

User Guide

Conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction issues vary significantly across regions and cultures. There is no “one size fits all” approach that can be taken by the international community or local populations to promote and sustain peace. However, conflict-affected societies do share common characteristics and problems that peace processes seek to address and resolve. In many instances, the international community takes the lead in providing guidance, expertise and resources to national authorities, but the approaches taken often fail to recognise the experiences, capacities and concerns of women. The Toolkit’s creation was motivated by the needs of these women who, despite their achievements, have limited access to international processes. It seeks to highlight the roles and contributions of women at the regional, national and local levels, who are breaking new ground in peacemaking and reconstruction. We have sought to provide examples of women’s efforts from around the world.

By providing clear, simple—but not simplistic—information, this Toolkit aims to be a resource to enable the strategic engagement of women in national peacebuilding and security processes. Everyone who wishes to use the Toolkit should find something of relevance. Inevitably, however, there will be gaps. We hope that they are minimal.

GOALS

The main goal of this Toolkit is to provide a resource for women peacebuilders and practitioners to engage effectively in peace and security issues. The authors have sought to do this by:

- framing the Toolkit within current approaches such as conflict transformation and human security that currently govern conflict, peace and security issues;
- providing critical information, strategies and approaches on key peace and security issues;
- bridging the divide between the realities of peace activists in conflict, post conflict or transition areas and international practitioners and policy-makers with responsibility for designing and implementing programmes in these contexts;
- presenting issues in a user-friendly manner and demystifying the “policy speak” and terminology used by the international community;
- relating the issues to women’s experiences, highlighting how women are affected and how they

contribute to core peacemaking, peacebuilding and security processes;

- highlighting practical examples of women’s contributions and offering concrete, “doable” ideas for advocacy and strategic action; and
- providing information on international human rights agreements and policies, which promote the integration of women’s human rights issues into all policies, programmes and processes that affect women’s peace and security.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The Toolkit has been developed specifically for women peace activists, advocates and practitioners in conflict-affected and post conflict countries. In developing the chapters we found that policy-makers and staff of major multilateral institutions, donor countries and international NGOs also found the information useful. We therefore encourage and welcome the use of the resource by all those concerned with global peace and security issues.

STRUCTURE

The Toolkit is divided into six sections, each with a number of related chapters. Each chapter is further subdivided to:

1. define the issues;
2. identify key actors involved;
3. examine the impact on women;
4. discuss the role and contributions of women;
5. highlight international policies relating to women's participation;
6. outline strategic actions that women peace activists might undertake; and
7. provide references for further information.

Many issues are interrelated, and every effort has been made to integrate key concepts into each chapter without excess duplication. The following are major themes that are discussed across the entire Toolkit but which do not form separate chapters:

- education and training;
- gender-based violence;
- disability;
- international law (the chapter on human rights outlines the main legal framework for women's rights and is complemented in other chapters with discussions of other legal frameworks such as those for refugees and internally displaced persons);
- culture;
- trafficking;
- gender mainstreaming;
- religion; and
- girls, boys and youth.

Throughout the Toolkit, examples of countries, conflict areas and key institutions are in **bold**. Unusual terms or aspects of a particular subject are also in **bold**. A list of acronyms can be found at the end of each chapter.

USE

At its most basic, the Toolkit is a compilation of information relating to peace and security issues and

as such has multiple uses. It can be used:

- **as a reference guide** providing information on internationally agreed laws and standards governing the protection of women during conflict and their participation in peace and security processes. It also provides information on strategies for the prevention of conflict.
- **as a tool for advocacy and action** encouraging women to adopt and adapt the examples of women's strategies and advocacy initiatives for inclusion into peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes such as peacekeeping support operations or disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and post conflict processes such as elections.
- **for training and awareness-raising** on issues such as HIV/AIDS, the need to ensure that refugee and internally displaced populations have adequate access to affordable and accessible health provision and care and that the camps in which they are housed are made as secure as possible.
- **to enhance the understanding and effective use of Resolution 1325** as a tool to hold governments, policy-makers and those involved in the development of budgets accountable. Enhanced understanding of 1325 can strengthen advocacy initiatives and provide openings for strategic action. In-depth knowledge of the tool can facilitate access to policy-makers and influence decision-making related to peacemaking and post conflict reconstruction.

METHODS OF DISSEMINATION

Although the Toolkit is available both in hard-copy format and electronically, we anticipate and hope that its users will develop their own means of disseminating the information based on the needs of their particular constituencies. This includes the development of audio or visual materials—creating radio programs, poetry, theatre or photography as a means of conveying the ideas and issues.

We take pride in having compiled this information and produced this work. Our hope, and the key measure of success, will be the extent to which activists, policy-makers and others use, develop and claim ownership of the Toolkit.