



IN BRIEF



ADDRESSING EXCLUSION THROUGH INTERSECTIONALITY IN RULE OF LAW, PEACE AND SECURITY CONTEXT

Photo: UN Women/ Asfandiyar Khan

What's the Issue?

Understanding intersecting forms of vulnerability and discrimination is increasingly recognized as key to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 'Leave No One Behind (LNOB)' agenda. Yet translation from concept into practice remains challenging and the use of intersectional approaches remain an underprioritized and underexplored area of work. Against this backdrop, UN Women has engaged in research and knowledge-generationⁱ as part of its global '[disability inclusion and intersectionality portfolio](#)' to explore how intersectional approaches help identify the drivers of exclusion in conflict or crisis-affected areas and countries in transition.

This policy brief discusses the global context for intersectionality in conflict or crisis and transition settings, and considers the specific barriers faced in relation to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the Rule of Law agendas. It provides recommendations to overcome these barriers and points to positive actions to ensure that policies and programmes are inclusive and accessible for all.

Our Solutions

Emerging from critical race and gender theory, intersectional approaches encourage policymakers and practitioners to move beyond singular categories of identity (such as gender, race, disability or age) and consider the more complex relationships and interactions between all identities and the impact of structures of oppression – including racism, sexism and ableism.ⁱⁱ The lens of intersectionality, broadly conceived, can better illuminate complex contexts and drivers of exclusion as it pays attention to the relationships between experiences of marginalization, power dynamics and structural inequality.

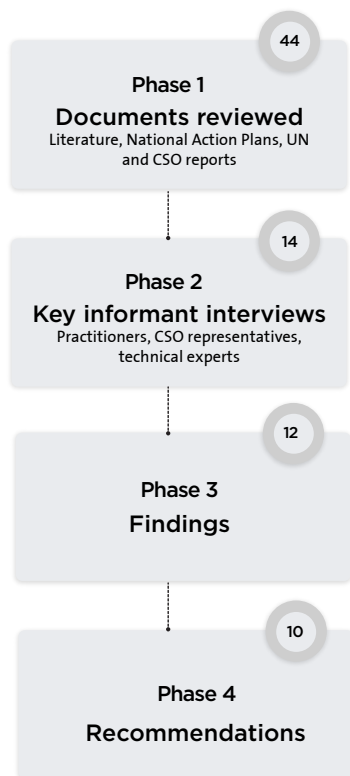
While an intersectional approach is not yet standard practice, there is growing understanding that these compounded forms of discrimination need to be addressed in order to ensure that individuals with lived experiences of systemic exclusion are not further excluded from the benefits of development. To advance this dialogue, UN Women and its partners engaged in a research and knowledge-sharing initiative to identify specific trends, gaps and opportunities for the application of intersectionality to policies and programmes in conflict or crisis-affected areas and countries in transition.

The ongoing research focused on the intersection of gender and disability and reviewed data from six countries facing the challenges of conflicts or post-conflict transitions – Central African Republic, Colombia, Iraq, Lebanon, Rwanda and Ukraine – to identify practical, country-specific approaches.

Limited partner availability due to COVID-19 meant that not all regions or countries were covered, however attempts were made to broaden the scope of cross-regional learning and knowledge-sharing.

The first phase of the work included a literature review of relevant documents pertaining to Rule of Law and Women, Peace, and Security within the six countries. The second phase was an analysis of local interventions (projects, advocacy initiatives, etc.) implemented by UN entities, governments, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). The assortment is a mix of both gender- and WPS-based projects. The third phase involved key informant interviews with practitioners working in each of the six countries. Finally, all three phases were compiled and coded and several themes were identified. The research findings and recommendations below highlight the central themes, gaps and key actions to strengthen intersectional approaches to governance, peace, security and the rule of law.

BOX 1



Intersectionality in context and assessments

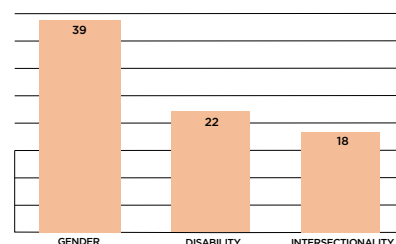
Diversity does not equal intersectionality

Intersectionality holds that lives cannot be reduced to singular and distinct categories and policies and interventions cannot simply add one identity to another and total these together. This literature review found that most documents did not take an intersectional approach. The majority focused either primarily on gender or disability and occasionally considered difference, but not in a systematic nor deep way. Few interventions addressed the intersection of two identities. Of the 44 reports reviewed, only 18 looked at the interaction and subsequent impacts of gender and disability together. Even in these cases, the intersectional groups were named without meaningful exploration of the impact of these intersections on lived experience. Documents derived from local CSOs are comparatively more intersectional than government, INGO and UN documents, likely reflecting the expertise of local community, grass-roots organizations that work closest to people's realities.

Women and persons with disabilities as monolithic groups

The majority of documents reviewed considered women as one group facing discrimination, and persons with disabilities as another. Sources frequently failed to convey an intersectional analysis of the multiple aspects of individual identity and experience and tended to present broad generalizations of women's experiences. Where intersecting identities were acknowledged, such as rural women or women survivors of gender-based violence, compounded vulnerability was assumed and there was no further elaboration on specific impacts on their lived experiences. Intersectional research and practice requires an open

BOX 2 Presence of an intersectional lens



questioning of the relationship between identity categories, rather than assuming that one category or another should take priority.ⁱⁱⁱ However, a common feature of the reports reviewed here is that analysis often assumes the primary importance of one characteristic over another and rarely provides an equal analysis of both. This is evident in, for example, reports from Rwanda that compared labour participation rates between women and men with disabilities but did not consider the challenges faced by women with disabilities in employment compared to women without disabilities.^{iv}

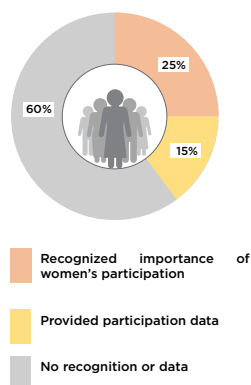
Rhetoric does not match reality

The review showed that, even where an intersectional lens was applied to research or intervention design, there was less evidence to show that this translated through to implementation. Social power dynamics and heightened risks of sexual and gender-based violence faced by women and girls with disabilities are well documented; however, subsequent interventions do not include targeted actions to address, for example, the stigma faced by women with psychosocial disabilities reporting sexual violence or the need for accessible courtrooms.^{iv}

Measuring results – what is not counted doesn't count

The majority of interventions reviewed reported sufficient detail to allow for an assessment of their effectiveness or impact on underrepresented target groups. For example, in Rwanda, results were primarily framed as quantitative outcomes, such as 'number of people participating in a campaign' or 'number of meetings held with decision-makers'.^{vi} Few documents reflected on their impact on target groups in a qualitative sense, and the intersectional nature of their identities and experiences was not taken into account.

BOX 3



The Women, Peace and Security agenda

The WPS agenda lacks an intersectional lens

Across most countries, this review found that the WPS agenda in UN Security Council resolutions, normative work, and corresponding peace and security goals in different entity-level planning documents lacks a distinct intersectional approach, in terms of both design and intervention, and minimal efforts are made to encourage the participation of underrepresented women in peace and security. National Action Plans (NAPs) for Women, Peace and Security were reviewed as part of this research, yet few applied an intersectional approach to engaging women in discussions around governance and peace processes.^{vii}

The victim/survivor narrative and gender stereotypes

The vast majority of sources focus on the impact of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) on women and girls. Aside from UN documents, women and girls are primarily portrayed as 'victims', which diminishes their agency and reinforces gender stereotypes whereby women and girls are seen as passive, sexualized objects. In conflict and crisis-affected settings, masculine stereotypes are also heightened. These gender stereotypes can lead to stigma, exclusion and underreporting of men and boys who experience SGBV, and fails to recognize the distinct risks and forms of violence experienced by men and boys with intersecting marginalized identities, such as men with Albinism or boys with psychosocial disabilities. Equally, it is imperative that men and boys are engaged in SGBV response efforts, alongside women and gender specialists.

Limits to women's participation

The documents and interventions reviewed highlight the non-intersectional gender-based approach that is being used to increase the level of participation of women in peace and security processes. This leaves women relegated to certain roles in the peacebuilding process, often excluded from formal high-level peacebuilding initiatives. Of the 44 reports reviewed, 18 recognized the importance of women's participation in peacemaking and conflict-prevention efforts, yet only seven provided quantitative data on women's participation.

The Rule of Law agenda

Barriers to access and siloed approaches to rights protection

Individuals experiencing intersecting and compounded forms of discrimination face greater barriers in access to justice and rule of law services and institutions. This relates to the accessibility of legislative and legal aid systems. It also reflects a lack of recognition by those in positions of power of the multiple intersecting systems of oppression that subject marginalized individuals (such as women with disabilities) to laws established by and catering to the powerful (such as men without disabilities).^{viii}

Laws and interventions that are developed without considering the many layers of oppression faced by those who are marginalized fail to adequately protect their rights. Analysis conducted by INGOs in the Central African Republic, for example, showed that stigma and fear of familial rejection are primary drivers of underreporting among survivors of sexual violence.^{ix} Yet legal interventions aimed at protecting women and girls from SGBV do not consult with survivors or tackle these obstacles. In Iraq, a similar issue with stigma and underreporting means that little attention is paid to the issue and the investments needed to enable women to escape abusive home environments are not made.

Implementation and enforcement

In cases where laws are designed using an intersectional approach, deficiencies remain in terms of their implementation and enforcement. The documents reviewed referred to the many legal instruments and mechanisms protecting gender equality and, to a lesser extent, upholding disability rights. However, reports from Rwanda, Central Africa Republic and Lebanon underscore discriminatory attitudes and practices, lack of trained staff and reasonable accommodations that have rendered many laws futile.^x This lack of enforcement evidences the extensive structural inequalities and power dynamics that create barriers, particularly for those living at the intersection of gender and disability discrimination.

Recommendations

While the development sector is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of intersectionality, this is not yet reflected in policies and interventions, and there is no one framework or approach that meaningfully considers all possible forms of intersecting identities. An intersectional approach requires constant assessment and reassessment of the interactions of different identities and compounded experiences of discrimination and oppression. It is about first understanding the challenges of society's most marginalized and then using this understanding to reduce barriers to their agency. In times of conflict or crisis, oppression and marginalization are often magnified, and additional attention is required to meet the needs and reflect the interests of the underrepresented. Conflict and crisis also present opportunities to institutionalize intersectional approaches in governance, peace, security and the rule of law. Some of the findings outlined above provide a basis for the following recommendations to strengthen an intersectional approach and facilitate inclusion for all key stakeholders, including Member States, UN and non-UN actors, media and CSOs.

Accessibility

Reasonable accommodations must be made to ensure that intervention information and/or services are equally accessible to all persons with disabilities, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation and across different types of impairment, including different literacy levels and systemic income inequality and poverty (which leave some people without access to online content).

BOX 4

"One of the best ways to approach intersectionality is simply to talk to people and ask what they need. Sometimes it represents an obstacle though, because many people don't know what they could or should ask for. However, you have to be proactive and identify what people actually experience. This is how you can learn about intersectionality – but respecting people's privacy is paramount. It is important to create comfortable settings."

KEY INFORMANT, INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY ALLIANCE

Civil society coalitions

Facilitate the formation of CSO coalitions that represent a range of underrepresented populations, so they can pool their collective experience and inform intersectional approaches.

Civic engagement in policymaking

Strengthen communication and relationships between CSO coalitions and policymakers in order to leverage the intersectional understanding of CSO coalitions in the policy realm.

Data disaggregation

Collect and use data that is disaggregated by a range of characteristics, including impairment type as well as identity, disability status, migratory status, location or ethnicity.

Survivor-oriented approaches

SGBV interventions should acknowledge the survivor's agency and ensure that their needs and rights are respected and prioritized.

Optional anonymity

Develop mechanisms that allow at-risk populations to take full and complete advantage of the intervention without requiring disclosure of personal or identifying information. This also complements a survivor-centred approach.

Define and promote meaningful, intersectional participation in WPS

Women facing intersectional and compounded discrimination must be explicitly included in WPS processes and decision-making. This means that all WPS stakeholders should consider a more ambitious definition of participation that includes quotas as a minimum standard and prioritizes participation and leadership, including in senior decision-making positions.

Intersectional budgeting

All government entities, particularly those directly in charge of the WPS agenda and rule of law, must dedicate a portion of their budgets to intersectional programming.

Intersectional capacity-building

UN Women country offices should partner with local CSO coalitions to develop culturally and context-specific informational workshops, training or webinars on

intersectionality for local government officials, in order to support an intersectional lens on the way that legislation is written and laws are upheld.

Autonomous, rights-based awareness-raising

Awareness-raising campaigns should be conducted by and for persons experiencing compounded discrimination so that common gaps in understanding are addressed and multiple and intersecting discriminations are better understood and explained to the target audience.

Intersectionality in practice: Learning from the field

The following examples are drawn from an analysis of local interventions implemented by UN entities, governments, INGOs and CSOs in the six target countries for this research. They are loosely divided into three categories: advocacy, capacity-building and programmes/operational support.

ADVOCACY

<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>PROMISING PRACTICE</u>
<u>FACILITATE PARTICIPATORY PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS LED DIRECTLY BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</u>	<p>Norwegian People's Aid and national partners pioneered a Public Policy Information Monitoring and Advocacy Project in Rwanda, facilitating community dialogue on the rights and needs of all Rwandans, including people with disabilities. Artists with disabilities deliver drama and musical performances that raise awareness on their issues and rights, and nearly 20,000 Rwandan citizens have now learned about disability rights through this initiative.</p> <p>There is no more effective way to raise awareness than for people with disabilities themselves to take the lead. This recognizes their agency and builds a platform for their inclusion and participation. Such efforts would be strengthened by ensuring the representation of both women and men with disabilities who experience marginalization on the basis of this and other characteristics.</p>
<u>APPLY AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS TO ADVOCACY GUIDES</u>	<p>With support from Humanity and Inclusion, a group of local Rwandan NGOs created two advocacy handouts to advocate for the ratification of a new African Union Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These guides examined how the protocol applies across gender and age dimensions and provide a legal foundation for upholding the rights of women and girls with disabilities. Activists and CSOs across Africa are encouraged to use these guides for their advocacy efforts.</p> <p>CSO-designed guides can be used to ensure that all advocacy efforts are intersectional by highlighting the impact of key legal and policy provisions on different intersecting categories of identity.</p>
<u>ADDRESS INTERSECTIONALITY AS PART OF SURVIVOR-BASED APPROACHES TO SGBV</u>	<p>Abaad's Shame on Who Campaign in 2018 called for tougher sanctions and accelerated trials against perpetrators of sexual violence in Lebanon. Additionally, it aimed to change social perceptions that stigmatize female survivors of SGBV. The advocacy campaign used TV advertisements and facilitated a public roundtable discussion followed by street art performances and social experiments to raise awareness against survivor-shaming.</p> <p>These platforms should be used to highlight the heightened risks and multiple forms of SGBV faced by women with disabilities and other intersecting identities.</p>

<p>CREATE A COALITION ACROSS PROFESSIONAL SECTORS TO PROTECT THE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES</p>	<p>PROFAMILIA, an organization in Colombia specializing in providing sexual health services, formed a coalition to protect women and girls with disabilities from forced sterilization, raise awareness about reproductive rights and dispel myths regarding sterilization. The outcome was an advocacy strategy directed towards professionals in the health and legal fields and families of persons with disabilities regarding Colombia's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This also led to a court order to protect people with disabilities from forced and coerced sterilization.^{xi}</p> <p>The formation of professional networks or coalitions across multiple sectors (including legal, medical, sexual health and education) can support effective advocacy campaigns and help protect the rights of the most disenfranchised local populations.</p>
<p>PROMOTE INTERSECTIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>The Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique goes into communities across the Central African Republic to engage in dialogue with community leaders about gender equality. These discussions specifically address the compounded stigma faced by women with physical and intellectual disabilities, women without formal education and women who are otherwise marginalized.</p> <p>This initiative could be replicated at a country level by offering grants for local CSOs to develop independent projects or advocacy initiatives targeted at community leaders. The goal behind this strategy is to remedy the dissonance between policy and practice.</p>
<p>BUILD INTERSECTIONAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN CSOs AND POLICYMAKERS</p>	<p>In Lebanon, the International Foundation for Election Systems partnered with the Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities and ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality to implement the 'Identify, Interpret and Respond' project. This project supports CSOs to address political discrimination and violence through coordinated action.</p> <p>Linking the work of this intersectional CSO coalition with advocacy groups and policymakers from government, INGOs and the UN would contribute to mainstreaming intersectional approaches at a policy level.</p>

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_21813

