

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is undertaking a new programme entitled "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

The two-year initiative, which was launched in April 2007, is funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). Six conflict-affected countries are involved: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Support women's capacities to engage in peace building and prevent conflict at the community level;
- Support women at the community level to prevent SGBV and respond to the needs of survivors in post-conflict contexts.

WHY IS UNIFEM WORKING ON THIS ISSUE?

Women's engagement in peace building is increasingly recognized as important for long term recovery and conflict prevention. However, women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes. They face social resistance when they take on new roles in public decision-making. Their ability effectively to influence these processes can be hindered by the threat or experience of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), levels of which commonly escalate during and after armed conflicts; while robust data is not generally available, all six countries experience significant rates of SGBV, and most have a national commitment to addressing the problem through a plan of action. In addition, while there are many cases where women's rights and priorities have been incorporated in peace agreements and post-conflict legislative and policy reform, these formal measures do not necessarily translate into better access for women to decision-making processes, nor to increased protection from violence at the community level.



Women's Peace Coalition Marching to Parliament with the Women's Peace Torch in Uganda.

UNIFEM'S APPROACH TO SUPPORTING WOMEN'S COMMUNITY-BASED PEACE BUILDING AND SGBV PREVENTION

The programme has a number of key elements which are common to all six countries, as well as context-specific elements responding to particular circumstances of individual countries.

Approaches which are common across the programme include:

- Working to make community-based peace building institutions and local authorities more responsive to women's priorities, as well as strengthening women's peace building organizations; this includes support to women's Peace Huts (local women's dispute resolution groups) in Liberia and to village councils in Afghanistan and Timor Leste.
- Supporting the police and members of the judicial system to better handle SGBV cases, including improved access to justice, reporting, recording and prosecuting of cases.
- Improving support services for women survivors of SGBV, through access to medical and psychosocial support, or access to protected spaces such as safe houses, transitional houses, and shelters.
- Awareness raising around women's rights in relation to SGBV, national SGBV legislation, and the availability of support services for survivors.

Country-specific initiatives include the following:

- Working with men as SGBV prevention advocates, keeping communities safe for women in Haiti.
- Promoting women's engagement in reconciliation mechanisms, as well as ensuring those mechanisms are responsive to women's concerns; this includes the traditional Gacaca courts in Rwanda and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia.
- Supporting livelihood programmes for women survivors of SGBV to reduce their vulnerability and break the cycle of violence in Timor Leste.
- Establishing Trust Funds to provide small grants to innovative community-led peace building and SGBV prevention initiatives in Haiti and Afghanistan.
- Developing manuals and toolkits, such as SGBV training modules for police in Uganda and Rwanda, a SGBV referral manual in Afghanistan and a legal aid toolkit in Liberia.
- Supporting women's engagement in formal peace negotiations, such as the Juba peace talks on one of the Ugandan conflicts and the peace jirgas in Afghanistan.

CHALLENGES

There are well-known challenges associated with working on women's empowerment at the community level. Women may face resistance to their engagement in decision-making from formal and informal institutions, community members and families; in many contexts it is extremely difficult to go against traditional practices without encountering backlash and outright obstruction.

There are also salient differences in the contexts and type of conflict across the six countries, meaning that the constraints faced by women will also differ. These include variations in the time since conflicts ended and the sustainability of peace (some countries experience ongoing insecurity, such as in Afghanistan and Haiti); variations in the inclusiveness of peace processes; variations in levels of women's access to national and local decision-making positions; and variations in the extent to which SGBV was used as a weapon of war, and its post-conflict prevalence. Such variations affect women's

capacity to engage in peace building, and UNIFEM's programme is designed to respond to these contextual differences.

UNIFEM and its partners hope that this programme will help identify effective means of addressing these challenges. By addressing similar institutional arenas (customary law, traditional decision-making, law enforcement, etc) across differing contexts, it is expected that some of the effective strategies which can embrace women's engagement and protect women's rights will be identified.



At a women's Peace Hut meeting, Margibi County, Liberia.



UNIFEM activities in Afghanistan.

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AFGHANISTAN

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes; beyond this, national level legal frameworks around women's peace building or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level.

In Afghanistan, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is undertaking a global program entitled "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

The two-year initiative in Afghanistan, which was launched in April 2007, is part of a global UNIFEM program funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The following six conflict-affected countries are involved in the program: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.



VAW Database training that we conducted for the Department of Women's Affairs, police and prosecutors in Herat.

OBJECTIVES

With a budget of US\$1,170,000 the objectives of the UNIFEM program in Afghanistan are:

- To support women's capacities to engage in peace building and prevent conflict at the community level;
- To support women at the community level in preventing SGBV and responding adequately to the needs of survivors.

ACTIVITIES

The program is being implemented in selected communities within the provinces of Parwan (Central Region) and Nangarhar (Eastern Region) in Afghanistan. At the same time activities are undertaken at the national level to further support the provincial-level work. Some of the key activities of this program include:

- Creating space for dialogue for women activists with local, national and international stakeholders to discuss women's participation and the inclusion of their priorities within all peace and security dialogues and processes.
- Providing support to Provincial Council members in fulfilling their role to eliminate customary practices contrary to Sharia and to ensure the respect of women's human rights.
- Establishing a Special Fund to provide small grants to innovative community-led SGBV protection and prevention initiatives.
- Establishing a paralegal program to provide assistance to women in remote areas, in order to enable them to have their rights upheld in communities and within the justice system.
- Establishing two referral centers to provide support to women victims of violence and coordinate other support services for women provided by relevant stakeholders in order to further empower women.
- Providing technical support to the ministry of Women's Affairs to operationalize a VAW database and produce an annual report from this data.
- Supporting the establishment of a transitional house for the protection of women released from prison who have no immediate possibility of returning to their communities.
- Amplifying Afghan women's voices by documenting the gender-specific dimensions of violence during conflict and in its aftermath.
- Providing technical support to the development of

gender sensitive legislation and policies at a national level needed for legitimizing and supporting activities in the communities.

SGBV IN AFGHANISTAN

While little information exists on the true extent and severity of SGBV, indicative studies suggest that:

- 82% of cases in a UNIFEM study on violence against women were perpetrated by family members, and
- Sexual violence accounted for 25% of VAW cases examined.¹

Some of the types of SGBV experienced during the conflict were:

- Women being abducted during Taliban time (and ongoing);
- Child and widow forced marriages;
- Abduction of boys.

PARTNERS

UNIFEM is working with the following partners to implement this program:

- Afghan Government and Justice Institutions and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
- UNAMA, UNHCR and UNFPA
- Five International governmental partners
- Five International NGOs
- Fourteen National NGOs

UNIFEM expects that these positive changes will contribute to supporting the women of Afghanistan in building peace and preventing SGBV at the community level.

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ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Increased reporting of incidents of violence against women
- Increased access to justice
- Improved protection mechanisms for women in distress,
- Growing awareness and decrease in tolerance of violence and injustice
- Relevant laws and policies are in place
- Women leaders are empowered to promote peace and justice.



Activities conducted for March 8th 2007

¹UNIFEM (2006) Uncounted and Discounted: A Secondary Data Research Project on Violence Against Women in Afghanistan, Kabul: UNIFEM.

HAITI

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes; beyond this, national level legal frameworks around women's peace building or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level.

In Haiti, the The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is responding to these two issues in a programme titled: "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

This two-year initiative, which was launched in April 2007, is part of a global UNIFEM program funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The following six conflict-affected countries are involved in the program: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.



Member of musical band Krezi leading a school discussion on Violence Against Women with youth.

OBJECTIVES

With a budget of over 1 million dollars, the objectives of the UNIFEM program in Haiti are:

- To support ending cultures of violence and targeting of women and girls through strengthening women's roles in reduction of violence and peace building and through gender-sensitive local security systems;
- To strengthen state accountability and eliminate impunity for sexual violence in justice processes;
- To empower and support women's organisations in their programming, advocacy and outreach in addressing violence against women;
- To promote a gender-sensitive social communications strategy on violence against women.

ACTIVITIES

The program is being implemented in selected communities in the departments of the North, North-east, and South-east, in addition to parts of the Port-au-Prince area. Some of the key activities of this program in Haiti include:

- Outreach and training on the role of women in the reduction of violence and security sector oversight;

- Justice sector trainings and community advocacy on legal options for survivors of SGBV;
- Small Grants Facility to support grassroots women's organizations to better respond to and prevent SGBV prevalence;
- Schools-based outreach campaign to engage youth in discussions about violence against women and violence prevention;
- Awareness raising and working with men as champions in the fight against SGBV.

SGBV IN HAITI

Comprehensive national-level data on SGBV remains a challenge to collect. Recent studies and surveys suggest that in the last 10 – 15 years at least three distinct areas of SGBV have emerged: political rape and other forms of sexual violence, domestic and intra-familial violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse by external security sector actors. Recent data suggests:

- That domestic/familial violence is a primary obstacle to women's effective engagement in public life in Haiti.
- Women are increasingly the prime targets for all forms of physical violence. A Médecins du Monde survey on victims of violence in 15 health centers of Port-au-Prince in 2005 documented 511 such cases. This study shows that 80% of the victims of violence treated are women and that 60% of the cases of aggression were sexual. 86% of the victims filed a complaint, but only 3.3% of the 79% who wanted to take the cases to court (citing a lack of trust in the legal system).

- Economic dependence of women on husbands and other men is seen as a key factor in cyclical violence against women.

CHALLENGES

Most women's rights advocates describe Haiti as having a culture that inherently discriminates against women, where gender-based violence in the home is exceedingly common, and a lack of access to economic autonomy renders women helpless in the face of such dynamics. High rates of violence, HIV/AIDS prevalence and cultural taboos about such violence create a highly complex advocacy environment. A 2007 national study supported by UNIFEM and the IDB on responses to gender-based violence paved the way for increased coherence and prioritization of response measures by UN and government actors in terms of geographic emphasis as well as areas of intervention.

It remains very difficult to discuss issues of peace-building and violence prevention in Haiti, particularly with regard to the effects on women and their participation in prevention. Standard models of peacebuilding have proved ill-suited for the Haitian context and challenge the international community and national counterparts in finding durable solutions. Recent high levels of kidnapping and drug-related crimes have underscored the nexus between political instability, endemic poverty and small arms proliferation.

UNIFEM seeks to address these challenges and the persistent issue of armed violence through making linkages between SGBV-related priorities and work with the security and judicial sectors. This is an opportunity to enhance and expand UNIFEM's work in this area, and build the link between the peacekeeping agenda and the longer term development agenda while supporting women's rights and the important work of women's rights organizations in Haiti.

PARTNERS

UNIFEM is working with the following partners to implement this program:

- Gender Unit of MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti)
- Ministry of Women's Condition and Women's Rights
- Networks of women's organizations in the South-east and North of Haiti

ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Increased political will and accountability to end gender-based violence;
- Improved policy and programmatic linkages between national peace and security initiatives and actions to end violence against women;
- Decreased public and private tolerance of violence against women;
- Strengthened institutional capacity of government and civil society to combat violence against women

UNIFEM expects that these positive changes will contribute to supporting the women of Haiti in building peace and preventing SGBV at the community level.



Poster developed to raise awareness on a woman's right to a life free of violence ("Women's Rights are Human Rights").

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LIBERIA

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes; beyond this, national level legal frameworks around women's peace building or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level.

In Liberia, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is undertaking a global program entitled "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

The two-year initiative in Liberia, which was launched in April 2007, is part of a global UNIFEM program funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The following six conflict-affected countries are involved in the program: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.

- authorities.
- Conducting training for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Secretariat on women's human rights and gender sensitivity, and supporting women to testify and pursue reparations.
- Increasing the capacity of the police to prevent, respond to, and file reports on SGBV crimes, by supporting women-friendly practices in police stations.
- Establish linkages between health service, psycho-social support, and the police to ensure effective referral systems of SGBV cases.
- Improving women's access to traditional justice through building the capacity of customary institutions to apply international human rights standards to SGBV cases.
- Producing a legal aid toolkit to promote responsiveness and confidentiality by formal justice system officials dealing with SGBV.

ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Strengthened capacity of select communities in four counties to own and contribute to programme design, monitoring and evaluation.
- Women organized in peace huts influence peace building in their communities.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is more responsive to addressing SGBV against women during the conflict.
- PRSP and county development plans 2008 to 2012

OBJECTIVES

With a budget of US\$1,063,880, the objectives of the UNIFEM program in Liberia are:

- To support women's capacities to engage in peace building and prevent conflict at the community level;
- To support women at the community level in preventing SGBV and responding adequately to the needs of survivors.

ACTIVITIES

The program is being implemented in selected communities within Grand Bassa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties. Some of the key activities of this program in Liberia include:

- Using the existing network of women's Peace Huts to strengthen women's capacity to influence peace building in communities, through creating forums for dialogue between women and local



Women's Peace Hut meeting, Margibi County, Liberia

- incorporate issues of women's participation in politics, rights to access and ownership of land and SGBV.
- Increased access by women to medical and psychosocial services for the prevention of and redress of SGBV.
 - Increased capacity of the police in the four focus counties to prevent, respond to and file reports on SGBV crimes.
 - Improved access by women to traditional and formal justice systems.

UNIFEM Liberia partner WONGOSOL, in a survey conducted in Grand Bassa County found out that:

- Domestic violence in the form of wife battering has prevalence rate of 45%, verbal insults 33%, torture or trail by ordeal 5%;
- 39% women have heard about the rape law, 15% men have heard about rape law;
- 65% people hear about rape cases every three months;
- Available services survivors of rape access: 41% police, 39% medical, 10% psychosocial counseling, 4% court or legal redress.

We expect to see wider awareness of the general public about the need for behavioral change to ensure punishment for perpetrators and reduction in various forms of SGBV, increased reporting of rape cases and increased access to a more responsive justice system and psychosocial support for survivors.

PARTNERS

UNIFEM is working with the following partners to implement this program:

- Government of Liberia represented by the Ministries of Gender and Development; Internal Affairs; and Justice
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- International and National NGOs and Networks, such as Action Aid International Liberia; Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL); Women in Peace-building Network; and community based women's organisations

The selection process for additional partners is already under way.

UNIFEM expects that these positive changes will contribute to supporting the women of Liberia in building peace and preventing SGBV at the community level.

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SGBV IN LIBERIA

While little information exists on the true extent and severity of SGBV, indicative studies suggest that:

- 92% of 1,600 women interviewed for a 2005-2006 government survey had experienced some form of sexual violence, including rape.
- Rape of minors is prevalent. A recent MSF study at a hospital in Monrovia found that an estimated 85% of the 658 rape survivors reporting to the hospital were aged under 18, while 48 % were aged between 5 and 12 years.

During the war, rape was extremely widespread, and women and girls were also used as 'sex slaves' by combatants. Incidence of rape and domestic violence remain high, with those most vulnerable being women in IDP camps and those living in extreme poverty. Survival sex and sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be issues, especially in urban areas.

United Nations Development Fund for Women



RWANDA

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes; beyond this, national level legal frameworks around women's peace building or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level.

In Rwanda, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is undertaking a global program entitled "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

The two-year initiative in Rwanda, which was launched in April 2007, is part of a global UNIFEM program funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The following six conflict-affected countries are involved in the program: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.



Community of Abahuje

OBJECTIVES

With a budget of US\$1,064,000, the objectives of the UNIFEM program in Rwanda are:

- To support women's capacities to engage in peace building and prevent conflict at the community level;
- To support women at the community level in preventing SGBV and responding adequately to the needs of survivors.

ACTIVITIES

The program is being implemented in selected communities within Kigali and the districts of Rutsiro, Ngorero, and Kayanza.

Some of the key activities of this program in Rwanda include:

- Training for the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, *gacaca* judges and women's organizations to strengthen their capacity to respond to

peace building priorities identified by communities.

- Facilitating dialogues on peace consolidation between the National Women's Council and local government.
- Organizing an annual forum for GBV service providers to harmonize community approaches and share experience on good practice.
- Training for police, including modules on SGBV survivor protection and psycho-social counseling for women victims of violence who seek support and services at police stations.
- Providing logistical and communication facilities in the form of motorcycles and telephones to police stations for rapid response to SGBV.
- Supporting sensitization campaigns for media, communities, and faith-based organizations and schools on preventing and responding to SGBV.

SGBV IN RWANDA

During the Rwandan genocide, mass sexual violence was perpetrated as a strategic political tool of shame and domination.

Types of SGVB perpetrated included: individual and gang rape; rape with sticks, guns, or other objects; sexual enslavement; forced labor; and sexual mutilation. Many victims of SGVB were murdered immediately after their assault.¹

While little information exists on the true extent and severity of SGBV, indicative studies suggest that:

- More than 250,000 women were raped during the genocide,² 80.9% of women survivors were HIV positive and 13% had broken vertebrae.³
- The Rwandan Police referred to prosecution the following rape cases:
 - 2005: 2380 children under 18 years of age; 619 for adults over 18 years of age;
 - 2006: 2033 children under 18 years of age; 403 rape cases for adults over 18 years of age.
- According to police only 10% of the police force are women.



Cover of the Police Bulletin N.1 on fighting GBV

PARTNERS

UNIFEM is working with the following partners to implement this program:

- Rwandan National Police
- Pro-femme
- Association of Genocide Widows-AGAHOZO (AVEGA)
- National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
- Rwanda Women's Network
- HAGURUKA
- FACT RWANDA
- RADIO SANA, Radio Rwanda
- Local government authorities
- Forum for Women Parliamentarians

ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Improved social welfare of vulnerable women who have been sexually violated and infected with HIV/AIDS as well as reduced stigma associated with their experience;
- Improved investigations and appreciation of GBV as a human rights issue by police;
- Increased number of female police personnel as a result or support for recruitment, and awareness-raising on women's rights and role in preventing and responding to GBV.

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¹ Human Rights Watch (2004) 'Struggling to Survive: Barriers to Justice for Rape Victims in Rwanda,' Human Rights Watch: New York.

² Human Rights Watch (1996) 'Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide,' Human Rights Watch: New York.

³ AVEGA-Agahozo, (1999) Survey on Violence against Women in Rwanda, AVEGA: Kigali.

TIMOR LESTE

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes; beyond this, national level legal frameworks around women's peace building or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level.

In Timor-Leste, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is undertaking a global program entitled "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peace-building and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

The two-year initiative in Timor Leste, which was launched in April 2007, is part of a global UNIFEM program funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The following six conflict-affected countries are involved in the program: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.



Interview with women survivors by UNIFEM's partner in Bobonaro

OBJECTIVES

With a budget of US\$519,911, the objectives of the UNIFEM program in Timor Leste are:

- To support women's capacities to engage in peace building and prevent conflict at the community level;
- To support women at the community level in preventing SGBV and responding adequately to the needs of survivors.

ACTIVITIES

The program is being implemented in selected communities within the two border districts of Covalima and Bobonaro. Some of the key activities of this program in Timor Leste include:

- Training women's groups to strengthen their capacity to engage in peace building activities.
- Working to make community-based peace building institutions and local authorities, such as village councils, more responsive to women's priorities.
- Awareness raising about women's rights in relation to SGBV, national SGBV legislation, and the avail-

ability of support services for survivors, particularly through the establishment of a referral pathway for access to medical and psychosocial support, as well as to shelters.

- Establishing community prevention mechanisms to tackle SGBV.
- Providing training for police, court actors, local authorities, and village councils on legal provisions for SGBV, their roles as duty bearers, and the needs of survivors.
- Supporting livelihood programs for survivors of SGBV to reduce vulnerability and break the cycle of violence.

SGBV IN TIMOR LESTE

While little information exists on the true extent and severity of SGBV, indicative studies suggest that:

- In 2003, 51% of women consulted had felt unsafe in their relationship with their husband in the previous 12 months,
- 24.8% had experienced violence from an intimate partner.¹
- 49% of cases reported in 2004 to the Pradet safe house at the Dili National Hospital involved child sexual assault.²

¹Traditional Justice and Gender Based Violence' (IRC 2003), p. 13.

²Cited in 'CEDAW Initial Treaty Specific Document: Timor Leste' (Office of the Prime Minister 2007), p. 13.

Types of SGBV in Timor Leste include: domestic violence, rape, gang rape, child abuse (rape, incest), sexual exploitation, and exploitation of bride price.

During the Indonesian occupation of 1975-1999, systematic rape, torture and sexual slavery were used as a weapon of war.

ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Strengthened institutional capacity of service providers to prevent SGBV;
- Increased awareness and political commitment to end violence against women;
- Decrease of sexual violence in the target communities.

BASELINE DATA

As part of the program inception activities UNIFEM undertook a baseline study on prevalence and attitudes toward SGBV, as well as women's participation in all levels of peacebuilding. Through this study, several findings emerged which shape the programme priorities. For example, the study showed that community attitudes toward sexual and gender based violence vary between the two focus sites of Covalima and Bobonaro. In Covalima the local community perceives sexual violence as commonplace although the local authorities interviewed denied the existence of any forms of sexual violence.

The baseline study revealed sexual exploitation as particularly common in the borderline sub-district of Covalima. In contrast, discussing the issue of sexual violence remains taboo in Bobonaro, where the community largely remains silent on the subject.

According to the findings, several factors contribute to women's vulnerability to sexual violence:

- Women's subordinate status in a patriarchal social structure despite a matrilineal system of property in-

heritance;

- Limited knowledge and awareness of sexual violence;
- Women's economic insecurity and limited access to livelihood programmes;
- The use of drugs administered to lower the inhibition and resistance of victims is used to for sexual exploitation and rape;
- Women's participation in peace building and communal conflict resolution forums is very limited and is usually conducted without the participation of the woman or victim.

PARTNERS

UNIFEM is working with the following partners to implement this program:

- Asia Pacific Support Collective-Timor Leste (APSC-TL)
- Forum Komunikasi Perempuan Timor Lorosae (FOKUPERS)
- Peace and Democracy Foundation (PDF)
- Associassaun HAK in cooperation with the government of Timor Leste, particularly the Ministry of Justice and the Secretary of State for Security.

The pilot project is expected to raise community awareness on SGBV as a prevention strategy. The pilot project will work with judicial actors and community authorities as well as care givers to ensure that they are aware of their obligations as duty bearers and the rights of those they represent. The project will also identify possible entry points where women can influence and participate in local mediation mechanisms. UNIFEM expects that these positive changes can be scaled up in the target districts and replicated in other districts of Timor Leste.

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Meeting with women survivors in Covalima

UGANDA

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes; beyond this, national level legal frameworks around women's peace building or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level.

In Uganda, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is undertaking a global program entitled "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

The two-year initiative in Uganda, which was launched in April 2007, is part of a global UNIFEM program funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The following six conflict-affected countries are involved in the program: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.



Women's Peace Coalition Marching to Parliament with the Women's Peace Torch

OBJECTIVES

With a budget of US\$1,096,000, the objectives of the UNIFEM program in Uganda are:

- To support women's capacities to engage in peace building and prevent conflict at the community level;
- To support women at the community level in preventing SGBV and responding adequately to the needs of survivors.

ACTIVITIES

The program is being implemented in selected communities within Gulu, Kitgum and Lira districts in northern Uganda. Some of the key activities of this program include:

- Enabling women affected by conflict to influence peace building processes by training women in gender responsive negotiation, analysis, and communication skills.
- Supporting women's engagement in the Juba Peace

process through providing a gender advisor to the UN Special Envoy, and working to ensure that women's priorities are addressed.

- Supporting women to monitor the West Nile peace agreement and its impact on women and girls.
- Training community activists on SGBV prevention and response, psycho-social support and mediation.
- Supporting land management and administrative institutions to ensure a gender perspective in restitution of property rights and compensation.
- Strengthening the capacity of the police to handle SGBV cases, including developing training modules, providing private places for dealing with SGBV cases, and implementing SGBV Prevention and Response Performance Audits.

SGBV IN UGANDA

While little information exists on the true extent and severity of SGBV, indicative studies suggest that:

- Nearly 41% of women attending the antenatal clinic in Kampala's main public hospital reported having been physically assaulted in the year before conceiving.¹
- In a 2006 Uganda Law Reform Commission study of 3,523 women, 78% of women in the north, and 66% of women throughout Uganda as a whole, had experienced domestic violence.²
- Girls are pushed into early "marriages" as a respon-

se to poverty and insecurity in IDP camps; over 32% of girls aged 15-19 are in formal or informal marriages (compared to 6% of boys).³

The key types of SGVB experienced during the conflict were:

- Women and girls abducted into sexual slavery.
- Significant levels of rape of women and girls within IDP camps.
- Domestic abuse within camps and resettled communities.

cessation of hostilities is gender blind. The second truce which is on comprehensive solutions to conflict contains some articles that reference women's rights. Proposals for accountability, reconciliation and justice need to be made more gender-sensitive, and transitional justice institutions will be supported by UNIFEM partners to ensure adequate access for women.

UNIFEM expects that these positive changes will contribute to supporting the women of Uganda in building peace and preventing SGBV at the community level.

PARTNERS

UNIFEM is working with the following partners to implement this program:

- Center for Domestic Violence Prevention
- Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
- Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association
- Local governments in Lira, Kitgum and Gulu districts
- The Uganda Women Peace Coalition
- Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI)
- Gulu Human Rights Foundation
- Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative
- Lira women's peace Initiative
- Concerned Parents Association
- Ministry of Internal Affairs including the Police Department
- Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

For further information and access to baseline data, contact:

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ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Women affected by conflict able to influence peace building processes (baseline: currently women are not adequately participating and influencing the peace building processes).
- Tolerance levels of SGBV at community level decrease (Baseline: there is impunity regarding sexual and gender based violence in the conflict affected areas).
- Peace process outcome documents reflect women's concerns and priorities. A baseline analysis notes the following: The truce signed at the Juba peace talks on



IDP Women, Lira District

¹Kaye, D. (2001) 'Risk Factors, Nature & Severity of Domestic Violence among Women Attending Antenatal Clinics in Mulago Hospital, Kampala, Uganda,' Central African Journal of Medicine 485/6).

²Quoted in Turyasingura Hope (2007) 'Responding to Domestic Violence: A Handbook for the Uganda Police Force,' CEDOVIP and Uganda Police Force: Kampala, p. 1.

³UBOS (2001) Uganda Demographic and Household Survey 2001-2001, UBOS: Kampala.