

SGTM 6C: GENDER AND PEACEKEEPING

The Standard Generic Training Module (SGTM) 6C deals with Gender and Peacekeeping.

The 6th Module groups together a number of sub-modules that all deals with the behavior expected of individual peacekeepers during peace operations. The other sub-modules are on Cultural Awareness, the Code of Conduct and Child Protection.

Background

It is essential that peacekeepers of all nations, whether military, civilian police or civilian understand the significance of gender relations in the work they undertake.

Experience in recent years has sadly demonstrated the negative effects on a conflicted population of the presence of peacekeepers who lack this appreciation, or who choose to act contrary to the principles and standards established by the United Nations. Their failure to conform to these standards and to respect the interests, needs and desires of the population, particularly the women, has weakened the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

Without an understanding of how the relations between women and men are structured, how they are affected by violent conflict and how the mere presence of peacekeepers further impacts on those relations, there can be little meaningful advance in the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

At the same time, when such an understanding is present, UN peace operations are meaningfully enhanced and the chances of achieving sustainable peace are greatly improved.

Aim

The aim of this module is to provide peacekeepers with an understanding of how the relationship and roles of men and women are affected by conflict, and how the presence of peacekeepers may further impact on these roles and relationships.

Learning Outcome

At the end of this Module the peacekeeper should be familiar with the impact of conflict on the roles and relationships of men and women, and how the presence of peacekeepers may further impact on these roles and relationships.

Assessment Criteria

At the completion of the module, the peacekeeper should be able to:

- Explain the impact of conflict on the roles and relationships of men and women; and
- Give examples of:
 - the Positive impact peacekeepers may have on these roles and relationships, and

- the Negative impact peacekeepers may have on these roles and relationships.

Duration and Time Schedule

Below is a standard syllabus outline for a 45 minutes lecture. Of the 45 minutes, no more than 30 minutes should be used for the presentation. The remaining 15 minutes should be used for questions and general discussion. The instructor should adapt the time allocated to this Module according to national training requirements.

Standard Syllabus Outline

1. Impact of conflict on women and men;
2. Roles and relationships of men and women;
3. Gender and sex, culture and human rights;
4. Impact peacekeepers may have on gender roles and relationships; and
5. Summary.

Notes on Methodology, Hand-outs and Teaching Materials

This is a subject that can best be taught by an instructor with peacekeeping experience and has also participated in a DPKO Train-the-Trainers Course on Gender in Peacekeeping.

This training takes a human rights-based approach. It is not a question of one view of what is “good” or “correct” but of the human rights of women and men

Some examples are given below, but students will relate much better to examples and case studies from own nation’s experiences in peace operations.

The country may have a policy on Gender in Peacekeeping (or perhaps more generally in the Military, Police or Civil Service), in which case a one/two page summary may be handed out to students. Magazine or newspaper articles on this topic may also be useful to bring the message across.

It is suggested that pictures be added to the presentation to portray men and women working together in peace operations, and men working with women from the host nation. Videos that show similar themes, even if it is not dedicated to this topic, will also be very useful in achieving Module objectives. Personal testimonies or case studies by men and women from own country that had experiences in peace operations can practically illustrate some of the messages conveyed by this module and may also further enhance the learning experience.

Module Content

1. Structure of the Presentation

The purpose of this introductory section of the presentation is to inform the students of the structure and duration of the presentation. Training research has shown that establishing an expectation among the students of the structure and duration of the

presentation they are about to receive improves their ability to focus on the subject and concentrate on the presentation.

It is suggested that a standard presentation at the basic level cover the following aspects:

- Impact of conflict on women and men
- Roles and relationships of men and women
- Gender and sex, culture and human rights; and
- Impact peacekeepers may have on gender roles and relationships

Slide 2

Structure of the Presentation

- **Impact of conflict on women and men**
- **Roles and relationships of men and women**
- **Gender and sex, culture and human rights**
- **Impact peacekeepers may have on gender roles and relationships**

2. Impact of Conflict

Absence of Rule of Law, increased human rights violations: Normal law and order systems and traditional social systems and cultural taboos collapse. Sexual violence is a prevalent feature of modern warfare. It is used to terrify, intimidate and destroy the enemy psychologically.

Upheaval, migration, and displacement: Women constitute the majority of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Civilians, which are mostly women, children and elderly, are deliberately targeted in modern conflict.

Changes in responsibility: Men and boys go to war, some women are left to care for the home, property, family. Women's roles change when men are missing. They have to make all family decisions in the absence of males. Some women also go to war as soldiers, messengers, camp followers and 'bush wife's (mostly against their will).

Unemployment, shortages and disrupted social services: Conflict destroys or disrupts government and social services such as education and health, it causes shortages in goods and services, there is an inflation in prices, growth and often dependency on the black market (illegal), and the physical infrastructure (roads,

bridges, transport, power and communication lines) are often damaged. Women lose access to reproductive health care and schooling for their children. They often also lose their peacetime jobs, pensions and other necessities of life. Because of poverty and desperation, women and children are prey to organized crime and are open to pressures to earn a living. Some may be forced to turn to begging and prostitution.

Focus on ex-combatants: post-conflict efforts often focus on male ex-combatants and neglect the role of women during and after conflict.

Slide 3

Impact of Conflict

- **Absence of Rule of Law, increased Human Rights violations**
- **Upheaval, migration, displacement**
- **Changes in responsibility and decision-making**
- **Unemployment, shortages and disrupted social services**
- **Focus on ex-combatants**

3. Change in Roles

New Roles and Responsibilities: During armed conflict women also assume new roles and responsibilities within the family and the community. Many play a more public role than during times of peace. It may be difficult to revert to the old roles after the conflict.

Contribute to war/peace effort: Women contribute to the war effort in many ways: messengers, suppliers of food and shelter, safe houses, distribution of information, etc. They also contribute to the peace efforts: mobilizing for action to stop the fighting, crossing the lines of fire, lobbying political figures, etc.

Increased political participation: Women play a more political role, provide leadership and support and expect this to continue in the post-conflict environment.

New skills and knowledge: They also develop skills and knowledge – surviving in such conditions is difficult – and they become more confident and knowledgeable about life outside the domestic sphere. These positive features often go unnoticed by the international community.

Peacekeepers can contribute by ensuring they talk to/find out about/provide all possible support to leading women community members.

Women are likely to provide a fuller picture of community problems than men because they have remained throughout the conflict, taken care of the old, sick and children and have survived. This requires strength and resourcefulness.

Slide 4

Change in Roles

- **New roles and responsibilities**
- **Contribute to war/peace effort**
- **Increased political participation**
- **New skills and knowledge**

4. Gender Roles

What is “right’ for women and men: Every culture, including minorities within the dominant culture have rules, beliefs, attitudes about how men and women should behave, the work they should do, the responsibilities they fulfill. It is part of what society believes is right, what a society values in its men and women.

Varies between cultures: Being submissive, subordinate, discreet may be thought as womanly in some cultures and not in others. Being tough, strong, warlike may be valued by some societies for its men. This can change. We all have ideas of what women and men are capable of, what roles they can fill.

Social differences: Not everyone in society is seen in the same way. Poor women always work – often in and out of the home. Women and men may be equally discriminated against if they are from a lower caste or place in society. Likewise race is a significant factor in society’s image of what is appropriate for men and women, and age can provide women with more respect and recognition - or on the contrary, in some societies if they are widows discrimination may increase.

Proposed Exercise: Ask students to THINK for a moment – what their culture expects of women and men: how they should behave/not behave: what jobs can they do/not do: roles they should fill/not fill. This is what is meant by GENDER. The attitudes, behaviour, jobs, responsibilities imposed by society on men and women. THINK – can this change? Has it changed since your parents or grand-parents day?

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Gender Roles

- What is “right” for women and men
- Varies between cultures
- Social differences affect gender roles
- Race, age, class influence gender roles

5. Special Vulnerabilities

Sexual Violence: Women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence during armed conflict. Without the normal forces of law and order, with the breakdown of traditional social values and taboos and the absence of traditional male protectors, women are vulnerable. Sexual violence is often a strategic weapon of war, not a random act. All sexual violence is unacceptable. In wartime it is used to de-stabilize and destroy

Trafficking and Forced Prostitution: Organized crime often moves into the vacuum created by the absence of law enforcement. Trafficking in humans and forced prostitution has become increasingly common in post-conflict societies. Women are vulnerable and desperate and are easy prey to traffickers.

Social Services: Female-headed households are particularly affected by the absence of social services and the increase in poverty due to loss of income and lack of employment

Loss of access and rights: because of their social roles and the absence of male family members, women are often unable to move freely, to approach official structures, to get financial assistance or claim rights to property and inheritance

Special Vulnerabilities

- **Sexual Violence**
- **Trafficking and forced prostitution**
- **Loss of social services**
- **Increased poverty**
- **Loss of access and rights**

6. Gender and Sex

Many languages lack the concept “gender” in their vocabulary so it is often impossible to translate. The following examples will illustrate the distinction between gender and sex.

Gender is about the ever-changing roles that the family, community and state expect women and men, boys and girls to play in public and in private. Gender is about how we are expected to act and think because we are male or female. Gender changes across time and across cultures. Society’s beliefs about gender have a profound impact on the opportunities men and women have and how and whether they have access to resources and to their rights.

Unlike gender, sex is fixed, determined by biology at birth and is universally recognized. We all know the physical difference between the sexes. Gender roles are determined by the roles society give to men and women.

Sex-roles do not change: Women give birth, breastfeed children. This is a sex role. Men cannot do it. Both men and women can care for children. This is a gender-role. It changes, both can do it.

Men have greater body mass, generally are physically stronger, can grow beards, their voices change at puberty. This is determined by their biological make up. It cannot change. But both men and women can be soldiers, or can be political or social leaders, this is determined by society and culture.

Both sex and gender roles have an impact on freedom of movement, the need for specific services such as reproductive health care for women and influence the kinds of work people do.

Gender and Sex

- **Sex is...**
 - **Biologically determined**
 - **Determined by birth**
 - **Universal**
 - **Unchanging**

- **Gender is...**
 - **Socially determined**
 - **Determined by culture**
 - **Culture specific**
 - **Changes over time**

7. Gender and Culture

Culture changes over time: The comment is often heard “We are not here to change the culture.” This is true, but the fact is that a Peace Operations will contribute to cultural change. Culture is always in a state of change, it is not static. Conflict will speed up and re-direct cultural shifts. The international community is not present to impose cultural values. That is why the focus is on a rights-based approach.

Universally accepted human rights standards: Personal views of what men and women should do/or not do, your personal cultural value system is not the measurement to be used. The UN member states have agreed on a set of universally recognized human rights (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other such treaties) and these agreements serve as the universally accepted standards that UN peacekeeping operations must adhere to, promote and defend.

Peacekeeper must project human rights culture: International human Rights laws are based on universally shared values regarding respect for the dignity of the individual. Perversion of these laws is partly a result of war and conflict

Respect and trust contribute to security: Peacekeepers have a responsibility to respect the local culture and thereby develop trust with the host population. This will increase their own security.

Gender and Culture

- **Culture changes over time**
- **Universally accepted human rights standards**
- **Peacekeeper must project human rights culture**
- **Respect and trust contribute to security**

8. Gender and Human Rights

Discrimination on the basis of Gender: is any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on sex which is intended to prevent the recognition and exercise of rights or freedoms.

Women are particularly vulnerable to violation of their rights in conflict: In conflict environments women are particularly vulnerable – they may not receive adequate food supplies in refugee camps; may be forced to provide sexual favors to police and border guards in order to gain asylum in another country; not be able to pass on citizenship to their children in the absence of the father; be refused employment; be denied provision of specialized health care; etc.

Sexual Violence as a weapon: The most profound form of discrimination in wartime is the sexual violence committed against girls and women.

Gender and Human Rights

- **Discrimination on the basis of Gender**
- **Women are particularly vulnerable to violation of their rights in conflict**
- **Sexual Violence as a weapon**

9. Gender Discrimination

The following are examples of discrimination on the basis of gender:

- Deny political rights to women (right to vote, right to be elected);
- Certain laws apply only to women/men (dress codes, freedom of movement, property rights, divorce, children, inheritance, etc.);
- Sexual crime: rape, trafficking, abuse (prostitution, soliciting, pornography, sex with minors, etc.);
- Displace/separate men or women only (specific actions to kill, displace, rape or capture on the basis of sex, e.g. separation of men and women in Srebrenica: approx. 7,000 men and boys massacred, scores of women raped and many killed);
- Sex specific mortality rates (indicate specific acts or omissions); and
- Sex specific unemployment (laws that prevent women from employment, or employment in certain categories).

Gender Discrimination

- Deny political rights to women
- Certain laws apply only to women/men
- Sexual crime: rape, trafficking and abuse
- Displace/separate men or women only
- Sex specific mortality rates
- Sex specific unemployment

10. Peacekeepers and Gender Rights

Expected to uphold Human Rights: Peacekeepers are obliged to uphold human rights. As members of UN missions they are bound by spirit and principles of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international treaties and conventions.

Human Rights laws are: founded on the principles of being **universal** (for everyone) **indivisible** (rights cannot be selected, all apply) and **equality** (they are of equal value). Message: Peacekeeper cannot choose which Human Rights to uphold and which to ignore, they must uphold all.

UN concept of human rights: Peacekeepers cannot choose which Human Rights to uphold (on the basis of their own culture's interpretation of human rights) – they are bound to uphold the UN concept of Human Rights, i.e. Human Rights as per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed to by most UN Member States.

Peacekeepers and Gender Rights

- **Expected to uphold Human Rights**
- **Human Rights are:**
 - **Universal**
 - **Indivisible**
 - **Equal**
- **UN concept of human rights**

11. Protecting Gender Rights

The Extent to which a peacekeeper may act to uphold Gender (Human) Rights depends on the mandate of the peace operation.

Actions may range from reporting to protecting depending on the mandate of the mission and the Rules of Engagement (ROE).

Reporting: there will always be a need to report, even when you may also act to protect human rights. Obtain as much information as possible of the alleged human rights abuse (make notes, take photos) and report it as soon as possible to your superior/next higher HQ. Report on: What, Where, When, Who, How?

Protecting: If you are allowed/obliged by the mandate of the mission to act to protect a person's rights (e.g. the right to life), this will be made very clear in your instructions/orders and Rules of Engagement (ROEs). There will be no specific ROEs for use for protection of Gender or Human Rights, the ROEs will apply to all situations that may require the use of force. ROEs are mission specific, as they depend on the mandate and other factors, but have been generally introduced under SGTM 3 the Legal Framework.

What should I do if I think I see a human rights abuse?

12. Sexual Relationships in Peace Operations

This guided question and answer has been included here because this question is often asked in relation to this topic.

Question: Am I allowed to have sex in a peacekeeping mission?

Answer: You will be a UN peacekeeper and you are under obligation to uphold international human rights standards. Remember the eyes of the whole world are on you. You will not only be judged as an individual, you will now be judged as a representative of the UN.

Your actions must be guided by:

1. International human rights standards (refer SGTM 9 – Human Rights);
2. The UN Peacekeeping Code of Conduct (refer SGTM 6a – Code of Conduct);
3. In case of formed military units, the national laws of your country and your military disciplinary codes (refer SGTM 2 Legal and SGTM 14 Personnel);
4. The specific instructions in this regard from your superiors; and
5. The laws, culture, religion and values of the host country.

Always be guided in your personal action by the knowledge that, on or off-duty, you represent the United Nations. Think of the consequences of your actions for others.

Am I allowed to have sex in a peacekeeping mission?

13. Power Imbalance

The Peacekeepers are powerful, because they have money, mobility, access to food, water and other goods, and force. This causes a power imbalance between the peacekeepers and the host population.

Must use this power to do good: Most peacekeepers use this power to do good. The international presence can have a positive effect by initiating and supporting efforts to stop organized crime and improve the conditions of the local population, including that of women.

Must not allow some to abuse power: Some peacekeepers have, however, used the powerful situation they are in to abuse vulnerable populations by using prostitutes and thus encouraging prostitution, including often children; by spreading HIV/Aids in the process; by getting involved in or even unknowingly encouraging organized crime involved in prostitution and the trafficking of women; by abandoning children they have fathered and by abandoning women who have been promised marriage or other benefits in exchange for a sexual relationship. This compounds the difficulties these communities face.

Such behavior is illegal and morally unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the United Nations.

We should not allow a few irresponsible people to **impact negatively on the credibility of the UN** and the peace operation and therefore on our ability to achieve our overall goal of sustainable peace.

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Power Imbalance

- **Peacekeepers are powerful**
- **Must use power to do good**
- **Must not allow some to abuse power**
- **Credibility of the UN**

14. Summary

Use this section to summarise the presentation by reminding the students of the structure of the presentation and the three most important messages this Module wants to convey.

The structure can perhaps be presented in a slide and the most important message in this Module is the impact of conflict on the roles and relationships of men and women, and how the presence of peacekeepers may further impact on these roles and relationships.

It may also be useful to remind the peacekeepers that this is a human rights-based approach. It is not a question of one view of what is “good” or “correct” but of the human rights of women and men.

Summary

- **Impact of conflict on women and men**
- **Roles and relationships of men and women**
- **Gender and sex, culture and human rights**
- **Impact peacekeepers may have on gender roles and relationships**

Primary Message: Impact of conflict on the roles and relationships of men and women, and how the presence of peacekeepers may further impact on these roles and relationships

11. Reference Material

Gender and peacekeeping Operations, In-Mission Training package, TES/DPKO 2001

Universal declaration of Human Rights, 1948

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966/1976)

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965/1969)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979/1981)

Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984/1987)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989/1990)

Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)

UNHCR, 1995, Sexual Violence against Refugees. Guidelines on Prevention and Response, Geneva UNTICR