolescent girls and young women.
7. Enforce the code of conduct for UN personnel serving in conflict and post-conflict zones so that they protect, and do not exploit, girls and young women.
8. Ensure that youth employment programmes, particularly in post-conflict states, focus on girls and young women, in particular young mothers, as well as young men and ensure that girls have access to appropriate skills training.

Policy and Programme Strategies Summary

Framework	Protecting girls during conflict	Promoting girls' rights in fragile and post-conflict situations
1. Gender Relations	***Enact policies and programmes that promote more equal gender roles and relations and take account of girls' as well as women's needs, rights and aspirations and their gender-specific vulnerabilities***	
	Insist that gender equality is a significant dimension of state fragility and work with stakeholders, policy makers and donors to ensure that gender equality is comprehensively mainstreamed into conflict prevention mechanisms, peace accords, inter-governmental agreements, national, local, and sector specific policy and planning Recognise the social relations, age and development-related differences between women and girls and make explicit the specific and diverse needs of girls and young women, especially in DDRR processes Identify 'windows of opportunity' for girls and women created through shifts in gender roles and relations for strategic programme development Identify and act on 'windows of opportunity' for advocacy and awareness raising on the rights of women and girls and the importance of gender equality in peacebuilding Challenge and transform attitudes, traditions, behaviours and practices that do not protect girls, which allow for abuse and exploitation and perpetuate stigma for certain girls Recognise the complex dynamics of gender and power; all actions should aim to change gender imbalances and to promote transitions to gender equitable peace and stability Recognise and work with girls as actual and potential agents of change	
2. Security & Protection	***Strengthen the promotion and protection of the human rights of girls and young women through policy and capacity development of law and security sectors***	
	Work with women, peace and security activists to promote Security Council Resolution 1325 with particular attention to girls and young women Hold NGOs, UN agencies etc accountable to UN SG Bulletin on codes of conduct for humanitarian and peacekeeping Hold duty bearers accountable to international, regional and national laws and policy on child protection and violence against women and children Establish district/ provincial/ national monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure that police, judges, prosecutors and other service providers respond to violations of girls' rights to security & protection	Work with authorities to develop and implement codes of conduct for police, teachers, healthcarers and others in direct contact with girls which forbid sexual relations with minors Support implementation of legislation, for example with gender and human rights training for police, peacekeepers, judges and prosecutors Strengthen local and national civil society organisations, networks and actors to work for the rights of girls and to demand accountability of duty bearers Promote government reform/ reconstruction actions to enact international commitments to girls' protection and well-being and ensure that girls' rights are made visible in national and local policy (and do not fall between women's and children's rights) Ensure girl-friendly processes for reporting and follow up on violations, e.g. Gender-Based Violence units within the police force Advocate for an end to impunity for violations of girls' rights, including by peacekeepers or other humanitarian aid workers, but remain attentive to protection needs of girls pursuing justice Establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms at local/ community level to ensure security for girls to access education, healthcare and participate in other activities and protection from sexual violence and forced recruitment; where necessary, establish specific protection strategies Work with key male leaders, teachers and opinion shapers to address gender-based violence, aggressive masculinities and to work to protect girls' rights

Policy and Programme Strategies Summary – continued

Framework	Protecting girls during conflict	Promoting girls' rights in fragile and post-conflict situations
3. Participation & Empowerment	***Empower girls, and create opportunities for girls' participation***	
	Ensure uninterrupted access to quality, basic education in safe learning environments for girls and young women Identify ways to provide critical life skills education to girls to build their resilience, resistance to abuse and exploitation and their capacity to participate Provide support to girls/youth organisations for targeted, community-based activities and build in support from and commitment from relevant women's and other community groups Ensure that girls are included in the identification of particular risks and in the development of effective protection strategies Prioritise the right to participate for girls even during conflict situations, create opportunities to engage with girls in all policy development and implementation processes and ensure that security and protection concerns are addressed	Support community based mechanisms for the reintegration of former girl combatants, girl mothers and girl survivors of sexual violence Support linkages between girls'/youth organisations, other civil society organisations and formal peace processes Strengthen girls' and youth organisations and increase their capacity for advocacy and participation on issues of concern Ensure that reform and/ or reconstruction of ministries, authority structures and process – especially in education and social services – includes representation of girls and young women Ensure that community development, local reform/ reconstruction structures and processes include girls and young women Focus on girls' intrinsic capacities and experiences as agents of change, their resilience and skills in a) early warning conflict monitoring and conflict prevention activities and b) post-conflict policies and programmes
4. Access to Basic Services	***Ensure all girls have equal access to quality, gender-responsive education and health services***	
	Ensure uninterrupted access to quality education for girls and young women; this may require alternative models and delivery mechanisms, eg home-based schools, 'child friendly spaces' Ensure safe and protective learning spaces eg with separate latrines, female teachers Tailor education programme content to respond to learning needs of girls, eg with reproductive health, life skills, income generation, child care content Ensure capacity development of education actors (MoE, NGOs, community groups) to ensure quality education for girls in difficult circumstances Pay particular attention to health needs of very young girls and of young women. Reproductive health services, including access to HIV testing, care, treatment and support, must be accessible to adolescent girls – welcoming, affordable and confidential Develop girl-specific programmes for survivors of sexual violence which include age-appropriate medical care (including post-exposure HIV prophylaxis), counselling, support groups and related activities. Pay particular attention to health needs of former girl combatants	Strengthen girls' capacities by ensuring access to quality education, including secondary education, in safe learning environments. Where required by certain groups of girls and women (eg girl mothers) ensure complementary non-formal education opportunities; Ensure that particularly vulnerable girls – eg girls involved in fighting forces, heads of households, with disabilities, girl mothers – are not excluded from education or health services Establish / support data collection and monitoring systems which engage local actors and provide up to date information on girls' access, to inform policy and strategy development, eg EMIS – education management information systems Support longer term staff recruitment, training, deployment and supervision policies which ensure that girls and young women are able to receive gender-responsive support and services (for example, by prioritising women teachers, doctors) and child friendly codes of conduct

Policy and Programme Strategies Summary – continued

Framework	Protecting girls during conflict	Promoting girls' rights in fragile and post-conflict situations
5. Economic Security and Livelihoods	***Ensure economic security for girls, especially through education and skills training before, during and after conflict***	
	Recognise girls' increased responsibility within the household in times of conflict and the impact this has on household income and their future ability to earn an income when they are taken out of school	Ensure equal access of girls to inheritance, land and other property rights, especially through Universal Birth Registration initiatives to ensure that all girls have a basic right of citizenship. Recognise that access to livelihoods for girls and young women is essential to their participation in peacebuiliding processes and their contribution to household income and local economy Ensure equal access for girls to relevant livelihood support programmes, including micro-finance, vocational skills, financial literacy, income generating and social networking trainings Build on girls' agency, resilience and capacities, and tailor skills development opportunities to the interests and agency of girls Ensure that vocational and skills trainings do not reinforce gender stereotypes and gendered divisions of work (eg carpentry for boys, tailoring for girls), and that girls and boys have access to skills with high earnings potential Ensure that especially vulnerable girls – former girl combatants, girls with babies and/or heading households, sex workers – have access to education, market-relevant skills training, the means and adequate protection to earn a livelihood without undue risk

Legal Opinion: The legal system for protecting girls affected by armed conflict

"Unless accountability mechanisms address crimes committed against children, and perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide are brought to justice, children will continue to suffer, with negative consequences for future peace and stability."
UNICEF The UN Children's Fund[1]

Humanitarian legal protection for girls is complex, but international law does make it clear that girls have legal protection, wherever in the world they live and whatever context they live in.

While there are no international treaties that relate exclusively to girls in situations of conflict, the general provisions of human rights law and the law of armed conflict (humanitarian law), as well as the specific standards for children and women, together provide the international legal framework for the protection of girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.

However, the very nature of war and conflict itself and the challenges faced by states to develop functional legal structures after war is over most often result in inadequate implementation of these standards.

Obstacles to girls' rights

Girls remain among the most vulnerable to violations of their rights in conflict and post-conflict environments, in part because of their dual status as female and as minors, both groups with low standing in society. To compound these barriers, the voices of women and girls are all too often absent from the dialogue affecting their lives. In conflict and post-conflict societies, there are five potential obstacles to girls realising their human rights, particularly in times of instability.

1. The absence of the rule of law

In armed conflict, the barriers that girls face are compounded by increased insecurity and a complete lack of legal protection. While societies function under a system of legal rules and procedures, the 'rule of law' – the ultimate supremacy of laws over individual power, including that of governments and armed groups – is generally absent in countries at risk of, in the midst of, or emerging from armed conflict.[2] The legal order – including regulation of government power, equality before the law for all citizens, adequate judicial procedures and access to justice – may be distorted or non-existent. Procedural justice is based on having a legal system with fixed, fair, published rules of procedures that are consistently and transparently applied. The manner in which a case is brought and decided can therefore be as important as the result.

2. The lack of national implementation of both international standards and domestic laws and policies

Even with a functioning state, the rules and laws of the legal system may not adequately protect girls who are especially vulnerable in conflict or post-conflict contexts. In accepting to be bound by international human rights standards, governments agree to implement those standards domestically. However, the international standards found in UN or regional conventions are only binding on those States which choose to accept them, and are limited in their practical enforceability.[3] Other standards, from UN Security Council resolutions to 'Programmes of Action' stemming from international conferences arguably face even less monitoring

of their implementation in individual countries.[4] Thus, the standards which can protect children in complex environments are not systematically enforced.

Further, even if the domestic law complies with international standards, poor or inequitable law implementation and enforcement continues to adversely impact children affected by war – particularly girls. Laws do not function in a vacuum and need mechanisms and budgets for the implementation – for example, laws guaranteeing free education to all require plans and funding – and must be implemented without any discrimination, either explicit or in their impact.

3. The social situation of girls and women

The patriarchal nature of most societies keeps women and children in a position of inferiority – and girls doubly so. Girls' social status is reflected in the law. For example, while women and children receive 'special' protection under international humanitarian law, the areas for protection are those perceived by others to be important – such as protection of mothers with small children, or protection from crimes against the 'honour' of women and girls.

4. The challenges of traditional law

In many countries, a 'traditional' legal system operates in parallel to the formal legal system. This traditional system, in some cases administered by local chiefs and their councils, often deals with matters relating to children and 'family'. In light of the customary roles of girls in society, this method of traditional justice may present a challenge to the realisation of girls' rights in complex environments. Traditional law can also become bound up in the politics emerging from the conflict itself and these traditional structures can become even more discriminatory. (See chapter 3 for more on traditional and customary law.)

5. The absence of girls and women in the development and implementation of legislation and rights

Existing legal standards are largely created by and generally interpreted by adults, and often from a male dominated perspective. The protection and fulfilment of rights for girls and young women affected by armed conflict lack girls' own perspective on their specific needs. Indeed, girls' increased involvement in formulating, interpreting and implementing the existing standards is necessary.

A number of international instruments focus exclusively on situations of armed conflict. The 1949 **Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols** of 1977 seek to regulate the conduct of parties during armed conflict. The instruments provide for protection of girls both under general provisions protecting civilians or combatants and in articles calling for special protection for children and women.[5]

For example, under **Additional Protocol I** (dealing with international armed conflicts) and **Additional Protocol II** (dealing with non-international armed conflicts), children are protected from recruitment in the armed forces or direct participation in the conflict, but only up to the age of 15 (Articles 77 and 4, respectively).

Girls have legal protection from sexual violence in both international and internal conflicts. Additional Protocol I contains specific provisions for the protection of women and of children, protecting them from 'indecent assault' – including but not limited to rape and forced prostitution (Articles 76 and 77).

Additional Protocol II includes rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault within the category of 'outrages upon personal dignity'. This is strengthened by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions (relating specifically to non-international armed conflicts) which requires protection of civilians without discrimination and prohibits "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment".

Nonetheless, much of the focus of the 'protection' is based on protecting the girl's

or woman's 'honour' (a concept arguably linked to the greater family more than the individual). The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women has thus recommended that the Geneva Conventions be re-examined and re-evaluated in light of developing norms.[6]

Laws of war have limited impact on the ground if those violating them are not brought to account. The international community has sought to tackle the issue of impunity by establishing ad hoc **tribunals** for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and, most recently, Cambodia. These tribunals have provided groundbreaking rulings and important guidance on cases relating both to sexual violence (Yugoslavia and Rwanda) and to children. Significantly, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Statue of which includes the crime of conscription and enlistment of children younger than 15 (Article 4), convicted the first person of these charges in 2007.

These ad hoc tribunals have not only provided important guidance but were also important for the development of the first permanent international court to try individuals for war crimes. The **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court** was adopted in 1998 and addresses issues impacting girls in armed conflict. The definition of 'crimes against humanity' in the Statute includes, for example "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" and enslavement, defined as "the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person and includes the exercise of such power in the course of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children."[7] The Statute also prohibits the recruitment and use of children younger than 15 by state and non-state forces in armed conflict; doing so constitutes a war crime (Article 8).

The **United Nations Security Council** (which has responsibility for international peace and security) has also issued a number of resolutions that call for the protection of children in armed conflict by state forces and non-state armed groups, including Resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005), in which there has been limited reference to the specific vulnerabilities and needs of girls. One of most important of the United Nations resolutions in addressing the impact of armed conflict on women and girls during armed conflict is the 2000 **Resolution 1325** on Women, Peace and Security. While it does not differentiate between women, young women and girls, it is the only resolution that looks specifically at the concerns of women and girls as a group. For example, the Resolution calls on states to include a gender-perspective in peace negotiation and implementation processes, with particular attention paid to measures that protect the rights of women and girls and take into consideration their distinct needs as a country is emerging from conflict (para. 8).

States are also under an obligation to protect and provide for girls under the detailed international human rights law framework. Although these instruments and norms do not have the same focus on situations of armed conflict and states may suspend the application of some specific rights during situations of armed conflict, many provisions continue to apply and a number of human rights provisions are explicitly applicable during times of war.

For example, the 1989 **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** specifically requires States Parties to protect and care for all children under the age of 18 years affected by armed conflict (Article 38) and promote their recovery and reintegration into society (Article 39) within their jurisdiction. In particular, the Convention obliges states to refrain from the recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 years in armed conflict. States must ensure these rights without any discrimination. In addition, the obligation on states to implement all articles of the Convention continues in situations of armed conflict.

The protection of children from use in armed conflict was strengthened in 2000 by **the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict**. The Protocol prohibits the deployment of children younger than 18 by state and non-state forces in armed conflict, raises the age of recruitment of children to 18 years for non-

state forces and 16 years for state forces and highlights the need for the demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration for those who already have been recruited and deployed. The Preamble to the Protocol includes girls in the list of those children particularly vulnerable to recruitment into conflict.

The need to recognise the different requirements and experience of girls and boys in armed conflict was highlighted in the **2007 Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (Paris Principles)**, which call for pro-active measures for the girls' involvement "in all aspects" of prevention, demobilisation, assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration.

The **1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**, often known as CEDAW, does not limit its application to specific age groups and thus applies to girls and women throughout their life cycle. CEDAW does not single out the specific context of armed conflict. However it is an important instrument for ensuring the equal treatment of girls, without discrimination, in all circumstances.

The **1995 Beijing Platform for Action**, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, provided international consensus on an "agenda for women's empowerment" throughout their life cycle, highlighting armed conflict as one of the situations impeding the realisation of girls' and women's rights (para. 42). It further stresses that women of all ages are vulnerable to violence and violations of their human rights such as murder, terrorism, torture, involuntary disappearance, sexual slavery, rape, sexual abuse and forced pregnancy, especially as a result of policies of ethnic cleansing. Specifically in the context of armed conflict, the outcome document for the **Beijing +5 Review** in 2000 noted the improvement in recognising that international standards must be applied in a gender-sensitive manner. However, this review highlighted with concern the abduction and recruitment of girls into armed conflict, "including as combatants, sexual slaves or providers of domestic services" (para. 19). Concerns at the impact of armed conflict on girls persist and the **Beijing +10 Review** noted: "humanitarian interventions must pay attention to the health needs, especially reproductive and sexual health, of women and girls in conflict, refugee, and situations where people are internally displaced".[8]

It is important to remember that many girls face multiple forms of discrimination – based on race, ethnic group or disability, for example. Although adherence to some provisions of the **International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights;** and **the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment** can be suspended during armed conflict, many are non-derogable and so apply even during armed conflict. Non-discrimination provisions of all treaties remain in effect no matter what. Moreover, these treaties do apply in post-conflict environments and, if ratified by a state, should be implemented accordingly. The **International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities**, which has not yet entered into force, also represents consensus on the particular vulnerability of persons with disabilities.

Further, regional human rights treaties often provide similar, or even improved, human rights protections compared with international treaties. For example, the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa** and the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** are powerful instruments for protecting and promoting girls' rights in Africa. For example, the latter specifically calls on States Parties to protect and care for children who are affected by international and internal armed conflicts and take "all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain in particular from recruiting any child" (Article 22). Several treaties of the Organisation of America States, including the **Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women**, are also helpful in outlining the obligations of

states in the region to protect the girl child during and following armed conflicts.

Recommendations

During conflict and particularly as a state emerges from conflict, several measures should be undertaken to promote and protect the human rights of girls and young women:

- Identifying gaps and strengthening the rule of law through transparency in the judicial system, access to justice, including child-friendly courts, law enforcement, promotion of good governance and strengthening institutions;
- Prioritising fulfilment of state obligations under international standards – with particular attention to constitutional and legislation reform, institutional reform and support to civil society;
- Incorporating gender perspectives in the process of post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and development and advocating for gender equality both in the law and its impact; and
- Establishing accessible independent redress mechanisms and truth and reconciliation bodies (where appropriate) which take into account the specific needs of girls.
- Ensure that the justice sector and security service providers are fully aware of how to apply international legal frameworks on gender equality and children's rights to their work.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49

Preamble

The States Parties to the present Convention,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Recognizing that the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Recalling that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance,

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,

Bearing in mind that the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children,

Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth",

Recalling the provisions of the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally; the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules); and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, Recognizing that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration,

Taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child,

Recognizing the importance of international cooperation for improving the living conditions of children in every country, in particular in the developing countries, Have agreed as follows:

PART I

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.
3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

Article 4

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.

Article 5

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 7

1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.
2. States Parties shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.

Article 8

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.
2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.
2. In any proceedings pursuant to paragraph 1 of the present article, all interested parties shall be given an opportunity to participate in the proceedings and make their views known.
3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.
4. Where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death (including death arising from any cause while the person is in the custody of the State) of one or both parents or of the child, that State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall of itself entail no adverse consequences for the person(s) concerned.

Article 10

1. In accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall entail no adverse consequences for the applicants and for the members of their family.
2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.
2. To this end, States Parties shall promote the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements or accession to existing agreements.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.
2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or
(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Article 15

1. States Parties recognize the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.
2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.
2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.

To this end, States Parties shall:

(a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;
(b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
(c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
(d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

Article 18

1. States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.
2. For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.
3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible.

Article 19

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Article 20

1. A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.
2. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child.
3. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

Article 21

States Parties that recognize and/or permit the system of adoption shall ensure that the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration and they shall:

(a) Ensure that the adoption of a child is authorized only by competent authorities who determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and on the basis of all pertinent and reliable information, that the adoption is permissible in view of the child's status concerning parents, relatives and legal guardians and that, if required, the persons concerned have given their informed consent to the adoption on the basis of such counselling as may be necessary;
(b) Recognize that inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of child's care, if the child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable manner be cared for in the child's country of origin;
(c) Ensure that the child concerned by inter-country adoption enjoys safeguards and standards equivalent to those existing in the case of national adoption;
(d) Take all appropriate measures to ensure that, in inter-country adoption, the placement does not result in improper financial gain for those involved in it;
(e) Promote, where appropriate, the objectives of the present article by concluding bilateral or multilateral arrangements or agreements, and endeavour, within this framework, to ensure that the placement of the child in another country is carried out by competent authorities or organs.

Article 22

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.
2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organizations or nongovernmental organizations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

Article 23

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.
2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.
3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development
4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 24

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.
2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To diminish infant and child mortality;
(b) To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care;
(c) To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution;
(d) To ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers;
(e) To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents;
(f) To develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.

3. States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.
4. States Parties undertake to promote and encourage international co-operation with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right recognized in the present article. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 25

States Parties recognize the right of a child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health, to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement.

Article 26

1. States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.
2. The benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child.

Article 27

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.
3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.
4. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad. In particular, where the person having financial responsibility for the child lives in a State different from that of the child, States Parties shall promote the accession to international agreements or the conclusion of such agreements, as well as the making of other appropriate arrangements.

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.
3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Article 32

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:

(a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;

(b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;

(c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

Article 33

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.

Article 34

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

(a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;

(b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;

(c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

Article 36

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

(a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;

(b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or

arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;

(c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age.
In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;

(d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

Article 38

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.
2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.
3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.
4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

Article 39

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

Article 40

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society.
2. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of international instruments, States Parties shall, in particular, ensure that:

(a) No child shall be alleged as, be accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law by reason of acts or omissions that were not prohibited by national or international law at the time they were committed;

(b) Every child alleged as or accused of having infringed the penal law has at least the following guarantees:

(i) To be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law;

(ii) To be informed promptly and directly of the charges against him or her, and, if appropriate, through his or her parents or legal guardians, and to have legal or other appropriate assistance in the preparation and presentation of his or her defence;

(iii) To have the matter determined without delay by a competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body in a fair hearing according to law, in the presence of legal or other appropriate assistance and, unless it is considered not to be in the best interest of the child, in particular, taking into account his or her age or situation, his or her parents or legal guardians;

(iv) Not to be compelled to give testimony or to confess guilt; to examine or have examined adverse witnesses and to obtain the participation and examination of witnesses on his or her behalf under conditions of equality;

(v) If considered to have infringed the penal law, to have this decision and any measures imposed in consequence thereof reviewed by a higher competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body according to law;

(vi) To have the free assistance of an interpreter if the child cannot understand or speak the language used;

(vii) To have his or her privacy fully respected at all stages of the proceedings.

3. States Parties shall seek to promote the establishment of laws, procedures, authorities and institutions specifically applicable to children alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law, and, in particular:

(a) The establishment of a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law;

(b) Whenever appropriate and desirable, measures for dealing with such children without resorting to judicial proceedings, providing that human rights and legal safeguards are fully respected.

4. A variety of dispositions, such as care, guidance and supervision orders; counselling; probation; foster care; education and vocational training programmes and other alternatives to institutional care shall be available to ensure that children are dealt with in a manner appropriate to their well-being and proportionate both to their circumstances and the offence.

Article 41

Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions which are more conducive to the realization of the rights of the child and which may be contained in:

(a) The law of a State party; or

(b) International law in force for that State.

PART II

Article 42

States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.

Article 43

1. For the purpose of examining the progress made by States Parties in achieving the realization of the obligations undertaken in the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Rights of the Child, which shall carry out the functions hereinafter provided.
2. The Committee shall consist of ten experts of high moral standing and recognized competence in the field covered by this Convention. The members of the Committee shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution, as well as to the principal legal systems.
3. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.
4. The initial election to the Committee shall be held no later than six months after the date of the entry into force of the present Convention and thereafter every second year. At least four months before the date of each election, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to States Parties inviting them to submit their nominations within two months. The Secretary-General shall subsequently prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated, indicating States Parties which have nominated them, and shall submit it to the States Parties to the present Convention.
5. The elections shall be held at meetings of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters. At those meetings, for which two thirds of States Parties shall constitute a quorum, the persons elected to the Committee shall be those who obtain the largest number of votes and an absolute majority of the votes of the representatives of States Parties present and voting.
6. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years. They shall be eligible for re-election if renominated. The term of five of the members elected at the first election shall expire at the end of two years; immediately after the first election, the names of these five members shall be chosen by lot by the

Chairman of the meeting.

7. If a member of the Committee dies or resigns or declares that for any other cause he or she can no longer perform the duties of the Committee, the State Party which nominated the member shall appoint another expert from among its nationals to serve for the remainder of the term, subject to the approval of the Committee.
8. The Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure.
9. The Committee shall elect its officers for a period of two years.
10. The meetings of the Committee shall normally be held at United Nations Headquarters or at any other convenient place as determined by the Committee. The Committee shall normally meet annually. The duration of the meetings of the Committee shall be determined, and reviewed, if necessary, by a meeting of the States Parties to the present Convention, subject to the approval of the General Assembly.
11. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the present Convention.
12. With the approval of the General Assembly, the members of the Committee established under the present Convention shall receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may decide.

Article 44

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Committee, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, reports on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognized herein and on the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights

(a) Within two years of the entry into force of the Convention for the State Party concerned;

(b) Thereafter every five years.

2. Reports made under the present article shall indicate factors and difficulties, if any, affecting the degree of fulfilment of the obligations under the present Convention. Reports shall also contain sufficient information to provide the Committee with a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Convention in the country concerned.
3. A State Party which has submitted a comprehensive initial report to the Committee need not, in its subsequent reports submitted in accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of the present article, repeat basic information previously provided.
4. The Committee may request from States Parties further information relevant to the implementation of the Convention.
5. The Committee shall submit to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, every two years, reports on its activities.
6. States Parties shall make their reports widely available to the public in their own countries.

Article 45

In order to foster the effective implementation of the Convention and to encourage international cooperation in the field covered by the Convention:

(a) The specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall within the scope of their mandate. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies as it may consider appropriate to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their respective mandates. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities;

(b) The Committee shall transmit, as it may consider appropriate, to the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies, any reports from States Parties that contain a request, or indicate a need, for technical advice or assistance, along with the Committee's observations and suggestions, if any, on these requests or indications;

(c) The Committee may recommend to the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to undertake on its behalf studies on specific issues relating to the rights of the child;

(d) The Committee may make suggestions and general recommendations based on information received pursuant to articles 44 and 45 of the present Convention. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be transmitted to any State Party concerned and reported to the General Assembly, together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

PART III

Article 46

The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.

Article 47

The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 48

The present Convention shall remain open for accession by any State. The instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 49

1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.
2. For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 50

1. Any State Party may propose an amendment and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall thereupon communicate the proposed amendment to States Parties, with a request that they indicate whether they favour a conference of States Parties for the purpose of considering and voting upon the proposals. In the event that, within four months from the date of such communication, at least one third of the States Parties favour such a conference, the Secretary-General shall convene the conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of States Parties present and voting at the conference shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.
2. An amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 1 of the present article shall enter into force when it has been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and accepted by a two thirds majority of States Parties.
3. When an amendment enters into force, it shall be binding on those States Parties which have accepted it, other States Parties still being bound by the provisions of the present Convention and any earlier amendments which they have accepted.

Article 51

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.
2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.
3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to that effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received by the Secretary-General.

Article 52

A State Party may denounce the present Convention by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Denunciation becomes effective one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

Article 53

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.

Article 54

The original of the present Convention, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In witness thereof the undersigned plenipotentiaries, being duly authorized thereto by their respective governments, have signed the present Convention.

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Legal Opinion

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ABBIE TRAYLER-SMITH / PANOS PICTURES

AN AGENDA FOR ACTION: BECAUSE I AM A GIRL CAMPAIGN

How do we ensure that the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) are effectively protected? The Children's Convention, in contrast to the Women's Convention (CEDAW) and other human rights treaties, lacks any method by which children can petition the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, when governments have violated their rights.

There is clear evidence that such a procedure can be used effectively by children. Children have won cases against governments in regional human rights courts including the European and Inter-American Courts of Human Rights. However, at present there is no global remedy for most children, because the UN CRC, a treaty specifically aimed at empowering children, does not contain any mechanism which children can use to prevent their rights being violated and to remedy any violations which have occurred. This has to change.

In the 1980s when governments were drafting the Children's Convention there was very little support for such a complaints procedure. Now attitudes are changing and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including Plan are seeking to improve the enforcement procedures of the Children's Convention.

To improve the protection of the rights of children throughout the world the UN CRC needs a complaints procedure by which an individual child or groups of children, or adults representing them can seek a remedy where children's rights have been violated by a state and that state has failed to remedy the situation. **In this way the complaints procedure would become an international safety net for children.**

A successful complaint against one state would not only benefit children living in that state but would set the standard which all other states would have to meet to avoid litigation being brought against them. **In this way the complaints procedure serves as a deterrent.**

To introduce a complaints mechanism into the UN CRC would require the United Nations to agree to the drafting of an additional treaty attached to the Convention called a Protocol. This would offer a unique opportunity to create a child focused and child friendly mechanism attuned to the specific needs of children of all ages, both genders and all cultures.

Preventing children's rights being violated is essential and this requires new ways of thinking and new procedures. A new Protocol to the UN CRC would also offer an opportunity to create a mechanism by which governments considering a specific policy or legislation would be able to ask the Committee on the Rights of the Child for an Advisory Opinion as to whether the proposed law or policy complied with the Convention. Although this would be a new role for a United Nations treaty body, it would perform the very important task of preventing children's rights violations.

Such a complaints mechanism could also create the possibility of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child undertaking on-site visits to places where alleged violations have taken place.

A complaints mechanism would benefit both boys and girls. It would, however, be of considerable benefit to girls as it would increase the global community's awareness of the violations of the rights of girls. It would also send out a clear and resounding signal that girls as well as boys are full beneficiaries of all the rights of the child – civil, political, economic, social and cultural in peace and in times of armed conflict.

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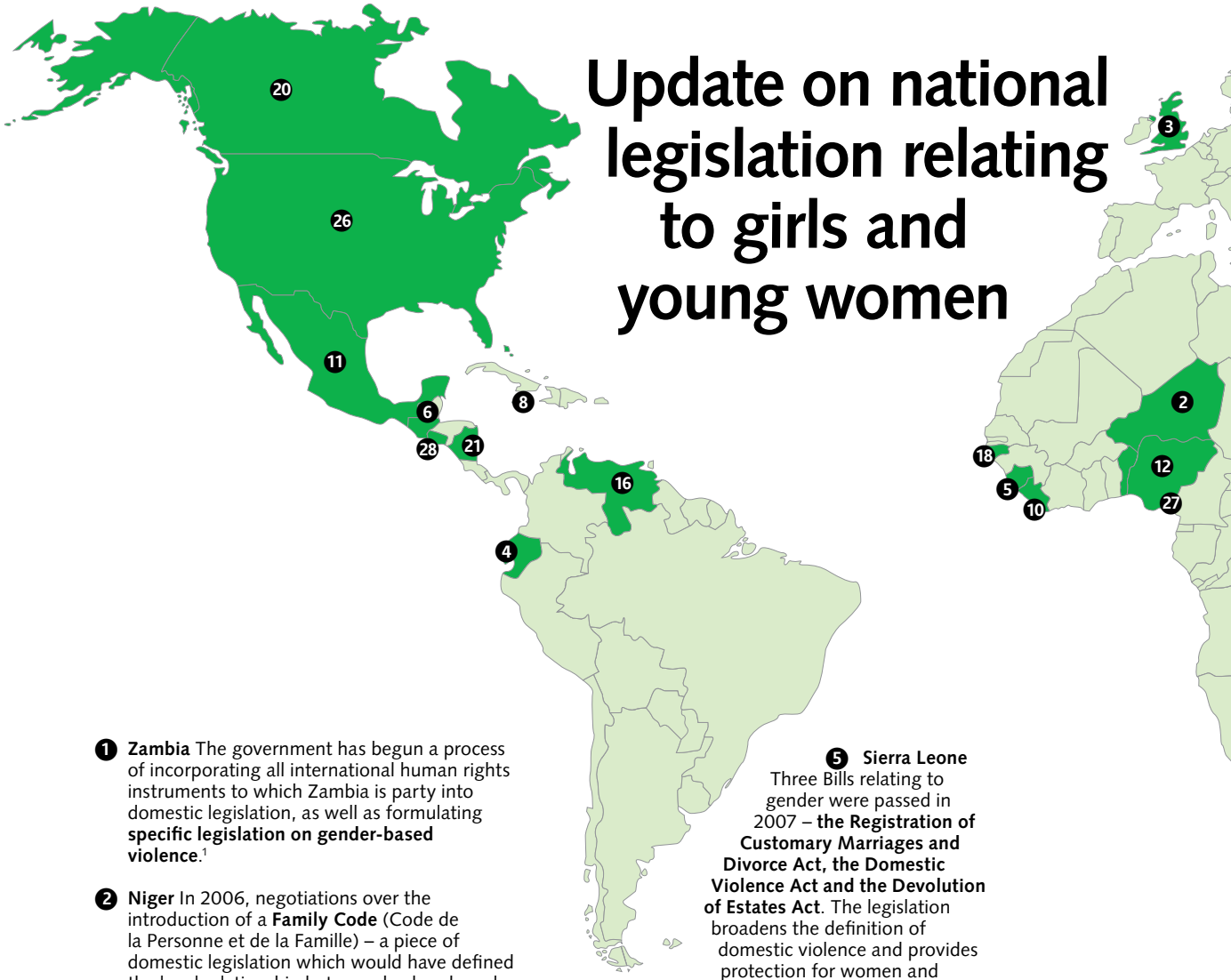
For more information about the campaign, visit www.becauseiamagirl.org

Update on national legislation relating to girls and young women



1 **Zambia** The government has begun a process of incorporating all international human rights instruments to which Zambia is party into domestic legislation, as well as formulating **specific legislation on gender-based violence**.[1]

2 **Niger** In 2006, negotiations over the introduction of a **Family Code** (Code de la Personne et de la Famille) – a piece of domestic legislation which would have defined the legal relationship between husbands and wives and children and parents, and included a legal minimum age for marriage and sexual intercourse – collapsed.[2]

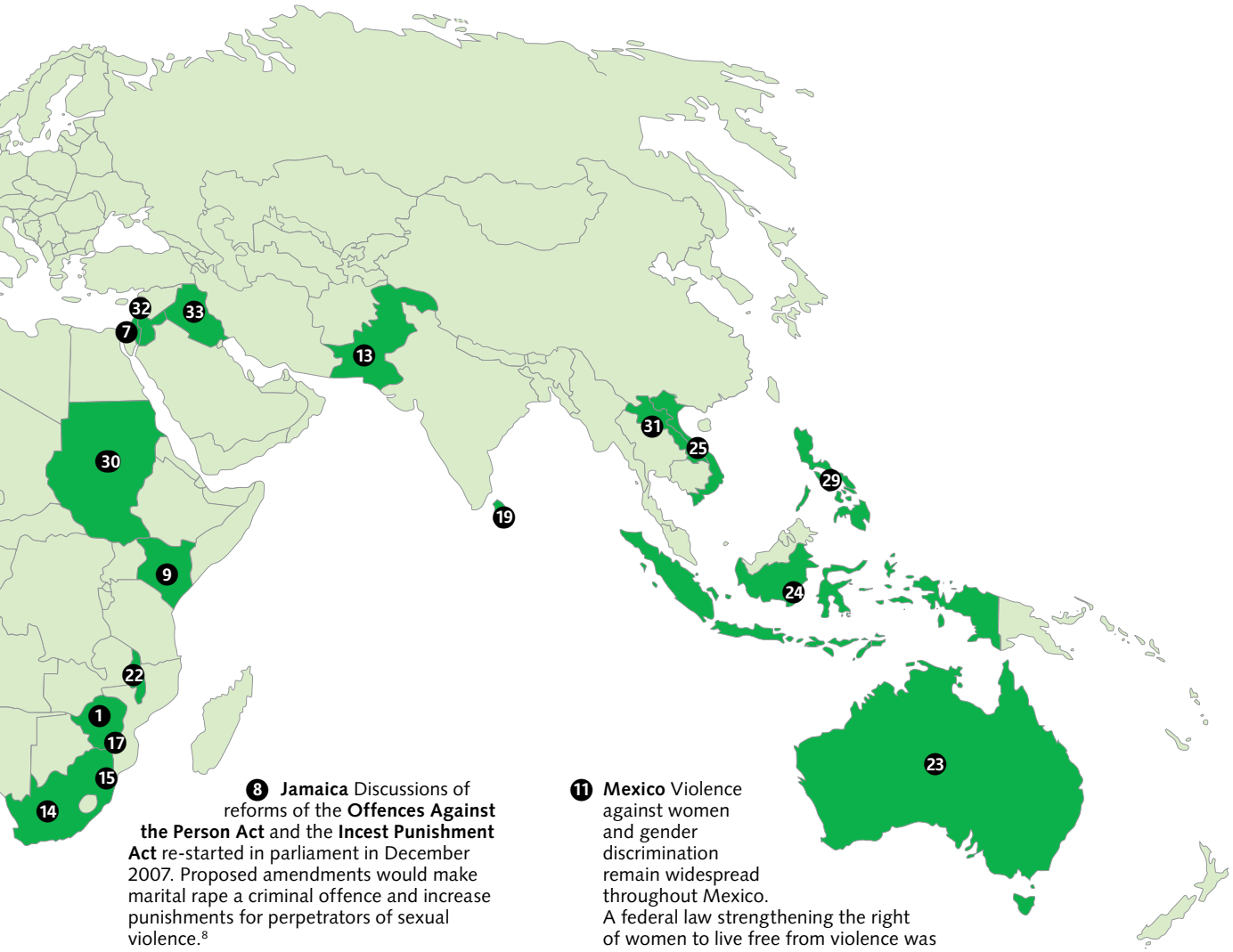
3 **United Kingdom** The **Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill 2006-07** was introduced to Parliament on 16 November 2006. A Government unit launched just prior to the introduction of the Bill handles approximately 250-300 cases per year, the majority from South Asia. Approximately 65% of cases are in families of Pakistani origin and 25% are in families of Bangladeshi origin. Around a third of cases involve children, some as young as 13.[3]

4 **Ecuador** The 2007 **National Plan for the Eradication of Gender Violence** includes a protection system for children, adolescents, and women victims of violence. The Plan is the culmination of a thirty-year process led by the Ecuadorian women's movement.[4]

5 **Sierra Leone** Three Bills relating to gender were passed in 2007 – **the Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorce Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Devolution of Estates Act**. The legislation broadens the definition of domestic violence and provides protection for women and children subjected to abuse. In addition, a minimum age of 18 years for customary marriages has been established, as well as the legal right to inheritance for wives and children.[5]

6 **Guatemala** The National Institute of Forensic Sciences was established in 2007 which could potentially improve the investigations into the disappearances, rape, torture and murders of girls and women and the impunity of such crimes. A Code aimed at preventing sexual exploitation in the tourism sector was approved by the National Tourism Agency.[6]

7 **Israel** In November 2007, MPs and activists formed a coalition in an attempt to raise Israel's minimum age for marriage from 17 to 18, saying that young wedlock harms the girls' health and violates their right to education, especially as Israel's education law requires 17-year-olds to be in school.[7]



8 Jamaica Discussions of reforms of the **Offences Against the Person Act** and the **Incest Punishment Act** re-started in parliament in December 2007. Proposed amendments would make marital rape a criminal offence and increase punishments for perpetrators of sexual violence.[8]

9 Kenya The 2006 **Sexual Offences Act** defines rape and other sexual offences and prohibits the use of previous sexual experience or conduct as evidence against the victim. However, the Act does not recognise marital rape, and does not criminalise forced female genital mutilation.[9]

10 Liberia A new **law on rape** was passed in December 2005, which classifies rape as a felony of the first degree with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment if the victim is below 18 years at the time of the offence, and second degree with a maximum sentence of 10 years of imprisonment if the victim is above 18.

Secondly, in the event of a father's death, the 2003 **Inheritance Law** provides for one-third of the property to be equally shared among the children – including the girls, and one-third given to the widow. Previously, only the male child benefited from inheritance.[10]

11 Mexico Violence against women and gender discrimination remain widespread throughout Mexico. A federal law strengthening the right of women to live free from violence was passed. In February 2006 a **Special Federal Prosecutor's Office for Crimes of Violence against Women** was established.[11]

12 Nigeria In August 2006 a Bill to incorporate the UN women's convention (CEDAW) into domestic law was presented to the Senate. The debated **Domestic Violence and Other Related Matters Bill** had not become law by the end of 2006. In December 2006, the Federal Government announced two new and related bills – a **Bill on reform of discriminatory laws against women and a Bill on elimination of violence from society**.[12]

13 **Pakistan** In January 2005, the Committee for Justice and Peace (CJP), a minority rights NGO, held consultations to amend the Succession Act of 1925 regarding **inheritance**. A change would affect approximately 5 million Christian girls and women, who tend to be denied the right to inheritance by male family members.

The **2005 Criminal Law (Amendment) Act** made the practice of 'giving away' girls and young women in marriage illegal in the event that they are 'given' to the family of a murdered person to settle a dispute.

The **2006 Protection of Women Act** incorporates the definition and punishment of rape within the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 as opposed to having it as an Islamic law which required a higher standard of proof of the offence. Among the changes, a woman who is accused of adultery by her husband, and denies the charge, can now seek dissolution of her marriage.[13]

14 **South Africa** The **2007 Sexual Offences Amendment Act** allows victims to be able to force their attackers to take HIV tests, and now recognises attacks on children as rape as opposed to their previous classification of indecent assault. It also introduces tougher measures to protect children and the mentally disabled from sexual exploitation and child pornography, as well as developing a register of sexual offenders.[14]

15 **Swaziland** The draft **Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill 2006** aims to improve the legal framework for investigating and prosecuting rape and other forms of sexual violence.[15]

16 **Venezuela** In November 2006 Venezuela passed a **women's rights law** criminalising physical, sexual and psychological violence, as well as forced sterilisation, trafficking, forced prostitution, and sexual harassment and slavery. The law established tribunals specialising in cases of gender-based violence.[16]

17 **Zimbabwe** The 2007 **Domestic Violence Bill** outlaws harmful cultural practices including the pledging of women or girls for the purposes of appeasing spirits, female genital mutilation, forced virginity testing, abduction and forced marriages.[17]

18 **Guinea Bissau** The **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;** and the **Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (from the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights)** have now been ratified. Although new laws have yet to be implemented, these ratifications demonstrate progress towards securing girls' and young women's rights in the future.[18]

19 **Sri Lanka** The 2005 **Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children for Prostitution** is likely to have a significant impact on girls, as will the 2006 **Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act** which prohibits children under eighteen years of age being employed in hazardous occupations.[19]

20 **Canada** The 2005 **Trafficking in Persons Act** includes new indictable offences to specifically address trafficking. In addition, the **Protection of Children and Other Vulnerable Persons Bill** creates a new offence against audio child pornography.[20]

21 **Nicaragua** The 2007 **Responsible Parenthood Law** includes the right to identity for girls, boys and adolescents. It aims to enforce the right of sons and daughters to have names and surnames, access to mediation to resolve parental conflicts, and the legal recognition of children, particularly by fathers. These changes could have great benefits for teenage girls, who make up 25% of all pregnancies in Nicaragua.[21]

22 **Malawi** The **Wills, Inheritance and Protection Bill** will, if passed, abolish customary laws involving succession, which will ensure equal inheritance rights. In addition, the **National Registration Bill** was before Parliament in 2007, aiming to achieve convictions of crimes involving girls where the age of victims is unknown. The **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Neglect and Domestic Violence Bill** raises the legal age of girls to consent to sexual intercourse from 13 to 16 years.[22]

23 **Australia** In 2006, the Victorian State Government introduced the **Working with Children (WWC) Check** to help protect children under 18 from physical or sexual harm by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them. In response to the 'Little Children are Sacred' report (http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/inquirysaac/) which highlighted widespread child abuse, the **Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007** has introduced alcohol and pornography restrictions/penalties, child health checks and police deployment.[23]

24 **Indonesia** The 2004 **Elimination of Domestic Violence Law** aims to abolish household violence. The 2007 **Suppressing Crime of Trafficking in Persons Law** prevents the trafficking of woman and girls. The 2006 **Population Administration Law** implements free birth registration for children between 0 – 60 days old.[24]

25 **Vietnam** In 2007 and 2008, two important laws to protect and promote the rights of girls and young women were passed – the **Gender Equality Law** and the **Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence**.[25]

26 United States of America The **International Violence Against Women Act** passed in 2007 addresses gender-based violence as a key priority in the American Government's foreign assistance programmes. This Act is especially important for girls and women vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse, as it aims to improve and increase prevention and protection programmes.[26]

In May 2007 plans to vaccinate girls against the sexually-transmitted virus that causes cervical cancer were blocked in several US states by conservative groups, who say that doing this would encourage promiscuity. Only one state – Virginia – has so far passed a law requiring vaccination.[27]

27 Benin Two important pieces of legislation were passed in 2006, one protecting children from trafficking and another protecting children from sexual harassment in school, both of which are issues that affect girls disproportionately.[28]

28 El Salvador The government set up the **2006-2009 National Plan**, which monitors the institutions working towards the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO Convention 182).

In 2007, the Ministry of Health rolled out a **National Day of HIV testing**, carrying out 27,461 tests, of which 378 tested positive. This initiative came out of the introduction of 2001's Law for the Prevention and Control of HIV and forms part of the National HIV and AIDS Programme.

In 2005, an agreement was made between the Mexican and El Salvadorian Governments regarding the **protection of victims of trafficking**. The Guatemalan and El Salvadorian Governments have a similar agreement.[29]

29 Philippines The **Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act** was passed in 2006 and criminalises people trafficking. The law imposes higher penalties if the victim is a child.

The **Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act** of 2004 classifies violence against women and children as a crime and provides protection for women – and their children – who experience abuse from their partners.[30]

30 Sudan The **2004 Child Act** is currently being revised to incorporate more progressive legislation for children. Legislation is also being drafted to make female genital mutilation illegal.[31]

31 Laos The 2004 **Women's Development and Protection Law** aims to protect women and promote their equality.[32]

32 Jordan The draft **Family Protection Bill** (2008) aims to combat rising domestic violence against women and children. The draft law imposes fines and imprisonment of up to six months, detains perpetrators for 24 hours in order to protect the victim, and bars them from approaching 'safe houses'.

Victims can also file for financial compensation in cases of physical harm or psychological abuse. However, lawmakers rejected an article in the bill that obliged healthcare staff and school teachers to report suspicions of family violence.[33]

33 Iraq In December 2007, Iraqi women parliamentarians and activists began pressing for a new law to help the increasing number of widows and divorced women in their war-torn country.

There are one million Iraqi widows who have lost their husbands in wars and internal violence over the past 30 years.[34]

1 http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=75942
2 http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=75932
3 http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/newsrelease260707c.htm
4 http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=625
5 http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=13948&flag=news
http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=606
6 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Americas/Guatemala
7 CRIN
8 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Americas/Jamaica
9 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Africa/Kenya and http://www.sexualoffencesbill.co.ke/
10 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Africa/Liberia and Plan Liberia staff
11 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Americas/Mexico
12 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Africa/Nigeria
13 http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=26853 and Plan Pakistan staff
14 http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=15845
15 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Africa/Swaziland
16 http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Americas/Venezuela
17 http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=74338
18 Plan Guinea Bissau
19 Plan Sri Lanka
20 Plan Canada
21 Plan Nicaragua
22 Plan Malawi
23 Plan Australia
24 Plan Indonesia
25 Plan Vietnam
26 http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=15386
27 http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn11842-us-conservatives-block-cancer-vaccine-for-girls.html
28 Plan Benin
29 Plan El Salvador
30 Plan Philippines
31 Plan Sudan
32 Plan Laos
33 http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76150
34 http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=75899

Because We are Girls

Real Choices, Real Lives Cohort Study Update

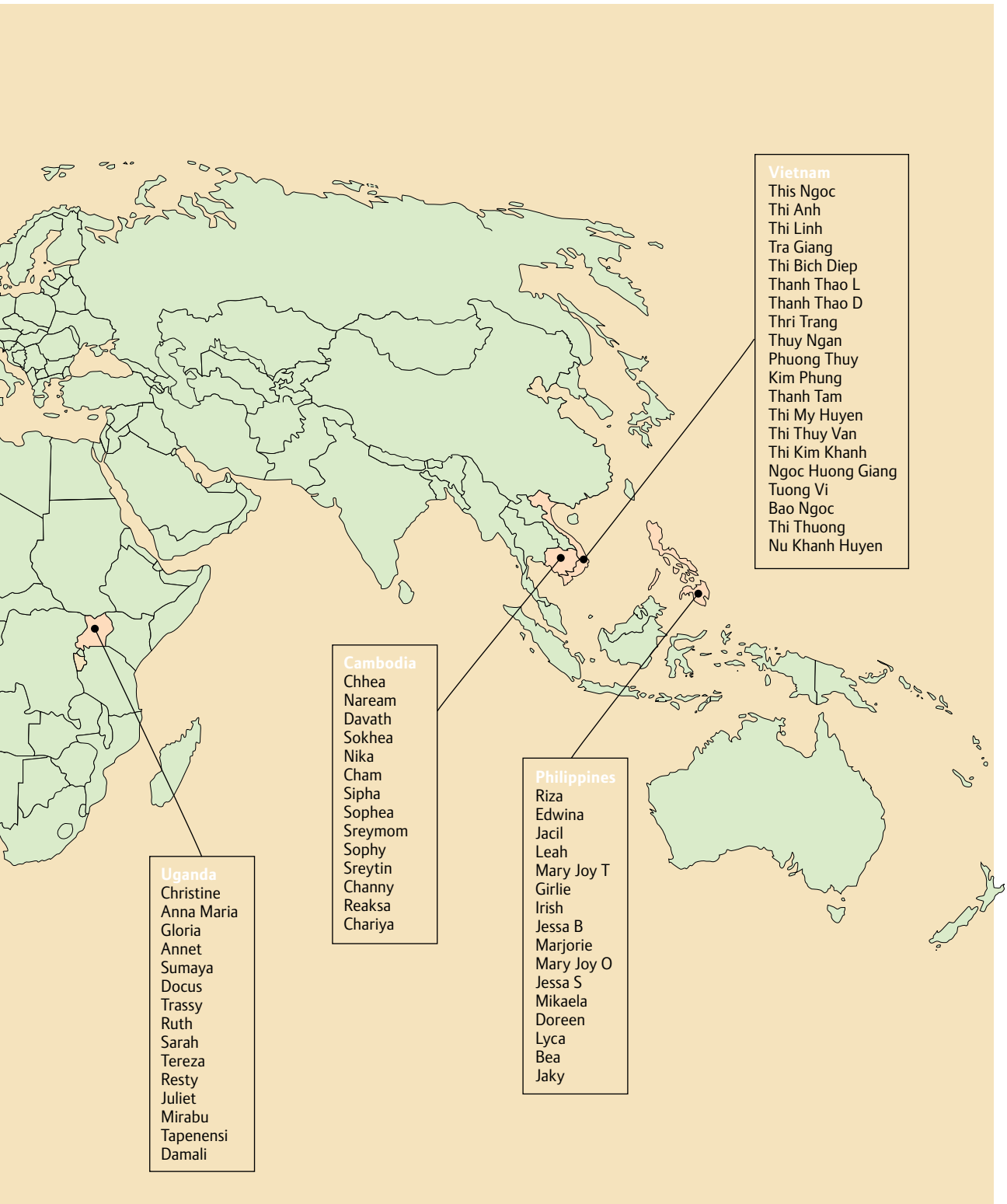
Dominican Republic
Elimar
Dineiri
Rosibel
Itriaga
Nataly
Anny
Noelia
Rudilania
Estéfani
Chabelin
Enely
Laura
Grismeili
Lorianne
Yohanna

Benin
Charnel
Consolata
Daki
Natacha
Estelle
Chantal
Marcelle
Debora
Judith
Emilienne
Huguette
Albine
Chimene
Ange
Abiguelle

El Salvador
Brenda
Evelyn
Jeidi
Yaquelin
Tatiana
Vilma
Maria
Gelen
Eunice
Ashlin
Darlin
Hilda
Melissa

Brazil
Cintia
Wemilly
Iasmin
Rosane
Kevyllen
Maria
Amanda
Ketile
Eloiza
Marina
Isadora
Kessia
Denise
Lorena
Sidcleia

Togo
Richala
Fatima
Ihdaya
Salimata
Djalilatou
Adjara
Yassiminat
Oumou
Hentou
Mariyam
Soumehato
Brenanm
Blandine
Fadilatou
Fidos Is.
Fassatou
Hadidjatou
Fridos Id.


Vietnam
This Ngoc
Thi Anh
Thi Linh
Tra Giang
Thi Bich Diep
Thanh Thao L
Thanh Thao D
Thri Trang
Thuy Ngan
Phuong Thuy
Kim Phung
Thanh Tam
Thi My Huyen
Thi Thuy Van
Thi Kim Khanh
Ngoc Huong Giang
Tuong Vi
Bao Ngoc
Thi Thuong
Nu Khanh Huyen
Cambodia
Chhea
Naream
Davath
Sokhea
Nika
Cham
Sipha
Sophea
Sreymom
Sophy
Sreytin
Channy
Reaksa
Chariya
Philippines
Riza
Edwina
Jacil
Leah
Mary Joy T
Girlie
Irish
Jessa B
Marjorie
Mary Joy O
Jessa S
Mikaela
Doreen
Lyca
Bea
Jaky
Uganda
Christine
Anna Maria
Gloria
Annet
Sumaya
Docus
Trassy
Ruth
Sarah
Tereza
Resty
Juliet
Mirabu
Tapenensi
Damali

Because We are Girls

Real Choices, Real Lives
Cohort Study Update Special Focus: Benin

The 'Real Choices, Real Lives' cohort study was set up to follow 135 girls from birth until their ninth birthday, in 2015. Every year, researchers will visit the girls and their families to talk to them about their health, their education and their daily lives. Over time they will build up a picture of how the fact that they are girls impacts on their lives. The girls are from nine countries around the world – Brazil, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Benin, Togo, Uganda, Cambodia, Philippines and Vietnam. This year our special focus is on the girls from the small West African state of Benin, currently ranked 163 out of 177 by the United Nations in terms of the well-being of its people:

Charnel • Consolata • Daki • Natacha
Estelle • Chantal • Marcelle • Debora
Judith • Emilienne • Huguette • Albine
Chimene • Ange • Abiguelle

Just 19 months old, Chantal is the youngest of three daughters born to an illiterate mother, and a father with a primary school education who drives a taxi.

Huguette, age 1, has a teenage mother who had to leave primary school as a young child when her family was unable to afford to continue to send her to school.

Judith, one of the youngest baby girls in the study, was just one day old when she was first visited by researchers.

The good news is that all the baby girls in our study have survived into their second year, in a country where the infant mortality rate for children under one year is 89 for every 1000 children. Despite passing the major hurdle of their first birthday, their next challenge is now to survive beyond the age of 5. In Benin, 150 children in every 1000 will die before they are five, mostly from preventable diseases. As we reported in the first Because I am a Girl report, whether a girl fulfils her potential is largely in the hands of the family, the community and country into which she is born. All of the girls in this study were born either in a local health centre or their birth was assisted in some way by a trained birth attendant. This alone would have helped to secure their immediate survival.

And the early years of a girl's life are crucial for her future – the first three years are the most crucial for her survival and for her to thrive. The babies currently spend their days close to their mothers or within their extended families, surrounded by other children. When well nurtured and cared for in their earliest years, girls are more likely to survive, to grow in a healthy way, to have fewer illnesses, and to fully develop thinking, language, emotional and social skills. When they go on to school, their prospects for performing well are improved. And as teenagers, they are likely to have greater self-esteem, crucial for teenage girls to be able to demand protection from HIV infection, for example. Although HIV prevalence rates are relatively low in Benin, at 1.8 per cent of the population, it is girls who are most at risk of infection when they hit their teens.

CHARNEL

Charnel's mother Josephine is still angry that her father refused to send her to school when she was a child. "He said that when you send women to school they become dropouts. They become spoiled." Today, Josephine cannot read or write. She has four children of her own – two girls and two boys.

She is determined to send all her children to school, including her youngest, Charnel. All three of Charnel's older siblings attend school, including her 12-year-old sister. As long as the family have the financial capacity to send the

Chantal

Huguette

Charnel

Debora

children to school, Charnel will learn to read and write, Josephine says. "I have seen what literate women are doing. They have a better future."

Charnel's father, Jonas, makes a living with his sewing machine. He is also adamant his daughters will go to school. "If they grow up and get the highest level of education, I will be very happy." Jonas spends much of the day with Charnel at his side, as he makes and repairs clothing in what is normally the living area of their modest home. Jonas warns that many young girls in Benin still face an uphill battle when it comes to getting an education. He knows that the payoff for sending girls to school is equally as important as sending boys to school. "Other men do not think this way. They are ignorant."

Early years' stimulation provided in a community-based setting can provide children, and particularly girls, with the stepping stones for the future. Girls living in societies where they are particularly disadvantaged can benefit more than boys from interventions that foster their physical, cognitive and emotional development. For example, in Nepal, children from disadvantaged families who had the opportunity to attend non-formal pre-school were 20 per cent more likely to attend school than those who did not. But for girls, the effect was even greater: they were 36 per cent more likely to enter school. There is currently no pre-school provision in the community in which these girls live.

ABIGUELLE

Boaz, 14, is proud of his baby sister, Abigail who is 12 months old. He truly believes she will be able to do whatever she sets her mind to when she gets older. But Boaz also knows it won't be easy. In his class of 55 children at school only 14 are girls. "My sister's life will be different from other girls," Boaz says, adding that he has another sister that already goes to school. Parents are starting to realise the importance of letting girls go to school, says Abiguelle's father, Robert. "At the lower grade levels, some classes have more girls than boys."

DEBORA

Debora isn't even 2 yet, but if she follows in her sister's footsteps she will be married by 13. Victorine, Debora's mother, has six children – three girls and three boys. She says she regrets the decision to marry off her oldest daughter, now 25. Debora will not be married so young, Victorine promises.

Early marriage not only robs children of their childhoods, it limits girls' futures. There is no time for school if they are having babies and caring for their families.

"Before I didn't appreciate it. Now I understand. I watch it happen," Victorine says. Victorine was 17 when she married. She never attended school and every day struggles with the inability to read and write. She swears Debora will have a better future. "Today, the girls can be doctors, presidents. They can do whatever they want."

'Real Choices, Real Lives' is a longitudinal study of 135 girls from nine countries, all born in 2006. The study will run for nine years and its main goals are to:

- Provide qualitative information about why girls continue to face discrimination;
- Provide segmented information about a small group of girls, with qualitative data about their education, healthcare and well being; and
- Examine girls' lives through a life cycle approach with a focus on their early childhood – the first nine years of their lives.

The study will enable Plan to examine several key issues of importance to children, and in particular to girls who are vulnerable to a series of risks because of the position they occupy in society:

- What is the family's access to quality basic services like?
- Is education girl-friendly?
- What about early years' provision, and the general needs of girls before adolescence?
- How are girls faring alongside their male siblings? What roles do they have to fulfil in the home?

For more details of the study and to track the girls' progress, visit www.becauseiamagirl.org

Marcelle

Abiguelle

Judith

Natacha

Table 1: Basic Indicators on Gender[1]

		Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2005		Adult literacy rate a (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	
	HDI rank	**Rank**	**Value**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT							
1	Iceland	1	0.962	83.1	79.9	..e	..e
2	Norway	3	0.957	82.2	77.3	..e	..e
3	Australia	2	0.960	83.3	78.5	..e	..e
4	Canada	4	0.956	82.6	77.9	..e	..e
5	Ireland	14	0.940	80.9	76.0	..e	..e
6	Sweden	5	0.955	82.7	78.3	..e	..e
7	Switzerland	9	0.946	83.7	78.5	..e	..e
8	Japan	13	0.942	85.7	78.7	..e	..e
9	Netherlands	6	0.951	81.4	76.9	..e	..e
10	France	7	0.950	83.7	76.6	..e	..e
11	Finland	8	0.947	82.0	75.6	..e	..e
12	United States	26	0.937	80.4	75.2	..e	..e
13	Spain	23	0.944	83.8	77.2	..e	..e
14	Denmark	22	0.944	80.1	75.5	..e	..e
15	Austria	29	0.934	82.2	76.5	..e	..e
16	United Kingdom	20	0.944	81.2	76.7	..e	..e
17	Belgium	14	0.940	81.8	75.8	..e	..e
18	Luxembourg	23	0.924	81.4	75.4	..e	..e
19	New Zealand	18	0.935	81.8	77.7	..e	..e
20	Italy	17	0.936	83.2	77.2	98.0	98.8
21	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	22	0.926	84.9	79.1	97.3j	97.3j
22	Germany	20	0.931	81.8	76.2	..e	..e
23	Israel	21	0.927	82.3	78.1	97.7j	97.7j
24	Greece	24	0.922	80.9	76.7	94.2	97.8
25	Singapore	..	..	81.4	77.5	88.6	96.6
26	Korea (Republic of)	26	0.910	81.5	74.3	..e	..e
27	Slovenia	25	0.914	81.1	73.6	99.6f,k	99.7f,k
28	Cyprus	27	0.899	81.5	76.6	95.1	98.6
29	Portugal	28	0.895	80.9	74.5	92.0k	95.8k
30	Brunei Darussalam	31	0.886	79.3	74.6	90.2	95.2
31	Barbados	30	0.887	79.3	73.6	99.7f,j	99.7f,j
32	Czech Republic	29	0.887	79.1	72.7	..e	..e
33	Kuwait	32	0.884	79.6	75.7	91.0	94.4
34	Malta	33	0.873	81.1	76.8	89.2	86.4
35	Qatar	37	0.863	75.8	74.6	88.6	89.1
36	Hungary	34	0.872	77.0	68.8	..e	..e
37	Poland	35	0.867	79.4	71.0	..e	..e
38	Argentina	36	0.865	78.6	71.1	97.2	97.2
39	United Arab Emirates	43	0.855	81.0	76.8	87.8k	89.0k
40	Chile	40	0.859	81.3	75.3	95.6	95.8
41	Bahrain	42	0.857	77.0	73.9	83.6	88.6
42	Slovakia	39	0.860	78.2	70.3	..e	..e
43	Lithuania	38	0.861	78.0	66.9	99.6f	99.6f
44	Estonia	41	0.858	76.8	65.5	99.8f	99.8f

Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education b (%) 2005”		Estimated earned income c (PPP US$) 2005		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	
101f	90f	28,637f	40,000f	0
103f	95f	30,749f	40,000f	-1
114f	112f	26,311	37,414	1
101f,g	98f,g	25,448 f,h	40,000f,h	0
102f	98f	21,076f	40,000f	-10
100f	91f	29,044	36,059	1
83	88	25,056f	40,000f	-2
85	87	17,802f	40,000f	-5
98	99	25,625	39,845	3
99	94	23,945	37,169	3
105f	98f	26,795	37,739	3
98	89	25,005f,h	40,000f,h	-4
101f	95f	18,335h	36,324h	1
107f	99f	28,766	39,288	3
93	91	18,397f	40,000f	-4
96	90	26,242f	40,000f	6
97	94	22,182f	40,000f	3
85i	84i	20,446f	40,000f	-5
115f	102f	20,666	29,479	1
93	88	18,501h	39,163h	3
73	79	22,433f	40,000f	-1
87	88	21,823	37,461	2
92	87	20,497h	31,345h	2
101f	97f	16,738	30,184	0
..	..	20,044	39,150	..
89f	102f	12,531	31,476	-1
99	90	17,022h	27,779h	1
78	77	16,805l	27,808l	0
93	87	15,294	25,881	0
79	76	15,658h,m	37,506h,m	-2
94g	84g	12,868h,m	20,309h,m	0
84	82	13,992	27,440	2
79	71	12,623h	36,403h	0
81	81	12,834	25,623	0
85	71	9,211h,m	37,774h,m	-3
93	86	14,058	22,098	1
91	84	10,414h	17,493h	1
94g	86g	10,063h	18,686h	1
68g	54g	8,329h	33,555h	-5
68g	84	6,871h	17,293h	-1
90	82	10,496	29,796	-2
80	77	11,777h	20,218h	2
97	87	12,000	17,349	4
99	86	12,112h	19,430h	2

Table 1: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

		Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2005		Adult literacy rate a (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	
	HDI rank	**Rank**	**Value**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
45	Latvia	44	0.853	77.3	66.5	99.7f	99.8f
46	Uruguay	45	0.849	79.4	72.2	97.3	96.2
47	Croatia	46	0.848	78.8	71.8	97.1f	99.3f
48	Costa Rica	47	0.842	80.9	76.2	95.1	94.7
49	Bahamas	48	0.841	75.0	69.6	95.0j	95.0j
50	Seychelles	..	..	..	..	92.3	91.4
51	Cuba	49	0.839	79.8	75.8	99.8f	99.8f
52	Mexico	51	0.820	78.0	73.1	90.2	93.2
53	Bulgaria	50	0.823	76.4	69.2	97.7	98.7
54	Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	..	..	..	..	..
55	Tonga	53	0.814	73.8	71.8	99.0	98.8
56	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	62	0.797	76.3	71.1	74.8k	92.8k
57	Antigua and Barbuda	..	..	..	..	..	..
58	Oman	67	0.788	76.7	73.6	73.5	86.9
59	Trinidad and Tobago	56	0.808	71.2	67.2	97.8k	98.9k
60	Romania	54	0.812	75.6	68.4	96.3	98.4
61	Saudi Arabia	70	0.783	74.6	70.3	76.3	87.5
62	Panama	55	0.810	77.8	72.7	91.2	92.5
63	Malaysia	58	0.802	76.1	71.4	85.4	92.0
64	Belarus	57	0.803	74.9	62.7	99.4f	99.8f
65	Mauritius	63	0.796	75.8	69.1	80.5	88.2
66	Bosnia and Herzegovina	..	..	77.1	71.8	94.4f	99.0f
67	Russian Federation	59	0.801	72.1	58.6	99.2f	99.7f
68	Albania	61	0.797	79.5	73.1	98.3f	99.2f
69	Macedonia (TFYR)	64	0.795	76.3	71.4	94.1	98.2
70	Brazil	60	0.798	75.5	68.1	88.8	88.4
MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT							
71	Dominica	..	..	..	..	..	..
72	Saint Lucia	..	..	75.0	71.3	..	..
73	Kazakhstan	65	0.792	71.5	60.5	99.3f	99.8f
74	Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	68	0.787	76.3	70.4	92.7	93.3
75	Colombia	66	0.789	76.0	68.7	92.9	92.8
76	Ukraine	69	0.785	73.6	62.0	99.2f	99.7f
77	Samoa	72	0.776	74.2	67.8	98.3k	98.9k
78	Thailand	71	0.779	74.5	65.0	90.5	94.9
79	Dominican Republic	74	0.773	74.8	68.6	87.2	86.8
80	Belize	..	..	79.1	73.1	..	..
81	China	73	0.776	74.3	71.0	86.5	95.1
82	Grenada	..	..	69.8	66.5	..	..
83	Armenia	75	0.772	74.9	68.2	99.2f	99.7f
84	Turkey	79	0.763	73.9	69.0	79.6	95.3
85	Suriname	78	0.767	73.0	66.4	87.2	92.0
86	Jordan	80	0.760	73.8	70.3	87.0	95.2
87	Peru	76	0.769	73.3	68.2	82.5	93.7

Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education b (%) 2005”		Estimated earned income c (PPP US$) 2005		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	
97	83	10,951	16,842	0
95g	83g	7,203h	12,890h	0
75g	72g	10,587	15,687	0
74	72	6,983	13,271	0
71	71	14,656h,l	20,803h,l	0
84	81	..h	..h	..
92	83	4,268h,m	9,489h,m	0
76	75	6,039	15,680	-1
81	82	7,176	11,010	1
74	72	..h,l	..h,l	..
81	79	5,243h	10,981h	-1
97g	91g	4,054h,m	13,460h,m	-9
..	..	..h,l	..h,l	..
67	67	4,516h,l	23,880h,l	-13
66	64	9,307h	20,053h	-1
79	75	7,443	10,761	2
76	76	4,031h	25,678h	-13
83	76	5,537	9,636	3
77g	72g	5,751	15,861	1
91	87	6,236	9,835	3
75	76	7,407h	18,098h	-2
..	..	2,864h,m	4,341h,m	..
93	85	8,476h	13,581h	3
68g	69g	3,728h	6,930h	2
71	69	4,676h	9,734h	0
89g	86g	6,204	10,664	5
84	78	..h,l	..h,l	..
78	72	4,501h,l	8,805h,l	..
97	91	6,141	9,723	1
76g	73g	4,560h	8,683h	-1
77	74	5,680	8,966	2
87	86	4,970	9,067	0
76	72	3,338h	8,797h	-2
72	71	6,695	10,732	0
78g	70g	4,907h	11,465h	-2
81	83	4,022h	10,117h	..
69	70	5,220h	8,213h	1
74	72	..h,l	..h,l	..
74	68	3,893h	6,150h	0
64	73	4,385	12,368	-3
82	72	4,426h	11,029h	-1
79	77	2,566	8,270	-2
87	85	4,269h	7,791h	3

Table 1: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

		Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2005		Adult literacy rate a (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	
	HDI rank	**Rank**	**Value**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
88	Lebanon	81	0.759	73.7	69.4	93.6j	93.6j
89	Ecuador	..	..	77.7	71.8	89.7	92.3
90	Philippines	77	0.768	73.3	68.9	93.6	91.6
91	Tunisia	83	0.750	75.6	71.5	65.3	83.4
92	Fiji	82	0.757	70.6	66.1	95.9j	95.9j
93	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	..	..	73.2	69.0	..	..
94	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	84	0.750	71.8	68.7	76.8	88.0
95	Paraguay	86	0.744	73.4	69.2	92.7k	94.3k
96	Georgia	..	..	74.5	66.7	..	..
97	Guyana	88	0.742	68.1	62.4	99.2f,j	99.2f,j
98	Azerbaijan	87	0.743	70.8	63.5	98.2f	99.5f
99	Sri Lanka	89	0.735	75.6	67.9	89.1o	92.3o
100	Maldives	85	0.744	67.6	66.6	96.4	96.2
101	Jamaica	90	0.732	74.9	69.6	85.9o	74.1o
102	Cape Verde	93	0.723	73.8	67.5	75.5k	87.8k
103	El Salvador	92	0.726	74.3	68.2	79.2k	82.1k
104	Algeria	95	0.720	73.0	70.4	60.1	79.6
105	Viet Nam	91	0.732	75.7	71.9	86.9	93.9
106	Occupied Palestinian Territories	..	..	74.4 71.6	71.3 67.8	88.0 86.8	96.7 94.0
107	Indonesia	94	0.721				
108	Syrian Arab Republic	96	0.710	75.5	71.8	73.6	87.8
109	Turkmenistan	..	..	67.0	58.5	98.3f	99.3f
110	Nicaragua	99	0.696	75.0	69.0	76.6	76.8
111	Moldova	97	0.704	72.0	64.7	98.6f,k	99.6f,k
112	Egypt	..	..	73.0	68.5	59.4	83.0
113	Uzbekistan	98	0.699	70.0	63.6	99.6f,j	99.6f,j
114	Mongolia	100	0.695	69.2	62.8	97.5	98.0
115	Honduras	101	0.694	73.1	65.8	80.2	79.8
116	Kyrgyzstan	102	0.692	69.6	61.7	98.1f	99.3f
117	Bolivia	103	0.691	66.9	62.6	80.7	93.1
118	Guatemala	104	0.675	73.2	66.2	63.3	75.4
119	Gabon	105	0.670	56.9	55.6	79.7k	88.5k
120	Vanuatu	..	..	71.3	67.5	..	..
121	South Africa	107	0.667	52.0	49.5	80.9	84.1
122	Tajikistan	106	0.669	69.0	63.8	99.2f	99.7f
123	Sao Tome and Principe	110	0.637	66.7	63.0	77.9	92.2
124	Botswana	109	0.639	48.4	47.6	81.8	80.4
125	Namibia	108	0.645	52.2	50.9	83.5	86.8
126	Morocco	112	0.621	72.7	68.3	39.6	65.7
127	Equatorial Guinea	111	0.631	51.6	49.1	80.5	93.4
128	India	113	0.600	65.3	62.3	47.8o	73.4o
129	Solomon Islands	..	..	63.8	62.2	..	..

Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education b (%) 2005”		Estimated earned income c (PPP US$) 2005		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	
86	83	2,701h	8,585h	-1
..	..	3,102h	5,572h	..
83	79	3,883	6,375	4
79	74	3,748h	12,924h	-1
76	74	3,928h	8,103h	1
70	68	4,449h	8,722h	..
73	73	4,475h	11,363h	0
70g	69g	2,358	6,892	-1
77	75	1,731	5,188	..
87	84	2,665h	6,467h	-2
66	68	3,960h	6,137h	0
64g	63g	2,647	6,479	-1
66	65	3,992h,m	7,946h,m	4
82	74	3,107h	5,503h	0
66	67	3,087h	8,756h	-2
70	70	3,043	7,543	0
74	73	3,546h	10,515h	-2
62	66	2,540h	3,604h	3
84	81	..	..	..
67	70	2,410h	5,280h	1
63	67	1,907h	5,684h	0
..	..	6,108h,m	9,596h,m	..
72	70	1,773h	5,577h	-2
73	67	1,634h	2,608h	1
..	..	1,635	7,024	..
72g	75g	1,547h	2,585h	1
83	72	1,413h	2,799h	0
74	68	2,160h	4,680h	0
80	76	1,414h	2,455h	0
84g	90g	2,059h	3,584h	0
64	70	2,267h	6,990h	0
68g	72g	5,049h	8,876h	0
61	66	2,601h	3,830h	..
77g	77g	6,927h	15,446h	-1
64	77	992h	1,725h	1
65	65	1,022h	3,357h	-2
70	69	5,913	19,094	0
66	63	5,527h	9,679h	2
55	62	1,846h	7,297h	-1
52g	64g	4,635h,l	10,814h,l	1
60	68	1,620h	5,194h	0
46	50	1,345h	2,672h	..

Table 1: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

		Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2005		Adult literacy rate a (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	
	HDI rank	Rank	Value	Female	Male	Female	Male
130	Lao People's Dem. Rep.	115	0.593	64.5	61.9	60.9	77.0
131	Cambodia	114	0.594	60.6	55.2	64.1	84.7
132	Myanmar	..	..	64.2	57.6	86.4	93.9
133	Bhutan	..	..	66.5	63.1	..	..
134	Comoros	116	0.554	66.3	62.0	63.9j	63.9j
135	Ghana	117	0.549	59.5	58.7	49.8	66.4
136	Pakistan	125	0.525	64.8	64.3	35.4	64.1
137	Mauritania	118	0.543	65.0	61.5	43.4	59.5
138	Lesotho	119	0.541	42.9	42.1	90.3	73.7
139	Congo	120	0.540	55.2	52.8	79.0k	90.5k
140	Bangladesh	121	0.539	64.0	62.3	40.8	53.9
141	Swaziland	123	0.529	41.4	40.4	78.3	80.9
142	Nepal	128	0.520	62.9	62.1	34.9	62.7
143	Madagascar	122	0.530	60.1	56.7	65.3	76.5
144	Cameroon	126	0.524	50.2	49.4	59.8	77.0
145	Papua New Guinea	124	0.529	60.1	54.3	50.9	63.4
146	Haiti	..	..	61.3	57.7	56.5j	56.5j
147	Sudan	131	0.502	58.9	56.0	51.8o	71.1o
148	Kenya	127	0.521	53.1	51.1	70.2	77.7
149	Djibouti	129	0.507	55.2	52.6	79.9j	79.9j
150	Timor-Leste	..	..	60.5	58.9	..	..
151	Zimbabwe	130	0.505	40.2	41.4	86.2k	92.7k
152	Togo	134	0.494	59.6	56.0	38.5	68.7
153	Yemen	136	0.472	63.1	60.0	34.7k	73.1k
154	Uganda	132	0.501	50.2	49.1	57.7	76.8
155	Gambia	133	0.496	59.9	57.7	49.9j	49.9j
LOW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT							
156	Senegal	135	0.492	64.4	60.4	29.2	51.1
157	Eritrea	137	0.469	59.0	54.0	71.5j	71.5j
158	Nigeria	139	0.456	47.1	46.0	60.1k	78.2k
159	Tanzania (United Rep. of)	138	0.464	52.0	50.0	62.2	77.5
160	Guinea	141	0.446	56.4	53.2	18.1	42.6
161	Rwanda	140	0.450	46.7	43.6	59.8	71.4
162	Angola	142	0.439	43.3	40.1	54.2	82.9
163	Benin	145	0.422	56.5	54.1	23.3	47.9
164	Malawi	143	0.432	46.7	46.0	54.0	74.9
165	Zambia	144	0.425	40.6	40.3	59.8	76.3
166	Côte d'Ivoire	146	0.413	48.3	46.5	38.6	60.8
167	Burundi	147	0.409	49.8	47.1	52.2	67.3
168	Congo (Dem. Rep.of the)	148	0.398	47.1	44.4	54.1	80.9
169	Ethiopia	149	0.393	53.1	50.5	22.8	50.0
170	Chad	152	0.370	51.8	49.0	12.8	40.8
171	Central African Rep.	153	0.368	45.0	42.3	33.5	64.8
172	Mozambique	150	0.373	43.6	42.0	25.0	54.8

Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education b (%) 2005”		Estimated earned income c (PPP US$) 2005		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	
56	67	1,385h	2,692h	-1
56	64	2,332h	3,149h	1
51	48	..	..	..
..	..	2,141h,m	4,463h,m	..
42	50	1,337h	2,643h	0
48	53	2,056h	2,893h	0
34	45	1,059h	3,607h	-7
45	47	1,489h	2,996h	1
67	65	2,340h	4,480h	1
48	54	841h	1,691h	1
56g	56g	1,282h	2,792h	1
58	62	2,187	7,659	0
54	62	1,038h	2,072h	-4
58	61	758h	1,090h	3
57	68	1,519h	3,086h	0
38g	43g	2,140h	2,960h	3
..	..	1,146h	2,195h	..
35	39	832h	3,317h	-3
59	62	1,126	1,354	2
22	29	1,422h	2,935h	1
71	73	..h	..h	..
51g	54g	1,499h	2,585h	1
46	64	907h	2,119h	-2
43	67	424h	1,422h	-3
62	64	1,199h	1,708h	2
49g	51g	1,327h	2,525h	2
37	42	1,256h	2,346h	1
29	41	689	1,544	0
51	61	652h	1,592h	-1
49	52	627h	863h	1
38	52	1,876h	2,734h	-1
51	51	1,031h	1,392h	1
24g	28g	1,787h	2,898h	0
42	59	732h	1,543h	-2
62	64	565h	771h	1
58	63	725h	1,319h	1
32g	47g	795h	2,472h	0
34	42	611h	791h	0
28g	39g	488h	944h	0
36	48	796h	1,316h	0
28	47	1,126h	1,735h	-2
23g	36g	933h	1,530h	-2
48	58	1,115h	1,378h	2

Table 1: Basic Indicators on Gender – continued

		Gender-related development index (GDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2005		Adult literacy rate a (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	
	HDI rank	Rank	Value	Female	Male	Female	Male
173	Mali	151	0.371	55.3	50.8	15.9	32.7
174	Niger	155	0.355	54.9	56.7	15.1	42.9
175	Guinea-Bissau	156	0.355	47.5	44.2	60.0j	60.0j
176	Burkina Faso	154	0.364	52.9	49.8	16.6	31.4
177	Sierra Leone	157	0.320	43.4	40.2	24.2	46.7

1. UNDP, Human Development Report 2007, 2007. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

a. Data refer to national literacy estimates from censuses or surveys conducted between 1995 and 2005, unless otherwise specified. Due to differences in methodology and timeliness of underlying data, comparisons across countries and over time should be made with caution. For more details, see http://www.uis.unesco.org/.
b. Data for some countries may refer to national or UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates. For details, see http://www.uis.unesco.org/.
c. Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated on the basis of data on the ratio of the female nonagricultural wage to the male nonagricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita in PPP US$ (see Technical note 1). The wage ratios used in this calculation are based on data for the most recent year available between 1996 and 2005.
d. The HDI ranks used in this calculation are recalculated for the 157 countries with a GDI value. A positive figure indicates that the GDI rank is higher than the HDI rank, a negative the opposite.
e. For the purposes of calculating the GDI, a value of 99.0 % was applied.
f For the purpose of calculating the GDI, the female and male values appearing in this table were scaled downward to reflect the maximum values for adult literacy (99%), gross enrolment ratios (100%), and GDP per capita ($40,000).
g Data refer to an earlier year than that specified.
h No wage data are available. For the purposes of calculating the estimated female and male earned income, a value of 0.75 was used for the ratio of the female nonagricultural wage to the male nonagricultural wage.
i. Statec. 2006.
j. In the absence of recent data, estimates from UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2003, based on outdated census or survey information were used, and should be interpreted with caution.
k. UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates based on its Global Age-specific Literacy Projections model, April 2007.
l. Data from earlier years were adjusted to reflect their values in 2005 prices.
m. Heston, Alan, Robert Summers and Bettina Aten. 2006. Data may differ from the standard definition.
n. For statistical purposes, the data for China do not include Hong Kong and Macao, SARs of China.
o. Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the column heading, differ from the standard definition or refer to only part of a country.

Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education b (%) 2005”		Estimated earned income c (PPP US$) 2005		HDI rank minus GDI rank d
Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	
31	42	833h	1,234h	2
19	26	561h	991h	-1
29g	45g	558h	1,103h	-1
25	33	966h	1,458h	2
38g	52g	507h	1,114h	0

GDI ranks for 157 countries and areas

1 Iceland
2 Australia
3 Norway
4 Canada
5 Sweden
6 Netherlands
7 France
8 Finland
9 Switzerland
10 United Kingdom
11 Denmark
12 Spain
13 Japan
14 Belgium
15 Ireland
16 United States
17 Italy
18 New Zealand
19 Austria
20 Germany
21 Israel
22 Hong Kong, China (SAR)
23 Luxembourg
24 Greece
25 Slovenia
26 Korea (Republic of)
33 Malta
34 Hungary
35 Poland
36 Argentina
37 Qatar
38 Lithuania
39 Slovakia
40 Chile
41 Estonia
42 Bahrain
43 United Arab Emirates
44 Latvia
45 Uruguay
46 Croatia
47 Costa Rica
48 Bahamas
49 Cuba
50 Bulgaria
51 Mexico
53 Tonga
54 Romania
55 Panama
56 Trinidad and Tobago
57 Belarus
58 Malaysia
59 Russian Federation
60 Brazil
61 Albania
62 Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
63 Mauritius
64 Macedonia (TFYR)
65 Kazakhstan
66 Colombia
67 Oman
68 Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)
69 Ukraine
70 Saudi Arabia
71 Thailand
72 Samoa
73 China
74 Dominican Rep.
75 Armenia
76 Peru
77 Philippines
78 Suriname
79 Turkey
80 Jordan
81 Lebanon
82 Fiji
83 Tunisia
84 Iran (Islamic Rep. of)
85 Maldives
86 Paraguay
87 Azerbaijan
88 Guyana
89 Sri Lanka
90 Jamaica
91 Viet Nam
92 El Salvador
93 Cape Verde
94 Indonesia
95 Algeria
96 Syrian Arab Rep.
97 Moldova
98 Uzbekistan
99 Nicaragua
100 Mongolia
101 Honduras
102 Kyrgyzstan
103 Bolivia
104 Guatemala
105 Gabon
106 Tajikistan
107 South Africa
108 Namibia
109 Botswana
110 Sao Tome and Principe
111 Equatorial Guinea
112 Morocco
113 India
114 Cambodia
115 Lao People’s Dem. Rep.
116 Comoros
117 Ghana
118 Mauritania
119 Lesotho
120 Congo
121 Bangladesh
122 Madagascar
123 Swaziland
124 Papua New Guinea
125 Pakistan
126 Cameroon
127 Kenya
128 Nepal
129 Djibouti
130 Zimbabwe
131 Sudan
132 Uganda
133 Gambia
134 Togo
135 Senegal
136 Yemen
137 Eritrea
138 Tanzania (U. Rep. of)
139 Nigeria
140 Rwanda
141 Guinea
142 Angola
143 Malawi
144 Zambia
145 Benin
146 Côte d’Ivoire
147 Burundi
148 Congo (Dem. Rep. of the)
149 Ethiopia
150 Mozambique
151 Mali
152 Chad
153 Central African Rep.
154 Burkina Faso
155 Niger
156 Guinea-Bissau
157 Sierra Leone

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education[1]

		Adult literacy a		Youth literacy a		Net primary enrolment b,c	
	HDI rank	Female rate (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female rate (% aged 15-24) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT							
1	Iceland	..	..	..	..	97e	0.97e
2	Norway	..	..	..	..	98	1.00
3	Australia	..	..	..	..	97	1.00
4	Canada	..	..	..	..	..	..
5	Ireland	..	..	..	..	96	1.00
6	Sweden	..	..	..	..	96	1.00
7	Switzerland	..	..	..	..	93	0.99
8	Japan	..	..	..	..	100	1.00
9	Netherlands	..	..	..	..	98	0.99
10	France	..	..	..	..	99f	1.00f
11	Finland	..	..	..	..	98	1.00
12	United States	..	..	..	..	93	1.01
13	Spain	..	..	..	..	99	0.99
14	Denmark	..	..	..	..	96	1.01
15	Austria	..	..	..	..	98e	1.02e
16	United Kingdom	..	..	..	..	99	1.00
17	Belgium	..	..	..	..	99	1.00
18	Luxembourg	..	..	..	..	95	1.01
19	New Zealand	..	..	..	..	99	1.00
20	Italy	98.0	0.99	99.8	1.00	98	0.99
21	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	..	..	..	..	90e	0.94e
22	Germany	..	..	..	..	96e	1.01e
23	Israel	..	..	..	..	98	1.01
24	Greece	94.2	0.96	99.0	1.00	99	1.00
25	Singapore	88.6	0.92	99.6	1.00	..	..
26	Korea (Republic of)	..	..	..	..	99	1.00
27	Slovenia	99.6	1.00	99.9	1.00	98	0.99
28	Cyprus	95.1	0.96	99.8	1.00	99e	1.00e
29	Portugal	92.0	0.96	99.6	1.00	98	1.00
30	Brunei Darussalam	90.2	0.95	98.9	1.00	94	1.01
31	Barbados	..	..	..	..	98	1.00
32	Czech Republic	..	..	..	..	93e	1.02e
33	Kuwait	91.0	0.96	99.8	1.00	86	0.99
34	Malta	89.2	1.03	97.8	1.04	84	0.95
35	Qatar	88.6	0.99	97.5	1.03	96	1.00
36	Hungary	..	..	..	..	88	0.98
37	Poland	..	..	..	..	97	1.00
38	Argentina	97.2	1.00	99.1	1.00	98f	0.99f
39	United Arab Emirates	87.8	0.99	95.5	0.98	70	0.97
40	Chile	95.6	1.00	99.2	1.00	89e	0.98e
41	Bahrain	83.6	0.94	97.3	1.00	97	1.00
42	Slovakia	..	..	..	..	92e	1.01e
43	Lithuania	99.6	1.00	99.7	1.00	89	1.00
44	Estonia	99.8	1.00	99.8	1.00	95	0.99

Gross primary enrolment b,d		Gross secondary enrolment b,d		Gross tertiary enrolment b,d	
Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
98e	0.97e	109e	1.03e	93e	1.85e
98	1.00	114	1.01	97	1.54
104	0.99	144	0.95	80	1.25
99e,f	1.00e,f	116e,f	0.98e,f	72e,f	1.36e,f
106	0.99	118	1.09	67	1.27
97	1.00	103	1.00	100	1.55
101	0.99	91	0.93	43	0.84
100	1.00	102	1.00	52	0.89
106	0.98	117	0.98	63	1.08
110	0.99	116	1.00	64	1.29
99	0.99	113	1.05	101	1.21
99	0.99	95	1.02	97	1.40
105	0.98	127	1.05	74	1.22
99	1.00	126	1.03	94	1.39
106	1.00	100	0.95	55	1.20
107	1.00	107	1.03	70	1.39
103	0.99	108	0.97	70	1.24
100	1.00	97	1.06	13e,f	1.18e,f
102	1.00	127	1.07	99	1.50
102	0.99	99	0.99	76	1.36
101	0.94	85	0.96	31	0.95
101	1.00	99	0.98	..	..
110	1.01	92	0.99	66	1.34
101	1.00	101	0.98	95	1.14
..	..	..	..	..	..
104	0.99	93	1.00	69	0.62
100	0.99	99	1.00	96	1.43
101e	1.00e	97e	1.02e	35e	1.13e
112	0.96	104	1.10	64	1.30
107	1.00	98	1.04	20	2.02
108	1.00	113	1.00	54f	2.47f
100	0.98	97	1.02	52	1.16
97	0.98	98	1.06	29	2.66
95	0.94	101	1.03	37	1.36
106	0.99	99	0.98	33	3.45
97	0.98	96	0.99	78	1.46
98	0.99	99	0.99	74	1.41
112f	0.99f	89f	1.07f	76f	1.41f
82	0.97	66	1.05	39e,f	3.24e,f
101	0.96	91	1.01	47	0.96
104	0.99	102	1.06	50	2.23
98	0.99	95	1.01	46	1.29
95	1.00	96	0.99	93	1.57
99	0.97	101	1.01	82	1.66

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

		Adult literacy a		Youth literacy a		Net primary enrolment b,c	
	HDI rank	Female rate (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female rate (% aged 15-24) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
45	Latvia	99.7	1.00	99.8	1.00	89e	1.03e
46	Uruguay	97.3	1.01	99.0	1.01	93e,f	1.01e,f
47	Croatia	97.1	0.98	99.7	1.00	87f	0.99f
48	Costa Rica	95.1	1.00	98.0	1.01	..	..
49	Bahamas	..	..	..	..	92	1.03
50	Seychelles	92.3	1.01	99.4	1.01	100e,f	1.01e,f
51	Cuba	99.8	1.00	100.0	1.00	96	0.98
52	Mexico	90.2	0.97	97.6	1.00	98	1.00
53	Bulgaria	97.7	0.99	98.1	1.00	93	0.99
54	Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	..	..	..	96e	1.06e
55	Tonga	99.0	1.00	99.4	1.00	93e	0.96e
56	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	74.8	0.81g	96.5g	0.97g	..	..
57	Antigua and Barbuda	..	..	..	..	..	..
58	Oman	73.5	0.85	96.7	0.99	76	1.01
59	Trinidad and Tobago	97.8	0.99g	99.5g	1.00g	90e	1.00e
60	Romania	96.3	0.98	97.8	1.00	92	0.99
61	Saudi Arabia	76.3	0.87	94.7	0.98	79	1.03
62	Panama	91.2	0.99	95.6	0.99	98	0.99
63	Malaysia	85.4	0.93	97.3	1.00	95f	1.00f
64	Belarus	99.4	1.00	99.8	1.00	88e	0.97e
65	Mauritius	80.5	0.91	95.4	1.02	96	1.02
66	Bosnia and Herzegovina	94.4	0.95	99.8	1.00	..	..
67	Russian Federation	99.2	1.00	99.8	1.00	93e	1.01e
68	Albania	98.3	0.99	99.5	1.00	94f	1.00f
69	Macedonia (TFYR)	94.1	0.96	98.5	0.99	92	1.00
70	Brazil	88.8	1.00	97.9	1.02	95f	1.00f
MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT							
71	Dominica	..	..	..	..	85e	1.02e
72	Saint Lucia	..	..	..	..	96	0.98
73	Kazakhstan	99.3	1.00	99.9	1.00	90	0.98
74	Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	92.7	0.99	98.1	1.02	92	1.01
75	Colombia	92.9	1.00	98.4	1.01	87	1.00
76	Ukraine	99.2	0.99	99.8	1.00	83e	1.00e
77	Samoa	98.3	0.99g	99.4g	1.00g	91e,f	1.00e,f
78	Thailand	90.5	0.95	97.8	1.00	86h	0.96h
79	Dominican Republic	87.2	1.00	95.4	1.03	88	1.01
80	Belize	..	..	..	..	96	1.03
81	China	86.5	0.91	98.5	0.99	..	..
82	Grenada	..	..	..	..	83e	0.99e
83	Armenia	99.2	0.99	99.9	1.00	81	1.05
84	Turkey	79.6	0.84	93.3	0.95	87	0.95
85	Suriname	87.2	0.95	94.1	0.98	96	1.04
86	Jordan	87.0	0.91	99.0	1.00	90	1.02
87	Peru	82.	0.88	96.3	0.98	97	1.00

Gross primary enrolment b,d		Gross secondary enrolment b,d		Gross tertiary enrolment b,d	
Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
90	0.96	98	1.01	96	1.79
108f	0.98f	113f	1.16f	55e,f	2.03e,f
94f	0.99f	89f	1.02f	42f	1.19f
109	0.99	82	1.06	28e	1.26e
101	1.00	91	1.00	..	..
116e	1.01e	105e	0.99e	..	..
99	0.95	94	1.00	78e	1.72e
108	0.98	83	1.07	24	0.99
101	0.99	101	0.95	47	1.14
102e	1.06e	93e	0.98e	..	..
112e	0.95e	102e,f	1.08e,f	8e,f	1.67e,f
106	0.98	107e	1.19e	59e,f	1.09e,f
..	..	..	..	..	..
85	1.00	85	0.96	19	1.09
99e	0.97e	82e	1.04e	14e	1.27e
106	0.99	86	1.01	50	1.26
91	1.00	86	0.96	34	1.47
109	0.97	73	1.07	55	1.63
96f	1.00f	81f	1.14f	36f	1.31f
100	0.97	96	1.01	72	1.37
102	1.00	88e	0.99e	19	1.26
..	..	..	..	..	..
128	1.00	91	0.99	82e	1.36e
105f	0.99f	77f	0.96f	23f	1.57f
98	1.00	83	0.98	35	1.38
135f	0.93f	111f	1.10f	27f	1.32f
92e	0.99e	106e	0.97e	..	..
107	0.97	85	1.21	20	2.80
108	0.99	97	0.97	62	1.42
104	0.98	79	1.13	41e,f	1.08e,f
111	0.98	82	1.11	31	1.09
107	1.00	85	0.92	75	1.20
100e	1.00e	85e	1.12e	7e,f	0.93e,f
94h	0.96h	72h	1.05h	44h	1.06h
110	0.95	78	1.21	41e,f	1.64e,f
125	0.96	85e	1.02e	4f	2.43f
112e	0.99e	74e	1.00e	20	0.95
91e	0.96e	102e	1.03e	..	..
96	1.04	89	1.03	31	1.22
91e	0.95e	68e	0.82e	26	0.74
120	1.00	100	1.33	15f	1.62f
96	1.01	88	1.02	40	1.06
112	1.00	92	1.01	34e	1.03e

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

		Adult literacy a		Youth literacy a		Net primary enrolment b,c	
	HDI rank	Female rate (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female rate (% aged 15-24) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
88	Lebanon	..	..	..	..	92	0.99
89	Ecuador	89.7	0.97	96.5	1.00	98e,f	1.01e,f
90	Philippines	93.6	1.02	96.6	1.03	95	1.02
91	Tunisia	65.3	0.78	92.2	0.96	97	1.01
92	Fiji	..	..	..	..	96e	0.99e
93	S.Vincent and the Grenadines	..	..	..	..	88	0.95
94	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	76.8	0.87	96.7	0.99	100	1.10
95	Paraguay	92.7g	0.98g	96.1g	1.00g	88f	1.00f
96	Georgia	..	..	..	..	92f	0.99f
97	Guyana	..	..	..	..	..	..
98	Azerbaijan	98.2	0.99	99.9	1.00	84	0.98
99	Sri Lanka	89.1	0.97	96.1	1.01	98e,f	1.00e,f
100	Maldives	96.4	1.00	98.3	1.00	79	1.00
101	Jamaica	85.9	1.16	..	..	90e	1.00e
102	Cape Verde	75.5g	0.86g	96.7g	1.01g	89	0.98
103	El Salvador	79.2g	0.96g	90.3g	1.04g	93	1.00
104	Algeria	60.1	0.76	86.1	0.92	95	0.98
105	Viet Nam	86.9	0.93	93.6	0.99	..	..
106	Occupied Palestinian Territories	88.0	0.91	98.8	1.00	80	0.99
107	Indonesia	86.8	0.92	98.5	1.00	94e	0.96e
108	Syrian Arab Re.	73.6	0.84	90.2	0.95	..	..
109	Turkmenistan	98.3	0.99	99.8	1.00	..	..
110	Nicaragua	76.6	1.00	88.8	1.06	86	0.98
111	Moldova	98.6g	0.99g	99.7g	1.00g	86e	0.99e
112	Egypt	59.4	0.71	78.9	0.88	91e	0.95e
113	Uzbekistan	..	..	..	..	..	..
114	Mongolia	97.5	1.00	98.4	1.01	85	1.03
115	Honduras	80.2	1.01	90.9	1.05	92e	1.02e
116	Kyrgyzstan	98.1	0.99	99.7	1.00	86	0.99
117	Bolivia	80.7	0.87	96.1	0.98	96e,f	1.01e,f
118	Guatemala	63.3	0.84	78.4	0.91	92	0.95
119	Gabon	79.7g	0.90g	95.1g	0.98g	..	..
120	Vanuatu	..	..	..	..	93e	0.98e
121	South Africa	80.9	0.96	94.3	1.01	87f	1.00f
122	Tajikistan	99.2	1.00	99.8	1.00	96	0.96
123	Sao Tome and Principe	77.9	0.85	94.9	0.99	96	0.99
124	Botswana	81.8	1.02	95.6	1.04	84e	1.00e
125	Namibia	83.5	0.96	93.5	1.03	74	1.07
126	Morocco	39.6	0.60	60.5	0.75	83	0.94
127	Equatorial Guinea	80.5	0.86	94.9	1.00	..	..
128	India	47.8	0.65	67.7	0.80	85e	0.93e
129	Solomon Islands	..	..	..	..	..	..

Gross primary enrolment b,d		Gross secondary enrolment b,d		Gross tertiary enrolment b,d	
Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
105	0.97	93	1.10	54	1.15
117e	1.00e	61e	1.00e	..	..
112	0.99	90	1.12	31	1.23
108	0.97	88	1.09	35	1.40
105e	0.98e	91e	1.07e	17e	1.20e
105	0.90	83	1.24	..	..
122	1.22	78	0.94	25	1.09
103f	0.97f	64f	1.02f	28e,f	1.34e,f
94	1.01	83	1.01	47	1.04
131	0.98	103	1.02	13	2.13
95	0.98	81	0.96	14	0.90
101e,f	0.99e,f	83e,f	1.00e,f	..	..
93	0.98	78e,f	1.14e,f	(.)e,f	2.37e,f
94	1.00	89	1.03	26e,f	2.29e,f
105	0.95	70	1.07	7	1.04
111	0.96	64	1.03	21	1.23
107	0.93	86e	1.07e	24	1.37
91	0.94	75	0.97	13	0.71
88	0.99	102	1.07	39e	1.04e
115e	0.96e	63e	0.99e	15e	0.79e
121	0.95	65	0.94	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..
110	0.97	71	1.15	19e,f	1.11e,f
92e	0.99e	83e	1.03e	41e	1.48e
97	0.94	82	0.92	..	..
99e,f	0.99e,f	93e,f	0.97e,f	14e,f	0.80e,f
94	1.02	98	1.13	54	1.62
113e	1.00e	73e	1.24e	20e,f	1.46e,f
97	0.99	87	1.01	46	1.25
113e,f	1.00e,f	87f	0.97f	..	..
109	0.92	49	0.91	8e,f	0.72e,f
129e,f	0.99e,f	42e,f	0.86e,f	..	..
116e	0.97e	38f	0.86f	4e,f	0.58e,f
102f	0.96f	97f	1.07f	17	1.22
99	0.96	74	0.83	9	0.35
132	0.98	46	1.08	..	..
105	0.98	75e	1.05e	5	1.00
100	1.01	60	1.15	7f	1.15f
99	0.89	46e	0.85e	10	0.85
111	0.95	22e,f	0.57e,f	2f	0.43f
116e	0.94e	50	0.80	9	0.70
94	0.95	27	0.83	..	..

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

		Adult literacy a		Youth literacy a		Net primary enrolment b,c	
	HDI rank	Female rate (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female rate (% aged 15-24) 1995-2005	Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
130	Lao People's Democratic Republic	60.9	0.79	74.7	0.90	81	0.95
131	Cambodia	64.1	0.76	78.9	0.90	98	0.98
132	Myanmar	86.4	0.92	93.4	0.98	91	1.02
133	Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	..
134	Comoros	..	..	..	..	..	..
135	Ghana	49.8	0.75	65.5	0.86	65	0.99
136	Pakistan	35.4	0.55	53.1	0.69	59	0.76
137	Mauritania	43.4	0.73	55.5	0.82	72	1.00
138	Lesotho	90.3	1.23	..	..	89	1.06
139	Congo	79.0g	0.87g	96.5g	0.98g	48	1.20
140	Bangladesh	40.8	0.76	60.	0.90	96e,f	1.03e,f
141	Swaziland	78.3	0.97	89.8	1.03	80e	1.01e
142	Nepal	34.9	0.56	60.1	0.75	74e,f	0.87e,f
143	Madagascar	65.3	0.85	68.2	0.94	92	1.00
144	Cameroon	59.8	0.78	..	..	..	..
145	Papua New Guinea	50.9	0.80	64.1	0.93	..	..
146	Haiti	..	..	..	..	..	..
147	Sudan	51.8	0.73	71.4	0.84	..	..
148	Kenya	70.2	0.90	80.7	1.01	79	1.01
149	Djibouti	..	..	..	..	30	0.81
150	Timor-Leste	..	..	..	..	..	..
151	Zimbabwe	86.2g	0.93g	97.9g	1.00g	82f	1.01f
152	Togo	38.5	0.56	63.6	0.76	72	0.86
153	Yemen	34.7g	0.47g	58.9g	0.65g	63e,f	0.73e,f
154	Uganda	57.7	0.75	71.2	0.86	..	..
155	Gambia	..	..	..	..	77e,f	0.99e,f
LOW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT							
156	Senegal	29.2	0.57	41.0	0.70	67	0.97
157	Eritrea	..	..	..	..	43	0.86
158	Nigeria	60.1g	0.77g	81.3g	0.94g	64e	0.88e
159	Tanzania (United Rep. of)	62.2	0.80	76.2	0.94	91	0.98
160	Guinea	18.1	0.43	33.7	0.57	61	0.87
161	Rwanda	59.8	0.84	76.9	0.98	75e	1.04e
162	Angola	54.2	0.65	63.2	0.75	..	..
163	Benin	23.3	0.49	33.2	0.56	70	0.81
164	Malawi	54.0	0.72	70.7	0.86	97	1.05
165	Zambia	59.8	0.78	66.2	0.91	89	1.00
166	Côte d'Ivoire	38.6	0.63	52.1	0.74	50e,f	0.80e,f
167	Burundi	52.2	0.78	70.4	0.92	58	0.91
168	Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	54.1	0.67	63.1	0.81	..	..
169	Ethiopia	22.8	0.46	38.5	0.62	59	0.92
170	Chad	12.8	0.31	23.2	0.42	..	..

Gross primary enrolment b,d		Gross secondary enrolment b,d		Gross tertiary enrolment b,d	
Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005	Female ratio (%) 2005	Female rate to male rate 2005
108	0.88	40	0.76	7	0.72
129	0.92	24e,f	0.69e,f	2	0.46
101	1.02	40	0.99	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..
80e	0.88e	30e	0.76e	2e,f	0.77e,f
87	0.96	40e	0.85e	4	0.56
75	0.76	23	0.74	4	0.88
94	1.01	19	0.85	2	0.33
131	1.00	43	1.26	4	1.27
84	0.92	35e,f	0.84e,f	1e,f	0.19e,f
111f	1.03f	48f	1.03f	4	0.53
104e	0.93e	44e	0.96e	5	1.06
108	0.91	42e	0.86e	3f	0.40f
136	0.96	..	..	2	0.89
107e	0.85e	39e	0.80e	5e	0.66e
70e,f	0.88e,f	23e,f	0.79e,f	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..
56	0.87	33	0.94	..	..
110	0.96	48e	0.95e	2f	0.60f
36	0.82	19	0.66	2	0.73
145	0.92	52	1.00	12e,f	1.48e,f
95f	0.98f	35f	0.91f	3e,f	0.63e,f
92	0.85	27e	0.51e	1e,f	0.20e,f
75	0.74	31	0.49	5	0.37
119	1.00	17e	0.81e	3f	0.62f
84f	1.06f	42f	0.82f	(.)f	0.23f
77	0.97	18	0.75	..	..
57	0.81	23	0.59	(.)f	0.15f
95	0.86	31	0.84	7f	0.55f
104	0.96	..	..	1e	0.48e
74	0.84	21e	0.53e	1	0.24
121e	1.02e	13e	0.89e	2e	0.62e
..	..	15f	0.78f	1e,f	0.66e,f
85	0.80	23e	0.57e	1e,f	0.25e,f
124	1.02	25	0.81	(.)f	0.54f
108	0.95	25e	0.82e	..	..
63e,f	0.79e,f	18e,f	0.55e,f	..	..
78	0.86	11e	0.74e	1e	0.38e
54e,f	0.78e,f	16e,f	0.58e,f	..	..
86	0.86	24	0.65	1	0.32
62	0.67	8e	0.33e	(.)e	0.14e

Table 2: Basic Indicators on Girls' Education – continued

HDI rank		Adult literacy a: Female rate (% aged 15 and older) 1995-2005	Adult literacy a: Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Youth literacy a: Female rate (% aged 15-24) 1995-2005	Youth literacy a: Female rate to male rate 1995-2005	Net primary enrolment b,c: Female ratio (%) 2005	Net primary enrolment b,c: Female rate to male rate 2005
171	Central African Republic	33.5	0.52	46.9	0.67	..	..
172	Mozambique	25.0	0.46	36.6	0.61	74	0.91
173	Mali	15.9	0.49	16.9	0.52	45	0.81
174	Niger	15.1	0.35	23.2	0.44	33	0.73
175	Guinea-Bissau	..	..	..	..	37e,f	0.71e,f
176	Burkina Faso	16.6	0.53	26.5	0.66	40	0.79
177	Sierra Leone	24.2	0.52	37.4	0.63	..	..
Developing countries		69.9	0.91	81.4	0.91	83i	0.95i
Least developed countries		44.3	0.80	58.0	0.80	70i	0.92i
Arab States		59.4	0.88	79.5	0.88	77i	0.92i
East Asia and the Pacific		86.7	0.99	97.5	0.99	93i	0.99i
Latin America and the Caribbean		89.7	1.01	97.0	1.01	95i	1.00i
South Asia		47.4	0.81	66.6	0.81	82i	0.92i
Sub-Saharan Africa		51.2	0.84	65.1	0.84	68i	0.93i
Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS		98.7	1.00	99.6	1.00	91i	1.00i
OECD		..	..	..	..	96i	1.00i
High-income OECD		..	..	..	..	96i	1.01i
High human development		93.6	1.01	98.4	1.01	..	..
Medium human development		71.2	0.92	83.2	0.92	..	..
Low human development		43.8	0.80	58.9	0.80	..	..
High income		..	..	..	..	95i	1.01i
Middle income		86.5	0.99	96.2	0.99	92i	0.99i
Low income		48.8	0.82	65.8	0.82	76i	0.92i
World		72.7	0.92	82.5	0.92	85i	0.96i

1. UNDP, Human Development Report 2007, 2007. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

a. Data refer to national literacy estimates from censuses or surveys conducted between 1995 and 2005, unless otherwise specified. Due to differences in methodology and timeliness of underlying data, comparisons across countries and over time should be made with caution. For more details, see http://www.uis.unesco.org/.
b. Data for some countries may refer to national or UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates. For more details, see http://www.uis.unesco.org/.
c. The net enrolment rate is the number of pupils of the theoretical school-age group for a given level of education level who are enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.
d. The gross enrolment ratio is the total number of pupils or students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is the five-year age group following on from the secondary school leaving age. Gross enrolment ratios in excess of 100 indicate that there are pupils or students outside the theoretical age group who are enrolled in that level of education.

Gross primary enrolment b,d		**Gross secondary enrolment** b,d		**Gross tertiary enrolment** b,d	
Female ratio (%) 2005	**Female rate to male rate 2005**	**Female ratio (%) 2005**	**Female rate to male rate 2005**	**Female ratio (%) 2005**	**Female rate to male rate 2005**
44e	0.66e	..	..	..	..
94	0.85	11	0.69	1	0.49
59	0.80	18e	0.62e	2e	0.47e
39	0.73	7	0.68	1	0.45
56e,f	0.67e,f	13e,f	0.54e,f	(.)e,f	0.18e,f
51	0.80	12	0.70	1	0.45
65f	0.71f	22e,f	0.71e,f	1e,f	0.40e,f
104i	0.94i	58i	0.93i	16i	0.91i
90i	0.89i	28i	0.81i	3i	0.63i
88i	0.90i	65i	0.92i	21i	1.01i
110i	0.98i	72i	1.00i	21i	0.93i
115i	0.96i	91i	1.08i	32i	1.17i
109i	0.93i	48i	0.83i	9i	0.74i
92i	0.89i	28i	0.79i	4i	0.62i
107i	0.99i	90i	0.98i	63i	1.30i
101i	0.99i	98i	1.00i	65i	1.17i
102i	0.99i	103i	1.00i	76i	1.20i
..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..
101i	0.99i	102i	1.00i	73i	1.21i
110i	0.97i	78i	1.01i	28i	1.09i
99i	0.91i	41i	0.82i	7i	0.68i
104i	0.95i	64i	0.94i	25i	1.05i

e. National or UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimate.
f. Data refer to an earlier year than that specified.
g. UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimate based on its Global Age-specific Literacy Projections model, April 2007.
h. Data refer to the 2006 school year.
i. Data refer to aggregates calculated by UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Table 3: Maternal Mortality in Selected Countries

Countries and territories	Maternal mortality ratio† 1990-2004* reported		2000 adjusted	Lifetime risk of maternal death. 1 in:
Afghanistan	1600		1900	6
Angola	-		1700	7
Azerbaijan	25		94	520
Burundi	-		1000	12
Cambodia	440		450	36
Cameroon	430		730	23
Central African Republic	1100		1100	15
Chad	830		1100	11
Colombia	78		130	240
Comoros	520	x	480	33
Congo	-		510	26
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	1300		990	13
Côte d'Ivoire	600		690	25
Cyprus	0		47	890
Djibouti	74		730	19
El Salvador	170		150	180
Eritrea	1000		630	24
Ethiopia	870		850	14
Fiji	38		75	360
Gambia	730		540	31
Georgia	52		32	1700
Guatemala	150		240	74
Guinea	530		740	18
Guinea-Bissau	910		1100	13
Haiti	520		680	29
India	540		540	48
Indonesia	310		230	150
Iraq	290		250	65
Kenya	410		1000	19
Korea, Republic of	20		20	2800
Lao People's Democratic Republic	530		650	25
Lebanon	100	x	150	240
Liberia	580	x	760	16
Mali	580		1200	10
Myanmar	230		360	75
Nepal	540		740	24
Nicaragua	83		230	88
Niger	590		1600	7
Nigeria	-		800	18
Occupied Palestinian Territory	-		100	140
Papua New Guinea	370	x	300	62
Philippines	170		200	120
Rwanda	1100		1400	10
Sao Tome and Principe	100		-	-
Sierra Leone	1800		2000	6
Solomon Islands	550	x	130	120
Somalia	-		1100	10
Sri Lanka	92		92	430

Table 3: Maternal Mortality in Selected Countries – continued

Countries and territories	Maternal mortality ratio† 1990-2004* reported	2000 adjusted	Lifetime risk of maternal death. 1 in:
Sudan	550	590	30
Tajikistan	45	100	250
Timor-Leste	-	660	30
Togo	480	570	26
Uganda	510	880	13
Uzbekistan	34	24	1300
Vanuatu	68	130	140
Zimbabwe	700	1100	16
SUMMARY INDICATORS			
Sub-Saharan Africa	-	940	16
Eastern and Southern Africa	-	980	15
Western and Central Africa	-	900	16
Middle East and North Africa	-	220	100
South Asia	-	560	43
East Asia and Pacific	-	110	360
Latin America and Caribbean	-	190	160
CEE/CIS	-	64	770
Industrialized countries	-	13	4000
Developing countries	-	440	61
Least developed countries	-	890	17
World	-	400	74

The maternal mortality ratio is the number of women who die from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management (excluding accidental or incidental causes) during pregnancy and childbirth or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, per 100,000 live births.

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Table 4: HIV Infection Rates in Selected Countries

	Young Women (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005		Young Men (15 to 24) Rate (%) 2005	
	Estimate	[low estimate-high estimate]	Estimate	[low estimate-high estimate]
WESTERN AFRICA	—	—	—	—
Côte d'Ivoire	5.1	[2.6 - 7.9]	1.7	[0.9 - 2.7]
Gambia	1.7	[0.7 - 2.9]	0.6	[0.2 - 1.0]
Guinea	1.4	[1.1 - 1.6]	0.5	[0.4 - 0.5]
Guinea-Bissau	2.5	[1.1 - 4.3]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.5]
Liberia	—	—	—	—
Mali	1.2	[0.9 - 1.5]	0.4	[0.3 - 0.5]
Niger	0.8	[0.3 - 1.4]	0.2	[0.1 - 0.4]
Nigeria	2.7	[1.3 - 4.4]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.5]
Sierra Leone	1.1	[0.6 - 1.7]	0.4	[0.2 - 0.6]
Togo	2.2	[1.0 - 3.6]	0.8	[0.4 - 1.2]
EASTERN AFRICA				
Burundi	2.3	[2.0 - 2.7]	0.8	[0.7 - 0.9]
Comoros	<0.1	[<0.2]	<0.1	[<0.2]
Djibouti	2.1	[0.5 - 4.6]	0.7	[0.2 - 1.6]
Eritrea	1.6	[0.7 - 2.7]	0.6	[0.3 - 1.0
Ethiopia	—a	[0.5 - 2.3]	—	[0.2 - 0.8]
Kenya	5.2	[4.5 - 6.0]	1.0	[0.9 - 1.2]
Mozambique	10.7	[6.0 - 15.8]	3.6	[2.0 - 5.3]
Rwanda	1.9	[1.9 - 2.0]	0.8	[0.7 - 0.8]
Somalia	0.6	[0.3 - 1.1]	0.2	[0.1 - 0.4]
Uganda	5.0	[4.2 - 5.7]	2.3	[1.9 - 2.6]
Zambia	12.7	[11.9 - 13.6]	3.8	[3.6 - 4.0]
Zimbabwe	14.7	[7.7 - 23.2]	4.4	[2.3 - 6.9]
MIDDLE AFRICA	—	—	—	—
Angola	2.5	[1.2 - 4.2]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.4]
Cameroon	4.9	[4.4 - 5.3]	1.4	[1.3 - 1.6]
Central African Republic	7.3	[2.7 - 13.1]	2.5	[0.9 - 4.5]
Chad	2.2	[0.9 - 3.9]	0.9	[0.4 - 1.6]
Congo, Dem. Rep. of	2.2	[1.0 - 3.8]	0.8	[0.3 - 1.3]
Congo, Rep. of	3.7	[1.9 - 5.7]	1.2	[0.6 - 1.9]
Gabon	5.4	[2.7 - 8.7]	1.8	[0.9 - 3.0]

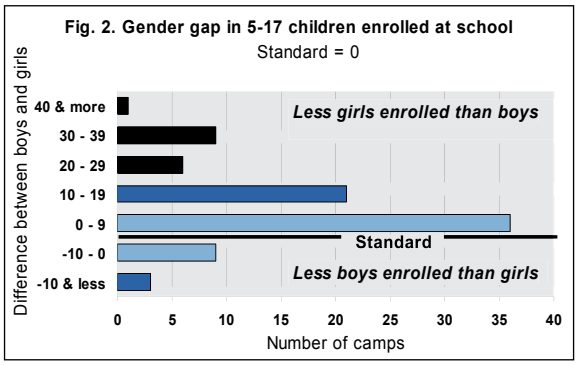
2SOURCE: 2006 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic (UNAIDS), available from: http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006/2006_GR_ANN2_en.pdf (accessed 04/12/06)

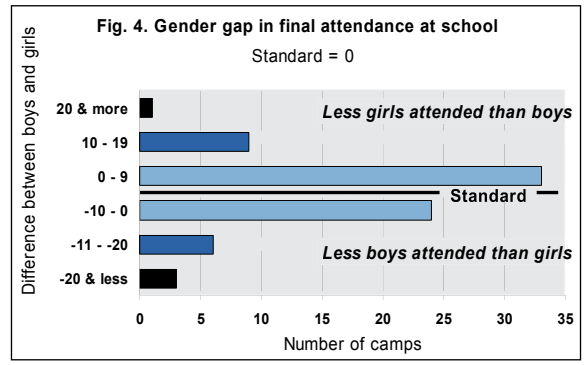
Key

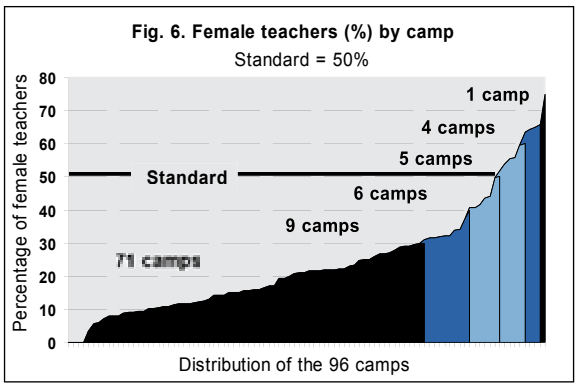
— Data unavailable or inapplicable

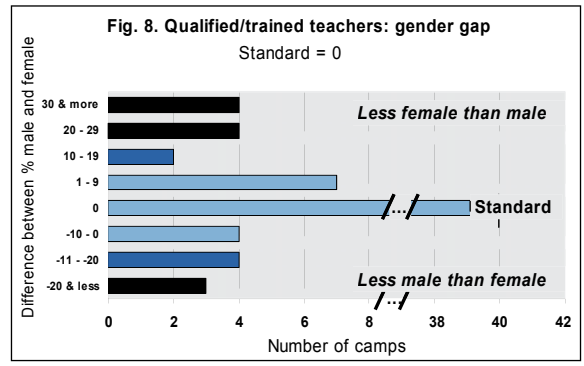
Information sourced and reproduced with kind permission from UNAIDS. UNAIDS, 2006, 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic.

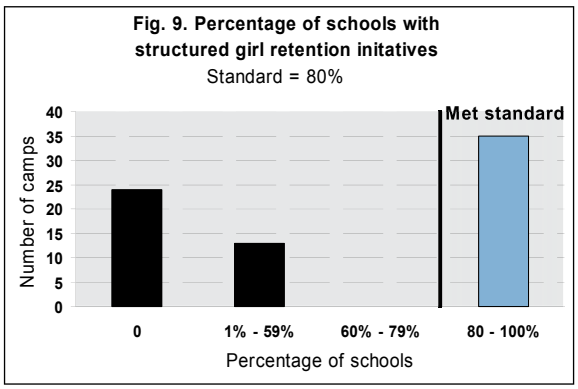
Table 5: Refugee Girls











Reproduced with kind permission from UNHCR. UNHCR, 2004, Refugee Education Indicators 2003.

Glossary

Gender based violence: According to the UNHCR the term GBV is used to distinguish violence which targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender, from other forms of violence. GBV includes violent acts such as torture, rape, forced impregnation, mutilation and sexual slavery.[1] UNIFEM consider the term GBV to be an important analytical tool that reflects the unequal power relations between men and women in society.[2]

Gender Development Index: Each year since 1990 the Human Development Report has published the human development index (HDI) which looks beyond a country's national GDP to a broader definition of well-being. The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income). The Gender Development Index provides the same measures, disaggregated by sex. The greater the gender disparity in basic human development, the lower is a country's GDI relative to its HDI.[3]

Gender discrimination: According to the World Health Organisation the term gender discrimination refers to 'any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms which prevents a person from enjoying full human rights'.[4]

Gender division of labour: The International Labour Organisation defines 'division of labour' as: "The process whereby workers are allocated to the activity in which they are most productive". A gendered division of labour would therefore refer to an allocation of activities between men and women in accordance to "traditional or cultural perceptions of the ability or suitability of each to perform them".[5]

Gender norms: Refer to the socially constructed characteristics which tend to be 'assigned' to men and women in accordance with their biological sex. In development, a 'gender transformative' policy would attempt to re-define women and men's gender roles and relations in an effort to promote "shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment".[6]

Gender roles: The International Labour Organisation defines the term 'gender roles' as "learned expectations and behaviours in a given society, community or social group that determine the type of activities that are seen as 'male' or 'female'".[7]

Livelihoods: The term 'livelihoods' can broadly be described as the way that people make their living. However, development organisations, such as Oxfam, believe the term means more than that. "It is about reliable and permanent sources of food, income, and employment". Thus 'livelihood' projects aim to provide poor communities with *sustainable* resources.[8]

Psychosocial: 'Psychosocial' refers to the dynamic relationship that exists between psychological and social effects, each continually inter-acting with and influencing the other.

'Psychological effects' are those which affect different levels of functioning including cognitive (perceptions and memory as a basis for thoughts and learning), affective (emotions), and behavioural. 'Social effects' pertain to altered relationships, family and community networks, and economic status.[9]

Transactional sex: Can also be referred to as 'sexual barter', and it is broadly defined as "the exchange of money or goods for sexual services".[10] During post-conflict reconstruction widespread poverty and lack of resources may lead women and girls to barter sexual favours for food or shelter.[11]

1 OCHA IRIN, IRIN In Depth: 'Our Bodies Their Battle Ground: Gender Based Violence in Conflict Zones', September 2004: http://www.irinnews.org/IndepthMain.aspx?IndepthId=20&ReportId=62814

2 UNIFEM, 'Gender Fact Sheet No. 5: Masculinity and Gender

Based Violence' (Accessed January 16, 2008): http://unifem-eseasia.org/resources/factsheets/UNIFEMSheet5.pdf

3 UNDP, Human Development Reports. 'Building the Capabilities of Women' (Accessed January 16, 2008): http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_USA.html

4 WHO, 'Gender and Reproductive Rights: Glossary' (accessed January 16, 2008): http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/glossary.html

5 ILO, INFORM Bureau of Library and Information Services, Department of Communications and Public Information, *ILO Thesaurus 2005*: http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ILO-Thesaurus/english/tr2742.htm

6 UN INSTRAW, Glossary of Gender Related Terms and Concepts' (accessed January 16, 2008): http://www.un-instraw.org/en/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=

7 ILO, INFORM Bureau of Library and Information Services, Department of Communications and Public Information, *ILO Thesaurus 2005*: http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ILO-Thesaurus/english/tr3012.htm

8 Oxfam GB, Trade and Livelihoods (Accessed January 16, 2008): http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/issues/trade/introduction.html

9 IRC, Psychosocial Guidelines and Principles, 2006 http://www.theirc.org/resources/IRCPsychosocial-Guidelines-and-Principles-Maries-rev-may-06.pdf

10 UNFPA, UN Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS, 'HIV/AIDS, Gender and Sex Work' (accessed January 16, 2008): http://www.unfpa.org/hiv/docs/factsheet_genderwork.pdf

11 Bowcott, Owen, "Sexual abuse by soldiers must be punished", *The Guardian*, March 25, 2005: http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1445537,00.html#article_continue

For Further Information on Girls' Rights

Regional Organisations

Forum of African Women's Educationalists (FAWE)
PO Box 21394 00505
Ngong Road
Nairobi, Kenya
+254 20 38 731 31
www.fawe.org

Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children
C/o ECA P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
+251 115 51 57 93
http://www.iac-ciaf.com/

European Women's Lobby
+32 (0)2 217 90 20
www.womenlobby.org

International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW) Asia Pacific
80-B Jalan Bangsar 59200,
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia
+60 (3) 2282 2255
www.iwraw-ap.org/

Asia Pacific Women's Watch
C/o Women and Gender Institute,
Miriam College, Loyola Heights, Diliman,
Quezon City, Philippines 1101
+632 426 0169
http://apww.isiswomen.org/

International Girls' and Women's Organisations

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
World Bureau, Olave Centre, 12c Lyndhurst Road,
London, NW3 5PQ, UK
+44 (0)20 7794 1181
http://www.wagggsworld.org/en/home

YWCA
World YWCA, 16 Ancienne Route,
1218 Grand Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland
+41(0) 22 929 6040
http://www.worldywca.info/index.php/ywca/world_ywca

Association for Women's Rights in Development
215 Spadina Ave., Suite 150, Toronto, Ontario,
M5T 2C7, Canada
+1 416 594 3773
http://www.awid.org/index.php

Soroptimist International
87 Glisson Road, Cambridge, CB1 2HG,
United Kingdom
http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/index.html

INGOs

Amnesty International
(Stop Violence Against Women)
1 Easton Street, London, WC1X 0DW, UK
+44(0) 20 7413 5476
http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/index-eng

Campaign for Female Education
(CAMFED)
22 Millers Yard, Mill Lane, Cambridge,
CB2 1RQ, UK
www.camfed.org

Defence for Children International
International Secretariat, 1 Rue de Varembé,
PO Box 88, CH 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
+41(0) 22 734 05 58
http://www.dci-is.org/

Human Rights Watch
(Children's Rights Division)
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor,
New York, NY 10118-3299 USA
+1 212 290 4700
http://www.hrw.org/children/

(Children's Rights Division and Women's
Right Division)
http://www.hrw.org/children/

Ipas
PO Box 5027, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, USA
+1 919 967 7052
http://www.ipas.org/english/

International Save the Children Alliance
Second Floor, Cambridge House,
100 Cambridge Grove, London W6 0LE,
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 8748 2554
http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/index.
html

NGO Working Group on Girls' Rights
c/o UNICEF, UNICEF House,
3 United Nations Plaza,
New York, New York 10017, USA
+1 212 326 700
www.girlsrights.org

Women's World Summit Foundation
P.O. Box 143, 1211 Geneva 20,
Switzerland
+41(0) 22 738 66 19
http://www.woman.ch/home.php

Womankind Worldwide
2nd Floor, Development House,
56-64 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4LT,
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 7549 0360
http://www.womankind.org.uk/index.html

World Vision International
34834 Weyerhaeuser Way So., Federal Way,
WA 98001, USA
+1 253 815 1000
http://www.worldvision.org/

Plan International Headquarters
Christchurch Way
Woking, Surrey
GU21 6JG
United Kingdom
+ 44 (0)1483 755 155
www.plan-international.org

For Further Information on Girls' Rights – continued

UN Agencies

International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
Calle César Nicolás Penson 102-A,
Santo Domingo, DN, Dominican Republic
+1 809 685-2111
http://www.un-instraw.org/en/

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
Two United Nations Plaza, 12th Floor,
New York, NY 10017, USA
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/

UNICEF
UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza,
New York, New York 10017, USA
+1 212 326 700
http://www.unicef.org/

UNIFEM
304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor,
New York, NY 10017, USA
+1 212 906 6400
http://www.unifem.org/

UNFPA
United Nations Population Fund,
220 East 42nd St.,
New York, NY 10017, USA
+1 212 297 5000
http://www.unfpa.org/

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW)
2 UN Plaza
DC2-12th Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA
+ 1 212 963 3463
www.un.org/daw

International Labour Office
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland
www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/gender.home

Office of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women
UN High Commissioner on Human Rights
2 UN Plaza
New York, NY 10017
USA
www.ohchr.org

Plan International Offices

Plan International Headquarters
Christchurch Way
Woking - GU21 6JG
United Kingdom
+ 44 (0) 1483 755 155
www.plan-international.org

Plan Asia Regional Office
Ocean Tower 2 Building, 18th Floor
75/24 Sukhumvit Road, soi 19
Khlontoey Nua, Wattana
Bangkok 10110
Thailand
+662-2042630 /1/2/3/4
aro.ro@plan-international.org

Plan East and South Africa Regional Office
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Northlands 2116
South Africa
+27-11-666-8400
resa.ro@plan-international.org

Plan Regional Office of the Americas
Cuidad del Saber
PO Box 0819-05571
Panama
Republic of Panama
+507-3171700
roa.ro@plan-international.org

Plan West Africa Regional Office
BP 21121
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Senegal
+221-33-8697430
waro.ro@plan-international.org

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+61-3-9-672-3600
info@plan.org.au

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fino.office@plan-international.org

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Germany
+49-40-611400
gno_info@plan-international.org

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126 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2
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+353-1-6599601

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11F Sun Towers, Centre Building
2-11-22
Sangenjaya, Setagaya-Ku
Tokyo 154-8545
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+81-3-5481-3511
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Hannam-Dong
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Van Boshuizenstraat 12
1083 BA, Amsterdam
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+31-20-549-5555
info@plannederland.nl

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Grensen 5-7
0159 Oslo
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+47-22-007600
info@plan-norge.no

Plan Spain
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28002 Madrid
Spain
+34-91-5241222
info@planespana.org

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Textilgatan 43
120 08, Stockholm
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+46-8-58775500
plan@plansverige.org

Plan Switzerland
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CH-8002 Zurich
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+41-44-288-9050
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+1-401-7385600
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"...to discriminate against girls is not only morally indefensible, it is also economically, politically and socially unsupportable. Nowhere is this more crucial than in societies that are unstable or in countries that are emerging from conflict, where to ignore a substantial proportion of the population makes little sense.

This report, the second in a series of nine on girls' rights, makes an important contribution to the calls for increased global momentum around the world's commitment to halve world poverty through the Millennium Development Goals. Without gender equality, these goals simply cannot be met. In addition, the report gives voice to the millions of girls who live every day in the shadow of war.

I therefore welcome Plan's urgent call for the world to take girls and young women into account."

Graça Machel
President of the Foundation for Community Development
Chair of the GAVI Fund Board

"I believe that securing the future for our girls is critical to achieving national development. The popular saying, "when you educate a man you feed his family but when you educate a girl, you educate a nation" is profound. Making a positive change to the state of the world's girls through educational and economic opportunities will lead to a decline in poverty around the world.

Post-conflict environments present opportunities for change but also consist of all of the variables that fuel the cycle of extreme poverty.

The key is taking action NOW to make a difference to the lives of millions of girls around the world."

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President, Liberia

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