GENDER, EDUCATION AND PEACEBUILDING BRIEF

Emerging issues from 'Learning for Peace'
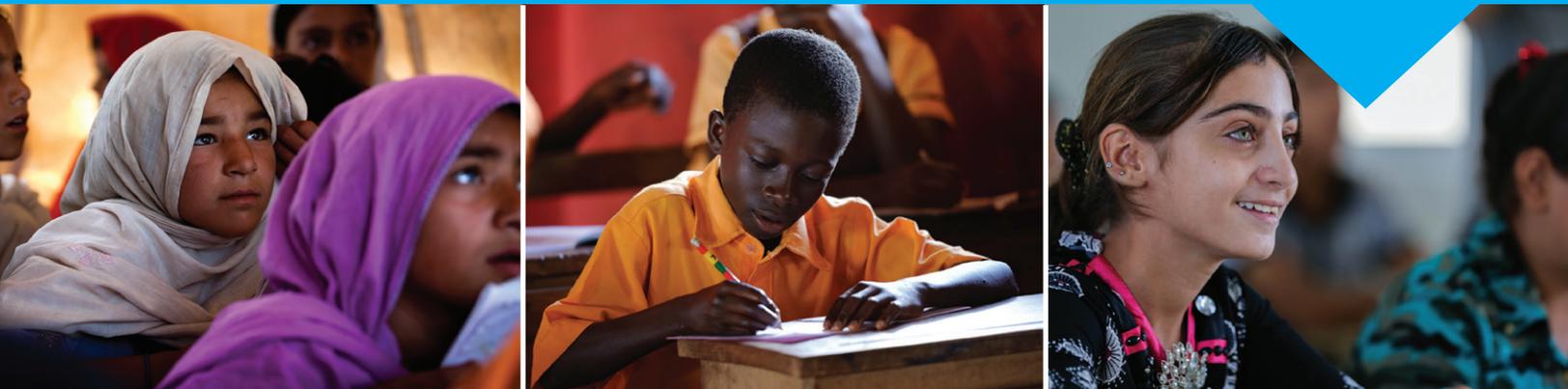
This brief is intended to inform policy discussions among education and peacebuilding actors on relevant gender considerations across both fields. It outlines evidence generated under 'Learning for Peace' – the four-year Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme implemented during 2012–2016, in partnership between UNICEF, the Government of the Netherlands, the national governments of 14 participating countries and other key supporters.

Millions of children are affected by violent conflict and insecurity worldwide. As they face increasing and protracted crises, UNICEF is committed to helping children live in peace, free from violence and fear. This requires exploring new approaches and investing in programmes that address underlying risk and build resilience to reduce children's vulnerability to violent conflict.[1]

Evidence demonstrates that effective and sustainable strategies to build resilience must address gender inequalities, and that failing to consider gender-related structural barriers and unequal power dynamics can reinforce vulnerabilities for the entire population.[2] To address gender inequalities and build long-term, sustainable peace, UNICEF uses social services as an entry point, with education representing a good example of this approach.

Gender equality: Fundamental to transformative and sustainable peacebuilding

Effective peacebuilding requires addressing the dynamics and underlying causes of conflict, and it cannot be accomplished if half the population is excluded from the process. Addressing gender inequalities, which are often an indicator of unresolved underlying conflict drivers, is an integral part of building long-lasting peace. Evidence indicates that improving gender equality in peacebuilding initiatives has a positive impact on both their outcome and durability.[3]

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> " Equality between women and men is inextricably linked to peace and security. "

– Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, High Level Advisory Group for the Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000.

Among other benefits, gender equality offers peacebuilding processes and society entirely new levels of inclusiveness, human and social capital recovery, and more durable economic growth.[4]

Reflecting the rights, needs and concerns of all societal groups is fundamental to the sustainability of peace, not only for reasons of equity but also because inclusivity is a key factor in all of the various components of a peaceful society. Taking the need for a dynamic and inclusive economy as an example, the disproportionate burden of care that women and girls typically face can become exacerbated in the post-conflict context and negatively affect their economic empowerment – and hence their contribution to economic growth – by limiting the time and physical capability they have available to engage in income-generating activities.[5] Gender-transformative strategies[6] therefore serve two purposes: they contribute to the emergence of new and better-adapted gender relations of benefit to all, and help lay the foundations for sustainable peace.

Global evidence further demonstrates that a country's level of gender equality is a key indicator of peacefulness (*see Box 1*). This is arguably linked to social or community norms of tolerance and inequality that are mirrored in behaviours throughout a population, from the individual to the whole society, as the blueprint for interaction between humans with different characteristics is learned from female-male relationships in every society.[7]

Although the social upheaval experienced during violent conflict may present an opportunity for peacebuilding approaches to redress gender inequalities and set new precedents during post-conflict transition, data show consistently low levels of gender equality in peacebuilding initiatives – both in terms of equal participation of women and girls, and in the limited application of strategies to promote shifts away from harmful gender norms.[8] Gender-transformative peacebuilding efforts to date have had limited impact due to the lack of systematic uptake at scale, minimal dedicated financing, and limited expertise on the ground. As a result, interventions have largely failed to analyse, understand and address the norms dictating gender relations and power dynamics that can fuel violence.[9]

Ensuring the equal participation of women and girls in efforts to promote peace and security and their engagement in decision-making on conflict prevention and resolution are crucial for sustainable peace. This principle is embodied in the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325,[10] which is considered to be central to advancing the international peace and security agenda. Gender-transformative peacebuilding approaches must go beyond simply including women and girls, to understanding and responding to how gender roles and relationships work across various contexts.

Gender considerations in peacebuilding have traditionally been based on the assumption that women face greater levels of vulnerability and marginalization. While Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security[11] have made efforts to refocus attention towards women's participation and protection, this has tended to result in 'just add women and stir'[12] approaches in which women and men are treated as homogeneous groups. In practice, little attention is paid to the multiple conflict roles and experiences of men and women as both survivors and perpetrators of violence, or as change agents, and how their gender intersects with other sociocultural identities (*see Box 2*).[13]

Box 1	Gender and peacebuilding

Among the evidence reviewed for this brief, it has been found that the greater the level of gender inequality in a country, the more likely a country is to be involved in intra- and inter-state conflict.[(1)]

The best predictor of a state's peacefulness, on the other hand, is how well women are treated, rather than the status of wealth, democracy, ethnicity or religious identity.[(2)] Based on the Gender Equality Index, and for countries with available data, 69 per cent of armed conflicts occur in areas with severe gender inequalities.[(3)]

Source: (1) Hudson, Valerie M., et al., *Sex & World Peace*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2012. (2) Caprioli, Mary, 'Gender Equality and Civil Wars', CPR Working Paper no. 8, World Bank, Washington, D.C., September 2003; Caprioli, M., 'Primed for Violence: The role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 49, 2005, pp. 161–178; and Melander, Erik, 'Gender Equality and Intrastate Armed Conflict', International Studies Quarterly, vol. 49, no. 4, December 2005, pp. 695–714. (3) Francesch, Maria Cañadas, et al., 'The Gender Dimension in Peacebuilding', Chapter 6, *Alert 2010! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding*, Escola de Cultura de Pau, Barcelona, 31 December 2009, pp. 139–148.

To promote gender equality effectively and ensure the durability of peacebuilding efforts, social service providers must understand how women and men jointly reproduce gender norms that dictate rigid gender roles and related power dynamics, and how these can either fuel conflict or promote peace. Gender must be understood in terms of its links to a range of identities, power dynamics and norms across various social groups, which in turn lie at the heart of peacebuilding (*see Box 3*). Adopting a broader and deeper understanding of power relations is an important factor in facilitating women's equal participation in social transformation that promotes benefit-sharing and solidarity, and can produce peaceful outcomes.[14] For example, men's willingness to share power and promote women's presence at the peace table or in negotiations/discussions in the public sphere is also a prerequisite for women's equal participation.

Harnessing the potential of education

Alongside promoting gender equality, leveraging the opportunities presented by education in the post-conflict period to promote gender-transformative interventions is a crucial prerequisite for building sustainable peace. Education can be transformative when it is equitably available, of good quality, relevant and conflict-sensitive, and can touch the lives of every citizen. UNICEF's Gender Action Plan 2014–2017 highlights the differential impact of conflict on girls and boys and underscores the need for tailored programmatic responses as part of strategies to mainstream gender equality in education and the importance of peacebuilding interventions to this end.[15]

Education is more than a social service; it can serve to develop identities and influence deeply seated cultural norms, and plays a vital role in shaping the understanding of gender roles and responsibilities, and internalizing positive gender norms during childhood and adolescence. Conversely, education that legitimizes potentially harmful gender stereotypes at an early age can pose a challenge to education access and quality – and can undermine the ability of boys and girls to

contribute to peacebuilding, and possibly even fuel violence.[16] The education system and teachers thus play a critical role in the process of promoting gender equality and providing opportunities for boys and girls to contribute equally and positively to peacebuilding processes for future generations.

UNICEF's strategic focus on girls' education goes beyond parity to aim at achieving gender equality. Girls in conflict-affected areas face higher barriers to accessing education due to such issues as child marriage, lack of security and threats of violence related to attending school, gender-based violence within schools, and lack of essential 'girl-friendly' infrastructure (*see Box 4*). Resulting gender disparities in access to education and completion of schooling deny children

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- Some 246 million boys and girls suffer from school-related violence every year.[1]

- Qualitative studies have shown that gender-based violence contributes to girls' poor performance at school and dropout. Rape or coerced sex can result in early and unintended pregnancies and increase the risk of girls not being able to finish their education.[2]

- An estimated 500 million women and girls lack adequate facilities to manage menstrual hygiene needs with dignity, privacy and safety.[3] Lack of adequate facilities at school can be a major barrier to girls' attendance.

Source: (1) Greene, Margaret Eleanor, et al., 'A Girl's Right to Learn without Fear: Working to end gender-based violence at school', Plan International, Woking, United Kingdom, 2013, p. 7. (2) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, *Gender and EFA 2000–2015: Achievements and challenges – EFA Global Monitoring Report gender summary*, UNESCO, Paris, 2015, p. 29. Available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2015/education-all-2000-2015-achievements-and-challenges#sthash.2Q0l0ILD.dpbs>. (3) World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, *25 Years of Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water: 2015 update and MDG assessment*, WHO and UNICEF, Geneva and New York, June 2015, p. 45.

– particularly girls – the opportunity to gain skills and competencies needed for civic and political engagement and to make an active contribution to peacebuilding.

The targets for education parity remain unachieved in countries affected by conflict, where primary enrolment rates were 83 per cent for boys and 76 per cent for girls in 2015.[17] While continued efforts to address parity in areas affected by violent conflict are needed, a greater focus is also needed on equality of education outcomes to enable all – and particularly young women and girls – to acquire the full benefits of education.[18]

Given the crucial role of women's socio-economic empowerment in the success of peace processes and the well-documented barriers girls face to accessing quality education in both conflict and post-conflict environments,[19] strategies for girls' education are an essential aspect of effective peacebuilding. Evidence demonstrates that girls' education can be transformative for entire societies, influencing not only girls' lives but almost every development outcome – from reducing child and maternal mortality to equitable growth and changing social norms.[20]

The Learning for Peace programme

UNICEF's innovative, cross-sectoral Learning for Peace programme, supported by the Government of the Netherlands, has been a catalyst for exploring how social services, particularly education, can break the cycle of conflict by addressing the root causes of violent conflict and contribute to long-term, sustainable peace. Learning for Peace aims to embed gender considerations into education for peacebuilding interventions by utilizing education to address gender inequalities that are exacerbated by conflict, and as a tool for advancing gender equality and promoting sustainable peace.[21]

Despite mounting evidence at the macro level, causal connections between gender strategies adopted in programming and advancing the goals of peacebuilding remain weak.[22] Emerging evidence generated under Learning for Peace, however, demonstrates a link between education gaps between boys and girls and a greater likelihood of experiencing armed conflict at the global level. Analysis has furthermore shown that gender inequality in education increases in response to the incidence of conflict.[23] At the country level, Learning for Peace has shown linkages between attitudes related to gender equality in education and the strengthening of social cohesion.[24] Experience gained through the programme generated important lessons for gender-transformative peacebuilding and has highlighted the transformative role of education, as outlined under the following points:

- **'Build Back Better' – Promoting positive gender relations and social norms**

  Despite the potential benefits of education, school practices commonly undermine gender equality, teaching materials can reinforce gender stereotypes, and systems often perpetuate or are unable to prevent school-related gender-based violence.[25] The recovery period following violent conflict presents the opportunity to 'build back better' – transforming institutions, structures and relationships in societies affected by violent conflict.

  Given that violent conflict often leads to significant shifts in gender roles and responsibilities, the transitional period presents an opportunity to influence education systems to adopt strategies aimed at reformulating negative gender and social norms. In addition to improvements such as girl-friendly infrastructure, the increased supply of qualified female teachers, and specific measures to prevent and address gender-based violence, approaches to promote positive gender socialization in schools are emerging as important elements of peacebuilding.

  To this end, building teachers' capacities to adopt conflict-sensitive and gender-transformative pedagogic approaches and developing

complementary teaching and learning materials have been tested by Learning for Peace.

While such approaches have traditionally focused on addressing inequalities faced by women and girls, the scope of interventions is increasingly expanding to reflect the importance of understanding the limitations placed on men and boys by narrow or rigid constructions of masculinity. These interventions also take account of the ways that society and social norms are gendered and interlinked with a range of identities such as ethnicity, religion and age.

The Uganda example (Box 5) demonstrates that the school system has the potential to impact attitudes and behaviour of teachers and students positively, even in conflict settings, and this includes influencing gender roles and responsibilities. For example, the Ugandan teachers who underwent training acquired the understanding that, contrary to common belief,

Box 5	Promoting gender equitable school environments in Uganda's Karamoja region

In Uganda's conflict-affected Karamoja region, Learning for Peace has piloted a teacher training model to build the capacity of primary school teachers to incorporate gender equality principles in their teaching practices. It was expected that the teachers' increased knowledge acquired through such training would increase the likelihood of their adopting skills to recognize and address gender inequalities and conflicts within the classroom, and that this in turn would generate a more gender equitable environment in schools and ultimately the community – contributing to strengthening social cohesion. The scheme was embedded in existing national teacher training systems, and training was provided to more than 1,000 primary school teachers. The pilot was complemented by an impact evaluation designed to gather evidence for potential upscaling.

The research showed positive quantitative effects of the training in raising teachers' level of knowledge of gender equality concepts and their relevance in school, as well as on their attitudes related to gender roles and identity. However, limited quantitative evidence was found demonstrating changes in teacher practices. Indeed, cognizant of the challenges of changing teacher practices in the short term, the evaluation incorporated a significant qualitative component to identify emerging promising practices to inform longer-term strategies. Such findings pointed to some positive examples of change beginning to take place: teachers reported that their classroom behaviour had changed – for example, they distributed resources and tasks among boys and girls more equally, and they reported that pupils' attainment (especially that of girls) had improved as a result.

Research was also designed to ascertain promising indications of changes brought about by the intervention that may contribute to the longer-term outcome of social cohesion. Results showed, on the one hand, that the approach adopted by the training appeared to be increasing social participation around gender and education issues, and that teachers recognized its peacebuilding potential. On the other, the intersection between ethnic identity and gender raised important challenges related to trust and respect among students as well as between students and teachers. For example, some teachers felt unable to resolve frictions between different ethnic groups and linguistic backgrounds, or to emphasize equal treatment for girls and boys in the face of prevailing gender norms across different tribes and clans. In other cases, teachers reported that boys who had undergone initiation rituals tended not to respect male teachers who had not (due to being from outside of Karamoja or from a different ethnic group). Such dynamics limited teachers' ability to gain traction at the community level to promote new ideas related to gender – and therefore resulted in a challenge to the programme's potential to translate into greater social cohesion in the community.

The intervention has demonstrated that increasing the knowledge, attitudes and practice of primary school teachers through the adopted model is possible, and potentially has considerable impact in terms of promoting safer and more equitable schools. However, activities are unlikely to sustain large-scale peaceful changes on their own. Support from a range of community stakeholders is integral to achieving macro shifts in gender roles, power relations and conflict dynamics.

UNICEF and Uganda's Ministry of Education, Sports and Technology are in the process of developing an upscaling strategy reflecting the evidence and lessons learned of the pilot programme to inform a longer-term intervention embedded within teacher training systems at the national level.

Source: UNICEF Uganda.

boys and girls have equal aptitudes for math and science, and were able to emphasize this in their interactions with girls, with the result that many girls improved their marks in these subjects. Equally, this has been shown to be the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Box 7), where research showed that as a result of the intervention girls and boys started sharing their household tasks more equitably in their home settings. In both Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the self-confidence of girls was enhanced, with many declaring that they could do whatever boys can do. However, in both cases, research demonstrated unequivocally that whatever changes had taken place within the school had no, or minor, impact on attitudes within the community more broadly. Influencing community attitudes via schools alone seems to have little likelihood of success. In comparison, Learning for Peace programmes that focused on shifting attitudes at the community level recorded relatively significant levels of change, in particular the community dialogue methodology developed by the Communities Care programme in Somalia and South Sudan (*see Box 8*).

- **Empowering women and young people to promote and participate in building sustainable peace**

Analysis points to changes in the roles, responsibilities and aspirations of women resulting from their experience of armed conflict. These shifts present the potential for women's empowerment, and linked to this, recovery at the household and community levels.[26] Education presents the opportunity to harness such transformative dynamics through adopting an empowerment approach to engaging women and girls. Approaches ensuring that girls receive education of a quality comparable with boys and supporting women to engage closely with education delivery can reinforce fundamental facets of building sustainable peace, given that:

◊ Educated women and girls are more likely to engage in and own peacebuilding processes, which leads to more sustainable results. Girls' lack of formal education is a structural barrier to women's productive community participation and leads to challenges such as lack of opportunities for employment. Data have shown this to be particularly evident in public administration, where women's limited presence can affect how well the issues that affect women and girls are represented in governance.[27]

◊ By reflecting gender-related conflict experiences and priorities in peacebuilding approaches, strategies become more relevant to an entire population. Peacebuilding initiatives can, for example, benefit from women's particular skills – and leverage the skills that they often developed during conflict, such as agency and activism.[28] The meaningful participation of the entire population will contribute to overall increased

productivity, greater investments in children's education, and more diverse representation in governance.[29]

The Côte d'Ivoire case (Box 6) demonstrates the peacebuilding potential of interventions that empower women to take an active role in their children's

| Box 6 | Côte d'Ivoire: Women's empowerment and social cohesion via early childhood development services |

In Côte d'Ivoire, Learning for Peace worked to engage women as peacebuilders through their engagement in the delivery of early childhood development services. Mothers' and Early Childhood Clubs have been established by uniting women from various national, ethnic and social backgrounds around the common goal of their children's well-being. Support to the clubs included giving mothers of preschool children training in literacy and numeracy, children's and human rights, associative development and social cohesion. They were also supported in undertaking communal income-generating projects, with the dual purpose of funding supplies for the Early Childhood Development Centres (food and equipment) and providing a context in which the women engage with one another in practical activities.

The Mothers' Clubs were expected to promote social cohesion in two ways: firstly, by shaping the early education of the preschool children and, secondly, by encouraging their mothers to collaborate and develop relationships across conflict lines. Accompanying research found that participating mothers had gained confidence and skills from the literacy and numeracy training, and that they were contributing significantly to social cohesion in their villages by developing closer relationships with women across different groups and increasing engagement in reconciliation activities. Women also believed that this growth in communication and togetherness was impacting their husbands as well. Women reported persuading their husbands to reconsider their negative perceptions of men who were not aligned with their political views and influenced their attitudes towards violence – and reported preventing them from engaging in disputes within the community as a result.

Source: UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire.

education and well-being, through promoting their growth in stature as role models by the championing of cohesion between different components of the community. However, the gains that women were able to make were based on and derived from their 'traditional' roles as wives and mothers. Although the training enabled participants to engage in activities which increased their own income and enabled them to acquire literacy and numeracy skills not possible in the past, this did not translate necessarily to financial independence, or any other type of independence, since the project was not intentionally designed to challenge the fundamentally unequal power structures existing within the community. While Early Childhood Development Centres provided women with the time to pursue non-traditional business activities, the intervention was designed primarily to provide support to such centres. This suggests that if a gender strategy has been deliberately integrated into its design, even more significant transformations might have resulted.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Box 7), research demonstrated that children and youth became real agents of change as a result of the project's participatory methodology in which the students themselves identified their campaigning priorities as well as the media they wished to use to carry them out. In this way, the project asserted the agency and capacity of young people – developing skills to convey messages to the authorities on poor governance and unequal access to quality education between girls and boys. It was particularly important that teachers and education authorities, as well as students, realized the importance of peacebuilding and gender equality and lent the project their support.

- **Invoking positive models of masculinity and supporting at-risk male youth**

    Although men and boys are often constrained by gender norms that perpetuate discrimination and violence, issues of masculinity and male vulnerabilities are seldom addressed in the peacebuilding context. Other groups' perceptions of the threats posed by young men often link gender, social class and age – for example, stereotyping young male ex-combatants as 'irresponsible and violence-prone'. It has also been shown that men with less education are more likely to express discriminatory views on gender, more likely to be violent in the home – and less likely to be involved in caring for their children.[30]

    Challenges for boys in relation to the low quality and relevance of education have increased their vulnerability to negative socio-economic coping strategies, such as crime and violence, as well as their vulnerability to re-recruitment.[31] These strategies are perceived as alternative avenues to achieving increasingly unattainable traditional expectations of manhood, such as serving as head of household and sole provider.[32] Promoting positive masculine ideals

| Box 7 | Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Role of Young Women and Girls initiative |

The pilot project aimed to consolidate peace by encouraging the participation of young women and girls in peacebuilding and education. The six-month initiative was implemented in two urban areas and a semi-urban area. A series of activities were conducted among in-school youth, including participatory theatre, young journalists' workshops, poetry and song competitions, and the establishment of peace clubs in schools. Activities were based on a participatory design process led by students drawn from different ethnic groups. Activities were carried out under the student's selected slogan, 'Peace Among Us First'. Research accompanying the pilot revealed a host of ways in which the mindset of students and teachers had changed as a result of activities. Specific gains made included a reported reduction in corporal punishment in schools, initiatives to combat discrimination against the minority Batwa ethnic group, and measures to support and encourage girls in school.

and initiatives – through both formal and informal education – that explicitly aim to reach young men at risk of engaging in violence are thus vital to ensuring a durable peace.

The Communities Care programme (Box 8) is an example of an intervention showing promise in transforming the social norms that perpetuate sexual violence, including successfully promoting positive models of masculinity. In both South Sudan and Somalia, facilitated dialogue within communities is showing striking changes of attitude on the part of both men and women. This has in turn increased mutual support between husbands and wives, with men taking on issues such as women's workload, husbands encouraging female and male children to engage in domestic work, promoting access to girls' education for the daughters and girls in the community, and the need to counter violence, particularly against women and girls. The process was designed to engage the community in a discussion of power and violence generally, including mapping the experience of violence both of men and boys and of women and girls. Preliminary data suggest that community dialogue and mobilization are participatory interventions

that could be taken to scale to not only transform social norms for challenging gender inequality, but also for boosting social cohesion, thus contributing to broader peacebuilding aims.

Equally, in Uganda (Box 5) the teacher training intervention adopted a unique approach in its focus on both male and female gender issues and efforts to promote positive notions of masculinity and femininity in response to identified gender-related conflict drivers. The impact evaluation showed evidence of change among teachers who participated in the training in that they were less likely to hold opinions conforming to traditional masculine stereotypes than teachers who did not participate in the training. In Côte d'Ivoire (Box 6), the intervention showed positive results with regard to improved communication and division of labour between wives and husbands, as well as women discouraging their husbands from engaging in conflict within the community. Such results show great opportunity to integrate intentional strategies to promote positive masculinities as part of efforts to ensure a transformative intervention that seeks to challenge unequal power structures.

As well as engaging men and boys in efforts to improve gender relations in the post-conflict setting, it is important to recognize that men and boys themselves face particular risks and vulnerabilities which increase during conflict and which have serious impacts, not only on men and boys themselves but also on their family members, and indeed on the whole society. As a recent UNICEF study in Somalia found, men had experienced a range of traumatic experiences resulting from the conflict and the collapse of the state: these included direct violence in the form of militarization and revenge killings, as well as drug addiction, separation from family, and loss of employment status and other assets. The

repercussions include: women having to take more responsibility within the household, with attendant stresses for women and tensions between husband and wife; failure by many men to protect their wives and children from poverty and violence; and poor or broken relationships between fathers and their children.[33]

Like women and children, men too may be survivors of gender-based violence. At present, the incidence of sexual violence experienced by boys and men is under-researched, and there remain few opportunities for boys and men to discuss their vulnerabilities and trauma.[34] Efforts to further understand the scope of the issue are particularly pertinent from a peacebuilding perspective given the negative repercussions that such violence may have at the individual, family and societal level if left unchecked.[35]

Interventions that acknowledge the risks that men and boys face, and support those most at risk, are few and far between, however. This gap in provision is particularly significant from a peacebuilding perspective, given its human rights implications[36] and given evidence that men and boys are more likely to adopt negative coping strategies, including strategies that are violent in nature, in response to experiencing traumatic events.[37]

• **Addressing gender-based violence**

As reflected in prominent provisions in United Nations Security Council resolutions, addressing gender-based violence is widely accepted as an essential element of peacebuilding. The global epidemic of violence is often integral to and exacerbated by conflict, and the normalization of such violence extends into post-conflict recovery. Gender-based violence also commonly serves as one

of the drivers of conflict. This 'continuum of violence' undermines the violence reduction efforts that are central to peacebuilding interventions.[38]

As a manifestation of unequal power relations, addressing gender-based violence means tackling the causes of gender inequality, which are linked to social norms and values reflected in structural discrimination. Evidence suggests, for example, that increasing women's access to productive resources and to socio-economic rights reduces their susceptibility to violence in certain circumstances, but

in others can increase susceptibility to violence, at least in the short term.[39]

Access to relevant, quality education can contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence and serve as an important long-term strategy to address the structural inequalities that impede women's empowerment. Unless the economic, social and psychological effects of gender-based violence on survivors, witnesses and perpetrators are considered, social cohesion can be undermined, given the effects on individual functionality that

Box 8	Working with communities in Somalia and South Sudan

UNICEF is piloting a community-based model in Somalia and South Sudan to transform social norms on gender, power and violence towards building sustainable peace within families and communities. By harnessing community dynamics following the intense social upheaval of conflict, the Communities Care initiative aims to alter engrained attitudes and beliefs that lead to sexual violence. The initiative seeks to promote positive shifts in the way people interact, and to improve the care and support given to survivors by the community and by a range of service providers. The two resulting components – the Community-Based Care and the Community Engagement and Action elements – are guided by a toolkit, whose four parts cover: building knowledge and awareness, programme planning and monitoring, strengthening community-based care, and catalyzing change (UNICEF 2016). An impact evaluation is being conducted in parallel to the intervention to inform evidence-based replication in similar contexts worldwide, and will be concluded at the end of 2016.

The Communities Care programme is being piloted in Somalia and South Sudan over a 3.5-year period and follow-up activities are ongoing until the end of 2016. In Community-Based Care, a total of 600 trainees from the two countries from among community and facility-based health workers, psychosocial support workers, education staff and law enforcement, received a foundation course on social norms, sexual violence, self-awareness, survivor-centred responses and sector-specific training, with training modules adapted to the local context from the Communities Care toolkit. Activities also included identifying gaps and barriers in service provision and efforts to improve coordination. Research has recorded substantial improvements in all areas. For example, in Somalia, participants in case management training improved their scores on average from 20 per cent to 82 per cent. In South Sudan, average scores increased from 40 per cent to 94 per cent.

Under the Community Engagement and Action element, Community Discussion Leaders were first selected and then trained and supported to facilitate community discussions with nearly 1,000 participants across both countries. Schools were an important element of this component with participation from teachers, school principals, head teachers, student representatives, school management committee members, representatives from the parents and teachers associations, and representatives from the state Ministry of Education across both countries.

Preliminary analyses of midline data and ongoing monitoring are demonstrating positive changes in beliefs about violence against women and girls. In Somalia, for example, there appear to be promising trends, with communities participating in the intervention having significantly greater improvement than those that are not on some of the social norms measured. In particular, community members report seeing fewer husbands using violence against their wives, as well as more community members who disagree that a husband has a right to use violence against a wife. Furthermore, individuals report seeing fewer people protecting family honour when a woman or girl has experienced sexual violence and more people who think that protecting family honour when a woman or girl is raped is wrong. Data furthermore show a positive shift in personal beliefs regarding violence-supportive norms collected from discussion participants in Somalia. Service providers are also demonstrating improved awareness and understanding of the specific needs of survivors of sexual violence and the positive changes they can make as organizations and role models in their communities.

Source: UNICEF South Sudan; UNICEF Somalia.

carry great socio-economic costs for society as a whole.[40]

Efforts to address gender-based violence through formal and non-formal education approaches are crucial contributions to building sustainable peace. In order to shift social norms that condone gender-based violence, parallel efforts beyond the school and classroom are required. Reducing societal violence necessitates engaging multiple stakeholders, including working with men and women to understand and address socialized behaviour held in place by the values and norms that lead to violence. Both formal and non-formal educational interventions can be used to catalyse behaviour change by creating or reinforcing positive social norms, and establishing or reinforcing legal norms.[41]

Communities Care has demonstrated the potential of education to strengthen the capacity of communities to address sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence in conflict by transforming negative gender norms that facilitate violence against women and girls into positive ones. As shown in Box 8, preliminary findings indicate promising shifts in social norms. Such results further reinforce the finding that informal education and community mobilization, alongside school and teacher-focused interventions, are critical to shifting social and gender norms, fostering social cohesion within communities and promoting positive behaviour change.

The way forward for gender equality, education and peacebuilding

During the past two decades, we have witnessed substantial advancements in the normative framework on gender equality and peacebuilding. But significant gaps remain in knowledge on good practices as a result of limited direct investment in strategic programmes operating at scale, and a lack of rigorous evaluation and documentation.[42] Important ongoing processes – from the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (*see Box 9*) to the 15th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – offer the momentum to drive new approaches and strategies to close these gaps.

Learning for Peace has generated important lessons on the role of education in promoting gender transformative peacebuilding as well as promising strategies for related investment:

- **The role of education in promoting gender-transformative peacebuilding**

  Evidence has shown that education has enormous potential to influence the formation of gendered attitudes, identities and capabilities – even in the most challenging contexts. The potential is evident at all levels of the educational system, and in both

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in-school and non-formal settings. While many components of the education system may play a role in delivering transformative change – the content of curricula, the behaviour patterned in schools, the role models exemplified by teachers, for example – at the core of these processes are interaction and dialogue, serving both to inform and to challenge learners. The Learning for Peace experience has also shown how the positive shifts in gender relations that education can promote can in turn make a significant contribution to social cohesion, helping people to empathize across conflict divides, question stereotypes, and forge new relationships. Gender equality, peacebuilding and education can thus be seen as mutually reinforcing goals.

Education and cultural context reinforce each other: Importance of the school-community link. Learning for Peace interventions have highlighted the importance of parallel efforts at both the school and community levels. Clearly, improving gender equality, achieving conflict reduction and sustaining peace will depend critically on the two-way relationship between the two spheres. Systems-level school and classroom-based strategies to promote gender-equitable environments must be cognizant of and complement wider community-based initiatives and informal education approaches aiming to shift social and gender norms. This should include such initiatives as prevention of gender-based violence in conflict-affected areas. Sustained change depends on overcoming any disconnect between the school and community and requires support from multiple stakeholders across government and the community in order to achieve macro shifts in gender roles, power relations and conflict dynamics.

- **Promising strategies for investing in gender-transformative education for peacebuilding**

Gender and conflict analysis as the foundation for project design, monitoring and evaluation. Conducting a gender analysis of the conflict context is essential to adopting intentional gender-transformative peacebuilding strategies. Such strategies must be developed on the basis of clearly identified gender-related conflict drivers in order to successfully mitigate factors that can undermine social cohesion while simultaneously promote principles of gender equality. It is worth noting that how gender is understood in such analyses is an equally important consideration. Approaches to gender in peacebuilding broadly fall into two categories: the 'women's rights' and the 'relational gender' approaches.[43] While the two are not mutually exclusive, there is increasing evidence that prioritizing women's rights in the absence of a broader analysis of gendered power relations as they play out in each individual context may be counter-productive.[44] The Learning for Peace experience has shown that intentionally integrating a gender strategy at the design stage of interventions aiming to build social cohesion is imperative to achieving significant transformation through activities that seek to harness the peacebuilding potential offered by both men and women and to challenge fundamentally unequal power structures existing in a community.

Sustained change requires deep-rooted and multiple approaches, and a long-term perspective. Gendered transformations cannot be expected to occur meaningfully in the short term, nor through one particular intervention. Gender is a component of all aspects of social and cultural life, and so lasting change in gendered values and practices will not happen unless it is addressed from multiple points of view and unless it seeks to operate at numerous levels. Learning for Peace has demonstrated the potential of programme strategies in the short term that research indicates are likely to yield transformative effects with regard to gender and peacebuilding if scaled up over a longer period. Evidence from these Learning for Peace initiatives are informing future investments in national education systems, such as in Uganda, where the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports is working to up-scale positive results emerging from the Gender Socialization in Schools in Uganda project into the national teacher training curriculum.

Learning for Peace has shown that such longer-term investments should consider the following to realize the mutually reinforcing nature of gender equality, education and peacebuilding goals:

◊ Ensure that all learners – particularly girls – are provided with the opportunity to gain skills and competencies needed for civic and political engagement and to make an active contribution to peacebuilding. In areas affected by violent conflict, this requires the dual approach of specific strategies to improve gender equality in education that allow all learners to reap the full benefits of education, and efforts to address barriers impeding access to education where parity remains largely unachieved.

◊ Build on the United Nations 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda to reflect a broader and deeper understanding of gender and conflict issues. This must incorporate an understanding of how society and social norms are gendered and interlinked with a range of different identities such as ethnicity, religion and age.

The majority of international donor support for gender equality in fragile states is allocated to social sectors, including education.[45] This presents a significant opportunity to leverage existing resources to invest in at-scale, evidence-based programming on gender equality in education for peacebuilding informed by the lessons generated by Learning for Peace.

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