



Gender, Justice and Security:

Structural Challenges, Feminist Innovations and Radical Futures

Report Summary



Gender, Justice and Security: Structural Challenges, Feminist Innovations and Radical Futures

The UKRI GCRF Gender, Justice and Security Hub

Report Summary

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Report Summary: Key Findings and Recommendations

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The Gender, Justice and Security Hub



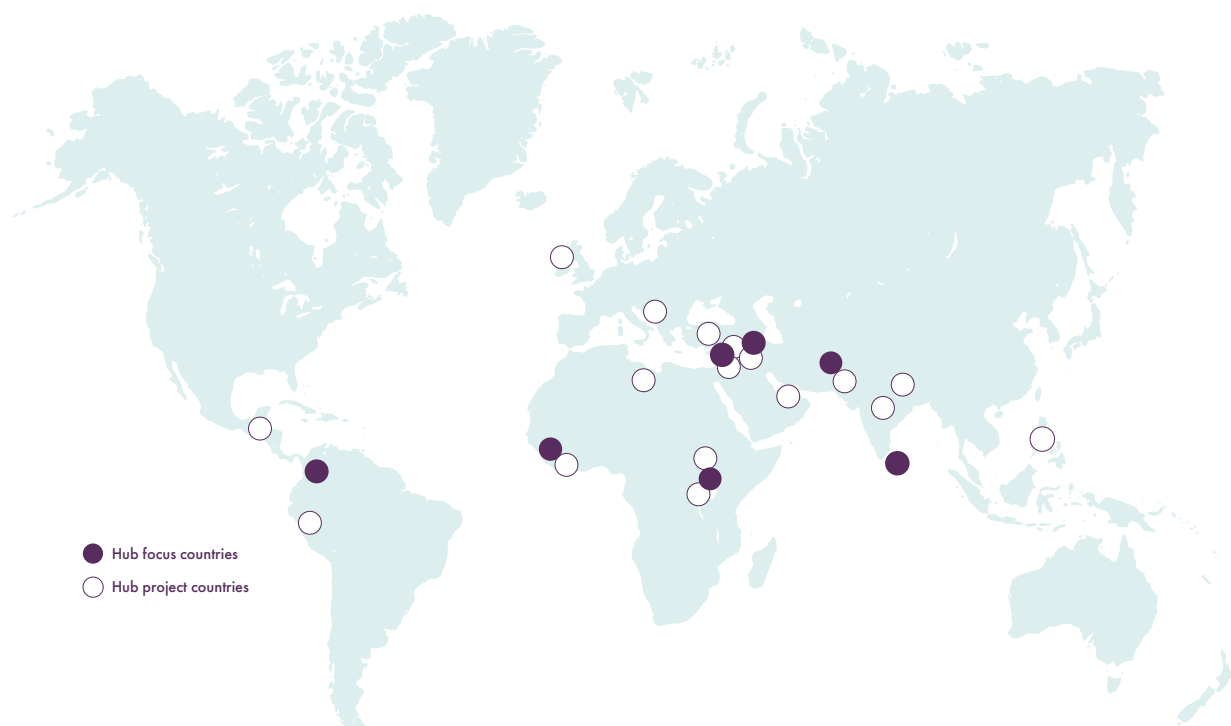
Another world is not only possible, she's already on her way... on a quiet day I can hear her breathing. "

ARUNDHATI ROY, WAR TALK, 2003.

The Gender, Justice and Security Hub addresses some of the world's most urgent injustices. Conflict and gender-based violence have devastating, long-term consequences on individuals, families and communities. They also severely hamper the successful delivery of development goals internationally. The Hub is an interdisciplinary, transnational research network working with local and global civil society, practitioners, governments and international organisations to address these challenges and advance the delivery of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality; SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions; and the implementation of the UN Security Council's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Through the creation of new knowledge and networks, including over 200 publications and research outputs, the Hub amplifies the voices of women and marginalised groups and drives local and global policy change and institutional reform.

The Hub includes of over 40 partner organisations, 38 research projects and 150 members around the world. Its novelty lies in its interdisciplinary ambition, its feminist framework, the breadth of comparative analysis it has generated and its vision of a holistic approach to considerations of gender equality and sustainable justice in and after conflict. The Hub is managed by an Executive Group of leading global scholars on gender justice, guided by a set of core feminist research ethics, and administered from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Centre for Women, Peace and Security. It is one of twelve interdisciplinary research Hubs funded by the United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

Gender, Justice and Security: Structural Challenges, Feminist Innovations and Radical Futures is a synthesis of the Hub's key findings and recommendations at the thematic, project, country and Hub-wide levels. Collectively authored by Hub members, it highlights Hub-wide analysis and reflections, findings and recommendations from the streams and projects and individual Hub members' voices. It is divided into sections on Structural Challenges, Hub Research and New Ways Forward, each of which is summarised below. More information on the Hub and its members can be found on its website: www.TheGenderHub.com.



The Hub Report

Structural Challenges

The UN has developed extensive legal frameworks for advancing gender equality, justice and security, and states have accepted obligations, further amplified by the human rights treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. In addition, policy initiatives have been developed, including in the 21st century the SDGs and the WPS agenda, that should lead to gender justice and inclusive peace. Yet no country is on course to fulfil the SDGs and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has shown itself unable to implement its own WPS agenda in contemporary conflicts. Section One of the Report examines the structural obstacles that frustrate the achievement of meaningful improvements in the lives of women and marginalised groups in the conflict-affected contexts in which Hub research was conducted. The analysis sets out the ways in which patriarchy, capitalism, coloniality and militarisation operate together to shape the gendered landscape of conflict and crisis, creating a hostile environment for research such as that undertaken through the Hub, sustaining gender backlash and impeding progress toward gender, justice and security.

Hub Research Findings and Recommendations

Section Two of the Report explores the Hub's work in more depth and detail. The Hub's research was conducted through 38 independent projects under six research themes: Transformation and Empowerment; Livelihood, Land and Rights; Masculinities and Sexualities; Migration and Displacement; Law and Policy Frameworks; and Methodological Innovation. The projects worked in seven focus countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, Kurdistan-Iraq, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Uganda – as well as in over a dozen additional countries across Africa, South America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Chapter Three situates the Hub's work geographically by outlining the key challenges, findings and recommendations for each of the Hub's focus countries. Chapters Four to Nine outline the driving questions in each research stream then provide summaries of the topics, methods, findings and recommendations of all Hub projects within the streams. The key recommendations emerging from each stream are outlined below.

Gender, Justice and Security Hub Research Structure

RESEARCH STREAM	REPORT SECTION	PROJECT	COUNTRY CASES
Transformation and Empowerment	4.2	Addressing Post-Colonial Legacies in Transitional Justice	Colombia, Northern Ireland
	4.3	Culture and Conflict	Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
	4.4	Gender, Governance and Peacebuilding	Jordan, The Philippines, Sri Lanka
	4.5	Legacies of the Disappeared	Colombia, Sri Lanka
	4.6	Political Economy of Reconciliation	Colombia
	4.7	The Potentialities and Politics of Transformation	Sri Lanka
	4.8	Social and Economic Rights in Transition	Northern Ireland
	4.9	Women's Political and Economic Empowerment	Colombia
	4.10	Women's Rights after War	Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Iraq, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Rwanda
Livelihood, Land and Rights	5.2	Beyond War Compensation	Uganda
	5.3	Land Policy, Gender and Plural Legal Systems	Sierra Leone
	5.4	Land Reform, Peace and Informal Institutions	Colombia
	5.5	When Women Do Not Own Land	Sri Lanka

RESEARCH STREAM	REPORT SECTION	PROJECT	COUNTRY CASES
Masculinities and Sexualities	6.2	Changing SOGIE in Conflict, Peace and Displacement in the MENA Region	Lebanon, Turkey, Syria
	6.3	Cross-Border Wars, Sexuality and Citizenship	Uganda
	6.4	Men, Peace and Security	Cross-Cutting
	6.5	Sex, Love and War	Uganda
	6.6	Sexuality, Work and Gender Relations in Peacekeeping Missions	Bosnia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, South Sudan
	6.7	Transitional Masculinity, Violence and Prevention	Kurdistan-Iraq
Migration and Displacement	7.2	Gender and Forced Displacement	Afghanistan, Kurdistan-Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey
	7.3	Gendered Dynamics of International Labour Migration	Kurdistan-Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey
	7.4	Return, Reintegration and Political Restructuring	Afghanistan, Kurdistan-Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
Law and Policy Frameworks	8.2	Donor Funding and WPS Implementation	Colombia, Nepal, Northern Ireland
	8.3	Feminist Security Politics	Cross-Cutting
	8.4	Funding Transitional Justice	Cross-Cutting
	8.5	Gender and Conflict Transformation	Cross-Cutting
	8.6	Gender and Transitional Justice in Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
Methodological Innovation	9.2	From Female Combatants to Filmmakers	Colombia, Uganda
	9.3	The Global Wellbeing and Resilience Index	Cross-Cutting
	9.4	Innovative Methodologies and Methodological Innovation	Cross-Cutting
	9.5	Narrating (In)Security	Sri Lanka
	9.6	Rights Research with Social Media	Cross-Cutting
	9.7	The Stories of Research	Cross-Cutting

TRANSFORMATION AND EMPOWERMENT



The focus of this stream is on exploring the concepts of ‘transformative justice’ and ‘empowerment’ within conflict-affected societies, aiming to understand who is being empowered and how, and the challenges faced by those seeking empowerment, both practically and institutionally, in multiple conflicted and post-conflict societies. Key findings and recommendations from the stream include:

- **Insufficient Women’s Rights Reforms and Lack of Institutional Transformation:** Legal and political reforms and institutional changes addressing women’s rights have been insufficient across conflict contexts and have failed to incorporate intersectional analyses.
- **Colonial Legacies in Transitional Justice:** Transitional justice mechanisms need to address colonial legacies, recognising their long-term structural impact on women’s and men’s engagement in various aspects of society.

- **Political Unwillingness to Implement Transitional Justice Mechanisms Poses Significant Challenges:**

These mechanisms, integral to addressing historical injustices and fostering reconciliation, often face resistance due to the polarised environment created by political forces. As a result, the rights and remedies of victims remain unfulfilled, highlighting a critical obstacle to the effective implementation of transitional justice.

- **Complexities of Reconciliation:** Reconciliation in post-conflict societies is complex and multi-layered. Reconciliation efforts must consider factors such as age, gender and the type of victimisation experienced. Tailored measures aligned with diverse populations’ expectations and needs are crucial.

- **Centrality of Women’s Voices:** Women and their voices must be placed at the centre of transformations and interventions in post-war settings. Recognising women’s agency and the importance of their participation in justice and security is essential, aligning with international agendas such as WPS and SDGs.

- **Use of Culture in Addressing Conflict Struggles:**

Cultural endeavours can serve as a source of reparation, healing and empowerment for women, contributing to their economic empowerment and strengthening women’s movements.

- **Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic:** Despite progress in research and practice, the COVID-19 pandemic represents a significant setback. It has shifted the trajectory for achieving gender equality, with national and international policies seemingly regressing rather than progressing.

LIVELIHOOD, LAND AND RIGHTS



This stream concentrates on the interplay between transitional justice, gendered power relations and socio-economic rights, particularly in relation to land and property. The research examines the unique challenges faced by women, who often emerge as heads of household post-conflict, yet struggle with property ownership and land access due to pre-existing discrimination and exclusion. Key findings and recommendations from the stream include:

- **Legal Pluralism and Implementation Gaps:** The coexistence of customary and general laws leads to gaps in implementation that disproportionately affect women. There is a need for legal reform, cultural transformation and increased awareness to ensure women's rights are upheld.
- **Role of Traditional and Informal Institutions:** Traditional and informal institutions have significant potential to mediate land disputes and support women's rights, especially in post-conflict settings, enhancing gender justice and social cohesion.

- **Challenges in Transitional Justice and Land Restitution:** Implementing transitional justice measures is complex, particularly in relation to land restitution. Stronger institutional frameworks and more transparent processes will help bridge the gap between law and practice.
- **Economic Empowerment and Social Wellbeing:** Land ownership is crucial for women's economic empowerment and overall wellbeing. Addressing barriers to land access and ownership is essential for advancing gender equality.
- **Patriarchal Structures and Cultural Norms:** Patriarchal structures and cultural norms have a significant impact on women's land rights. Efforts to transform these norms and promote gender equality in land governance are crucial.
- **Policy and Governance Reforms:** Policy and governance reforms and measures to engage women in decision-making processes are needed to ensure equitable land access.
- **Awareness and Advocacy:** Raising awareness and advocating for women's land rights through community engagement and dialogues with diverse actors is vital. This should be complemented by legal aid and support for women navigating land dispute resolution mechanisms.

MASCULINITIES AND SEXUALITIES



The Masculinities and Sexualities stream examines different perspectives on the constructions of masculinity, sexuality and violence, exploring the ways they evolve and are influenced by conflict and region. Key findings and recommendations from the stream include:

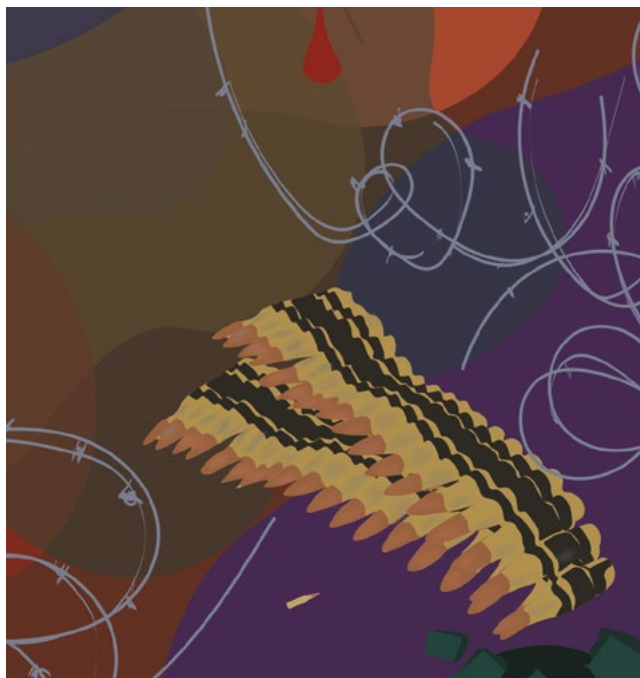
- **Reflection Through Dialogue and Focus Group**

Discussions: Fostering community dialogue and focus group discussions is imperative in promoting reflection, critical thinking and evaluation of the social dynamics of violence, masculinity and gender-related issues.

- **Community Ownership:** It is important that solutions are developed within the community rather than through external contexts. More community-level conversations, led by local cultural and religious leaders, educators and activists, are needed on social norms and gender-based issues, as well as to work towards producing community-led solutions.

- **Empowerment Through Creative Expressions:** Using diverse creative methods, like poetry writing workshops and photo texts activities, have proven effective in encouraging self-expression, challenging stereotypes and aiding in reflection on social issues.
- **Capacity Building and Policy Change:** Collaboration with key government ministers for capacity building and policy recommendation can be effective ways of influencing systemic change and promoting gender sensitivity. However, it remains crucial to acknowledge the overwhelming reluctance within government agencies to accept and embrace change or adopt new approaches, often due to regulatory constraints and societal pressures.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Examining social issues, such as gender and violence, through a multidisciplinary lens is crucial as it provides more accurate and dynamic insights into the root causes of deep problems. Additionally, fostering collaboration across disciplines serves to enrich perspectives and enhance the overall impact of each project while making sure duplicate efforts are eliminated.
- **Coordinated Responses:** Achieving gender equality is not the responsibility of NGOs and activists alone, and it will not be possible without the engagement of the larger community. An effective approach requires coordinated responses from the government, the NGO sector, funders and donors, the media and the broader community.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** The global pandemic increased gender-based violence against women and people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT



The projects in this stream analyse gendered aspects of different forms of internal and international displacement and migration in the Middle East and South Asia and make recommendations to develop policies addressing gendered issues that go beyond top-down discourses and initiatives at the international level and work with community groups and local organisations. Key findings and recommendations from the stream include:

- **Gender Disparity in Health and Education:** Across all contexts there are profound gender differences in health and education, and displaced groups lack access to clean water, sanitary living conditions and reproductive health.
- **Training and Communication:** There is a need for better training and communication of gender-inclusive policies at the international level to national and local governments, to improve awareness and understanding of the importance of gender analysis in forced displacement, returnee and migration policies.

- **Policy Implementation:** Gender-inclusive policies and training on forced displacement need to be better implemented at the national and local levels.
- **Motivation for Return Migration:** Factors driving return migration include poor living conditions, racism and discrimination (heightened during COVID-19) in the host country, and improved or stable conditions in the origin country, which can make return either feasible, profitable or both.
- **Lack of Return Policies and Assistance:** A lack of return migration policies and assistance constrains some migrants from returning to their homeland with limited opportunities in the labour market and access to housing and education.
- **Power of Recruitment Agencies:** Recruitment agencies have significant influence in facilitating migration and on the conditions faced by migrant women, particularly in countries with kafala systems such as Lebanon.
- **Inequality and Violence:** Women's agency in migration contexts is undermined by structural inequalities and violence that inhibits their ability to participate in labour markets.
- **Research Gaps:** More research is needed on the diversity of gendered migration in the Global South and greater efforts made to improve the living and working conditions of domestic workers who are not covered by standard labour laws. This should be done with community groups in order to better understand the lived experiences and distinct needs of migrant women in these contexts.

LAW AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS



This stream focuses on local-international policy linkages, considering the impact of policies and practices promoted at the international level on states in the Global North as well as the Global South. Projects gather quantitative and qualitative data on the effects of donor policies, institutional structures, and funding patterns on transitional justice and WPS, and examine the record to date of transformative conflict resolution and gender-sensitive protection policies. Key findings and recommendations from the stream include:

- **Gender is Not an “Add On” (or a Synonym for Women):** In many cases gender perspectives are still sidelined, gender-disaggregated data is not prioritised and the assumption is that including women addresses the “gender dimension” of peace and justice processes.
- **Gendered Impacts of Policy:** Despite the apparent priority of gender justice and concern for the gendered implications of policy at the international level, too much domestic and international policy and practice still have deeply gendered impacts.

- **Language Matters:** It is important where possible to socialise policymakers to shared understandings of key concepts, such as ‘justice’, ‘peacetime’ and ‘post-conflict’, without losing a healthy scepticism regarding whether the ‘policy ecosystem’ of WPS can or should be aligned around such shared meanings.
- **Silence Also Matters:** Researchers should remain attentive to who is able to speak and be heard in policy discussions, what they choose to talk about and which people and topics are silenced.
- **Amplify Local Voices:** In conflict and conflict-affected settings, the organisations doing peace and justice work on the ground are knowledge-holders and should be valued as such. Power imbalances and funding shortages disproportionately impact local organisations, limit their access to decision-making spaces and privilege actors in the Global North.
- **The Local-National-Global Disconnect:** The domestic and international aspects of key policy frameworks are often not well-connected and local actors are not necessarily finding international frameworks such as the WPS agenda useful in their day-to-day work.
- **Accountable, Transparent and Participatory Funding:** International actors, particularly donors, have significant influence in justice and reconciliation work carried out post conflict, yet access to data on funding is poor.

METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATION



These projects aim to contribute to more resilient, equitable and peaceful societies through innovative methodological advancement. They develop feminist participatory and collaborative approaches that are adaptive to changing contexts while always adhering to strong ethical and safeguarding principles. Key findings and recommendations from the stream include:

- **Reflexivity and Relationality:** Reflexivity and relationality are critical to research in this field. Methodologies must be context-specific, conflict-sensitive, considerate and collaborative. Researchers should design and conduct studies in collaboration with the communities they seek to serve, recognising the collective nature of knowledge cultivation.
- **Impact of Crises on Research:** Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, budget cuts and political upheavals test the resilience of research methodologies and ethical frameworks. Researchers must be prepared to adapt and respond to these challenges.

- **Innovative Methodologies:** The use of innovative methodologies, such as participatory filmmaking and arts-based approaches, or conducting online interviews with individuals who would not normally be able to participate in a research project, can enhance the impact and reach of research, fostering deeper engagement and understanding among diverse audiences.
- **Draw on Participatory and Arts-based Methods:** These methods should be mainstreamed in conflict-affected contexts to facilitate spaces for communities to share and process their experiences, contributing to more ethical and impactful research.
- **Enhance Data Collection Efforts:** Greater investment in data collection, particularly in fragile and low-income settings, is needed to address critical gaps and improve the assessment of societal wellbeing and resilience. Disaggregated data on sex, age and other key intersectional categories is urgently needed.

New Ways Forward



Remember to imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones you cannot live within.”

RUHA BENGAMIN, *IMAGINATION:
A MANIFESTO*, 2024.

Section Three of the Report offers new ways forward for scholars, practitioners, law and policymakers and activists working towards gender justice and inclusive peace. Chapter Ten explores the Hub itself as a model for change – unpacking how its interdisciplinary, transnational and collaborative feminist praxis can support advances in addressing interdependent intractable challenges. The advantages, weaknesses, challenges and risks of the Hub’s feminist model, practices and ethics are explored, with two strategies outlined to overcome the challenges identified: 1) weaving webs of holistic feminist research; and 2) anticipating and engaging friction. It is only when webs are built across disciplines, nation-state lines and academic-practitioner divides that networks like the Hub are able to confront the nexus of patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism and militarism.

Hub work demonstrates the value of a whole-of-research application of feminism, from design to dissemination. Feminist ethics combined with a pluralistic epistemological position created the space for feminism to show up in a multiplicity of places within the Hub – for the Hub itself to be akin to a web-weaving ecosystem. The experience of the Hub also underlines the importance of anticipating and engaging friction. Feminist researchers must plan for friction by investing in the development of a constructive conflict culture rooted in clear and collaboratively developed policies and support structures for addressing external threats and challenges as well as internal disagreements and disputes. Doing so requires a process of solidarity and loving accountability to ensure that friction is harnessed as a constructive force: a creative energy that illuminates challenges and reveals new possibilities.

Chapter 11 explores the Hub’s overall vision and calls to action for a radically transformed future, characterised by gender-based rights; dignity; the absence of violence; economic, racial and decolonial justice; structural change; global movements for social change; strong laws and policies; inclusive peacebuilding; high levels of trust; equitable politics and the importance of hope. The Chapter sets out nine principles that emerged from the Hub’s collective work that illuminate the path towards the futures we imagine. The principles are summarised below.



Hub-Wide Reflections and Recommendations

Listen More	Keep Talking About Gender	Name the Structural Problems
Weave Feminist Webs	Anticipate and Engage Friction	Centre Activism
Close Implementation Gaps and Fund the Work	Incorporate the Arts and Culture	Expand, Connect and Communicate the Evidence Base

1. Listen More

First and foremost, listen to those most affected by gender injustice and insecurity.

Centring the voices and lived experiences of women and marginalised groups must remain at the forefront of gender justice work. Further, there is a need to listen to a spectrum of perspectives beyond the bubbles of existing gender justice networks and allies. While listening alone is insufficient, it is an important conduit towards a more inclusive peacebuilding process that centres the expertise and experience of those most affected and that invites a broad coalition of stakeholders into the process of social change.

2. Keep Talking About Gender

Take gender seriously and keep bringing it up – personally, politically and professionally.

Talking about gender in contexts such as law and policymaking, research and activism can be disruptive, but such disruption is necessary and can be generative in bringing about social and political change. Talking about gender is particularly important amid the rise of sustained and severe anti-feminist movements where gender has become weaponised and critical discourse about patriarchy silenced, and when attention and resources are being diverted.

3. Name the Structural Problems

The problems of patriarchy, capitalism, coloniality and militarism must be named in the halls of power, because what goes unsaid all too often becomes uncontested and unquestioned.

Feminist scholarship has long advanced theoretical and practical insights on the ways in which language matters and how the stories we tell about social problems shape our social worlds and imaginaries; impacting the way we think and act. Addressing the intractable and interlocking structural violences of patriarchy, capitalism, coloniality and militarism requires both a grammar of gender justice and the political will to name this violence directly.

4. Weave Feminist Webs

The intractable challenges of patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism and militarism are interdependent and interlocking. Approaches to addressing them must be intersectional, synchronised and holistic.

Web weaving entails a focus on connecting – bringing multiple perspectives and approaches together through intersectional analysis, transnational partnerships, interdisciplinary methods and multi-sector collaborations with scholars, practitioners, activists and law and policymakers. It also points to the value of a holistic application of feminist thinking and practice at each step of the research process and the ways in which a feminist ethic of care and community building are key. There is significant work to be done engaging with donors and funding bodies to ensure lessons learned from the large-scale gender justice projects like the Hub can be replicated at various scales moving forward.

5. Anticipate and Engage Friction

Feminist research requires the mitigation and prevention of external threats and challenges as well as constructive engagement with internal tensions and contradictions.

Feminist researchers need to proactively anticipate and navigate external challenges and resistance. This includes investing time, funding and expertise in project and risk management, and analysing existing power dynamics and relationships between the projects, institutions, funders and communities most directly affected. Successful feminist research also entails engagement with internal challenges by centring a feminist ethic of care, focusing on the importance of relationships, navigating compromise and resistance with loving accountability, and developing a constructive conflict culture.

6. Centre Activism

Recognise and support feminist activism and place it at the heart of gender justice research, activism, law and policymaking.

Grassroots gender justice activism should be prioritised, funded and protected. Inclusive peacebuilding requires simultaneous top-down and bottom-up approaches to social change and it is imperative that the latter is not minimised or delegitimised. To do so requires investment in local, national and transnational community organising. Such roles must be seen as valued labour and as work that can be stable and sustainable for those involved.

7. Close Implementation Gaps and Fund the Work

Language matters, but action matters more.

While new laws and policies may be necessary in some areas, the full implementation of the existing legal and policy architecture, including the SDGs and WPS agenda, would significantly accelerate progress towards gender justice and inclusive peace. This requires more meaningful, sustainable and transparent funding. All too often the rhetoric of gender justice from those in power fails to become reality through concrete policy implementation and adequate funding. To realise gender justice and inclusive peace requires action, and action requires resources.

8. Incorporate the Arts and Culture

The arts and culture are vital components of gender justice and security work and should be meaningfully integrated into projects, campaigns and theories of change.

The arts and cultural practice should be seen as strategic components of gender justice work that can be used to engage diverse audiences, including creative professionals and broader publics. Artistic and cultural approaches can be context-responsive and multidimensional ways to educate, analyse, process, heal, connect, express, disseminate, seek justice, advance social change and envision new radically transformed futures. The arts are necessary, not just an accessory.

9. Expand, Connect and Communicate the Evidence Base

More feminist research is needed, along with more gender-disaggregated data, equitable knowledge exchange partnerships and research communication strategies that are both effective and affective.

More research is urgently needed to address a wide range of key questions that have emerged in the Hub's work, as well as the lack of gender-disaggregated data, lingering gaps in the academic literature and emergent social, political and technological challenges. More work is additionally required to better connect existing knowledge, breaking down disciplinary silos and scholar-practitioner divides and to communicate knowledge effectively and affectively to diverse stakeholders.

Country-Specific Calls to Action

Putting the Hub's nine principles to work to bring radical, material change requires concrete action in conflict-affected societies and beyond. The findings of the Hub's projects as they relate to the research focus countries and the recommendations that follow from them are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 and summarised below.

AFGHANISTAN



Photo Credit: Farid Eshad on Unsplash

Prior to the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, the key findings in projects working on Afghanistan focus on physical and economic insecurity and the ways in which women and marginalised groups continue to generate both livelihoods and community in the face of crises. The projects also document the multiple gendered impacts of displacement for the Afghan population in terms of health, social isolation, legal status and access to education and employment. However, under Taliban control, many of these recommendations cannot realistically be implemented due to the regime's draconian policies regarding women's rights and participation in public life. They are shared here nonetheless, to provide a framework for future advocacy, document the work done and to keep highlighting women's advocacy before and now.

Recommendations

Recommendations up to August 2021

Government of Afghanistan:

- **Economic Empowerment:** Develop and support programmes for the economic empowerment of displaced women, particularly in the craft sector.
- **Educational Programmes:** Implement policies and programmes to prevent early marriage and promote girls' education.

- **Reduce Discrimination in Education:** Review and amend community education policy and practices to combat discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and language.
- **Mental Health Services:** Establish mental health services that are accessible to displaced populations, with a focus on addressing the unique stressors for these communities and to women and girls in them.

UN Agencies, International NGOs and Humanitarian Actors:

- **Women's Health:** Prioritise women's health initiatives, including antenatal and reproductive health services.
- **Basic Needs and Sanitation:** Advocate for and provide access to clean water, sanitation facilities and food security to mitigate health crises.
- **Peace and Reconciliation Advocacy:** Advocate for peace processes in Afghanistan, especially focusing on women's inclusion, while encouraging engagement with Afghan people who have existing relevant skills and experience.
- **Awareness of Rights and Access to Justice:** Raise awareness and improve understanding of women's rights and refugee rights and provide support in seeking access to them.

International Community and Host Countries:

- **Support for Afghan Migrants and Returnees:** Assist Afghan returnees and migrants in terms of job placement, social integration and addressing poverty.
- **Skill Utilisation:** Identify and utilise the skills and qualifications of Afghan experts, particularly those who have been displaced, to contribute positively to their host communities and homeland.
- **Legal Protection for Migrants:** Strengthen legal protections for Afghan migrants, especially for women, and facilitate their integration and access to public services.

Recommendations after August 2021

External Governments, International NGOs and Organisations:

- **Engage, Organise and Mobilise Afghan Experts Inside Afghanistan and Across the Diaspora:** To support Afghans, in their homeland and in the region, the UN, host countries for refugees and organisations from the Afghan diaspora need to develop policies to identify Afghan experts and determine how to best utilise their social, human, cultural and economic capital.
- **Exert Leverage to Catalyse the Stalled Peace Process:** The international community needs to use whatever leverage it has over the Taliban to pressure them to begin the stalled peace process and reconciliation with all facets of the society, including women.
- **Shift the Narrative to Focus on and Support Work that is Still Possible:** In the current situation, opportunities for women to draw on their skills to produce financial value still exist. Despite deep and sustained attacks on women's rights, security and livelihoods, women continue to work, especially in modes that allow them to stay inside the home. To bolster this work, trade routes between Afghanistan and Pakistan are vital. International organisations should be working to maintain these trade routes to enable goods, such as craft products, to leave the country to generate income. NGOs should continue to support work that enables women to generate an income.
- **Include and Advocate for the Inclusion of Women in Political Processes:** Afghan women risk being erased from the ongoing dialogues about the future of their nation that are being held by the international community. A possible recognition of the Taliban in the coming years will make this erasure a large price that future generations of women might pay. All donors and policymakers should maintain the equality of all genders at the heart of their advocacy and policy.
- **Crisis Responses are Gender Blind and Need to be Aware of Intersectional Inequalities.** The crisis of 2021 made it clear that gender blind policies of protection, including evacuation and access to humanitarian visas and related safety, were gender blind. Related resettlement programmes also showed a lack of awareness of intersectional inequalities in Afghanistan. The Hub's Gender Intersectionality Crisis Toolkit addresses this gap in understanding and should be utilised and adapted in other contexts.

COLOMBIA



Photo Credit: UN Women (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Projects working on Colombia examine the impact of various aspects of the peace and reconciliation process. The projects explore the limits to women's political and economic empowerment in the country, the disparities between the symbolic reparations offered by transitional justice institutions and the material reparations needed by communities, the challenges of reintegration and the long-term legacies of colonialism. They found that the land restitution process is often slow and flawed and that there has been a concerning decline in international funding for and attention to women's rights, empowerment and gender equality.

Recommendations

Government of Colombia:

- **Responsive Reconciliation Policies:** Create reconciliation programmes that recognise and incorporate the complexities of individual experiences of conflict, focusing on providing targeted material reparations alongside symbolic acts.
- **Economic Justice for Rural Women:** Enhance support systems for rural women, such as education and land rights, to address economic disparities and promote gender equality.
- **Transparent and Efficient Land Restitution:** Review and reform the land restitution process with a focus on transparency and efficiency, ensuring legal consistency and victim-centred outcomes.

- **Intersectional Approach to Justice Institutions:**

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), Victim's Unit and the Monitoring Committee of The Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-repetition (CEV) should prioritise an intersectional approach in their work wherever possible to fully understand the situation of particularly vulnerable people and provide appropriate mechanisms for redress.

- **Colonial Roots of Inequitable Justice:** When evaluating the implementation of the 74 final recommendations made by the CEV, the Monitoring Committee should consider the background of colonial legacies and structural constraints on reconciliation.

- **Local Leadership and Intercultural Education:** The voices of Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities must be centred in the transitional justice process. Integrate local leaders in policy design and execution to ensure that programmes align with the specific needs and expectations of their communities.

- **Reconciliation Expectations:** Conduct a national dialogue to clarify and define reconciliation, its scope and its limits to ensure there is a unified and realistic expectation from the process.

Civil Society and International Actors:

- **Sustainable and Flexible Funding Models:** Develop funding models that provide long-term support for women-led civil society organisations (CSOs), allowing for the continuation and scaling of successful programmes and for resources to be allocated in ways that respond to changing context and needs.

- **Meaningful and Diverse Participation:** Ensure the participation of a diversity of women's groups – including female ex-combatants, victims, Indigenous groups – in all aspects of peace implementation, from disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration to land rights, economic opportunity and transitional justice.

- **Capacity Building for Grassroots Organisations:** Allocate resources enhance the ability of marginalised groups and grassroots organisations to respond to community-specific needs with cultural competence and local knowledge. Funding should be made available to smaller and more informal organisation and guaranteed for gender issues throughout the peace implementation process.

- **Intersectional and Holistic Gender Programming:** Avoid single-issue approaches to gender advocacy, which can perpetuate existing social and political hierarchies. Focus on violence perpetuated by interlinked structures of oppression experienced by minoritised women and groups.

- **Colonial Influences on Transitional Justice:** Research that seeks to address historical colonialism should itself take a decolonial methodological approach and engage with Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities.

KURDISTAN-IRAQ

Photo Credit: Levi Meir Clancy on Unsplash



Hub research on Kurdistan-Iraq exposes the barriers to progress faced by women due to failures in the political and legal systems, deep-rooted patriarchy and gender backlash including high levels of harassment of women's rights activists. These projects also demonstrate the misalignment between international policies and local realities in terms of both the discourse and practice of managing displaced populations and highlight the contributions that returnee migrants to the country make to peace, development, gender equality and the labour market.

Recommendations

Regional Government of Kurdistan-Iraq:

- **Engaging Men and Challenging Patriarchal Norms:** Increase funding and resources for local initiatives that focus on engaging men, specifically regarding those in positions of power, to challenge patriarchal norms and resist the growing gender backlash.
- **Viable and Sustainable Policies for Returnees:** Develop sustainable and viable policies with the aim of encouraging highly skilled men and women to return to Kurdistan and contribute to economic development and peace.
- **Engaging with Diaspora:** Establish a Diaspora Affairs Department to engage with and benefit from the human, cultural, social and economic capital of the Kurdish diaspora; identify evidence of labour shortages, build networks of potential returnees and assess their potential contribution to sustainable development.

- **Focusing on the Rights and Contributions of Women Returnees:** Work with non-governmental partners to establish and implement policies to develop positive policies for women and to benefit from the skills of women returnees.

International Actors:

- **Implement Gender-Inclusive Policies:** Work with regional and local actors to develop and implement displacement policies that account for gender-specific needs and challenges, with a focus on empowerment and skill acquisition for displaced women and girls.
- **Gender-Sensitive Training on Forced Displacement:** Support and facilitate training programmes at the national and local levels to ensure a deep understanding of gender issues in displacement contexts, aiding in the creation of more effective support systems.

Local Communities and Educators:

- **Community-Led Solutions:** Empower local leaders and educators to spearhead discussions on gender norms and establish community-driven responses to address these issues effectively.
- **Education as a Tool for Change:** Integrate comprehensive gender equality education into curriculums at schools, mosques and other learning platforms. Focus on engaging younger generations to shape future societal norms and engaging men to highlight the positive role they can play as gender equality allies within the community.
- **Arts-Based Approaches:** Implement creative and arts-based methods in educational settings to foster empathy, challenge established gender norms and promote a re-evaluation of gender identities.

Media, Funders and the General Public:

- **Coordinated Multi-Actor Approaches:** Coordinate responses from the government, the NGO sector, funders and donors, the media and the larger community to achieve gender equality.

LEBANON



Photo Credit: Radwan Sleky on Unsplash

Projects on Lebanon find that the triple crises that the country has recently experienced (the economic downturn, Beirut port explosion and COVID-19 pandemic) compounded the ostracisation, harassment and discrimination of persons of diverse SOGIESC, in particular undocumented Syrian refugees, and noted the scarcity of psychosocial support for these communities. The triple crisis also disproportionately affects migrant women, exacerbating their vulnerabilities and leading to increased unemployment, isolation, incidents of gender-based violence and an increased risk of human trafficking.

Recommendations

Government of Lebanon:

- **Abolish Discriminatory Laws and Strengthen Legal Protections:** Article 534 in the Penal Code criminalises homosexual acts. This, and other laws that criminalise sex workers, should be abolished.
- **Enhance Legal Protections for Migrant Women:** The Lebanese government should enact and enforce laws that safeguard migrant women in both public and private spheres, offering them security and justice.

Policymakers and Lebanese NGOs:

- **Adopt an Intersectional Approach:** Lebanese policymakers and NGOs should embrace an intersectional lens to understand the complexities of SOGIESC identities, to bring about policies and support services that cater to their specific needs.

- **Support Transnational Activism:** Encourage and facilitate transnational activism and collaboration among SOGIESC organisations across the region to strengthen the resilience and effectiveness of the SOGIESC movement in Lebanon and beyond.
- **Increase Sustainable Funding:** Lebanon urgently needs to increase sustainable funding for SOGIESC-focused services, especially in mental health and psychosocial support.

Government, NGOs, and International Organisations:

- **Reform the Kafala System:** The Lebanese government, with support from international bodies, must urgently overhaul the kafala system to protect domestic workers' rights.
- **Advance Migrant Rights and Safety:** A coordinated approach involving the Lebanese government, NGOs and international organisations should be implemented to create a more inclusive, safe and supportive environment for female migrants.
- **Support Migrant-Centred Programmes:** The Lebanese government should collaborate with NGOs on programmes that offer job training, legal assistance and social support to migrant communities.

Governments of Migrant Workers' Country of Origin:

- **Bilateral Migration Agreements:** The governments of migrant domestic workers' country of origin are called to take action and negotiate bilateral agreements with the Lebanese government to provide fairer conditions for their migrant citizens.

SIERRA LEONE

Photo Credit: Land Policy, Gender and Plural Legal Systems Project



A focus on land justice in Sierra Leone shows that poverty is the main factor limiting access to land, followed by being a migrant or non-local in a community. This disproportionately affects women who face cultural patriarchal norms restricting their tenurial rights to land. Further, corporate actors are taking advantage of the liberalisation of the Sierra Leonean economy to deny access to land and to dispossess women. Economic development is being prioritised over social justice and women's empowerment, inhibiting efforts to establish long-term gender justice and inclusive peace.

Recommendations

Government of Sierra Leone:

- **Policy Reform and Implementation:** Legal and policy reform guaranteeing equal ownership and access to land for women needs to be strengthened and fully implemented.
- **Land Policy and Inclusivity:** Review and update existing land policy to incorporate the progressive provisions outlined in the National Land Commission Act (2022) and the Customary Land Rights Act (2022). This should be accompanied by the development of a comprehensive land law.

- **Women's Rights and Corporate Interests:** Protect the rights of women when they conflict with corporate land interests. This includes closing legal loopholes that allow women's rights, including land rights, to be compromised in the name of development.
- **Civil Society and Local Organisations:** Support civil society and local organisations working on the ground including through funding and engagement.

Traditional Authorities:

- **Customary Law and Gender Equality:** The institution of chieftaincy should be reformed, focusing on equal representation and participation of women in chieftdom decision making, including in committees set up to manage land and land resources.

Civil Society Organisations and NGOs:

- **Land Justice and Non-State Actors:** Paralegal and dispute resolution assistance to women should be enhanced so that women can be fairly represented in land deals and have access to justice when their rights are violated. Education and information sharing about new laws and policies should also be prioritised.

SRI LANKA

Photo Credit: Fredrik Öhlander on Unsplash



Research on Sri Lanka concentrates on issues of justice, land and migration. Projects find that there are significant shortcomings in justice for families of the disappeared and for victim-survivors of sexual and gender-based violence as well as a general systemic shortfall in access to justice for women. On land, Hub research shows that women's land ownership is affected by the absence of a uniform law for land rights, the complexities in customary laws, ethnoreligious and cultural norms and the impact of war. Internally displaced people in Sri Lanka have limited access to economic and livelihood opportunities and cannot meet basic healthcare needs, and women returnee migrants face significant discrimination and challenges.

Recommendations

Government of Sri Lanka:

- **Justice for the Disappeared:** Prioritise disappearance cases and investigate what happened in these cases to restore faith in the OMP.
- **Housing and Restitution for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** Increase the current land and housing grants to IDPs in line with inflation. Continue and expand work on documenting the experiences of IDPs to inform policies of protection and assistance in resettlement and relocation.
- **Justice for Victim-Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV):** Include a legal definition of CRSV in the substantive law. Review legal standards on consent and corroboration in cases of CRSV and recognise the impact of trauma on witness statements. Guarantee the participatory rights of victims in court.

- **Victim-Survivor Support in CRSV:** Institute mandatory and robust training of police officers and judicial medical officers in CRSV cases and trauma to ensure gender sensitivity and the protection of the dignity and rights of the victim-survivor.
- **Existing Laws Need to be Further Amended and Properly Implemented to Allow Women to have Greater Access to, and Full Control of, Land:** The government administrators should ensure that the recent amendments to laws (i.e. Land Development Ordinance) are honoured in practice and that women are given more space for decision-making in matters of land utilisation.
- **Encouraging Return Migration:** Develop and implement policies to attract and integrate highly skilled returnees, recognising their potential to contribute to economic development and peace.
- **Integrated Dialogue for Future Peace and Economic Stability:** Incorporate discussions on identity and culture into peace and economic dialogues. Arts-based practices and research offer unique insights that can guide policymaking.

International Community:

- **Gender-Inclusive Policies:** Support the development, implementation and communication of gender-inclusive policies from the international to the local level.
- **Centre Marginalised Women in Gender Policy:** Existing policies that are intended to better integrate women into systems of power need to be refocused so that they centre marginalised communities and address the systemic issues that subject these communities to harm and violence.
- **Office of Missing Persons (OMP) Accountability:** It is imperative that international actors support the efforts of families of the disappeared and sustain pressure on the Sri Lankan state to investigate cases of forcibly disappeared and missing persons through the OMP.
- **International Engagement of Sri Lankan Diaspora:** Engage and mobilise experts within the diaspora, focusing on gender justice and inclusive peace.
- **Supporting Participatory and Arts-Based Methods:** Recognise and financially support arts-based research methodologies for their unique contributions to data collection, learning and dissemination.

UGANDA

Photo Credit: Itote Rubombora on Unsplash



Projects working on Uganda provide a broad range of findings on the country's experience post conflict. Female ex-combatants, 'floating populations', the 'temporary families' of soldiers and women returnees and their children continue to face severe marginalisation, leading to stigmatisation, economic struggles and social challenges. The patrilineal land ownership system creates significant challenges for all women, particularly female ex-combatants and their children, leading to disputes over land rights and insecurity. Female ex-combatants face inadequate long-term health support and neglect in reintegration programmes, impacting their successful reintegration into society. Extended conflicts and displacements have significantly disrupted intimate relationships, kinship systems and traditional practices, leading to intergenerational conflicts and severe mental health issues in affected populations.

Recommendations

Government and Policymakers:

- **Government Engagement and Support:** Engage continuously and offer robust support to marginalised communities and floating populations, including women returnees and children born in conflict, to address issues of stigmatisation, violence and social integration.
- **Simplification of Legal Processes:** Streamline legal documentation processes for people lacking parental or birthplace information, enabling better access to government services and legal rights, particularly for children born in captivity.

- **Land Reform and Community Trust:** Address land conflicts and challenges from land commercialisation by reinforcing community trust, facilitating the adaptation of traditional land and kinship systems, and ensuring fair land access for all, especially women and children affected by conflict.
- **Military Strategy and Deployment Policies:** Redefine military strategies to emphasise peaceful conflict resolution and limit the duration and frequency of deployments to prevent the formation of temporary families and improve soldier well-being.

International Organisations and NGOs:

- **Role of International Actors:** Actively work with a wide range of actors to combat stigmatisation and discrimination against people formerly associated with armed groups, focusing on the specific needs and contexts of the affected populations.

Communities and Cultural Institutions:

- **Prioritise Post-War Social Identity:** Develop programmes to support social connectedness, encourage intergenerational dialogue and foster collective identity within communities.

Media and Communication Sectors:

- **Effective Community Outreach:** Make use of radio and other media as tools for community outreach and public debate, especially in rural, war-impacted areas, to bridge divides and to amplify marginalised voices across various demographic lines.

Healthcare and Social Services:

- **Long-term Health and Reintegration Programmes:** Develop and implement comprehensive and intentional reintegration programmes that address the long-term physical, mental and social impacts of conflict on ex-combatants.

Visit [**www.TheGenderHub.com**](http://www.TheGenderHub.com)
to read the full Report.



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