



Men, Masculinities and Feminist Peace A Peer Exchange on Lessons, Challenges and Collaborations

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01

PEOPLE

We came together as a diverse group of practitioners, policy advocates and researchers in a peer exchange on lessons, challenges and potential collaborations on mobilizing men for feminist peace. Convened by Ilse Wermink from PAX and Dean Peacock from WILPF, this peer exchange comprised two 3-hour online meetings (February 17 and March 3), facilitated by Bela Kapur. The peer exchange had three overarching objectives:

1. Gain a **shared understanding** of what organizations focused on conflict and peacebuilding are doing on the topic of masculinities
2. Explore possibilities for **multi-level approaches** (from community education to policy advocacy to movement building, etc.)
3. Explore appetite for better **networking and collaboration**, including ongoing peer exchange and joint advocacy activities

A pre-meeting survey revealed the range of work being undertaken by participants' organizations on issues of masculinities and peacebuilding (see Annex 1 for a list of participants), including a focus on:

- Violence, trauma and psychosocial support for men and boys in conflict-affected contexts;
- Anti-militarist advocacy and programs with men on conscientious objection to military service;
- Mobilizing male allies in support of the leadership of women peace activists;
- Internal capacity building within civil society organizations working on feminist peacebuilding to challenge and change patriarchal, heteronormative working cultures;
- Development of programming tools to integrate masculinities lens in to feminist peacebuilding program design and implementation;
- Research and advocacy on the gender dimensions of structural drivers of armed conflict and barriers to feminist peace; and
- Network strengthening among organizations working with men for gender equality in support of accountable advocacy for feminist peace.

Throughout the two meetings, participants expressed their appreciation of this diverse mix of experience and expertise, and the possibilities thus created to explore links between:

levels of work (from community programs to global policy); global South and global North interests and perspectives; the factors and forces driving armed conflict (from upstream to downstream); and the complex ways in which militarization interacts with social norms, political institutions and economic relations. Participants were asked at the beginning of the second meeting what they had learned from the first meeting, and the value of this peer exchange was highlighted:

- “Loved seeing opportunities to potentially collaborate with other orgs on masculinities and post-conflict settings”
- “Good to hear the communion between ppl working in diff sectors coming together”
- “Getting a sense of the people from the different orgs doing this work”

This report presents the highlights of the peer exchange in terms of lessons shared, challenges identified and collaborations explored.



02

EVENTS

Our discussion of lessons, challenges and potential collaborations were shadowed by other events, highlighting both the violence produced by overtly masculinized military aggression as well as some of the silences that continue to surround the forces driving armed conflict

On 24 February, the Russian Federation announced a “a special military operation” within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.¹ Later that day, Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba wrote on Twitter that Russia had “launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine”.²

Media coverage of the operation/invasion, at least in the anglosphere, has made much of the ‘toxic’ masculinity of Russia’s ‘strongman’ leader Vladimir Putin, in order to account for this military aggression by the Russian state against a neighboring country.³ At the same time, the Ukrainian government has banned men of conscription age, aged 18 to 60, from leaving the country, while urgently seeking to arrange safe passage for children, women and elderly people away from conflict areas. On 26 February, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced in a video message that “I will protect the motherland with my life.”⁴

In addition to these gender narratives, the racist coverage of events in Ukraine by sections of the anglophone media has also been noted. CBS News correspondent Charlie D’Agata drew a distinction between fighting in Ukraine, which he described as “civilized”, and places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵ This heightened visibility of barbaric acts taking place in “civilized” societies is in stark contrast to the racialized erasure of military barbarism elsewhere. As one example of many, war in Yemen, entering its eighth year, is estimated to have killed 377,000 people as of the end of 2021, both directly and indirectly through hunger and disease, with nearly half the country of 30 million people facing severe food insecurity.⁶ Yet a recent UN pledging event, held on 16 March to raise funds to address this humanitarian catastrophe, raised less than a third of its funding target.

¹ <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/24/putin-orders-military-operations-in-eastern-ukraine-as-un-meets>

³ <https://unherd.com/2022/03/putins-toxic-masculinity/>

⁴ <https://pipanews.com/there-is-no-question-of-surrender-i-will-defend-the-motherland-with-my-life-president-of-ukraine/>

⁵ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/russia-ukraine-war-social-media-reacts-uncivilised-media-coverage>

⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/9/yemens-war-explained-in-maps-and-charts-interactive>

This neglect is accompanied by a selective gendering of the conflict. The masculinity, toxic or otherwise, of Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Crown Prince and Minister of Defense is rarely mentioned, even though he is widely regarded as the architect of the Saudi-led and US-backed coalition, whose military intervention in 2015 precipitated the current conflict in Yemen. Where masculinities are invoked, they are discussed in relation to the rise of what is designated as “violent extremism” in Yemen.⁷ Selective gender narratives are purposive in their deployment.

A week before the failure of the UN pledging event for Yemen, Saudi Arabia hosted its first-ever World Defense Show (6–9 March), as “the latest addition to the global defense show circuit.”⁸ The show welcomed 65,000 attendees, with some 600 defense and security exhibitors from 42 countries and 80 military delegations from 85 countries, including Russia and Ukraine. It was announced that US\$7.916 million in deals were signed during its four days. The gender narrative accompanying the show is striking for its emphasis on defense industries as an agent of women’s empowerment.

Amanda Stainer, chief commercial officer of World Defense Show, told journalists that the “Woman in Defense Day was incredible, we had some amazing women, not just Saudi ladies, but international ladies speaking about their careers, [...] and the changes that are happening particularly here in the Kingdom for women, and women in defense.”⁹

In mid-March, a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute noted the growth in arms sales over the last decade, with those by the Top 100 arms companies 17 per cent higher in 2020 than in 2015. The United States once again hosted the highest number of companies ranked in the Top 100. Arms sales increased even as the global economy contracted by 3.1 per cent during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The biggest growth in arms imports among world regions occurred in Europe, a trend that is only likely to continue given recent events in Ukraine. Asia and Oceania remain the largest importing region for major arms, receiving 43 per cent of global transfers in 2017–21, and six states in the region are among the 10 largest importers globally: India, Australia, China, South Korea, Pakistan and Japan.¹⁰

⁷ O’Driscoll, D. (2017). *Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Yemen*. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

⁸ <https://www.worlddefenseshow.com/media/>

⁹ <https://www.zawya.com/en/economy/gcc/saudi-arabias-debut-world-defense-show-attended-by-65-000-people-nq0mq9im>

¹⁰ <https://sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/global-arms-trade-falls-slightly-imports-europe-east-asia-and-oceania-rise>

Yet **militaries** are exempt from compulsory reporting of their **greenhouse gas emissions** to **UN processes**.

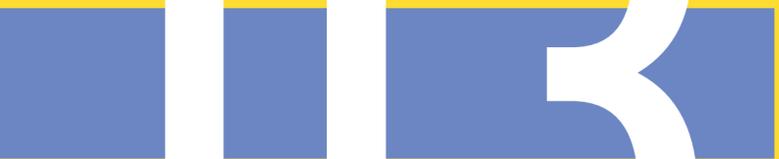
This growth in the arms trade is alarming for many reasons, not least in relation to its contribution to climate catastrophe. Global military spending is currently US\$2 trillion per year; 87% of this spending is accounted for by the G20 countries. The US Defense Department is the single largest consumer of energy in the USA and the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the world. In the UK, the Ministry of Defence is the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions within the central government, responsible for more than half of the total. Yet militaries are exempt from compulsory reporting of their greenhouse gas emissions to UN processes.¹¹

Between the first and second peer exchange meetings, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC Working Group II report, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, with the stark warning that "human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature" exposing "millions of people to acute food and water insecurity, especially in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, on Small Islands and in the Arctic."¹² Such insecurity will only exacerbate political instability and concomitant risks of armed conflict.

This conjunction of events, happening within a few days of the peer exchange events discussed in this report, highlights not only the many barriers to feminist peace but also the different uses to which gender narratives can be put in explaining or obscuring the complex drivers of armed conflict. In turn, this raises questions about our understanding of such narratives and the best ways in which we can deploy them in the service of mobilizing more men for feminist peace. Sharing and discussing, if not always answering, these questions was the focus of the two peer exchange meetings.

¹¹ <https://oxfamapps.org/fp2p/what-has-global-military-spending-and-emissions-got-to-do-with-development-rather-a-lot/>

¹² <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/resources/press/press-release/>



03

QUESTIONS

A short survey was sent to participants ahead of the first peer exchange meeting, and its questions and participants' responses helped to guide the conversations during the two meetings.

The survey comprised questions about:

- **Current work** of participants' organizations on men, masculinities and feminist peace. What are your areas of work and main thematic focus in relation to mobilizing men for feminist peace?
What are your priority activities for 2022 to mobilize men for peace and engage on masculinities?
Who are your current partners in your work on masculinities and peacebuilding?
- **Current challenges**, operational and conceptual, confronting participants in their work
What are your top 3-5 challenges in carrying this work forward?
What conceptual/theoretical issues are you struggling with currently?
- **Specific issues** for strengthening work on men, masculinities and feminist peace
Are you focused on addressing upstream/structural drivers of conflict and violence? If so, how are you doing this?
What steps do you take to promote accountability to women's rights organizations and movements?
How are you working to advance decolonial approaches to work with men and boys on masculinities and conflict?
- **Support needs** for strengthening work on men, masculinities and feminist peace. What support would be most helpful to advance your work on masculinities and to mobilize men for feminist peace?

Responses to these questions were collated and reported back during both meetings, and incorporated into the peer exchange discussions. The agendas for both meetings (see Annex 2) were also structured around some overarching questions:

- What has been a key learning for you in 2020–2021 in your work on engaging men?
- What are the key challenges and issues you are grappling with?
- How would you like to work on these challenges?
- What did you get from the previous meeting? What did you find valuable?
- What joint activities might you want to collaborate on with others in this group in 2022?

During the course of the two meetings, participants raised their own questions:

- About the threat posed by resurgent “anti-gender” **movements on men’s rights** and patriarchal masculinities. Leandra Bias from Swisspeace asked: *How do we make sure that the way we put our arguments forward are clear and cannot be co-opted by these very powerful and highly-financed transnationally-connected masculinities movements?*
- About the challenges and opportunities to connect work at the **individual/personal and institutional/structural** levels. Dean Peacock from WILPF asked: How do we draw attention to these upstream drivers of conflict and violence without then losing a focus on the masculinities and the work that we have all been doing over many years to draw attention to the gender dimensions of men’s lives?

- About the possibilities opened up by more complex **analyses of power**. Gabriel Nuckhir from Conciliation Resources asked: Has increasing attention to intersectionality created any new openings?
- About concrete **next steps for collaboration** and partnerships. Laxman Belbase from MenEngage Alliance asked: It's good that we're having this conversation, but what is the thinking behind concretely, all of us remaining in touch so that we can find ways of working together?

Answers to these questions were discussed and debated over the course of the nearly six hours of conversation that comprised the two meetings, and are summarized in this report.



04

FEELINGS

**There is no government.
How do we engage the
community? Communities
are afraid to speak.**

We were quick to acknowledge the emotional realities and difficulties of our work, as well as the importance of staying with these feelings.

“I just shared a lot of my frustrations with work in Lebanon, the amount of dead ends we seem to run into. How do we engage government? There is no government. How do we engage the community? Communities are afraid to speak. How do we promote nonviolent activism? Nonviolent activists get beat for protesting. A lot of dead ends and that can be a bit demoralizing.”

- Anthony Keedi, ABAAD

Participants shared feelings of confusion, frustration, doubt, demoralization, as well as hope, excitement and inspiration. The age of information overload in which we work and live is also an era of potential emotional overwhelm, a feeling intensified in recent weeks by the 24 hour news coverage of death and suffering in Ukraine. In the second meeting, Jane Kato-Wallace from ABAAD made this point clearly, noting that:

It's one of the beauties of having a phone that provides you with an infinite amount of information is that you can stay up to date on what's happening. The downside is that you are fully aware of everything that's happening around the world, all at the same time. And how do you wrap your head? How do you wrap your heart around it?

The importance of welcoming and not denying this emotionality was emphasized. As Leandra Bias said in the first meeting, in relation to concerns that an implicitly racialized masculinities agenda is being taken up by some donors: “What I take out of this is feeling a sense of caution but also a bit lost to be honest, and not wanting to repeat the same mistakes but not having an answer. But that’s good!” Several participants emphasized the value of these peer exchange meetings as opportunities for mutual support as well as shared learning.

In noting of his work in Lebanon that the “context in which I currently work is quite stifling at the moment,” Anthony Keedi reminded us: “And that's part of why we're here. I didn't have solutions for what I wanted. It was just like, I need to start somewhere. Where do we start? And maybe that's what we're doing. Maybe all of us thinking together as somewhere to start.”

This theme of mutual support was picked up in the second meeting. Several responses to the questions posed at the beginning of the meeting (What did you get from the previous meeting?

What did you find valuable?) that were noted on the jam board were on this theme:

- Sense of connection with those grappling with similar issues
- Figuring out how we sustain our hope

Early in the second meeting, which took place one week on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Bela Kapur brought us back to the emotional present of the meeting, when she commented that: “I’m sensing there is a heaviness. And it’s good to be together when there’s a heaviness. [...] I can feel it. It’s completely obvious. And it’s really important in when we come back, we figure out how we can support each other better.”

Dean Peacock agreed, and also put such feelings in the broader and longer context of gender justice work with men: “I think there is a heaviness, and I think that is certainly about Ukraine, but it’s about more than that.”

Dean noted something of a paradox about this history of gender justice work with men. Over the last two decades or more this work has significantly expanded, developing a substantial evidence base on working with men and boys to change patriarchal attitudes and behaviors and putting issues of men and their patriarchal masculinities on national and global policy agendas in unprecedented ways.

Yet, patriarchal structures of power persist in many societies; in many contexts, they seem to be worsening. Work on mobilizing men for feminist peace must confront worrying trends: the rise of authoritarian ‘strongmen’, attacks on policy and legislative progress on SRHR, ever more visible men’s rights movements and vocal online misogyny, and political and religious forces organized around an “anti-gender” ideology.

Alejandro Parra, from ACOOC in Colombia, also reminded us of the continuing and everyday ways in which people of all genders resist militarism and war.

As Dean said:

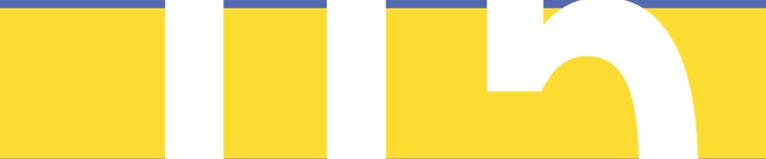
So the heaviness in some ways is that we have learned so much about how to do this work and we are ambitious. We want to do the work in ways that address some of the upstream drivers of violence so that we're not just dealing with the downstream consequences. [...] So on the one hand, yes, heavy, on the other hand, incredibly exciting to be in this conversation together. And so I don't feel discouraged by the heaviness in a way.

Henny Slegh, who has worked with the Living Peace project in the DRC, also acknowledged the feelings of both heaviness and hope, and that both arise from working directly with former combatants who have committed and suffered extreme acts of violence. Seeing the ways in which community-based psychosocial services can support these men to deal with the hurt they have caused and experienced is a continuing source of hope, that change is possible.

Alejandro Parra, from ACOOC in Colombia, also reminded us of the continuing and everyday ways in which people of all genders resist militarism and war.

As he said, a significant task is to share these stories of everyday resistance more broadly to inspire others:

One thing that we could do, and something that's helped us a lot in Colombia, is to give visibility and a voice to expressions of resistance in communities which are common. War is made up of episodes, but this solidarity is something that's always existed.



05

LEARNINGS

What has been a key learning for you in 2020-2021

An important focus of the first meeting was discussing the question: What has been a key learning for you in 2020-2021 in your work on engaging men?

“Some of the most valuable learning I think isn’t necessarily around sharing what’s gone well, it’s around things that, personally and organizationally, are bottlenecks.”

- Gabriel Nuckhir, Conciliation Resources

Participants broke out into smaller groups to share and discuss their answers to this question, recording the highlights on jam boards, and then returning to plenary to identify shared learnings.

These are summarized below. Language and concepts

The need to clarify our language and concepts emerged as an important lesson for many participants. Some noted that gender is still too often equated with women in policy and programming on peacemaking. As Kathleen Kuehnast from USIP insisted: “We [have] really tried to make sure our language is accurate, that when we’re talking about gendered practices, it’s truly about gender and not about women. These can’t be synonymous, or else so much of what we’re talking about today goes out the window.” Others noted that “masculinities” as a concept is being increasingly used, but the different terms with which this concept is applied in the work of mobilizing men for feminist peace (“positive masculinities”, “peaceful masculinities”, “transforming militarized masculinities”) become a potential source of conceptual confusion, without greater clarity about what exactly these terms are referring to.

Several participants commented that, in practice, the use of masculinities as a concept in work on anti-militarism and for feminist peace has tended to focus attention on change at the individual level. Gabriel Nuckhir, from Conciliation Resources, noted that a learning shared in his Breakout Room “were tendencies toward individualizing, looking at specific examples of men who have transgressed rather than take

a fully systematized approach and looking to deconstruct the norms in a more holistic way.” He reflected on the work of Conciliation Resources on men, masculinities and feminist peace, and a “tendency toward homogenizing and essentializing which we have been trying to work beyond.” He noted a paradox of this work; that efforts to engage men in work on feminist peace often rely on “quite binary and essentialized constructs” which then become hard to deconstruct. As Gabriel said: “We can quite quickly get pulled into ideas of what “good men” or “peaceful men” are but that can feel essentializing in some ways and maybe that is closing off opportunities in the longer term.”

Callum Watson from Small Arms Survey made a similar point, urging that “we need new language and we need to change our frame of reference to look at the systems more broadly.” As he emphasized:

The language that we are using is outdated. So, personally, I have this problem with “toxic masculinity” for exactly the same reason in that we are both individualizing the issues and not looking at the systems, the patriarchal system; working on “toxic masculinity” prompts us to focus on the behavior of disempowered men rather than addressing discriminatory systems and powerful individuals within it who reap the benefits from exclusionary practices and the violent behavior of others.

Issues of language recurred throughout the two meetings, as being central to feminist peace advocacy and programming, not only in challenging the patriarchal power dynamics of militarism but also the neocolonial aspects of global North-South relations in peacebuilding (see below). As several participants noted, a key challenge for international NGOs is to work more closely with and from the terms and framings used by those most impacted by the militarism and armed conflict that our work addresses.

Power and impunity

Many participants also noted that our work to-date has tended to focus too much on the masculinities of poor and marginalized men, paying insufficient attention to the behaviors and responsibilities of elite men. Several comments on the jam boards from the Breakout Rooms spoke to this point:

- We’re often problematizing the least powerful men and champion the most powerful one
- Impunity of those in power
- Engaging with men in power: engage with them on their interests and experiences

In sharing some of the highlights from his Breakout Room discussion, Anthony Keedi from ABAAD, emphasized the

need for anti-militarist work with men to focus much more on the impunity of elite men, and the norms and institutions that maintain this impunity. “I spoke in our group a lot about impunity,” he said, “so I keep coming back to the personal and how to take it to the political.” He emphasized the need to highlight:

how important the problem of impunity is, of the military leaders, of people working behind military leaders and the funding towards arms and extremist groups, that this is a strategy that's quite historic among many of the biggest nations and it's known, but it's never highlighted.

As he pointed out, “we naturally challenge lower class men with a highly visible patriarchal and militant behaviors, but we're afraid to do it on a higher level to a certain extent.” Gabriel Nuckhir reflected on the work that Conciliation Resources has done to develop a “power just” approach to men and masculinities work, which by analyzing the structuring of gendered relations of power seeks to avoid

“problematizing the least powerful men and championing the most powerful men.”

Racialization and intersectionality

A third set of learnings related to issues of racialization and the need for, and challenges of, a rigorously intersectional approach to mobilizing men for feminist peace. The increasing attention being given to a masculinities lens in policymaking on armed conflict and peacebuilding was welcomed, but some participants noted that this attention has relied on and reinforced implicitly racialized accounts of whose masculinities are problematic (non-white, global South) and whose are not (white, global North). Leandra Bias commented on this neocolonial framing in reflecting on the increasing interest, for example in French and Swiss foreign policy, in addressing the “violent masculinities” of violent extremist groups which has focused solely on North Africa and the Middle East. As she said: “This can have really counter-productive effects of thinking there is specific violent type of masculinities that only happens in certain other contexts but not in the context of France or Switzerland.”

A key learning participants took from this is the need to do much more to decolonize our work. As one jam board comment noted:

“Where does the change need to happen? in the most powerful countries. How can we work 'on' those actors? This is part of a de-colonized approach.” The pre-meeting survey asked participants to identify the ways in which they are developing and applying decolonial approaches to their work (see box), and some of the challenges of such approaches are discussed in the next section.

Participants also shared learnings about the ways in which the concept of intersectionality has been useful in relation to this goal of decolonizing our work. Several noted that many donors, governmental and philanthropic, are making reference to intersectionality in their requests for proposals but without asking questions about what such an intersectional approach to gender and peacebuilding looks like in practice.

Pre-Meeting Survey: How are you working to advance decolonial approaches to work with men and boys on masculinities and conflict?

- Working in ways that respect the autonomy and self-determination of our national sections in the global south and that foreground their analysis, leadership and decision making.
- From our pedagogical work, one of the colonial approaches we aim to transform has to do with the formative processes based on gender studies strictly academic, that means, we are not interested in developing workshops in which an expert speaks and participants listen; our approach is highly participatory because we believe in collective learning; it's only in that exchange of knowledge that knowledge can be constructed. This is why we propose playing as key aspect of our pedagogical effort because playing breaks the role prioritization inside the learning experience and places people (facilitators and participants) in the same joyful and interaction level.
- I am living in a situation of hostile occupation, which is essentially a form of colonialism – so all my work is to

advance decolonial approaches since it aims to end the occupation.

- We're unfortunately not doing this yet. But that is precisely the concern I mentioned above: essentialising men – and a specific type of men – by linking them exclusively with violence. Very keen to hear how others do this in practice!!
- First of all we do this by creating spaces for voices from the local levels to share, exchange and learn from each other. This further to shape the process on agenda setting on the work of the Alliance. In addition, we are careful about ensuring bottom up approach to the strategy development as well as agenda setting for the Alliance.
- All our awards are made without restrictions or reporting requirements, thus promoting local leadership and ownership. Our governing structures are fully representative and inclusive, and our pledge and principles speak frequently of the lead role for local actors in determining our work plans under the mantra, "Nothing about us without us."

Laxman Belbase, from MenEngage Alliance, reflected on the experience of MenEngage as a network of member organizations working with men and boys for gender equality. As he emphasized:

What we have come to understand within MenEngage is that the whole definition of intersectionality becomes problematic if it is not done with the population that we will be working with. If you are coming with a particular definition of intersectionality that only includes certain variables that do not necessarily resonate or that would not be the priority for the local population, that would not produce greater success in the programs.

This emphasis on the need to work from local understandings was echoed by other participants. In some settings, it was noted that there can be political sensitivities around the term "intersectionality", and debates about what it reveals and what it obscures about relations of power and oppression in societies very different from the US context in which it first originated.

Upstream and downstream

Our discussion of learnings also highlighted the importance of both ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ work and the need to better connect the two. Work with men and boys on gender equality over the last two decades or more has tended to focus on issues of SRHR and GBV, and this peer exchange is an opportunity to discuss how different this work might need to be when applied to issues of anti-militarism and feminist peacebuilding. As Dean Peacock said:

I think one of the things we've heard is that our work on conflict and post-conflict and peace-building forces us to think upstream a little bit. It forces us to think about the arms industry, to think about the impunity of politicians that both Anthony and Don talked about.

This need to focus on both upstream and downstream change was emphasized by a number of participants, when asked in the second meeting about their most significant learning from the first meeting.

Some jam board comments included:

- Very appreciative of the emphasis on policy/advocacy to focus on structures that need to be dismantled. Initially we focused on work at community level, and then focus on policy change, but too much of a disconnect between the two levels.
- We must connect the two levels - micro/individual and macro/structural change. But how do we hold men in power accountable? Need to find balance between resources for on the ground work and for policy change.

The fact that this peer exchange was bringing together policy-oriented advocates and community-based practitioners was welcomed as a concrete example of trying to connect upstream and downstream work. Ilse Wermink from PAX commented that:

It was really interesting to have so many different individuals with different perspectives: people more focused on research, those more focused on program practice, those dealing with how do you translate that into concrete policy recommendations. I saw a powerful combination there.

Several participants working in global policy spaces emphasized a key lesson they are learning about the need to connect such policy advocacy more closely to realities ‘on the ground’. Gretchen Baldwin, from International Peace Institute, said that:

So it's really helpful to hear from practitioners who have on the ground experience. [...] One of the most interesting discussions I think I had in the last meeting was [that] practitioners are often much further along in thinking through masculinities and the complexities of gender because there are typically much more tangible examples of how these dynamics play out. So that has been really useful for me.

Pre-Meeting Survey: What steps do you take to promote accountability to women's rights organizations and movements?

- We are a women's rights organization.
- I don't think I do.
- This agenda is quite central to what we do and in everything we do. For strengthening this we organize capacity strengthening and mobilization in the implementation and realization of our accountability standards among our members and partners at all level. We have developed the accountability standards and training toolkit, to support our members to roll out the standards and strengthening accountable practices.
- Don't fully understand question: we publish reports, op-eds, etc., on government and international organizations' fulfillment of commitments to the WPS agenda; for example, the United States WPS Act of 2017, as well as UNSCR 1325 NAPs.
- Many of our programs are driven by in-country partnerships with a diverse range of women's rights organizations and movements, so accountability is integral to those partnerships. We are also seeing an explosion of donor interest in significant sub-granting to women's groups and movements, which is requiring us to review our partnership mechanisms for operational and values-based reasons.
- By walking and talking the fact that women and men are equal and tackling all toxic and 'militarized masculine' attitudes and behavior that deny equal space to women and girls.
- Women's rights organizations and movements would hopefully feature as partners in future work. I would also like to push to have more women's rights organizations as reviewers of some of our research.
- At the moment, none as we are still working on project development. But would hope to make sure this is taken into consideration.
- The Institute integrates it into our projects and programming.
- Many other organizations have come to ACOOC to schedule workshops or sessions to address issues related to GBV prevention or the development of internal protocols to it. From the experience on constructing our internal protocol to prevent and stop GBV, we have helped other organizations develop GBV policies and protocols. We are also active participants in the Red Espiral de Masculinidades and from there, we help to make complaints visible and to promote accountability processes and alternative justice in case of aggressors who belong to social organizations.

Movement building

The pre-meeting survey asked participants to share examples of steps their organizations "take to promote accountability to women's rights organizations and movements?" and the range of responses reflect the different ways in which this accountability is understood (see box).

The continuing need to situate and articulate our work on mobilizing men for feminist peace in relation to ongoing work by women-led and women-focused feminist peace movements was an important learning shared by participants. As Kathleen Kuehnast from USIP reminded us: "There's a lot of reaction in the WPS community when you start to bring in masculinities, some is positive, some is not positive. So just depends where you sit." For Laxman Belbase, this need for close collaboration is paramount:

One of the things we have realized within MenEngage is where are we politically locating this work becomes important. Are we trying to do it in isolation or are we located within the broader gender justice movement? And I think more and more looking at it from an intersectionality perspective as well, it's important that this work should be located and done in close collaboration with feminist activists on the ground.

For Don Steinberg, from Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security, much depends on a personal and organizational practice of humility.

For Don Steinberg, from Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security, much depends on a personal and organizational practice of humility. As he emphasized:

One of the points of my organization is that it isn't about us. You know, whenever men talk about women, peace and security, it always centers on them. And that's not what we're doing here. We're centering on what is the role for men in promoting women who are stepping forward in this arena.

As with other participants, Don welcomed the opportunity presented by this peer exchange to come together and discuss this: *"We really need to focus on what are our rules of engagement as well as, you know, just bringing ourselves together as a community of practice, because I think we're so far away from that right now."*

Inspiring practice

A final set of learnings related to the importance of sharing good practice with each other, not simply to improve our work

but also to stay inspired about the possibilities of change, especially given the emotional challenges discussed in the previous section. Several inspiring examples of innovative work were shared during the peer exchange meetings. In Colombia, ACOOC uses role plays and other creative experiential learning techniques to encourage men to reflect on their gender socialization and the impacts of militarization and Colombia's long history of armed conflict on their conceptions of manhood and the normalization of violence, especially sexual violence.

As Alejandro Parra from ACOOC shared:

We use games to engage students in discussions on gender and violence, conflict and masculinity. Before, we had a big problem in connecting with people; the topic turned people off, especially men who felt blamed. But using games has really engaged men - men start to speak more spontaneously and discover things through play.

Men's mental health has been an important entry point for working with men as part of struggles for feminist peace in Sudan (see box). Hannah Babiker, from PAX, highlighted the "trauma-induced anger" that many men experience as a result of the protracted conflict, in part linked to their inability to live up to social expectations of being providers for and protectors of their family. These same masculine injunctions also prevent many men from seeking emotional and psychosocial support. To increase men's access, PAX is working on a mobile phone app to help men self-assess their need for support and be linked to available services.

Struggles for Feminist Peace in Sudan

- Sudan's 2018 "Women's Revolution" showed the strength and impact of women activists at the forefront of the resistance movement, propelling it forward with an unwavering determination towards the non-violent overthrow of al-Bashir's dictatorship. Estimates suggest that women have made up at least 60% of the demonstrators since the start of the revolution. Since the 25 October 2021 military coup, women activists remain a core driving force in mobilizing communities and maintaining the movement's momentum to see meaningful social and political change.
- They continue to take their place on the front lines of violent crack-downs that resistance activists across the country face week after week at the hands of security forces. Unfortunately, yet unsurprisingly, Sudanese women are paying a steep price for their roles in the revolution and resistance movement. Videos, photos, and testimonials received from protesters highlight the ways in which women are being targeted by Sudanese security forces, including being whipped, beaten, sexually assaulted, raped, harassed, and arrested, held, and interrogated for several weeks without charge or access to legal advice.
- The militarized nature of the governing powers in Sudan is tied to some of the country's traditional gender norms, whereby masculinity is socially understood as inherently violent. Sexual violence is being used to terrorize and deter protesters from taking part in demonstrations and from making their demands for a freer, more just society. Rape, for example, serves as an attempt to break not only the non-violent ethos of the Sudanese revolution, but also protesters' sense of self since the two have become entwined. The Sudanese revolution, through its commitment to nonviolence, as well as its aspirations for freedom, peace, and justice for all Sudanese irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, challenges not just social and gender norms, but it also threatens the very foundation of such a conceptualization of masculinity. Perhaps that is why the resistance movement, and particularly the leadership and majority role of women activists, is, from the perception of Sudan's security forces, so dangerous. Nonetheless, women activists in Sudan continue to rise up.



06

CHALLENGES

Participants broke out into smaller groups, recording the highlights of their discussions on jam boards, before re-convening in plenary to share and discuss further.

The challenges we face in our work and how we would like to work more collaboratively to address them was a significant focus of the first meeting. Participants broke out into smaller groups, recording the highlights of their discussions on jam boards, before re-convening in plenary to share and discuss further. These conversations built, in part, on the pre-meeting survey, which asked participants: “What are your top 3-5 challenges in carrying this work forward?”.

Four categories of challenges emerged from these discussions, which are summarized below as:

- Contextual
- Conceptual
- Operational
- Political

Contextual challenges

Continuing (and increasing?) barriers to progress on Women, Peace and Security

The first meeting began with an acknowledgment of the limited progress made by the WPS agenda and the persistent barriers inhibiting progress. As one of the respondents to the pre-meeting survey noted, there is “lingering resistance of armed participants in peace processes to accept women’s participation, and lack of willingness of international mediators to insist (viz. Afghanistan).” During the group-work in the first meeting, a similar point was made that we are: “Still at the beginning, which feels disappointing given how long the work has been going on. We have different views on the roles of men in this work. We need a sense of humility, but need to be careful that we don’t stifle a range of views.” Events in Ukraine have only served to heighten this sense of increasing barriers to progress on WPS, not least given the explicit speculation (across the anglophone media at least) about the imminent threat of nuclear conflict and/or the onset of the next “World War”.

As noted above, the global arms industry still flourishes, even amid a general economic downturn.

The desire to secure control over scarce natural resources continues to drive the arms trade and armed conflict. Control over oil fueled the ‘resource wars’ of the 20th and early 21st centuries, and access to the rare earth minerals vital to ‘green’ technologies will continue to be a source of geopolitical tension. As Bhattacharyya noted in 2018: “Violence in pursuit or in defence of access to scarce resources has characterised the era of new wars and has been a significant factor in triggering population movement.”¹³ Fossil capitalism, as ecofeminist activism and writing has long made clear, is intimately connected not only to militarism and armed conflict, but to a masculinized domination of nature, which Daggett characterizes as “petro-masculinity”. As she explains, the concept of petro-masculinity emphasizes “the relationship – both technically and affectively, ideationally and materially – between fossil fuels and white patriarchal orders.”¹⁴

Securitization and ‘everyday’ militarization

Several participants linked the barriers to progress on WPS to a deepening securitization and militarization of ‘everyday’ life. Don Steinberg, from Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security, highlighted the securitized response to the COVID 19 pandemic in many countries as indicative

of such trends. He noted that “the COVID response was a masculine response, a beggar-thy-neighbor approach, how can we sanction other countries, how do we close our borders. Never admit that we made mistakes, adopt a securitized approach to the disease.” Other participants commented on broader trends in the militarization of society, which has long been the subject of feminist analysis and critique. One of the responses to the pre-meeting survey made this clear in the case of Colombia, noting that its history of armed conflict has led to the “militarization of masculinities and its impact on the reproduction and normalization of GBV in Colombia” with “consequences of the strengthening of gender stereotypes at schools and its relation with the normalization of GBV and the consolidation of the mandates of hegemonic masculinity.”

There is a rich and growing body of research on processes of securitization and militarization, and their links to masculinities. This includes attention to increasingly militarized border regimes in an era of unprecedented population movement¹⁵ as well as to the paramilitarized policing of a rapidly urbanizing world.¹⁶ In both cases, gendered and racialized discourses of masculinized protection against the threat posed by dangerous male “others” loom large. For Bhattacharyya, “the erection and policing of borders

¹³ Bhattacharyya, G. (2018). *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield International. p147

¹⁴ Daggett, C. (2018). “Petro-masculinity: Fossil Fuels and Authoritarian Desire.” *Millennium* 47(1): 25-44. p28

¹⁵ Walia, H. (2021). *Border & Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

¹⁶ Graham, S. (2011). *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*. New York, NY: Verso.

represents a central aspect of securitisation”, which “is what the military-industrial complex grows up to be”. This reflects the “power of particular logics of violence coupled with particular bundles of corporate interest in our time”, and “in this sense is a parallel process to militarisation and there is an overlap between the technologies, the companies and the workforces engaged in these practices.”¹⁷

The contention that ‘everyday’ civilian life is increasingly militarized continues to be debated. For Howells, among others, the “concept of militarization obscures the constitutive nature of war-like relations of force perpetrated against populations deemed to be a threat to civil order or the health of the population, especially along lines of race, Indigeneity, disability, gender, sexuality and class.”¹⁸

As Neocleous explains, the view that civilian life is becoming more militarized often invokes evidence that civilian policing increasingly relies on military logics (and technologies). But the origins of policing in early capitalist development in Europe and colonial conquest in the Americas and later Africa and Asia, whose aim was “the fabrication of durably pacified social spaces”,¹⁹ make clear that the “police power” has long

been practiced in military terms, as waging war on ‘enemies’ of social order. Neocleous makes clear that “[a]s the security problem of the age, the lawless creature was the police problem” and “the lawless creature was also thought to be at war with the social order.”²⁰ The war-like operations of the “police power”, defending the social order and its regime of accumulation against its “lawless” enemies, were also always masculinized. As Neocleous notes, “[p]olice power, as the ordering of the urban environment, was understood as an expression of this strain of martial masculinity.”²¹

Clearly, these are complex histories being alluded to but even this brief account makes clear the need to recognize not only “just how much the war power and the police power both thrive on and sustain a logic of masculine protection” but also the class-based and racialized dynamics of this logic.²² These dynamics can be at work, too, in the emerging discourse of “human security”, which is sometimes invoked as a feminist alternative to the masculinist emphasis on national security. Based on case studies of paramilitary urban policing and their ‘cleansing’ operations in favelas of Rio de Janeiro and low-income neighborhoods of Cairo, Amar cautions against an uncritical adoption of this

discourse, when it has become the legitimizing narrative for targeting ‘disorderly’ elements (“drug traffickers” and “human traffickers” respectively) with extra-judicial killing and unlawful detention in the name of human security.²³

Such security is often linked to peace, but the establishment of an ‘orderly’ peace, as in pacification, has long involved war-like operations. As Neocleous makes clear, for oppressed communities “peace is a coded war” and “it is coded as pacification.”²⁴ It makes sense then that the wave of favela occupations launched in Rio de Janeiro in late 2010 were spearheaded by newly formed Police Pacification Units.²⁵

Rise of anti-gender movements and patriarchal authoritarianism

Participants identified a third set of contextual challenges as relating to the rise of transnationally-organized and politically influential “anti-gender ideology” movements, and their links with the emergence of ostensibly democratic but clearly authoritarian leaders in a number of countries, whose politics is often explicitly patriarchal and misogynistic.

¹⁷ Bhattacharyya, G. (2018). *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield International. p135

¹⁸ Howell, A. (2018). “Forget “militarization”: race, disability and the “martial politics” of the police and of the university.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 20(2): 117-136. p118

¹⁹ Neocleous, M. (2014). *War Power, Police Power*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press. p32

²⁰ Neocleous, M. (2014). p31

²¹ Ibid. p119

²² Ibid. p90

²³ Amar, P. (2013). *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

²⁴ Neocleous, M. (2014). p32

²⁵ Amar, P. (2013).

²⁶ Rowley, M. V. (2020). “Anything but Reactionary: Exploring the Mechanics of Backlash.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 45(2): 278-287.

These developments, and attendant attacks on feminist civil society groups and signs of patriarchal backlash, are a direct threat to progress on feminist peace, and were identified by several respondents to the pre-meeting survey, who named their challenges as:

- Rise of anti-gender movements and groups that are well-funded and resourced to have influences in policy making spaces
- Closing civil society space that restricts our ability to work directly with local actors and puts their safety and security at risk
- The issues of equality, also around the problem of nationalism in the context of occupation versus simply working towards equality and how to do this. How to overcome the inevitable gaslighting and marginalisation that undermines women's advancement towards equality.

Some participants noted with concern the resurgence of men's rights movements and the role of the manosphere, referring to the online network of anti-feminist sites and chat rooms, as a gateway into far-right authoritarian and ethnonationalist political groups. As Leandra Bias from Swisspeace said:

That was one of the concerns I have, is that how do we make sure that the way we put our arguments forward are clear and cannot be co-opted by these very powerful and highly financed transnationally connected masculinities movements?

A growing body of research and commentary is exploring the ways in which such groups deploy and exploit narratives of masculinities.²⁷ The racialized politics of purity and belonging that is so central to far-right formations, from the US Republican Party to India's Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party to the anti-immigrant policies of many European parties, draws heavily on narratives of masculinized threat and protection. In such narratives, the protective masculinity of the majoritarian community must be mobilized against the dangerous masculinity of the racialized Other, whose threat is often depicted in terms of their sexualized violence. The anti-feminism of such narratives is often explicit; feminism is blamed for emasculating men of the majoritarian community in the face of this racialized threat, leaving them unable to protect 'their' women. To counter this purported emasculation, authoritarian and ethnonationalist formations often make explicit appeals to a martial and para-military masculinity; scholars of anti-immigrant politics across Europe and the USA have noted the celebration of "border guard masculinities" in such politics.²⁸ Efforts to mobilize men for feminist peace will need to confront such narratives.

²⁷ See <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/masculinities-and-the-far-right/>

²⁸ Keskinen, S. (2013). "Anti-feminism and white identity politics: Political antagonisms in radical rightwing populist and anti-immigration rhetoric in Finland." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 3(4): 225-232.

Conceptual challenges

Potential limitations of “militarized masculinities” as a framework

The need to clarify our language and concepts emerged as a key learning, and participants discussed the challenges in relation to this, not least with respect to the concept of “militarized masculinities” which is so widely used now. The pre-meeting survey had asked participants about the conceptual/theoretical issues they are struggling with, and one response highlighted the concept of “militarized masculinities”:

- Militarized masculinities: is suggesting a “different species” of masculinities. It is a problematic concept, as men and boys (even women) respond to war, conflict and trauma by drawing on destructive ideas about masculinities to survive. Thus men may use militarized attitudes to survive (psychologically, physically) by dominating, violent and destructive attitudes.

Potential limitations of the concept of “militarized masculinities” were highlighted by several participants during the first meeting. Dean Peacock from WILPF expressed concern that “the focus on militarized masculinities shifts the focus on to individual men and in some ways on to the

qualities that are held by those people” rather than the structural forces and upstream drivers fueling and shaping armed conflict. Callum Watson from Small Arms Survey echoed this, noting that: “We talked about the issue with “transforming” masculinities for exactly the same reason, because it focuses on the individual and not on the system overall.” As Dean said:

I struggle a lot with this in a project entitled “Countering Militarized Masculinities and Mobilizing Men for Feminist Peace”; we have got both pieces, but I go with the Mobilizing Men for Feminist Peace when I describe the project.

One of the themes of the 3rd MenEngage Global Symposium (also referred to as the MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium), which concluded in June 2021, was “Peacebuilding and Countering Militarism” and a recent summary report on the symposium’s discussion of this theme makes reference to the use and value of the concept of “militarized masculinities”:

Across the sessions, panelists generated a loose consensus that ‘militarized masculinities’ are a combination of traits and attitudes that are hypermasculine, hegemonic, violent, and associated primarily with military members and other militarized institutions (like the police, private security, and border patrols).²⁹

The report also emphasizes that “militarized masculinities are not the exclusive domain of men in formal military institutions; they are also practiced by ordinary citizens who have internalized the dominant values of militarized societies.”

These emphases on “militarized masculinities” as traits, attitudes and values would appear to bear out the concerns raised by participants that the concept can direct attention toward the personal and away from the structural level of change. Scholarly work in recent years has also critiqued the concept of “militarized masculinities” and called for more nuanced accounts of the gendering of armed conflict and armed forces. In a 2017 special issue of the journal *Critical Military Studies*, the editors Chisholm and Tidy note the

²⁹ S Pawlak, P. (2021). *MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium Summaries: Peacebuilding and Countering Militarism*. Washington, DC: MenEngage Alliance. p5

“perhaps too comfortable understandings of and empirical focal points for military masculinities, gender, and war” and seek to “trouble the ease with which we might be tempted to synonymize militaries, war, and a neat, ‘hegemonic’ masculinity.”³⁰ In this same issue, Myrntinen, Khattab and Naujoks similarly critique:

Discourses that either revolve around essentialist arguments highlighting men’s ‘innate’ propensity to violence, or focus on simplistic uses of frameworks such as hegemonic, military/militarized, or ‘hyper’-masculinities.³¹

They question the often unstated premise that “violent, military masculinities are hegemonic, especially in conflict-affected societies”,³² noting that this neglects “men as peacebuilders and non-violent men, who by and large are the majority of men even in conflict-affected situations.”³³ They urge attention to the heterogeneity of diverse men’s experiences of armed conflict, and differing men’s

vulnerabilities during war, including men’s own experiences as targets of sexual violence. Linked to this, the authors note the heteronormativity that continues to dominate most discussions of militarized masculinities:

Sexual and gender minorities (SGM), and their roles, agency, and vulnerabilities in both conflict and post-conflict periods are often wholly absent from gender in peacebuilding discourses and practice.³⁴

Attachments to the gender binary

Similar concerns were raised in the pre-meeting survey and during the meeting itself. One respondent to the survey commented on the:

- Continued unwillingness of colleagues who work on “WPS” to acknowledge that a hyper-focus on cisgender women’s rights--ostensibly as the sole means to accomplishing gender equity and promoting human rights--is counterproductive at best and regressive at worst.

This neglect of SOGIESC issues in most discussions of “militarized masculinities” is linked to an implicit gender essentialism, that maps war/peace and perpetrator/victim on to the male/female gender binary. As another survey respondent reported:

- Yes, we try to sensitize policy-makers for hegemonic masculinity as a potential driver to violence. We’re particularly interested in drawing their attention to hegemonic masculinity and misogyny in extremism but we are also very wary of essentializing men in doing so and in associating masculinity only with conducting and not suffering of violence.

This implicit gender essentialism can make it difficult to address men’s vulnerabilities to and experiences of different forms of violence during armed conflict. The question of whether the concept of gender-based violence can take account of men as not only agents but also targets of violence was raised. As one survey respondent emphasized:

Main issue: may we be diluting the concept of GBV if we include men in it? I am trying to draw clear lines between an increased understanding and consideration of masculinities and improved response to and understanding of SGBV.

²⁹ Pawlak, P. (2021). *MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium Summaries: Peacebuilding and Countering Militarism*. Washington, DC: MenEngage Alliance. p5

³⁰ Chisholm, A. and J. Tidy (2017). “Beyond the hegemonic in the study of militaries, masculinities, and war.” *Critical Military Studies* 3(2): 99–102. p99

³¹ Myrntinen, H., L. Khattab and J. Naujoks (2017). “Re-thinking hegemonic masculinities in conflict-affected contexts.” *Critical Military Studies* 3(2): 103–119. p104

³² Myrntinen, H., L. Khattab and J. Naujoks (2017). p105

³³ *Ibid.* p104

³⁴ *Ibid.* p112

Questions about how to understand and address the links between gender, violence and suffering during armed conflict continue to be hotly debated, especially in relation to “conflict-related sexual violence” and how to frame “men” and “masculinities” in responses to such violence. Nor is the problem simply one of gender essentialism. Drone strikes by the US military in Afghanistan and Iraq against “military-aged males” as presumptive combatants expressed not only a masculinized vulnerability but also a racialized disposability.³⁵

Operational challenges

Lack of capacity and know-how

A challenge shared by many participants was the lack of capacity and know-how within their own organizations and the field more generally to address issues of militarized masculinities and mobilize men for feminist peace. Responses to both the pre-meeting survey and the jam boards during the meeting itself made reference to this particular challenge:

- There is a fair amount of goodwill to address this topic within the organisation, but a lack of capacity in how to incorporate approaches to men and masculinity in very specific working contexts.

- How do we get an overview of masculinities policy and practice experience and learning?
- Lots of interest, but no understanding on 'how' to do this work.
- Need for pedagogical tools that offer more direct link to our work e.g games as a bridge to work with communities to address these topics.
- Communicative approaches key in terms of how to talk about masculinity.
- We have so many questions left that we don't know what our entry points are. All we know is that we want to engage with men.

Bojan Francuz, of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control, noted how little engagement within the network there has been so far on these issues, in part because of a lack of knowledge of and exposure to work on “men and masculinities” issues. Even where there is a growing evidence base, for example in relation to working with men to challenge patriarchal social norms, many questions remain. As Jane Kato-Wallace from ABAAD said:

³⁵ Wilcox, L. (2017). "Embodying algorithmic war: Gender, race, and the posthuman in drone warfare." *Security Dialogue* 48(1): 11-28.

Not all men are fathers and not all people who father identify with hegemonic ideas of masculinity.

There's more evidence than ever before. [But] you can't just copy and paste an approach that worked in one setting or one community and shifted to another. And you can learn. You can adapt. You can be flexible. But I think what's one of the more frustrating things for me is that when you're trying to communicate what we think works to, to shift norms, shift power, I think there's still so many more questions than there are answers.

Many questions remain appropriate entry points for this work with men on feminist peace. As some participants noted, fatherhood is frequently identified as one such entry point, but it is not without risks. As one jam board comment noted:

Fatherhood is an entry point, but can also be seen as reinforcing gender binary attitudes. Not all men are fathers

and not all people who father identify with hegemonic ideas of masculinity. How do negative experiences of the patriarchy fit in this model?

More generally, participants raised questions about the best ways to mobilize men for feminist peace, without at the same time reinforcing the binary notions of gender discussed above. From the jam boards, comments included:

- How not to reaffirm traditional gender norms when working with our local partners?
- How to do work on Men and Masc in non-problematic ways
- Possible reinforcement of "gender binary" notions with this work

One way forwards identified by some participants was the need to build capacity to develop intersectional approaches to connecting with men and opening conversations about militarism, war and feminist peace. Callum Watson from the Small Arms Survey highlighted the value of discussing these issues with men with an awareness of their diverse experiences of violence and oppression, linked not just to their gender but also class position, race/ethnic identity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and dis/ability status. As Callum said:

I think that I have found that sometimes approaching discrimination in a more holistic way starting with forms of oppression that people are more conscious of immediately can be a way to then help participants to explore forms of oppression that impact on others.

At the same time, the challenge can sometimes be to maintain a focus on men's responsibilities to challenge patriarchal violence; as Callum added, *"I will say the only challenge we then had was trying to get the conversation to go back to really look at gender."*

Better links between research and programming are needed

There was some discussion of the role that research could play in contributing to improved practice and enhanced capacity. The disconnect between research and practice was noted by several participants in the pre-meeting survey and the jam boards:

- We've had all the information and theory we need since about 2009; it just isn't gaining enough traction and being converted into concrete changes on the ground.
- Connect research and practice – how to understand change that is taking place?
- How do we make sure our (policy-oriented) research reflects and resonates needs on the ground?
- How to translate research, learning, concepts into actionable policy options and approaches?

- Role and gender of researcher in a deeply patriarchal society creating barriers and ways that understanding is shaped.

In bringing practitioners and researchers together, participants acknowledged the value of these peer exchange meetings as a step towards closer links between research and practice, and helping to set an agenda for more practice-driven research and research-informed practice.

Lack of management support

The challenge of management support was also identified frequently in both the pre-meeting survey and the jam boards:

- The gender blindness of human rights and peace building work in ways that we don't see in the child development and IPV prevention spaces.
- Making a clear and practical case as to why harmful masculinities is a useful lens to address and advocate for gender justice in the context of conflict.
- In the interest of getting more WPS practitioners on board--trying to better articulate the direct links between increased understanding of masculinities and gender equity.

- Hard to get people interested here in the question of masculinities as there is so much that seems more urgent
- Survey: Uneven organizational buy-in and ongoing commitment—and sometimes lack of capacity even when there is goodwill--within organizations.
- As a junior research officer, I depend on senior researchers to develop this agenda. Challenge of dealing with organizational hierarchy. and convincing those in leadership.
- Can be reliant on convincing (more senior) colleagues that it is a worthwhile inquiry.

Some participants also linked this challenge of management support to the issue of donor priorities and 'silos'. Some noted that there is currently not much interest in masculinities issues within the WPS donor community. Others commented on the siloed nature of funding proposals, which makes it difficult to integrate innovative work with men into WPS-related proposals.

Political challenges

“Whenever you talk about racism in a meeting, everyone goes silent..”

- Callum Watson, Small Arms Survey

Confronting the neocolonial aspects of our work

The need to decolonize our work on women, men and peace and security, and bring an intersectional lens to the work of mobilizing men for feminist peace, was identified as a key learning, as discussed in the previous section.

But what this looks like in practice was identified as a significant challenge. There was the recognition that even though there are increasing references to the need to “decolonize the work” there remains little donor appetite to adequately fund such an effort. Several participants noted the difficulties of securing donor funding from former colonial powers to explore issues of decolonizing work on gender, peace and security, though Callum Watson did note that *“you can kind of bundle it with gender, and I found that to be effective to an extent.”*

Farooq Yousaf from Swisspeace urged that more intentional efforts be made to insist that global policy spaces not continue to be dominated by mostly global North actors, and to open these spaces to scholars and activists from the most impacted communities from the global South. This could also include investments in research and knowledge production by global South scholars in order to make progress in decolonizing the intellectual and empirical bases of our work. Lucy Nusseibeh of Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND) provided ideas and suggestions for practical approaches to actively decolonize our work.

These include efforts to surface “stories and narratives of resistance” by working with creatives and cultural producers in conflict-affected communities and focusing on oral traditions of storytelling, song and poetry as well as contemporary technologies of image and story production (e.g. films, podcasts, etc). Notwithstanding these suggestions, participants acknowledged that the need to find ways to confront the racism and racialization within work on anti-militarism and peacebuilding remains a significant challenge.

Pre-Meeting Survey: Are you focused on addressing upstream/structural drivers of conflict and violence? If so, how are you doing this?

- Yes, mostly through research at the moment, but also by encouraging partners to consider issues such as land dispossession, corruption, the arms trade, the war on drugs, the extractives sector, climate change as drivers of conflict and of important stressors on women and men's lives and gender identities.
- In the Palestinian context, I do this via writing and by trying to shift the discourse and the key perceptions (or misperceptions) of the other – by humanising amongst other things.
- Colombian armed conflict has a key aspect in culture: the violent patriarchal culture that normalizes massacres, that strength the idea of a boy becoming man in the army, that states soldiers and police members are heroes and therefore, they mustn't be criticized nor contested towards their violent actions against women. Through research and pedagogical work, we are trying to analyze, question and state alternatives to this structural issue.
- My organization works to address the transfer of illicit small arms and light weapons and reduce armed violence – which is part of the puzzle when it comes to upstream/structural drivers of conflict.
- Yes, we try to sensitize policy-makers for hegemonic masculinity as a potential driver to violence. We're particularly interested in drawing their attention to hegemonic masculinity and misogyny in extremism but we are also very wary of essentializing men in doing so and in associating masculinity only with conducting and not suffering of violence.
- We support groups that are addressing population displacement, health challenges, promotion of voices of marginalized populations on an intersectional basis, incl. disabilities.
- Yes, through the VE/CT research project. One aspect of that project is the ways that masculinities within CT institutions, societies, and VE groups interact and drive each other cyclically. We hope our policy recommendations will help to identify means by which practitioners and policymakers can break that cycle peacefully and responsibly.
- Yes. NDI views exclusion as a driver of conflict and political exclusion as a form of that, so our approach is addressing upstream conflict and violence.
- Structural violence, inequality and poverty generate responses of violence. These are the trauma related and gender related drivers of conflict and direct consequences of structural violence and inequality. We address those drivers by focussing on the trauma response part, taking a human rights/(that include a feminist) perspective
- Networking and movement building, strengthening capacity and programming on transforming masculinities, collective political advocacy, elevating the work and voice of the local organizations.
- Yes, we do this at the project design stage through internal and external training.
- One project idea were are interested in developing / looking further into is the role of school curriculum in either preventing or supporting militarized masculinities. With this project we are hoping to look more closely at upstream and structural drivers.

Connecting work on the micro and the macro drivers of armed conflict

As already noted in the previous section, another key learning related to the importance of both ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ work and the need to better connect the two. But once again, the challenge of how to do so was raised by many participants. Comments from the pre-meeting survey and jam boards included:

- How do we do the upstream work without undermining the local work?
- Importance of focusing on structures and not just on individuals.
- Valuable that to start thinking about how to make work on masculinities in systems and structures concrete – also in providing policy advice.
- How to identify and address upstream drivers of conflict without obscuring/losing the focus on masculinities.
- Much of the work around engaging men and boys has focused on the individual and community level, but this needs to be escalated to engaging with patriarchal systems and institutions that drive the militarized and toxic masculinities we see at the individual level.

The pre-meeting survey asked participants to share examples of the ways in which they are trying to address upstream/structural drivers of conflict and violence (see box) and their answers indicate a range of approaches being used. During the first meeting, we took this conversation further, with participants sharing ideas and examples of the ways they have approached the need to link on the personal and structural dimensions of armed conflict. For some, it was about developing tools and processes for working directly with men in leadership positions.

Gabriel Nuckhir from Conciliation Resources identified the questions this raises about how to incentivize powerful men in deconstructing their own power and internalized patriarchal norms. There are examples of such tools, such as UN Women’s Barbershop Toolbox, but the evidence to date on their effectiveness is mixed.³⁶ For other participants, the way to meet this challenge is think through questions of how do we plan on holding accountable not only men but also governments and their (mostly male) elite leadership. The difficulties of doing so in contexts where the state is de-institutionalized and more openly captured by elite interests and corrupt practices was acknowledged. There was some discussion of the usefulness of understanding “militarized masculinities” not simply in terms of individual traits and

attitudes, which favors a social psychological account of the links between gender and militarism, but also in terms of ideological narratives and the institutional forces deploying such narratives, including the media. Several participants identified a need for more work on the use of narratives of masculinity in military recruitment. As Alejandro Parra from ACOOC in Colombia said:

I’d like to share from a country that’s had an armed conflict for the last 60 years. It’s not just the war in Ukraine, it’s also in Syria, Palestine, Colombia, Yemen. They all have an element in common. The language that is used is the patriarchal code, transmitting images of warriors.

There is a growing body of research and scholarly analysis of this ideological use of masculinities to mobilize men to fight, not only in terms of direct military recruitment, but also in relation to the role played by media industries in conditioning public support for militarism.

³⁷ See <https://www.heforshe.org/en/barbershop>

“The burning question that’s been in the center of the discussion and that I feel really acutely in my work is how do we draw attention to some of the upstream and structural issues without losing our focus on the interpersonal and the community, of the gendered parts of the work that bring us all together?”

- Dean Peacock, WILPF

The ideological uses of militarized masculinities was also highlighted by Anthony Keedi from ABAAD in Lebanon, referencing Tapscott’s work on the “paradox of restraint”. Through case studies of authoritarian leadership in Russia, the Philippines and Uganda, Tapscott notes the ways in which such leaders deploy a narrative of the male protector, whose excessive violence is sanctioned, paradoxically, by their authority to exercise restraint and enact a protective, purportedly caring and paternalistic masculinity. In this way, Tapscott:

recasts the conceptual utility of militarized masculinities, showing that the concept’s inherent tensions between ordered discipline and unaccountable violence produce and project authoritarian power, giving militarized masculinities special potency as a mode of social discipline in these contexts.³⁷

Efforts to hold male leaders accountable must also be sustained, but as several participants noted, our work is usually constrained by short project timeframes, as several jam board comments attest:

- Change requires long-term engagement, yet funding opportunities tend to be short-term.
- We struggle with how to work with elite men. Need to work at local level to understand entry points, but project framework is problem – social change requires long term work and more movement building approach.

Several participants noted the importance of community organizing and protest action as a way to bring pressure to bear on elites to change and hold them accountable. As Ilse Wermink from PAX said, “there’s an energy [for change] that is being created at the individual and community level, and that can be created at a systemic level as well.” The gender challenge here can be to work with men to enlist their support for feminist peace activism ‘on the ground’. PAX, in its work with the feminist peace movement in Sudan, has confronted the need to work with men on their “trauma-induced anger” in order to ensure their support for the civil disobedience tactics adopted by the movement.

At the same time, this raised questions about the roles and responsibilities of international NGOs in relation to supporting

local-level action, but trying to connect it to national and global policy change. As one comment on the pre-meeting survey put it:

- Much of the change seems to happen at a very local level; it is not clear how international NGOs should engage with small-scale processes in a meaningful way, and what our role is.

Working with men as part of movement-building for feminist peace

These challenges of linking work on personal and structural change were also discussed in the context of learning about the need for a stronger movement-building orientation in our work on mobilizing men for feminist peace. Some participants noted that the long history of WPS work has been founded on and driven by strong feminist movements, both national and transnational, but that this relatively new area of work on mobilizing men does not have this grounding in civil society activism. Participants also commented on the sometimes uneasy relationships between international NGOs seeking to push a masculinities agenda, and community-based feminist organizations dealing with the everyday realities of militarized patriarchal violence. The need to emphasize that this agenda is not about centering men but highlighting the different roles that men can play in supporting women’s work for peace and justice was reiterated.

³⁷ Tapscott, R. (2020). “Militarized masculinity and the paradox of restraint: mechanisms of social control under modern authoritarianism.” *International affairs* (London) 96(6): 1565-1584. p1565

More generally, participants raised issues about the relationships between international NGOs and local community-based organizations in trying to strengthen a global movement for feminist peace. As Leandra Bias from Swisspeace put it:

Sometimes in working with local partners, we tend to reaffirm traditional roles and values almost on their behalf. It's almost like a paternalistic attitude as well that we cannot possibly imagine that they can also understand gender equality or gender identity, and more progressive concepts. So that is also a challenge, I think.

For Gabriel Nuckhir from Conciliation Resources, this raised questions about how do INGOs be positive force for change, and not force movements to NGO-ize. The need to shift the power dynamic from UN, international donors and INGOs to local communities who represent those who have not been heard in the past was emphasized. The question of patriarchal gender relations within peace movements, and how to address them, was also raised. As Ilse Wermink from PAX noted:

There is very little understanding of how gender relations are shaping up within those nonviolent movements. I think that would be an area of work that we're really just scratching the surface.

A final set of issues, already raised in relation to the learning on movement-building, was how to ensure that efforts to mobilize men for feminist peace remain accountable to broader feminist peacebuilding movements. A number of comments from the pre-meeting survey and the meeting jam boards spoke to this:

- Certain resistance/fear on behalf of feminist organizations that this will draw already dire resources away from their work.
- Importance of ensuring accountability within the work on engaging men.
- Movement building is a big challenge. In MeToo, where were the men? We don't need a separate movement for men and masculinities – need more men to engage accountably within the feminist movement.
- Participants agreed that there are no easy answers but tools and processes have been developed for movement-building and accountability which can be used to take this work further.³⁸

³⁸ See <https://menengage.org/resources/accountability-standards-guidelines/> and <https://oursecurefuture.org/sites/default/files/3.20.19%20Charter.pdf>

07

COLLABORATIONS

One of the three objectives of these peer exchange meetings was to “explore appetite for better

“We hope that there is an appetite for us to at least become in a way a network in which we can share information and potentially we can see what can we do together in influencing the way that in a policy sphere this subject is understood and worked on. And can we somehow concretize what that would mean for our work together.”

- Ilse Wermink, PAX

networking and collaboration, including ongoing peer exchange and joint advocacy activities”, and the second meeting focused on this exploration of potential for collaboration. The pre-meeting survey had asked participants to identify existing partnerships and collaborations, as one basis for taking this work further together. It was also clear that participants greatly appreciated this opportunity to come together and explore possible collaborations.

Bela Kapur, the meeting facilitator, invited participants to choose one of these four areas to work on in smaller groups.

When asked at the beginning of the second meeting what they found valuable about the first meeting, several commented on this:

- Sense of connection with those grappling with similar issues.
- Diversity of perspectives on topic of masculinities: going beyond non binary perspectives.
- Realized that the group had different roles - which creates opportunities to connect: programming, research, policy influencing.

- Loved seeing opportunities to potentially collaborate with other orgs on masculinities and post-conflict settings.
- Reflections from last 2 years: Breaking of silos to look at intersections between VAWG and peace building. Not just separate fields anymore.

To develop this conversation on potential collaboration, participants broke out into smaller groups to discuss the question: “What joint activities might you want to collaborate on in 2022?” Following the group-work, participants wrote up their range of responses using Mentimeter (see Annex 3).

These suggestions were then grouped into four main themes:

1. Policy advocacy
2. Methods/tools
3. Changing narratives
4. Anti-gender backlash

Bela Kapur, the meeting facilitator, invited participants to choose one of these four areas to work on in smaller groups. Participants self-selected to work on theme 1 and theme 3.

Theme 1: Policy advocacy

In their report back, the group that had discussed potential areas of collaboration with respect to policy advocacy and addressing the upstream drivers of armed conflict emphasized the following:

- Be wary of the elitism of national/global policy spaces and stay connected to on-the-ground realities of peace activism and anti-militarist resistance.
- Develop gender-sensitive tools to amplify the voices, interests and demands of communities (and their most impacted members) in national/global policy spaces.
- Linked to this, develop more rigorous intersectional feminist analyses of the drivers and impacts of armed conflict.
- Such intersectional feminist analysis should also address the ideological use of masculinities narratives in military recruitment and the social normalization of militarism, including its racial, class-based and other identity-related dynamics, and the role of media industries and their complicity with military institutions.

- Such analyses of military recruitment and normalized militarism should also be linked to support for organizations working with conscientious objectors to amplify their anti-militarist voices, and integrate such voices into feminist peacebuilding efforts.
- Support dialogue both within existing networks (such as MenEngage Alliance) and between different movements and campaigns (e.g. feminist peacebuilding and litigation on arms control) to strengthen commitment, capacity and collaboration on mobilizing men for feminist peace.
- All of the above can be brought together as part of an overarching effort to hold states and companies accountable for their militarism and impunity.

Theme 3: Changing narratives

In their report back, the group noted that they had distinguished between changing narratives at different levels, from the community level to the level of global policy spaces, as follows:

- Connect more closely with diverse understandings, narratives and practices of masculinities at local level.

- This requires locally-driven and contextually-sensitive research initiatives to better understand the diversity and complexity of masculinities. In turn, this requires more intentional efforts to both decolonize knowledge production and to condition global policy spaces to be more open to non-conventional forms and sources of knowledge about militarized masculinities.
- Use creative media and participatory content development (e.g. digital storytelling, music production) both as a way to connect with men more emotionally about their experiences of masculinities and to amplify diverse perspectives on masculinities in policy spaces, paying particular attention to the intersectional complexities of such perspectives.
- Linked to this, recognize and support the ways in which social media is already being used as a tool of anti-militarist resistance and feminist peace activism.

Closing

The second meeting ended with an open acknowledgement that progress on any of the above requires us, in Callum Watson's words, "to be brave" in seeking funding to do innovative work on the structural drivers and masculinized narratives of militarism and armed conflict. As Anthony Keedi from ABAAD added:

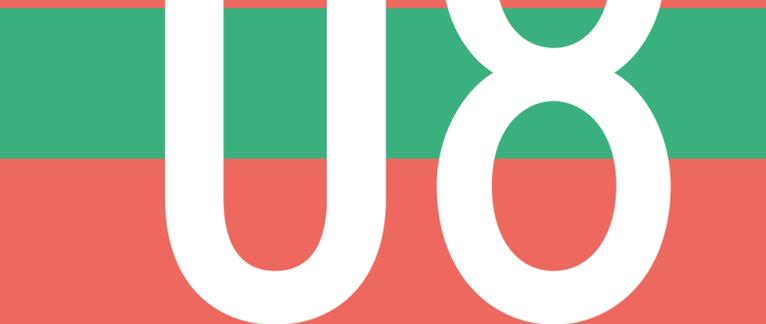
I really like that idea. While we were talking, I was thinking of how many times when we are strategizing or planning and we say 'oh but, we can't say that', whether that be because we're working with a particular donor or particular state. Perhaps we need to think more about why can't we say that, what are we afraid of, what are the obstacles that keep us from being brave.

Lucy Nusseibeh of Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND) in East Jerusalem agreed:

A lot of this is about being brave actually. And with persistence, funders and donors will listen. One has to get them to be brave. They are as frightened of being innovative, or adventurous or changing narratives as everyone else. So it's up to us to reassure them and lead them.

As Bela Kapur noted in bringing the meeting to a close, this was an inspiring note on which to end, remembering that by being brave ourselves, we can encourage donors and others to be brave as well. This commitment to taking risks and being uncomfortable is also central to our commitment to hold ourselves and others accountable in our efforts to secure feminist peace.

Bela closed the meeting by asking us to share in the chat a word or two on how we were feeling at the end of this two-meeting process, reminding us of the importance of staying emotionally present as we take this work forwards. The question of what support would be most helpful to advance work on masculinities and to mobilize men for feminist peace was asked of participants in the pre-meeting survey (see Annex 4), and a commitment to continue to support this process of peer exchange and mutual learning and support was made by Ilse and Dean in formally closing the meeting.



08

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Organisation
Anthony Keedi	ABAAD
Hassan Joumaa	ABAAD
Alejandro Parra	Acción Colectiva de Objetores y objetoras de Conciencia (ACOOOC)
Gabriel Nuckhir	Conciliation Resources
Farida Nabourema	Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC)
Daniel Mack	Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC)
Bojan Francuz	Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC)
Jane Kato-Wallace	Independent consultant
Gretchen Baldwin	International Peace Institute (IPI)
Danny Bradley	MADRE
Don Steinberg	Men as Partners for WPS
Lucy Nusseibeh	Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND)
Laxman Belbase	MenEngage Alliance
Sandra Pepera	National Democratic Institute (NDI)
Jossif Ezekilov	National Democratic Institute (NDI)

Name	Organisation
Sebastian Molano	Oxfam America
Ilse Wermink	PAX
Florence Bateson	PAX Lebanon
Hannah Babiker	PAX Sudan
Kelly Fisher	Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
Julia Poch	Saferworld
Callum Watson	Small Arms Survey
Mpiwa Mangwiro	Sonke Gender Justice
Leandra Bias	Swisspeace
Farooq Yousaf	Swisspeace
Kathleen Kuehnast	United States Institute of Peace (USIP)
Semih Sapmaz	War Resisters International
Natalia García Cortés	War Resisters International
Dean Peacock	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Hareer Hashim	WILPF Afghanistan
Guy Feugap	WILPF Cameroon

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ANNEX 2: MEETING AGENDAS

Learning Event 1

1400-1700 CET, 17 February 2022

Objectives

- Gain a shared understanding of what organisations focused on conflict and peacebuilding are doing on the topic of masculinities,
- Explore possibilities for multi-level approaches (from community education to policy advocacy to movement building, etc.).
- Explore appetite for better networking and collaboration, including ongoing peer exchange and joint advocacy activities

Agenda

1345-1400	Virtual coffee
1400-1405	Welcome and introduction to learning exchanges
1405-1410	Introductions and re-introductions
1410-1420	Review of agenda and learning commitments
1420-1520	Break out groups and plenary discussion on: What did you get from the previous meeting? What did you find valuable?
1520-1530	Break
1530-1535	Refresh on feedback from online survey: 2022 priority activities
1535-1655	Break out groups and plenary discussion on: What joint activities might you want to collaborate on with others in this group in 2022?
1655	Next steps and close

What joint activities might you want to collaborate on in 2022?

Sharing good practices on responding to anti-gender backlash.

Focus on national and transnational dynamics of patriarchal backlash

Policy Influencing: Connect spheres of influences by sharing information on political developments and lobby & advocacy efforts Building on and connecting with each others work

Transnational anti backlash

Circulate, build on and use research that's coming out.

-Anything related to gender (broadly) and the Global South.
- Anything that helps reclaim agency for all those groups Who don't get usually get it in "mainstream" discussions and literature.

Building out work on militarized masculinities

Transnational digital storytelling and participatory video to promote transformative gender approaches

Keep it real Develop, honest share and reflect on practical working approaches.



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ANNEX 3: POSSIBLE AREAS OF COLLABORATION

Changing narratives of patriarchy and patriarchal code

Cross movement work that brings people out of silos to work on masculinities and climate change, masculinities and guns, masculinities and corruption, and masculinities and conscriptions.

Use of different media (video stories, photography) to make visible other gender narratives and anti-militarist resistance

Sharing ideas on messaging around the benefits of non-violent masculinity. (Anti-gender movements seem to their "customers". We're asking people to relinquish privilege.. for what?)

Connecting policy-oriented research with advocacy work

Exploring ways to influence and charge the language away from the "patriarchal code"

Work to popularise UNHRC Res 35/10 on masculinities and GBC prevention so that it influences policy

Decolonizing masculinities work: surfacing community based concepts, terms and understanding to work with

Organising events where allies from the Global South are invited to Europe or North America, which can help bridge gap

1. Exchange of pedagogical experiences around masculinities, Advancemes in diference perspectives about the prevention or recruitment. Exploration of different narratives and metodologies (board games, podcasts, video games, etc)

Theme 1: Policy advocacy

- What support would be most helpful?
- Collaborative thought and advocacy partnerships, multi-year funding.
- Mainly, support on pedagogical experiences and communicative strategies. Improving the quality of our methodologies, games and communicative materials would be a huge opportunity to get to more schools, communities and social organizations.
- Perhaps knowledge support is the first thing that comes to mind, and brainstorming – I think the peer-to-peer learning approach will be very helpful as I feel very ignorant about how best to do this – I need to learn a lot more, and to learn about a variety of contexts.
- Get to know more local partners beyond Refugee Law Project and ABAAD which are the only two I am currently aware of and understand how other peacebuilding organisations convince donors to work on masculinities and how this is then implemented in projects. The advocacy side seems covered in the context we're working in.
- But we cannot move forward on the implementation side. I would also be very keen to hear lessons learnt from others to avoid making the same mistakes. I remember Dean saying he's tired of hearing about transforming masculinities, that it needs a structural approach. I'd like to hear more about that and how such a structural approach would look like.
- Networking and strengthening partnership. Strengthening the knowledge base and capacity development on programming and evidence building.
- Increased commitment of international peace mediators in particular to the full integration of women in all aspects of negotiations and implementation of agreement -- the complete opposite of the exclusion we always see (viz. Afghanistan).
- Nothing new. We need men in power to be active and accountable allies, including by ceding their privilege.
- Proper funding for long term support of gender transformative approaches that include men and women of all ages. The obstacles to feminist Peace, (peace for women and girls to feel safe and have equal opportunities and rights) are also deeply ingrained in women and girls expectations. In fact, I think that we need to have more fully integrated programs that include all genders that aim for general peace: sharing being human together.
- I feel that a lot of capacity building happens through the development of diverse peer networks of people working on similar topics. Particularly after COVID, we have lost many of the informal interaction we used to have to foster these peer discussions. Identifying good speakers, coaches and partners can be useful, but also people with who to foster research collaborations could be effective.
- A key goal of our research is to make sure that it is informed by real life challenges, but also that our research helps to address research gaps for current societal challenges. Finding out what types of issues and topics are of interest for those working in the field, and what types of collaborations they would be open to would be a big boost for our work.
- We need good linguists and public affairs experts to think about how we articulate and move this agenda forwards.



Men, Masculinities and Feminist Peace A Peer Exchange on Lessons, Challenges and Collaborations