



UN calls for more collaboration to fill research gaps on gender, peace and security

[Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 18 December 2008] The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) launched the results of "Filling the Gaps: A Virtual Discussion of Gender, Peace and Security Research" which took place in October 2008.

The discussion was an opportunity for over 90 academics and researchers from universities, NGOs, research institutes and international organizations around the world to fortify existing networks and build a platform for more participatory and dynamic research.

The purpose of the three week dialogue was to exchange information and stimulate the debate on Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) research with the goal of identifying gaps in current research and tools to fill them.

In particular, it aimed to assess the results of the work being done in research on GPS issues and identify concrete strategies and mechanisms to strengthen the impact of research on policy-making and operational efforts.

Participants' suggestions included increasing collaboration and networks between academia, policy makers and activists to make peace and security research **more inclusive and its impact more visible**. "There is a real limit to how far such change can be advanced via programmatic work in the absence of broad-based civil society engagement", pointed out Niamh Reilly, Senior Lecturer, National University of Ireland.

Moreover, the specialists called for making research **more participatory**, by using bottom-up approaches to address more comprehensively the specific needs of communities in peace building processes.

Njoki Wamai, Peace and Security Fellow at Kings College London, commented, "Investment in training more women, more Africans, more younger people, among others, to engage in peace and security is important in ensuring that peace and security research is defined by their terms and as such solutions are homegrown and sustainable."

Participants stressed the importance of fully incorporating and utilizing a **gender perspective in traditional academic disciplines**.

Furthermore, they emphasized the need to **incorporate marginalized groups** in existing and future research through the consideration of social divisions (ethnicity, race and class) that can generate further, intersecting forms of discrimination.

"Research is the core tool in order to create, foster and build capacity to understand the different spheres of conflict and security and what it means to different communities - and

especially the most vulnerable among us. Only by fully understanding these issues can a positive difference be made and sustainable policies implemented”, said Nicola Popovic, GPS Program Officer at UN-INSTRAW.

“There is an urgent need for sophisticated gender-sensitive indicators that can measure and demonstrate the process, quality, direction and impact of change. In addition, indicators and monitoring mechanisms should, apart from being gender-responsive, also be context-specific and account for intersectionality and a plurality of security needs”, wrote Steven Schoofs, Research Fellow at the Clingendael Institute.

Experts showed that there is a big obstacle to collecting **sex-disaggregated data** especially in developing and post-conflict contexts. In this light, it is crucial to develop standardized gender indicators and data collection processes to assess the impact of gender empowerment.

The participants recommended creating more academic programs in the area of GPS with a focus on **connecting academia and civil society**.

Finally, they suggested developing a Community of Practice that would strengthen the collaboration and information sharing among academia, policy-makers and activists.

Participants came from many countries including Australia, Czech Republic, Ireland, Nigeria, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Uganda, United Kingdom and the United States.

[Read the Summary of the Dialogue](#)

[Read the 10 Key Recommendations](#)

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