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Intersectionality: Experiences, views and visions for change

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Acknowledgements

Development Dialogue has been serving as the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's forum for exploring critical international development priorities, lift new ideas, build conversations and bring together diverse voices in the global development and multilateral arenas for over 50 years. Our goal is to reach global audiences and invite individuals, organisations, policy makers, local and international institutions, civil society, the research community as well as the media.

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Foreword

With less than ten years to deliver the 2030 Agenda it is more important than ever to mobilise support for accelerated action. Progress towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals looks bleak and, in many cases, has been reversed. The 2030 Agenda, as endorsed in 2015 by all Member States of the United Nations, is the blueprint for achieving sustainable development. It promises to leave no one behind and is an affirmation of the very purposes and principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Charter's commitment to *'equal rights'*, *'better standards of life'* and the *'economic and social advancement of all peoples'*.

Still, inequality keeps rising, undermining economic and social development and sustainable peace globally. In 2023, countries are slowly recovering from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have been further compounded by the effects of the ongoing war in Ukraine and the current crisis in the global financial system. Added to this, climate change and a rise in armed violence and conflicts further exacerbate poverty and human suffering, mostly affecting populations and groups already marginalised, vulnerable and excluded from development gains.

Our approaches to address exclusion and to advance inclusivity need to change. The UN Secretary General has called for urgent action on three levels to mobilise support for the 2030 Agenda: *global action, local action* and *people action*. This is a stark reminder that we all have a responsibility and a role in putting equality and inclusion at the centre of the development agenda. How do we do that? How do we identify who is most at risk, most excluded and marginalised, and implement programming that addresses their actual needs? What can we do to ensure that people who are now invisible in the data we analyse are not forgotten?

An answer may be found in *intersectionality*, a concept and theoretical framework that in recent years has received increasing attention. Intersectionality facilitates recognition of the complex and cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect.

While we can agree that new approaches are needed to ensure that no one is left behind, the perception remains that intersectionality is considered by many to be complicated and costly to apply. Intersectionality could be a key method for developing and implementing strategies that prioritise those who are furthest behind, but the term and concept are often misunderstood, misused, dismissed, or, at worst, vilified.

At the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation we aim to advance dialogue and policy for sustainable development and peace, grounded in and building on Dag Hammarskjöld's legacy. The terminology of intersectionality may not have

been in use during Hammarskjöld's lifetime, but it is certainly in line with the commonality of humankind to which he often referred and his deep sense of fundamental universal values and human rights. The concept is also present in other words in his speeches, such as in 1956 when he said, '*…our world of today is more than ever before one world. The weakness of one is the weakness of all, and the strength of one… is indirectly the strength of all.*'

This 65th edition of the Development Dialogue Volume, 'Intersectionality: Experiences, views and visions for change', is not intended as a *'how to'* guide, or an academic analysis of advancements in the concept of intersectionality. Nor does it aim to prescribe a specific approach to applying intersectionality. Rather, our intention with this publication is to provide a platform for select actors within the UN system, in civil society and in donor circles to highlight their experiences with and approaches to practically applying what to many remains a noble, yet abstract concept. We strive to support ongoing efforts within the UN to advance inclusive sustainable development and peace through dialogue and training, and in doing so to explore deep structural and systemic questions about discrimination and inequality.

This volume builds on two previous Development Dialogue Volumes published by the Foundation. They have similarly sought to advance inclusivity and respond to the willingness to learn from the successes and challenges of addressing exclusion, moving beyond the normative discourse to a change in implementation, and ultimately to help improve the lives of some of the world's most marginalised people at the country and community level. Volume 63 titled *'Inclusive Peacebuilding: Recognised but not Realised'* explored these issues with analysis from four country contexts in 2015. At that point the UN was going through a period of critical reflection on its own performance, including a Review of UN Peace Operations, a Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, and a Global Study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The following volume, *'Dialogue in Peacebuilding – Understanding Different Perspectives'*, published in 2019, sought to deepen awareness of dialogue as a critical aspect of and tool for inclusive peacebuilding and for strengthening social cohesion.

By way of this publication, we aim to contribute to moving from conceptual understanding of and theoretical support for the relevance of intersectionality to action. There are opportunities now to enhance policies and practices that can advance intersectional approaches. To get there will take leadership, resources, and political will. We hope that by amplifying the voices and experiences of people and organisations working daily to apply intersectionality at multiple levels, we can reinforce and reinvigorate the joint efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

Henrik Hammargren
Executive Director
Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Introduction

Designing and implementing meaningful and sustainable development and peacebuilding policies and programmes to address the needs and challenges of different groups in society requires that everyone is seen, recognised, and included. This 65th edition of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's Development Dialogue Volume aims to create a better understanding of intersectional approaches and methods in policy and practice.

Intersectionality, a term originally coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, is increasingly applied as an analytical framework for understanding how overlapping social identities such as race, class, gender and other individual characteristics can compound experiences of privilege, discrimination and oppression.[1] This framework can be used to comprehend how systemic injustice and social inequality occur on a multidimensional basis. The ideas giving rise to the term go back further in history, coming up as early as the 1850s when American abolitionist and women rights activists highlighted the differences in obstacles facing black women slaves. The concept gained further traction in the 1970s when black, Mestiza, postcolonial, queer, and Indigenous feminists pushed forward social movements and scholarship to recognise previously ignored subject positions and identities.[2]

Over the last two decades, intersectionality has come into more common use to advance the understanding of discrimination, nuancing the discourse on human rights violations. During the World Conference against Racism in 2001, delegates adopted the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It states that 'the intersection of discrimination on the grounds of race and gender makes women and girls particularly vulnerable to this type of violence, which is often related to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.'[3]

International human rights instruments have generally not referred to the concept using the specific terminology of intersectionality, but have recognised that groups experience systems of oppression, marginalisation and discrimination differently. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) addresses the specific marginalisation of rural women, and the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 1989 (No. 169) includes provision on discrimination, including sexual harassment, against indigenous women.[4] Other United Nations' (UN) human rights mechanisms, including Special Rapporteurs on minority issues, freedom of religion or belief have also engaged with intersectionality in their most recent reports.[5]

In 2021, UN Women, working in partnership with a broad range of organisations, produced the 'Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit', as further described in one of the contributions to this volume. It explains that

intersectionality recognises that 'people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression depending on a person's context and existing power structures such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism'.[6] Intersectionality is not simply about taking an 'add and stir' approach. Instead, it is asking society to use an intersectional lens to reframe the understanding of marginalisation through creating space for reflection and critical engagement. In a parallel development, the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities produced a 'Guidance Note on Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination & Protection of Minorities' that was published in 2022.[7] This publication was created as a learning tool that offers a deeper understanding of the concept of intersectionality, with practical examples and practitioner advice. It is part of a broader programme supporting Member States to meet human rights standards and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Intersectionality has most commonly been considered in the context of international human rights law and the principle of non-discrimination and equality. Normative frameworks and agendas in the field of peace and development have also begun to recognise that all individuals, including those facing intersectional forms of discrimination, marginalisation and oppression, must be included in sustainable development and peace processes.

The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pledges to 'leave no one behind' and 'endeavours to reach those furthest behind first'.[8] The twin resolutions on Sustaining Peace (S/RES/2282; A/RES/70/262) adopted in 2016 emphasise inclusivity as 'key to advancing national peacebuilding processes' and underscore the need to recognise the important role of women and young people as active agents of change in peacebuilding, urging implementation of the women, peace, and security (WPS) and the youth, peace, and security (YPS) agendas.[9] The Secretary General's Our Common Agenda seeks to accelerate implementation of existing agreements, including human rights mechanisms, that offer approaches to prioritise, engage and support groups who were traditionally marginalised.

The 13 contributions in this volume highlight experiences in, and reflections from, diverse contexts to deepen our understanding of intersectional approaches addressing multiple forms of discrimination. There is an emphasis on the need for transformative change to reach the SDGs, as well as the leave no one behind principle at the country, regional and global levels.

Together, the contributions build a better understanding of how practitioners apply intersectionality, broadly exploring four themes. The first, **intersectional data**, looks at comprehensive, disaggregated and accurate data use by practitioners to develop appropriate, evidence-based responses and policies to make populations more visible. Theme two examines the role of **multilateral institutions** and innovative development approaches in programmatic work

through cross-mandate cooperation among entities including different UN agencies, funds and programmes. The third, **financing mechanisms**, reflects on flexible and creative ways to design and implement interventions and financing arrangements by various stakeholder groups to bring about transformative change. Finally, the fourth theme raises critical links between human rights, social equity and justice, gender equality, and **climate change**. It underlines how certain communities such as women and girls, continue to be disproportionately affected by the climate crisis.

The authors of the contributions bring their personal and, in some instances, institutional perspectives. They generously share experiences from the vantage point of beneficiaries and programme interventions, and with their own understanding of intersectionality. The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation does not strive to promote any specific interpretation or application of intersectionality as a concept. The platform it provides serves to amplify conversations as well as to raise society's understanding, with a focus on practitioners and policy-makers, about what intersectionality is while sharing examples of how it has been put into practice.

As the world continues to experience rising inequality, threats and violence, especially towards human rights defenders and activists demanding societal change, the practical use of concepts such as intersectionality become even more important.[10] Looking ahead to the 2023 SDG Summit, the UN Summit of the Future scheduled for 2024, and the mandated 2025 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, the Foundation hopes that this publication will contribute to a greater understanding of intersectional approaches and applications and, ultimately, to help realise the promise of leaving no one behind.

Notes:

[1] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine'. (Chicago, University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989).

[2] Fernando Tormos, 'Intersectional solidarity, *Politics, Groups, and Identities', in Politics, Groups, and Identities, Vol. 5* (No. 4), 707-720. 2017, pp. 708-709. (Oxon, Taylor Francis Online, 2017).

[3] United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 'Guidance Note on Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination & Protections of Minorities', p 15, (Geneva, United Nations, 2022), https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/30th-anniversary/2022-09-22/GuidanceNoteonIntersectionality.pdf.

[4] See note 3.

[5] See note 3, p 19.

[6] UN Women and United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 'Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit, An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind', p 8, (New York, UN Women, 2021), https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-en.pdf.

[7] See note 3.

[8] Sarah Renner, Ludo Bok, Nicole Igloi, and Natalia Linou, '*What does it mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation*', p 7, (New York, UNDP, 2018), https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Discussion_Paper_LNOB_EN_lres.pdf.

[9] UN Women, 'Global norms and standards: Peace and security', (New York, UN Women website, accessed 20 February 2023), https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/global-norms-and-standards.

[10] Katy Steinmetz, '*She Coined the Term 'Intersectionality' Over 30 Years Ago. Here's What It Means to Her Today*', Time, 20 February 2020, https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/ accessed online on 20 February 2023.

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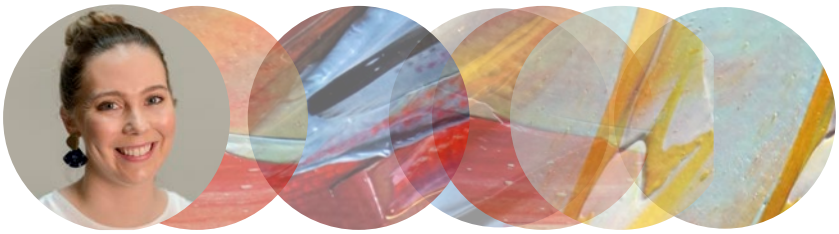

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Advancing inclusion and equity: Why intersectional data is key to leaving no one behind

By Mike Bolton, Tichafara Chisaka and Kate Richards

Introduction

The launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 brought data disaggregation to the top of the agenda for both governments and the United Nations system. Making 'leave no one behind' the central, transformative promise of the SDGs required an urgent shift towards disaggregating data to identify, address and monitor exclusion and inequality. Yet, as we near the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, we still lack the critical data required to tackle rising inequality.[1] Data practices continue to exclude, overlook or harm marginalised people.[2] This article explores how intersectional data approaches can address these issues by identifying structural inequalities and embedding equity and inclusion at the centre of data systems, thereby realising the commitment to leave no one behind.

What is an intersectional approach to data?

Intersectional data approaches identify inequalities within and between groups of people based on how multiple factors of a person's identity – from disability to gender, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation – intersect to create inequalities or privileges. Gathering intersectional data allows us to analyse systemic inequality and its root causes, drivers and effects, and to understand an individual's or group's experiences of marginalisation. It is a critical way of generating the data required to inform more inclusive and equitable policies and programmes. Intersectionality recognises that all forms of inequality are mutually reinforcing and must therefore be analysed simultaneously in order to prevent one form of inequality obscuring or reinforcing another.

Using intersectional data approaches encourages us to examine how – by appreciating the multi-dimensionality of identity and inequality – data practices, processes and institutions can be more inclusive and equitable. Rather than applying a strict methodology, intersectionality is a lens through which we can critically assess inherent power dynamics and the benefits and risks of data processes. These approaches promote practices and tools tailored to specific contexts and the situations faced by particular people or groups. In doing so, it is recognised that what might be an appropriate approach for one person or group may not be appropriate at another time, in another context, or for different people.

Intersectional data management approaches build on the human rights-based data principles of participation, data disaggregation, self-identification, transparency, privacy and accountability.

Building momentum for intersectional data

There has been growing awareness and action on inclusive data and, more recently, intersectional data. The Inclusive Data Charter (IDC) encourages and supports political commitments, collaboration, learning and action on inclusive and disaggregated data.[3] Since its launch in 2018, the IDC has grown to incorporate over 30 champions working to put their commitment to leave no one behind into practice.

Data disaggregation – through breaking down datasets by characteristics such as disability status, gender or age, as outlined in SDG target 17.18 – is critical to uncovering different population groups' situations.[4] In strengthening their inclusive data work, however, IDC champions have recognised that disaggregating data by singular dimensions can mask or inadvertently deepen inequality. For example, measuring the gender pay gap without consideration of race or immigration status can obscure intersecting inequalities and lead to counterproductive policies. Intersectional data approaches address this challenge, with IDC champions exploring how to apply these approaches in different contexts.

However, many questions and challenges remain regarding how best to implement an intersectional approach. In 2021, the IDC secretariat and champions came together to develop guidance on intersectional approaches to data.[5] Given that specific intersectional tools and methods should be tailored to the context and created with the direct participation of affected people or groups, we developed five principles for implementing an intersectional approach to data that are broadly applicable across geographies and institutions. This intersectionality guidance consolidates the experiences, best practices and learnings gained from diverse organisations on how to apply an intersectional lens – from data collection through to its use – in order to advance inclusion and create more equitable societies.

Intersectional data management approaches build on the human rights-based data principles of participation, data disaggregation, self-identification, transparency, privacy and accountability.

Table 1: Five principles for an intersectional approach to data

Principle 1	Establish a commitment to centring the voices of individuals at risk of marginalisation or discrimination in all aspects of data systems and practice by identifying marginalised people and meaningfully engaging them in data work.
Principle 2	Promote equity across the entire data value chain by asking critical questions across the data cycle – from collection through to the use of data.
Principle 3	Ensure that institutional data systems are inclusive and safe by reviewing the tools, processes and mechanisms practitioners use to carry out their data work.
Principle 4	Engage data to increase context awareness and reduce inequality at individual and systemic levels.
Principle 5	Build inclusive institutions by prioritising diversity and inclusion.

The principles of an intersectional approach to data

The five principles described in Table 1 and elaborated in the following sections set out critical considerations for an intersectional approach to data. Taken together with an overarching intersectional lens, these principles can support institutions in more inclusively and effectively understanding how inequalities overlap to limit the potential of people, economies and societies. Equally, they can help ensure people gain more power and agency in data processes. The principles should be considered across all stages of data processes – from design to collection, analysis, use and governance.

Principle 1. Centre the voices of marginalised people

Intersectional approaches to data recognise that structural inequalities affect people and groups differently – from experiences of discrimination to essential service provision to the limitations of legislation. As such, intersectional data approaches focus on ensuring marginalised people can engage and shape data systems, processes and tools, as these people/groups are often best placed to identify the unique ways intersecting inequalities affect their lives, societies and economies. The active participation of marginalised people in data processes is also critical to rebalancing the inherent power dynamics that reinforce inequality, enabling them to have a say in how, why, when and by whom data is generated and used.

Participatory data processes can take many forms and should be tailored to the context and people involved. This could mean working in partnership with civil society organisations or directly consulting with marginalised people to develop a data strategy. Participatory processes must, if they are to understand intersectional inequalities and avoid tokenism, recognise and respect the inherent diversity of views within groups and communities, and consider how power dynamics shape processes.

Principle 2. Promote equity at all stages, not just data collection

While inclusion and participation are often considered when collecting data, an intersectional approach to data pushes for this lens to be applied to all stages in the process. From deciding what data points are relevant or how questions should be structured to using data to create change, there are opportunities for marginalised people and their representative organisations to engage consistently. This longer-term engagement is vital for building the agency of people and communities through data, rebalancing unequal power dynamics, and building trust and accountability.

Researchers at the Centre for Internet and Society in India, for example, partnered with members of the Domestic Workers Union as co-researchers to conduct a study on caste discrimination against female domestic workers. The co-researchers, drawing on their lived experiences, advised that the survey questions could be structured in more sensitive ways. This initial co-design process led to better, context-sensitive data collection.

Principle 3. Reconsider data tools and sources

Taking an intersectional approach enables practitioners to reconsider data tools, processes and policies, and how they can obscure or illuminate overlapping inequalities. Intersectional approaches often favour research designs that garner insights through combining quantitative and qualitative data. Official data producers are also increasingly using qualitative methods to uncover and understand the root causes of structural inequalities.

Research and recommendations from the Inclusive Data Taskforce, commissioned by the United Kingdom's Office for National Statistics, has highlighted gaps in existing UK data.[6] The taskforce noted that further insights should be sought regarding the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, as well as children and young people. Qualitative methods were used to better learn directly from young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) about their experiences of education.

The methodology was developed with a steering group of academics, relevant third sector organisations, and parents and carers, as well as an expert panel of young people with SEND. Data collection was intentionally flexible to suit the

needs of individuals, using a toolbox of creative methods, including drawings, timelines and Lego play. This enabled young people to freely discuss what was most important to them about their educational experiences. An ongoing assent process was followed using a traffic light system, with individuals able to pause or stop the interviews at their discretion. This design enabled researchers to engage with young people with a wide range of support needs, in a way that appeared to make them feel comfortable sharing their views and experiences and helped reassure them that they had control over the research process. All this has identified helpful strategies to enable young people with SEND to feel more led and understood on their education pathways.

It is our argument that while an intersectional approach often begins by reviewing specific tools or a project, these efforts should eventually be undertaken more systematically in order that intersectionality becomes embedded across data systems.

Principle 4. Foster diverse and inclusive institutions

The use of intersectional approaches often requires new knowledge and expertise on the part of the workers handling these data processes. This may require additional training on enumerating and interviewing, engaging stakeholders, approaches to qualitative methods, multivariate statistical methodologies, or visualising and disseminating intersectional data.

Alongside this investment in technical skills, it is critical to invest time and resources in developing diverse and inclusive institutions. Having a wide array of voices across all levels of an organisation helps ensure that different perspectives are fed into processes and that intersectional issues are identified. This can be achieved through more inclusive recruitment strategies, comprehensive training on equality, diversity and unconscious biases, and through fair working conditions for all.

Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE, from the Spanish Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística) began mainstreaming a differential and intersectional approach across the national statistical system in 2019.[7] The aim is to ensure that statistical programmes are specifically designed to understand marginalised groups and focus on simultaneously analysing multiple factors of a person's identity, thereby allowing better understanding of inequality and discrimination within and between marginalised groups and wider populations. DANE undertook many activities to increase internal understanding and interest in intersectionality, consulting across the national statistical system, as well as with marginalised groups and intersectionality experts. In 2020, they launched a new guide on how to put a differential and intersectional approach into practice[8], and ran training and events to increase uptake across the system. Since then, there has been local, national and international interest in the recommendations from DANE's guide. The guide has been used as a reference for understanding

> *Intersectional approaches to data are critical to ensuring that those most impacted by inequality or discrimination are fairly represented in data and, in turn, fairly considered in policy-making.*

statistical issues related to vulnerable and marginalised groups, and was cited in the official reports of the Truth Commission looking at the impacts of the armed conflict in Colombia.[9] DANE developed and launched a free, publicly available virtual course for people interested in the guide's recommendations[10], with an emphasis on training officials from public entities and asking them to outline specific actions they intend on taking to implement the guide. To date, nearly 40 public entities, including ministries, have committed to actions that take forward recommendations in the guide.

Principle 5. Always prioritise safety

It is critical to recognise that in some contexts it may be neither appropriate nor desirable to engage certain population groups directly, as collecting data can pose a risk to marginalised people when sensitive questions are asked. Sharing data may also put individuals at risk of violence or persecution. There are legitimate reasons for why individuals should have the right to remain less visible in data. Sometimes, the safest action is not to collect, store and share data about vulnerable people. Intersectional approaches prompt us to incorporate a human rights-based perspective in order to question the value of data, whom it benefits and why it is needed.

Looking ahead

With UN Secretary-General António Guterres stating that progress towards the SDGs is in 'jeopardy' due to the various interlinking crises and conflicts faced by the world[11], it is more important than ever that data systems are inclusive of all people. Greater action on intersectional data approaches is required to deliver our commitments to the world's most marginalised people and ensure they are not left behind.

Intersectional approaches to data are critical to ensuring that those most impacted by inequality or discrimination are fairly represented in data and, in turn, fairly considered in policy-making. Moreover, these approaches provide an opportunity to ensure the benefits and risks of data collection are balanced for people whose lives are compromised by intersecting inequalities.

Notes:

1 United Nations, 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022', 2022, https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf.

2 Martina Barbero et al., 'Global Reimagining Data and Power: A Roadmap for Putting Values at the Heart of Data', Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2022, www.data4sdgs.org/reimagining-data-and-power-roadmap-putting-values-heart-data.

3 Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 'Inclusive Data Charter', www.data4sdgs.org/initiatives/inclusive-data-charter (accessed 29 July 2022).

4 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistical Division, 'SDG Indicators: Metadata repository', https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=17&Target=17.18 (accessed 1 November 2022).

5 Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 'Unpacking intersectional approaches to data', www.data4sdgs.org/resources/unpacking-intersectional-approaches-data (accessed 29 July 2022).

6 UK's Office for National Statistics, 'Inclusive Data Taskforce Report: Leaving No One Behind – How Can We Be More Inclusive in Our Data?', 2021, https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/inclusive-data-taskforce-recommendations-report-leaving-no-one-behind-how-can-we-be-more-inclusive-in-our-data/ (accessed 29 July 2022).

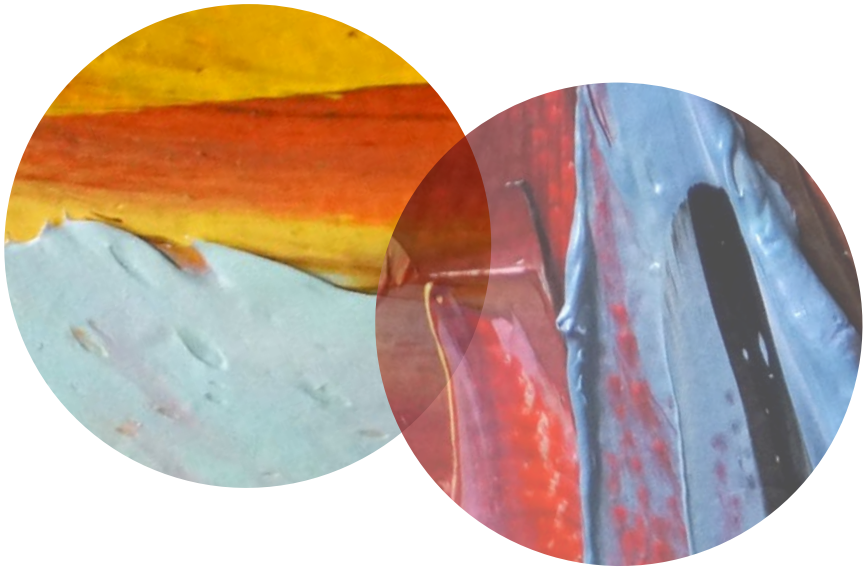
7 National Administrative Department for Statistics, Colombia (DANE); UK's Office for National Statistics and Inclusive Data Charter, 'Establishing an Intersectional Approach to Data at your National Statistics Institute: What is Involved in Defining Your Institution's Approach to Intersectionality?', n.d., www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/file_uploads/JN_1286_IDC_KP_DANE_CaseStudy.pdf (accessed 29 July 2022).

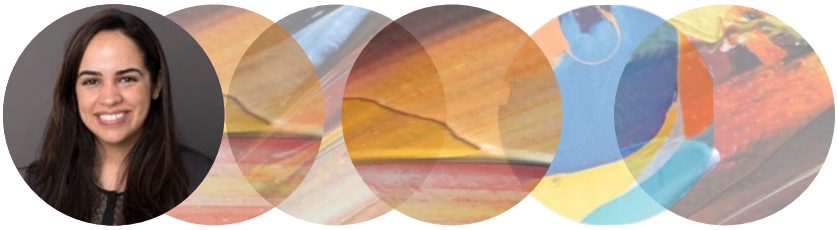
8 Karen Garcia, 'Advancing inclusion and equality in Colombia: A new statistical guide', Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 29 January 2021, www.data4sdgs.org/index.php/blog/advancing-inclusion-and-equality-colombia-new-statistical-guide.

9 See www.comisiondelaverdad.co/.

10 See www.sen.gov.co/servicios/aula-digital.

11 United Nations (note 1).





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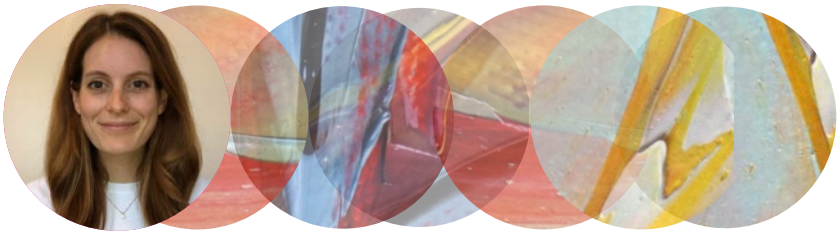

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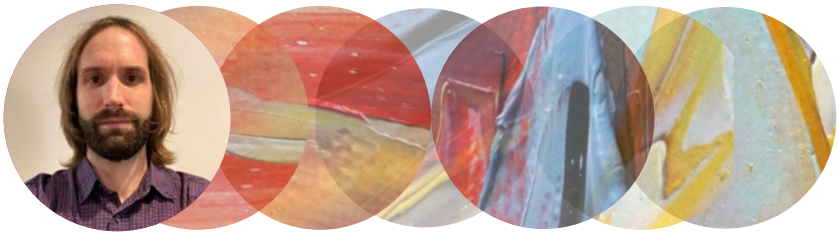

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Intersectional approaches to gender data: Creating visibility for women and girls furthest behind in meeting the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals

By Ginette Azcona, Antra Bhatt, Julia Brauchle and Guillem Fortuny Fillo

Introduction

As part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls constitutes both a specific goal (SDG 5) and a means of achieving all the other SDGs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs also promise to leave no one behind and, as a matter of priority, address the discrimination, exclusion and inequality undermining the potential of individuals and society. The mainstreaming of intersectional perspectives, including when tackling gender inequality, is therefore crucial to the delivery and achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The most recent SDG 5 data confirms that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. Moreover, only 47 per cent of the data required to track progress on SDG 5 is currently available, effectively rendering many women and girls invisible, particularly those furthest behind.[1] Increased production, analysis and use of high-quality sex-disaggregated statistics are essential if the needs of women and girls are to be brought to the fore. Data disaggregation by sex alone is, however, insufficient. The identification of marginalised women and girls facing compounding forms of deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination requires that data be simultaneously disaggregated by both sex and other dimensions, including age, geographic location, income, wealth, race, ethnicity, migration, disability status, and other characteristics relevant to national contexts.

Applying an intersectional approach to gender data makes the heterogeneity in women's well-being across different groups and sub-groups visible, thereby enabling a deeper understanding of how systemic power imbalances within society intersect. Additionally, using this type of analysis across thematic areas or in multi-sectoral analysis reveals that women and girls at the intersection of multiple forms of deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination tend to fare worse than all other groups of women and men in society.[2]

Cross-country analysis shows that overlapping discrimination related to, for example, income, location and ethnicity are often associated with deprivations in a range of SDG-related outcomes for women – from access to education and health to clean water and decent work.[3] Disaggregated data that can enable

Box 1: Key landmark agreements on gender equality and women's empowerment

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is considered the most progressive blueprint yet for advancing women's rights.[4] Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 by representatives of 189 governments, it imagines a world where each woman or girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, as well as realise all her rights, such as living free from violence, going to school, participating in decisions and earning equal pay for equal work. The transformative features of this agenda are central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015 by 193 United Nations Member States. The achievement of gender equality is the fifth of 17 SDGs and includes nine targets and 18 indicators/sub-indicators measuring progress towards economic, social and political equality. Ten additional goals include gender-specific benchmarks, acknowledging the interconnection between women's empowerment and a better future for all.

intersectional subgroup analyses is key to bringing these inequalities to light but is often unavailable. Further, even when these datasets are available, intersectional approaches to data analyses are not routine or prioritised. In this article we apply an intersectional approach to gender data on education and sexual and reproductive health in order to understand how overlapping forms of discrimination impact women's outcomes in key areas of well-being. Amid a context of rising levels of conflict and fragility, the global population of forcibly displaced women and girls has reached record levels.

We therefore draw specific attention to the vulnerabilities faced by women and girls living in fragile and conflict-affected settings. The results show evidence of large inequalities between groups and sub-groups of women, with marginalised groups of women worse off. Although data remains scarce, the analysis also points to the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating existing inequalities.

We conclude by highlighting the need for scaled-up investments aimed at expanding intersectional approaches to gender data for achievement of the Beijing Platform for Action and accelerated progress towards the SDGs.

Intersectional analyses reveal a long road towards achieving inclusive and equitable quality education for all girls

The world has witnessed significant gains in access to education and learning outcomes (SDG 4) over recent decades. At the aggregate level, girls have even surpassed boys in many key education-related outcomes.[5] Intersectional

Biased gender norms and stereotypes, embedded in curricula, textbooks and teaching and learning practices, have a major impact on the subjects girls choose to study in school and, ultimately, the careers and employment opportunities they can access as adults.

analyses, however, show that not all women and girls have benefitted equally from the transformative power of education. In 29 countries with recent data on upper secondary school completion by sex, location and wealth, the gap in completion rates between the poorest rural women and urban richest ranged from 11.5 per cent to 72.2 per cent.[6] In Thailand, for example, women from the poorest rural households were nearly three times less likely to complete upper secondary school in 2019 than women in the richest urban households (35.3 per cent versus 93.6 per cent).[7] The path for girls facing discrimination based on race/ethnicity, religion, migration or disability status is likewise disparate from what the aggregate would suggest.

Data from 42 countries confirms that children with disabilities have less access to early childhood education than children without disabilities, and that the disparity is greater for girls with disabilities.[8] Similarly, conflict-affected countries account for more than half of the nearly 130 million girls not enrolled in formal education worldwide (54 per cent).[9] Disruptions to education systems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated access and learning inequalities for these vulnerable groups of girls and young women.
Biased gender norms and stereotypes, embedded in curricula, textbooks and teaching and learning practices, have a major impact on the subjects girls choose to study in school and, ultimately, the careers and employment opportunities they can access as adults. Although young women outnumber young men in tertiary education, globally, only 18 per cent of girls in tertiary institutions pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields compared to 35 per cent of boys.[10] These differences are mirrored in the labour market, with women holding just two in every ten jobs in science, engineering and information, communication and technology (ICT).[11] Gaps in STEM education and careers are greater for women and girls doubly disadvantaged by the intersection of gender and other vulnerabilities. In the United States of America, women in STEM jobs earn less than their male counterparts, while Black and Hispanic women, for instance, earn about US$ 20,000 less a year than the average for STEM jobs and about US$ 33,000 less a year than their white male counterparts.[12]

Decades of research results leave no doubt as to the direct and indirect benefits of educating girls and young women, including in terms of earnings and economic opportunities. However, despite progress, the intersectional analysis shows that girls' education continues to face many challenges. Achieving inclusive and equitable quality education for girls will require focused investments in all girls, but most especially those from marginalised communities, which the disaggregated data shows are currently being left behind. Interventions that reduce the cost of schooling are especially effective at increasing access, as are other gender-specific interventions focused on, among other issues, addressing gender-based violence and harmful practices such as child marriage.[13]

An intersectional lens is key to identifying pervasive gaps in universal access to sexual and reproductive health

At the current rate of progress, the world is not on track to reduce maternal mortality (SDG target 3.1) or achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services (SDG target 3.7) by 2030. As the backlash against women's sexual and reproductive health and rights gains momentum, large inequalities in sexual and reproductive health outcomes prevail across and within countries.[14] Today, over 1.2 billion women and girls of reproductive age (15–49) live in countries or areas with some restriction on access to safe abortion.[15] Decisions that reverse previous progress are likely to contribute to more unsafe abortions, a leading – but preventable – cause of maternal deaths and morbidities.[16]

Picture: Adobe stock photo

Inequality in health outcomes for women and girls is systemic. In Niger, for example, 83 per cent of births in urban areas are attended by a skilled health worker, compared to 21 per cent in rural areas.[17] In Guinea, 90 per cent of births in the richest 20 per cent of households are assisted by skilled birth attendants, versus 10 per cent in the poorest quintile.[18] When data is simultaneously disaggregated, the compounded effects of various deprivations reveal even starker inequalities. In Colombia, for example, over a third (33.4 per cent) of indigenous women living in the poorest rural households deliver without the assistance of a skilled health professional, compared to only 0.1 per cent of women who do not identify with any racial minority and live in the richest urban households.[19] Non-intersectional data analysis focused on the national average would obscure this situation of acute inequality in access to health professionals, making invisible the urgent need for targeted policy interventions.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, indigenous women and girls were less likely to have access to healthcare services, including maternal care, than their non-indigenous counterparts. In Guatemala, for instance, the maternal mortality ratio of indigenous women is three times that of non-indigenous women.[20] Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to maternal health and family planning services have exacerbated these inequalities, taking a disproportionate toll on the physical and mental health of those women and girls already furthest behind. In developing countries, adolescent girls aged 15–19 from the poorest households have about three times as many births as girls from the richest households,[21] while adolescents in rural areas have on average twice as many births as their counterparts in cities.[22]

As the data shows, a gender analysis is particularly relevant in conflict and humanitarian settings, where women and girls are often in dire need of protection from violence, abuse, hunger and other violations of their basic human rights.

The intersection of gender, conflict and fragility curtails the dignity and rights of women and girls

Today, the number of women and girls living in fragile and conflict-affected countries stands at 511 million, almost double the number in 2019.[23] Understanding the impact of conflict and fragility on their lives is critical for inclusive responses, and for ensuring their meaningful participation in peace processes, peacebuilding, and recovery efforts. Evidence shows that when gender, conflict and fragility intersect, the well-being of women and girls is severely deteriorated across many dimensions, including through displacement, education disruption, food insecurity, increased violence and harmful practices.

By the end of 2021, a record 44 million women and girls globally were living in displacement, a figure encompassing refugees, asylum seekers, and persons displaced by conflict and violence in their own country.[24] Of these groups, an estimated 12.4 million are refugees, a third of whom come from Northern Africa and Western Asia.[25]

Globally, six in every ten undernourished persons live in areas affected by conflict.[26] In 2021, 37.5 per cent of female-headed households in war-affected areas of Ukraine experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, compared to 20.5 per cent of male-headed households.[27] This outlook is likely to worsen as a result of the ongoing war (which is limiting the supply of wheat, fertiliser and fuel, and propelling inflation) and as more data from recent conflicts in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa become available.

By August 2022, Europe had recorded 6.8 million refugees from Ukraine, more than eight in every ten of whom were women and girls.[28] Countries in conflict are among those with the highest rates of illiteracy, with girls in these contexts missing out most of all.[29] Across 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, interviews with refugee and displaced women revealed an increased prevalence of domestic (73 per cent) and sexual violence (51 per cent) during the COVID-19 pandemic, while 32 per cent of these women indicated a risk of early and forced marriages.[30]

As the data shows, a gender analysis is particularly relevant in conflict and humanitarian settings, where women and girls are often in dire need of protection from violence, abuse, hunger and other violations of their basic human rights.

Renewing partnerships and scaling up investments to expand intersectional approaches to gender data

The intersectional approaches to gender data presented in this article demonstrate the numerous possibilities for disaggregating and analysing existing datasets in ways that make visible the inequalities experienced by different groups of women and girls across various dimensions of sustainable development. While data on gender and intersecting forms of inequality is crucial to leaving no one behind, production of such data is seldom prioritised and faces chronic underfunding – it is estimated that gender data systems have experienced a shortfall of US$ 450 million every year since 2015.[31]

It is our experience that marginalised and vulnerable groups of women are generally invisible in official statistics. For instance, censuses and household surveys may omit vulnerable groups of women – such as homeless women – and the available household survey samples may limit simultaneous disaggregation across multiple dimensions. In addition, the collected data may be subject to bias depending on question formulation or the survey respondent.

Picture: Adobe stock photo

Addressing the needs of the furthest behind women and girls requires identifying and resolving data gaps, as well as strengthening the capacity of data producers both within and beyond the national statistical system, including civil society. Building a coalition of gender data producers and users that can holistically measure progress towards gender equality is not, however, a straightforward or quick process – it needs political will, time and monetary investments. Renewed partnerships with national statistics offices, international survey programmes (such as the Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys) and UN agencies are required to devise ways of improving data availability on marginalised and vulnerable women and girls.

UN Women is supporting this work through a number of initiatives, including developing guidance notes and toolkits targeted at national statistical offices and other key constituents. The *Counted and Visible Toolkit*,[32] for example, provides practical guidance for national statistical offices and individual researchers on how to conduct an intersectional analysis, as well as information on why disaggregated data matters when it comes to designing effective policies and programmes addressing the needs of marginalised persons, including marginalised groups of women and girls.

Although the SDGs' focus on 'leaving no one behind' has heightened the importance of taking an intersectional lens to development outcomes, support for and investments in national statistical systems are still required. These investments may be directed, towards, among other areas: 1) applying intersectional analyses to gender data using existing census and survey datasets; 2) integrating missing intersectional perspectives in existing data collection tools by, for instance, expanding respondent characteristics or developing add-on modules; 3) developing new data collection tools specifically targeting these groups, such as surveys of persons with disabilities (though generating a standalone sample of the target population may be a costly and time-intensive undertaking, depending on the characteristics of the group, the recruitment techniques used and the subject of interest);[33] and 4) expanding the use of small-area estimation techniques.[34]

Finally, more effort is needed to map existing data sources and develop inventories of surveys and other data sources that can be used for intersectional analyses. Only when the unique barriers faced by marginalised groups of women and girls are brought to the forefront can the ambitious objectives of the SDGs or the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action be realised.

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19 UN Women (note 17).

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This article is written in the personal capacity of Elisa Mosler Vidal and Marie-Luce Bia Zafinikamia and does not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations.

Intersectionality and migration data: Creating inclusive and migrant-sensitive policy through data disaggregation

By Elisa Mosler Vidal and Marie-Luce Bia Zafinikamia

Introduction

The concept of intersectionality acknowledges that gender, sex, ethnicity, migratory status and many other factors interact to produce a state of multiple advantages or disadvantages for an individual, and that these factors must be studied in concert. Today, there are over 281 million international migrants around the world. This is not a homogenous group and migrants' sex, age and level of education – among many other factors – may affect everything from their employment status and income to their personal safety or child's birthweight. In some cases, migrants' characteristics may work together to disadvantage them through different and/or overlapping inequalities, amplifying the overall impact of being 'left behind'. This means that in order to accurately understand and respond to the needs of certain migrant populations, it is necessary to use an intersectional lens.

However, the available data does not usually allow this. Instead, the existing data on migration tends to tell us, for example, how many migrants are in a country, but not how many have a disability or identify as transgender. In turn, existing data from other sectors often fails to tell us who is a migrant and who is not, let alone further characteristics about those who are migrants. This is because data is not usually disaggregated by migratory status – that is, categorised by who is a migrant or not – or other important dimensions such as sex, gender, age or disability status. As this is the case for other population sub-groups, such as people with disabilities, as well, it is important to address this by strengthening disaggregation along all dimensions possible.

Migrants are currently largely invisible in sustainable development statistics, and even more so migrants whose distinct characteristics may mean they are subject to disadvantages and so need extra policy care, such as those in irregular situations (sometimes called 'undocumented' and 'unauthorised') or with disabilities. This means we do not know the situation and needs of many migrants across sectors. Disaggregated data is critical to helping us understand and address the needs of different migrants across policy areas, and in turn informing migrant-inclusive programming that is cognisant of migrants' intersectional experiences.

This article will first provide an overview of the current state of inclusive and intersectional migration data. Next, it will discuss common challenges faced in this space, before presenting several possible ways to improve intersectionality in migration data.

Current state of inclusive and intersectional migration data

Globally, significant information is missing on key migrant sub-groups in relation to sustainable development. For example, there were 55 million internally displaced persons at the end of 2020, many with urgent health, educational and other needs. At the same time there were 36 million migrant children, who may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation, especially unaccompanied minors. Evidence on the needs of populations in this category and how far they are being met is scarce.[1] There is often little comparable information on their social, political or other characteristics. In addition to this missing information on the features of migrant populations, data on the characteristics of larger population groups – for example, across a city or region – often fails to accurately capture their migratory status. For example, even if some sectoral indicators are disaggregated by age and sex, they tend not to be disaggregated by country of birth or citizenship. In sum, the data needed to take an intersectional approach to migration policy and programming is not available.

Picture: Adobe stock photo

While global comparable evidence on the situations of migrants across sectors is limited, some relevant information is available. This is based on compiled disaggregated statistics – for example, in the area of education. Displaced children and young adults tend to have lower schooling levels than natives. This is reflected in low enrolment rates in refugee groups across educational levels compared to non-migrant children. For example, just 61%, of refugees around the world are enrolled in primary education, 23% in secondary education and 1% in higher education, compared to global enrolment figures of, respectively, 91%, 84% and 36%.[2] Such comparative presentation or analysis of data is rare, however, and it is difficult to understand migrants' overall educational opportunities and outcomes across sex, gender and age.

The level of education data disaggregation is similar to that in other sectors: while several discrete datasets on sectoral sub-topics may be broken down by country of birth or citizenship, there is no systematic disaggregation of key datasets or other ways of easily building a more comprehensive picture of the status of migrants in a particular sector.

In some cases, governments have made efforts to disaggregate and compile development data more systematically. For example, the Italian Instituto Nazionale di Statistica (Istat) (National Statistics Office) disaggregated several Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators by country of citizenship and first- and second-generation migrants in its SDG Information System.[3] It is important to remember that having just one or two dimensions of disaggregation is insufficient to capture the intersectional experiences of migrants. Policy-makers need to know other migrant characteristics – such as age or gender – that may also shape different aspects of life, from income to mortality. Adopting a lens that takes into account migration, gender, disability and other dimensions in data production, collection and analysis is crucial to meeting the diverse needs of migrant communities adequately, and ultimately to leaving no one behind and working towards a human rights–based approach to migration.

Inclusive and intersectional migration data: Common challenges

There is currently a strong theoretical consensus around the fact that producing disaggregated data will help make often-vulnerable migrant sub-groups visible, countable and therefore easier to protect and empower. In practice, however, this has not yet led to significant results. Obstacles still need to be overcome for disaggregated data to be regularly available across countries, and there are many methodological, and some practical, challenges.

Traditional tools for collecting population statistics – namely censuses and household surveys – often have limitations when it comes to gathering migration data, let alone identifying migrants' intersectional characteristics.

Traditional tools for collecting population statistics – namely censuses and household surveys – often have limitations when it comes to gathering migration data, let alone identifying migrants' intersectional characteristics. One example of the limitations of censuses is the long intervals between data collection rounds (about ten years), which render data quickly out of date. Censuses may also have incomplete population coverage for many migrant sub-groups of special policy interest, such as irregular migrants who are excluded from, or may purposefully evade, official data collection processes. Another possible category in this regard is emigrants, as they cannot be directly included in data collection.

Disaggregated data can be leveraged from household surveys, which are conducted more frequently, are timelier, and often collect rich information across sectors. However, data collected on migrants through surveys may not always be representative due to sample size issues – conducting surveys with large enough sample sizes to generate meaningful data on migrants can be prohibitively expensive. It is likely that the sub-groups of migrants that intersectional analysis would reveal as the most in need are precisely those that are most difficult to reach through data collection.

These sub-groups include, for example, homeless migrants, members of the migrant community living in collective housing, or persons facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/agender plus (LGBTQI+) migrants. Some migrant sub-groups may be physically or otherwise hard to reach with data collection efforts (for example, physically difficult to reach for enumerators leading data collection, or digitally if digital access and/or literacy is low), but also hard to reach in other ways if the characteristics linking an individual to a particular migrant sub-group are difficult to detect.

Many intersectional contexts of migration may be invisible – for example, migrants with diverse sexual orientation and sex characteristics – meaning policy-makers may have difficulty taking the voices and needs of migrants in these sub-groups into account.[4] Civil society organisations or other actors regularly accessing and undertaking operational work with relevant sub-groups, including national human rights institutions, can often play a key role in data collection on hard-to-reach migrants.[5]

There are also more practical challenges related to data disaggregation. Sometimes there is a lack of awareness regarding the importance and policy potential of data disaggregated by migratory status. National government representatives or those from international organisations typically agree on the need to disaggregate by age and sex, but not always by further dimensions. Relevant stakeholders in national statistical offices (NSOs) may have limited resources and/or capacity in general if disaggregation is insufficiently prioritised in national agendas or budgets.[6] Boosting disaggregation often requires new types of collaboration across all spheres of government – for example, between a health ministry, migration agency and NSO – which can be difficult to kick-start.

Inclusive and intersectional migration data: Opportunities

In the data-collection arena, there are impressive examples of small-area estimation (SAE) approaches. This is where a range of statistical methods estimating indicators in cases where data is unavailable in small areas – such as counties, states or districts – is applied in different countries, integrating different datasets where a sample size of one dataset alone is too small. SAE approaches provide opportunities to combine data sources, – including administrative data, which can have high coverage – to generate rich data on specific population sub-groups. There have been some, albeit limited, applications related to migration.

Picture: Adobe stock photo

For example, a study estimated the prevalence of migration at the municipal level in Colombia using data from the census and the Demographic and Health Survey, and produced estimates on the health, education, employment and other needs of local migrant populations.[7]

There are many ways of addressing the more practical challenges related to disaggregation around the world. For example, dedicated working groups can be set up, or disaggregation 'champions' across ministries nominated, to boost coordination between relevant agencies. The use of several specialised guides and toolkits can also help in conceptualising and planning a roadmap in a particular city or country to increase data disaggregation. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is actively working with countries to expand data disaggregation in this way (see Box 1).

IOM has also published a guidance note on gender and migration data that includes targeted advice on how to make migration data gender-responsive, including – among other steps – rethinking categorisation, integrating ethical considerations in data collection, and adopting a whole-of-society approach to data collection, analysis and evaluation.[8] There are also tools dedicated to other topics, such as improving disability inclusion in migration data, including the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Field Companion for Disability Inclusion, produced in collaboration with various partners.[9]

Box 1: IOM data disaggregation guide

IOM has published a guide on data disaggregation by migratory status, which is currently being rolled out in selected pilot countries in Africa.[10] IOM will work with stakeholders across ministries in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tunisia to implement the key steps of this guide, which aim to concretely increase the level of disaggregation of available data at the national level by migratory status.

The key steps are to:

1. establish institutional leads;
2. undertake specialised awareness-raising and training;
3. identify SDG indicators and migration disaggregation needs;
4. conduct data mapping;
5. design and implement courses of action; and
6. undertake specialised reporting, dissemination and communication.

Conclusion

There has been an increased focus on migration data in recent years, in recognition of the fact that there can be no effective migration policy without a strong evidence base. Without an intersectional approach, it will be hard for migration policy to be inclusive of all migrant sub-groups. This is especially important today, as since 2015 the global motto of sustainable development has been to 'leave no one behind' which cannot be achieved without non-discriminatory and fully inclusive policies that take into account everyone's intersectional experiences.[11]

Countries need to strengthen national-level statistical systems for collecting, analysing and using data that adequately captures the different dimensions of a migrant's life. To this end, data disaggregation is a key tool that can enable intersectional approaches in migration policy-making. It has the potential to form the basis of more inclusive development policies, addressing topics ranging from gender equality to how migration contributes to development.

Finally, there is an opportunity to leverage existing momentum to improve inclusive and intersectional migration data. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has placed data disaggregation squarely on the global agenda as a means to support implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Now is a good time to act on this.

Notes:

1. Elisa Mosler Vidal, and Frank Laczko, Migration and the SDGs: Measuring Progress – An Edited Volume (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2022).
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3. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Istat) [Italian National Institute of Statistics], '2019 SDG Report: Statistical Information for 2030 Agenda in Italy', April 2019, www.istat.it/en/archivio/229827.
4. Jenna Hennebry, Hari KC and Kira Williams, Gender and Migration Data: A Guide for Evidence-based, Gender-responsive Migration Governance (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2021), https://publications.iom.int/books/gender-and-migration-data-guide-evidencebased-gender-responsive-migration-governance.
5. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 'A Human Rights–Based Approach to Data: Leaving No One Behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', 2018.
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8. Jenna Hennebry, Hari KC and Kira Williams (note 2).
9. International Organization for Migration, 'DTM MSLA for Disability Inclusion', n.d., https://displacement.iom.int/dtm-partners-toolkit/guide/dtm-msla-disability-inclusion.
10. Elisa Mosler Vidal (note 2).
11. UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' [The 2030 Agenda], 21 October 2015, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=111&nr=8496&menu=35.

Rana Taha

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Understanding intersectionality through leave no one behind (LNOB) analysis: An example from Kenya

By Rana Taha and Prisca Kamungi

Background

Intersectionality refers to how social categorisations such as race, class and gender interconnect to create multiple, often overlapping and interdependent, systems of disadvantage, exclusion or discrimination affecting a given individual or group.[1] The term acknowledges the fact that people are defined by identities or perceived to belong to social categories associated with similarity and difference, or privilege and marginalisation – this in turn affects access to power and resources.[2] People do not live single-issue lives – for example, as poor or as women – but face an interlocking, interdependent system of issues, which construct and reinforce each other in a variety of contexts to create different meanings, experiences, and layers of vulnerability and inequality.[3] Intersectionality as a term was coined in the 1980s by Crenshaw[4], who illustrated the idea by referring to the intersecting 'roads' of issues such as colonialism, patriarchy, poverty, sexuality, disability and nationality, and how these intersections are subject to 'crashes'. Looking at a single issue (or road) may obscure the interconnected challenges faced by an individual or group, and the ways in which they experience life – for example, their access to healthcare. In the same way, leave no one behind (LNOB) represents a commitment by all United Nations Member States to identify those groups at the 'intersection' of five factors: 1) discrimination; 2) vulnerability to shocks; 3) governance; 4) socioeconomic status; and 5) geography (ie the blue circle in the centre of Figure 1).

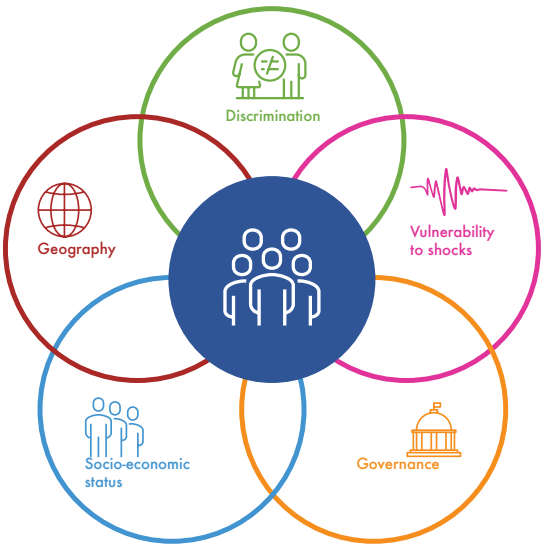


Figure 1. Framework for analysing who is left behind.

Source: Adapted from UN Development Programme, 'What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind?', July 2018.

Member States have committed to alleviating these five factors as the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is to be done through measures to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind, thereby undermining the potential of individuals and humanity as a whole. LNOB not only entails reaching the poorest of the poor but combating discrimination and rising inequalities within and among countries, including addressing their root causes. A major cause of people being left behind is persistent forms of discrimination – for example, gender discrimination – which leaves individuals, families and communities marginalised and excluded. LNOB compels us to focus on the discrimination and inequalities (often multiple and intersecting) that undermine the agency of people as holders of rights.[5] Many of the barriers that people face in accessing services, resources and equal opportunities are not simply due to accidents of fate or a lack of available resource, but rather arise from discriminatory laws, policies and social practices that leave particular groups of people further and further behind.[6]

Who is left behind? Who is at the intersection?

Operationalising the commitment to LNOB requires a comprehensive approach involving a series of steps, including identifying who is being left behind and why; as well as identifying effective measures to address root causes. This article reflects on an effort in Kenya to identify who is being left behind and to bring their voices to the decision-making table.

Led by the Peace and Development Team (PDT) in the Office of the Resident Coordinator, the effort began by attempting to identify those left behind and then incorporating their concerns into the Kenya UN country team's Common Country Assessment (CCA)[7] – a document identifying development challenges and programming priorities. The LNOB analysis was conducted in partnership with the Folke Bernadotte Academy[8], with contributions from the University of Nairobi and the Conflict Analysis Group (part of the national peacebuilding infrastructure). The LNOB analysis sought to identify who is at risk of being left behind by examining the five above-mentioned intersecting factors, as set out in the guidance note.[9]

The aim of the LNOB analysis in Kenya was to identify those groups that experience intersecting vulnerabilities and so are either the furthest left behind or at risk of being left behind, with a view to positioning their needs and voices at the centre of the 2021 CCA and subsequent UN–government development programming. The analysis also aimed to mainstream an LNOB perspective in assessing how left-behind groups are affected by peace and conflict dynamics. It began with an evidence-based investigation of deprivation across the five intersecting factors. Through exploring the intersection of these factors, the analysis sought to identify specific LNOB groups in ways that were not confined to pre-existing assumptions or generic categories (such as women, persons with disability, or youth).

The methodology used was a hybrid of quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study relied on formal data from the national census and economic household surveys from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, as well as secondary data from academic publications and grey literature from development reports. Gaps in data availability meant quantitative analysis was limited to the socioeconomic status, geography and governance factors (see Table 1), while qualitative indicators were used for discrimination and vulnerability to shocks, including perceptions of being excluded or treated differently, and experiences of disasters (floods, drought, landslides) and forced displacement. The PDT cross-referenced the indicators for each of the five factors, selecting counties with a numeric ranking that incorporated all indicators. Lack of disaggregated data limited the identification of left-behind groups at the sub-national level. The study also used qualitative methods – notably formal and informal interviews, and consultations led by the Conflict Analysis Group – at the national and county level. In addition, the PDT also conducted a survey with UN agencies on their use of LNOB frameworks. A combination of these methods was used to identify specific LNOB groups with greater granularity beyond the county level.

Table 1: Factors and indicators considered to quantitatively assess LNOB groups in Kenya

Socioeconomic status	Geography	Governance
• Gini coefficient • Poverty rate • Food security • Received antenatal care from skilled provider • No schooling (%) • Men with at least secondary education (%) • Women with at least secondary • education (%) • Relative Wealth Index (RWI) • Variation in RWI	• Electricity use (%) • Mobile phone ownership (%) • Road Access Index • Internet use (%) • Health facilities per 100,000 people • Health facilities per 10,000 km^2 • ICU beds per 100,000 people	• Believes government is highly corrupt (%) • Fund allocation per capita • Magistrate courts per 100,000 people

Results

The analysis found massive data gaps, notably a lack of disaggregated data and inconsistent data collection across all factors. Overall, for many indicators, the most specific data available was at the county level, which prevented more nuanced investigation – such as understanding which groups were struggling in counties with high levels of inequality, or investigating beyond broad categorisations and aggregated groups (eg women, youth, minority groups).

There was no national-level disaggregated data on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/agender (LGBTQIA) community or stateless persons; no county-level data on gender discrimination, gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment; and hardly any data on governance, including access to political institutions and offices (active/passive), access to judicial system/legal representation, timely processes and rule of law.

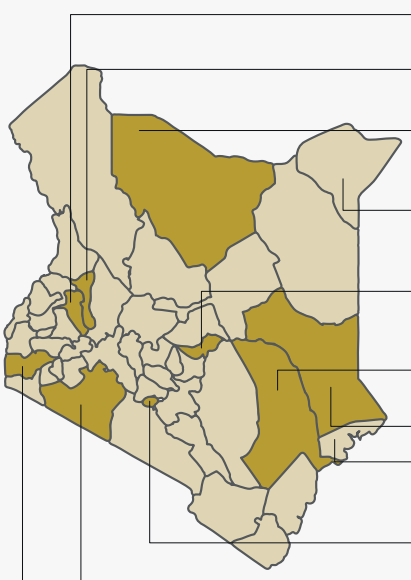
These data gaps notwithstanding, the analysis found that the counties most left behind are those that perform most poorly across multiple indicators. Counties with high poverty levels also have greater perceived levels of discrimination and higher incidences of shocks. The results also showed that these counties are in geographical regions that have experienced historical marginalisation, notably the borderlands or 'northern frontier' counties, including Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Turkana, West Pokot, Marsabit, Tana River, Isiolo, Kwale and Kilifi.

This tells us that even counties that seem to be doing well according to the aggregate assessment of indicators may have pockets of left-behind groups, especially in urban informal settlements. Conversely, relatively poor areas still have a small percentage of very wealthy people.

On inequality, data from 2005 indicates that traditionally marginalised counties such as Tana River, Kilifi, Kwale and Lamu have higher levels of inequality than the national average. However, the variation in Relative Wealth Index, a granular measurement of wealth constructed via machine learning, indicates the most unequal counties are the cities of Mombasa and Nairobi, as well as large cosmopolitan urban centres such as Kiambu, Garissa and Nyeri. Some of these counties have large informal settlements and refugee camps. This tells us that even counties that seem to be doing well according to the aggregate assessment of indicators may have pockets of left-behind groups, especially in urban informal settlements. Conversely, relatively poor areas still have a small percentage of very wealthy people. Granular data is needed to understand the nuanced realities of shared prosperity or poverty. Qualitative interviews found that stateless people, those living in informal settlements, persons with disabilities, people without documentation, small tribes, refugee women and girls, indigenous communities, and hunter-gatherers are most at risk of being left behind.

…Conversely, relatively poor areas still have a small percentage of very wealthy people. Granular data is needed to understand the nuanced realities of shared prosperity or poverty.

LNOB groups by county



Uasin Gishu: Ogieks – small gatherer population whose lifestyle has been ignored in policy/decision-making.

Elgeyo Marakwet: Sengwer evicted from forest with contestation as to compensation.

Marsabit: Desenach, El-molo – traditional religious group faces discrimination from Muslims and Christians. Widows suffer from social abandonment if they refuse husband's relative.

Daadab: Kenyan host community registered as refugees. With therepartition, they have no home to go to in Somalia and no status as Kenyans.

Tharaka Nithi: Tharaka people experience discrimination due to association with poverty, witchcraft and underdevelopment. Region lacks access to infrastructure. 'Kabonokia' group resists modern practices.

Tana River: Watta, Waliwana, Bajuni, Somali many but excluded, people displaced by flooding along River Tana.

Garissa: Pastoralists affected by climate change, low road access.

Coast area: Youth (particularly stateless) lack access to documentation (ID cards), limiting tertiary education and employment, and are more vulnerable to radicalisation.

Nairobi: Elderly people living alone or caring for others, urban refugees, LGBTQIA community. Recently recognised groups due to legacy of exclusion – eg Nubi.

Narok: Small clans lack political voice, Ogiek at risk of eviction from Mau.

Homa Bay: Suba community discriminated against by Ugandan police forces.

Figure 2: Map of LNOB groups by counties (selection).
Source: Conflict Analysis Group field interviews.

Investigating the relationship between indicators helped deepen the understanding of precisely how LNOB factors intersect to compound vulnerabilities. A correlation analysis found that in counties with high poverty rates there tends to be: a larger percentage of the population that lacks schooling; less electricity use; lower rates of mobile phone ownership and internet use; and lower proportions of women with at least a secondary-level education. Moreover, far-flung counties (those geographically distant from the capital) had lower electricity use, mobile phone ownership and internet use, and smaller percentages of women achieving at least secondary-level education. These geographically distant counties also had higher incidences of violence, including cross-border conflict dynamics and inter-communal conflicts arising from competition for diminished natural resources – such as water and pasture – due to climate change.

In addition, primary data from interviews and consultations found that areas left behind geographically have higher levels of gender discrimination and

GBV, including higher rates of female genital mutilation. Refugee women and girls in camps located in remote areas are at higher risk of sexual exploitation and internal trafficking for forced labour. Low levels of education, limited livelihood opportunities, violent conflict, displacement and gender inequalities are linked to harmful social and cultural practices, contributing to human trafficking and vulnerability to recruitment into terrorist groups. Young unemployed men in urban informal settlements are at higher risk of political violence and human rights violations. Members of small tribes, subtribes, indigenous communities and hunter-gatherer groups lack political representation or voice[10], meaning they face a heightened risk of political exclusion and rights violations – notably, forced eviction from their natural habitat in forests and areas declared 'protected areas' (eg water catchments).

The analysis indicates that the groups most at risk of being left behind include the rural poor in far-flung counties and minority communities; the urban poor in informal settlements and low-income urban estates; indigenous communities and pastoralists who have lost their livelihoods; the elderly in rural areas; people with disabilities without social support systems; and single women, especially teenage mothers and widows. LGBTQIA communities face stigma, harassment and attacks by members of the public and law enforcement agencies – homosexuality is illegal in Kenya, meaning there is a lack of laws and institutions to protect them. The Road Access Index and internet connectivity are lowest in remote rural areas, where people face both monetary and multi-dimensional poverty. For instance, indigenous communities living in forests have access to hardly any schools, hospitals or roads.

The Kenyan government has taken measures to address inequality and promote shared prosperity. One of the main items of the 2008 Kenya National Accord and Reconciliation Agreement was the requirement to address long-term issues and solutions and the underlying causes of violence, including inequality and regional development imbalances. In this regard, the coalition government set up the Ministry of Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands, which had a mandate to expedite development interventions and bring the arid lands to the same threshold as the rest of the country.[11] Following the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the subsequent transition to the devolved governance system in 2013, the government recognised marginalised and minority groups, establishing an Equalization Fund to provide a framework for bridging development inequalities and assisting multi-dimensional poverty regions at risk of being left behind. The constitution also provides for affirmative action and quotas for the inclusion of women, youth and persons with disability in development programming, resource allocation and political participation. For example, the two-thirds gender rule requires both the national assembly and senate to ensure that no more than two-thirds of their members are from one gender. While these policy and programmatic interventions have made a difference, inefficiencies resulting from everyday practices of exclusion, corruption and the legacies of inter-group animosity continue to perpetuate inequality, sometimes through the emergence of new dynamics.

Both intersectionality and LNOB identify how social categorisations such as ethnic identity, class and gender interconnect to create multiple, often overlapping, and interdependent systems of disadvantage, exclusion or discrimination affecting individuals or groups.

Conclusion

Both intersectionality and LNOB identify how social categorisations such as ethnic identity, class and gender interconnect to create multiple, often overlapping, and interdependent systems of disadvantage, exclusion or discrimination affecting individuals or groups. The LNOB analysis in Kenya helped identify communities and regions facing intersecting challenges and multiple vulnerabilities due to their gender, social status, distance from the capital and/or vulnerability to shocks, which affected their access to political power and public services.

The analysis, which informed the 2021 CCA and subsequent identification of development priorities for the 2022–2026 UN Sustainable Development and Cooperation Framework[12], highlighted the need to direct and prioritise development programming towards groups at the intersection of poverty, exclusion and marginalisation – among other factors – as the assured strategy to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Significant data gaps were found, notably the lack of agreed data on who is left behind or a unified approach on collecting it. Different actors have different approaches, standards and sources of accessing and analysing data. The data was also not granular, and the team had to develop indicators for some of the LNOB factors, such as discrimination and vulnerability to shocks.

There were sensitivities around homosexuality and identification of the LGBTQIA community as a group at risk of being left behind, which the PDT approached through partnership with human rights organisations and cautious framing of the text. The analysis recommends a harmonised common approach to LNOB and the data needed to increase understanding of how multiple vulnerabilities intersect and so improve the design of development programmes. Conducting a thorough LNOB data mapping and gap analysis is critical, as filling these gaps – in collaboration with UN agencies and national partners such as the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics – would allow more specific identification of LNOB groups and provide reliable data on their demographic characteristics and development needs. The analysis also recommends the deliberate targeting of groups at risk of being left behind in order to bring their voices and needs to the centre of development programming, in recognition of the fact that it will only be possible to achieve sustainable peace and the SDGs if no one is left behind.

Disclaimer: Acknowledging limitations due to the scope and scale of this exercise and the complexity of compound LNOB risks, this analysis is not exhaustive in identifying groups left behind or at risk of being left behind in Kenya.

Notes:

[1] Julia Seng et al., 'Marginalized identities, discrimination burden, and mental health: Empirical exploration of an interpersonal-level approach to modeling intersectionality', *Social Science & Medicine*, 75/12 (2012), pp. 2437–45, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.09.023.

[2] S. Laurel Weldon, 'Intersectionality', in Gary Goertz and Amy G. Mazur (eds), *Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 193–218.

[3] Sarah El Gharib, 'What is intersectionality and why is it important?', Global Citizen, 17 February 2022, www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-intersectionality-explained/.

[4] Kimberlé Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (New York: The New Press, 2017).

[5] United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), 'Leave No One Behind', https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind.

[6] UNSDG (note 5).

[7] The CCA is an integrated, forward-looking and evidence-based analysis of a country context. Produced by the UN country team under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the CCA relies on secondary and primary data to provide a cumulative, logical articulation of key development challenges and opportunities, and identifies strategic priorities for UN programming in that country.

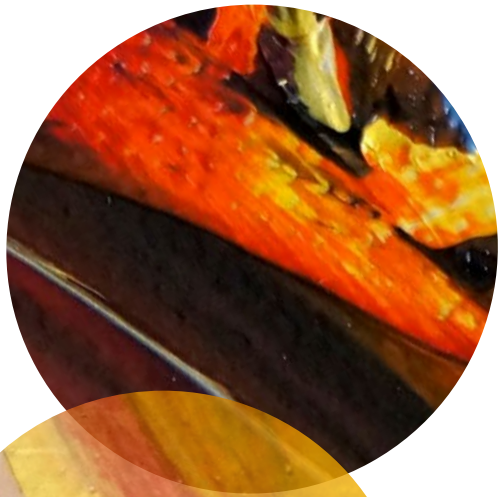
[8] Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Swedish agency for peace, security and development, provided the grant for the study. Further information is available on their website: https://fba.se/en/how-we-work/research/research-grants/.

[9] UNSDG, 'Operationalizing Leaving No One Behind: Good Practice Note For UN Country Teams', 2022, https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Operationalizing%20LNOB%20-%20final%20with%20Annexes%20090422.pdf.

[10] Members of small tribes are unlikely to win democratic elections, which are dominated by large communities. Consequently, their needs and concerns are routinely excluded from the political and policy discourse, or relegated to the margins of the national development agenda. Often, their cause is taken up by civil society organisations.

[11] Republic of Kenya, 'Vision 2030: Development Strategy for Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands', 2012, https://repository.kippra.or.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/530/V2030-Development-Strategy.pdf.

[12] UNSDG, 'United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: Internal Guidance', 2019, https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/UN%20Cooperation%20Framework%20Internal%20Guidance%20--%201%20June%202022.pdf. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which replaced the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), is the instrument for planning and implementing UN development activities at a country level in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). The UNSDCF now guides the entire programme cycle, driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective UN support for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The UNSDCF determines and reflects the UN development system's contributions, shaping the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside a country.



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This article is written in the personal capacity of Valerie Julliand and Joseph Hincks and does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

Why the aid sector should adopt an intersectional approach: A case study of Indonesia

By Valerie Julliand and Joseph Hincks

Introduction

Looking out from the hillside above Jayapura City, in West Papua, the changes that have swept through Indonesia's fastest growing municipality are impossible to miss. The reflected lights of high-rise office buildings and hotel chains glitter in Yos Sudarso Bay below. The city has an international airport, a well-regarded university, movie theatres, and fast-food outlets. Yet here, at the urban heart of the region sometimes dubbed 'New Papua', Indigenous Papuans are now a minority population.

The Papua region comprises West Papua and Papua provinces – from which Indonesia's government created three new provinces through legislation the country's parliament approved in June 2022. Papua scored lowest among Indonesia's provinces on the 2021 Human Development Index, ranking 0.606. Yet the region's capital Kota Jayapura, with a population growth of more than 55% over the past decade, measured 0.801 on the same index.[1] That 'very high' score places Jayapura close to Java's economic centres in terms of human development. However, only a few kilometres inland the asphalt roads turn to dirt tracks, the forest swallows the streetlights, and the poverty rate skyrockets. Further inland, in regencies such as Nduga in Highland Papua, Indigenous Papuans make up the vast majority of the population. Here, the Human Development Index score is 0.3284 – not only the lowest in Indonesia, but among the lowest in the world.[2]

As Dr. Agus Sumule a senior lecturer in agricultural socioeconomics at The University of Papua, states in reference to Papua Highland, 'With the pace of development in Indonesia at the moment, it would take around 50 years for that new province to reach a human development score of 0.7'. A score of 0.7 is the minimum standard for 'high development'.

The vast inequalities between Jayapura and much of Papua are a microcosm of those that exist throughout the world's largest archipelago, comprising some 17,000 islands, of which about 6,000 are inhabited and home to an estimated 1,300 ethnic groups. These inequalities are influenced by geography, gender, youth, Indigenous identity, disability, HIV status, sexuality, and a range of factors not accounted for in the traditional development calculus. The need to understand how people's ability to live fulfilling lives is impacted by discrimination and disadvantage based on these intersecting factors gave rise to the Leaving No One Behind Study, launched by the United Nations in Indonesia in late 2021.[3] However, the fact that such studies are necessary to orient UN system interventions speaks to a greater challenge in terms of what

> *The vast inequalities between Jayapura and much of Papua are a microcosm of those that exist throughout the world's largest archipelago, comprising some 17,000 islands, of which about 6,000 are inhabited and home to an estimated 1,300 ethnic groups.*

the aid sector must do to ensure 'no one is left behind' – the transformative vow that underscores the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030. The aid sector must account for the way that relatively stable factors such as gender, ethnicity, disability and geography intersect to impact people's development prospects. It should also adopt an equity-based approach that ensures people who are discriminated against or otherwise disadvantaged enjoy equal opportunities. Without this, we cannot hope to remain true to Agenda 2030's promise.

By most metrics, Indonesia is a remarkable developmental success story. A combination of industrial development, natural resource exploitation, smart fiscal policy and a young labour force have helped drive the country's robust economic growth over the past two decades. Home to about 40% of the population of South-East Asia, it is the region's largest economy by a considerable margin.

Since the fall of dictator Suharto in 1998, Indonesia's poverty rate has nearly halved, and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has – aside from 2020 – risen each consecutive year. Indonesia briefly became an upper middle-income country in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 crisis and bounced back from a pandemic-related contraction in 2020 by posting GDP growth of 3.7% in 2021. Indonesia is already the world's fourth most populous nation, and President Joko Widodo says he expects the country to be the world's fourth largest economy by 2045.

Yet, viewing Indonesia through a purely macro-economic lens obscures the diversity of human experiences, opportunities and challenges in booming Jayapura and its impoverished outskirts, or earthquake-ravaged Palu, or Indigenous communities living around the palm oil plantations of South Kalimantan, or anywhere else across this vast archipelago.

For example, despite Indonesia's steadily rising GDP per capita, nearly 8 million Indonesian children under five, or 27.7%, were stunted in 2019 according to the World Bank.[4] And while macro-economic growth rebounded from 2020 to 2021, the proportion of people in extreme poverty increased over the same period as the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. Although Indonesian civil society groups have worked tirelessly to advance women's rights, leading to the long-delayed passage into law of

the Sexual Violence Bill in 2022, progress on gender equality is lagging in relation to much of the Asia-Pacific region. Indonesia ranks a lowly 92 out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap ranking[5], ahead only of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar among the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The importance of intersectional approaches to data collection

Bridging the development gap in any context is complicated by a lack of data. While Indonesia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 22 years ago, Antik Bintari – a researcher and lecturer at the Gender and Children Research Centre at Universitas Padjadjaran – argues in a recent editorial for the Jakarta Post that, 'It lacks the gender-differentiated data and information to thoroughly assess the situation and develop appropriate, evidence-based responses and policies'.[6]

Similar shortfalls constrain evidence-based policy making on disability, with a recent report from the International Labour Organization office in Jakarta noting, 'There is no accurate and comprehensive data regarding persons with disabilities in Indonesia'.[7] Meanwhile, although Indonesia is a signatory to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the government argues that the concept of Indigenous people is not applicable, as all Indonesians – with the exception of ethnic Chinese – are indigenous and therefore entitled to the same rights.[8] Accordingly, empirical evidence on how indigeneity impacts development is in short supply.

Map of Indonesia.

All those data deficits made the UN in Indonesia's Leaving No One Behind study necessary. It uses a mixture of systematic literature review, expert opinion and nationally representative data to calculate the risk of various disadvantaged groups being left behind compared to the general population. Being left behind is defined in terms of 24 development indicators across eight SDGs, ranging from literacy, mobile phone access and voting rights to health insurance coverage and housing conditions. As Professor Arief Anshory Yusuf of Padjadjaran University's SDGs Center – one of two economists leading the study – observes, 'We want to know who among Indonesians face severe or intersecting deprivations and disadvantages, or multiple forms of discrimination that make them likely to be the furthest left behind'.

Early indications from the study show that, on average, women living in disadvantaged regions of Indonesia are already being left behind in 10 of the 24 development indicators, with elderly people living in rural regions facing the same plight in 14 development indicators. Overall, the study identified living in a remote region as the most common factor raising a person's risk of being left behind when combined with other types of disadvantages. People living in rural regions are four times more likely to own no assets, twice as likely to live in inadequate housing, two times more vulnerable to food insecurity, and more than 2.6 times more likely to be illiterate.

However, a lack of disaggregated data means the study is limited in its conclusions. The UN in Indonesia had to rely on anecdotal evidence and focus groups to estimate how being a member of an Indigenous community, a person living with HIV, a lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/agender plus lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning (LGBTIQ+) and gender diverse person, or someone living in a post-conflict area, might intersect with age, geography, gender and disability status to influence development outcomes.

Still, the study's conclusions find stark validation in early evidence of how the socio-economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic landed hardest on already disadvantaged groups. For example, it exposed women's vulnerability to shocks in the labour market, particularly among informal workers, with UN Women finding that 36% of Indonesian women in informal employment in 2020 decreased their paid work time, compared with 30% of men in informal employment.[9]

Residents of Muara Prafi village in the Manokwari District of West Papua, preparing the soil to plant chillies. The project is being led by Mrs. Yuliana Isba with the assistance of fellow community members Fitri Mandacan, Marice Iba, Aplena Isba, Estepince Meidodga, and Mince Isba, as part of a partnership between the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The partnership, called Transformasi Ekonomi Kampung Terpadu (TEKAD) (Integrated Village Economic Transformation) is running in nine Eastern Indonesian provinces. Its activities are supervised by the village authoritative body with the help of a non-commissioned army officer stationed in the village.

Picture: Lustri Talimbekas, January 2023.

A study by Indonesia's National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) found that the pandemic had limited access to safe reporting for victims of abuse and made it difficult for partner organisations to assist victims and record cases, likely resulting in domestic violence being underreported.[10] Meanwhile, in a UNAIDS Indonesia survey conducted in August 2020, only 52% of 1,035 people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) across 196 regencies and cities in Indonesia had enough antiretroviral drugs to last a month, which is less than the World Health Organization's recommended level of three-to-six months of supply stock.[11] According to medical journal The Lancet, many Indonesian districts completely ran out of anti-retroviral therapy drugs in 2020, meaning tens of thousands of people living with HIV had to stop lifesaving treatment.[12]

Towards equitable and intersectional human development

The UN Development Programme's Human Development Index was crucial to differentiating UN development assessments from assessments undertaken by the World Bank, creating space to move beyond turgid indicators like GDP growth when assessing a country's progress. It enables development professionals to confidently claim that Indonesia's 11th richest province in 2021 – Papua, replete with natural resources and palm oil plantations – was also its least developed. The Multidimensional Poverty Index, introduced in 2010, adds nuances such as whether a person's house has an inside or outside water source, or an earth or concrete floor, thereby acknowledging that different forms of impoverishment require different policy responses.

However, as the UN in Indonesia's Leaving No One Behind Survey affirms, people who have the same access to health, education, financial services and housing can have wildly different opportunities and disadvantages related to inflexible aspects of their identity. Women, refugees, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse people, as well as other vulnerable groups, face more adverse consequences following disasters — a fact underscored by the inequitable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the escalating climate emergency.

The role of the UN/UN Indonesia in advancing equitable approaches to development

To ensure that UN interventions benefit society's most vulnerable, the UN system must consider more stable factors – such as gender and disability – in its programming. It must also – in accordance with the UN system-wide action plan on the rights of Indigenous peoples – facilitate dialogue and cooperation between state actors and Indigenous peoples, promoting the latter's participation in the global, regional and national processes affecting them, while taking into account Indigenous peoples' rights and views in line with international standards.[13] One way of achieving this could be to adjust or expand the Multidimensional Poverty Index, or alternatively create a new index that measures the impact of those fixed or inflexible factors on people's opportunities, disadvantages and development prospects.

UN agencies often focus on their individual mandates, but intersectionality requires a big picture approach.

As a key player in the process, the aid sector should adjust its approach in order to minimise the impact of intersectional disadvantages on a person's development prospects. That would mean effectively compensating for factors such as geography, ethnicity and indigeneity, as well as actively working to address the discrimination that contributes to those factors becoming inhibitions in the first place. This could include advocating that governments adopt an equity-based approach to supporting citizens, and ensuring equitable development is not sacrificed at the altar of economic growth.

Indeed, if we at the UN do not walk the talk on equity, our refrain of 'leaving no one behind' risks ringing hollow. The UN's internal evaluation scorecards on gender, disability and youth inclusion are a good starting point, advancing understanding of the needs of these demographics across such UN functions as accessibility, communications, human resources and recruitment, procurement, and information and communications technology provisioning. They also provide clear feedback on how UN country teams can better meet these needs.

In January 2022, based in part on shortcomings identified by the 2021 disability scorecard, the Resident Coordinator's Office in Indonesia implemented a disability inclusion project designed to improve accessibility in information and communications technology systems, human resources processes and support services. The project included a physical accessibility assessment in March 2022, with implementation of its recommendations beginning in the following summer. The UN's Business Operations Strategy framework ensures these recommendations can be implemented at scale across UN agencies in Indonesia, with a view to providing proof of concept that can be replicated across other UN country teams.

Intersectionality requires a big picture approach, beyond the individual mandates of any one UN agency. The UN in Indonesia's Leaving No One Behind study is a compelling example of how the UN can adopt intersectional analyses to advance programming that recognises the various structural barriers and intersecting identities hindering people-centred development in which the 'human person' is the central subject, participant and beneficiary of development. It is this holistic vision of development that is reflected in the transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks 'to realise the human rights of all' and is firmly anchored in human rights principles and standards, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties.

There is a long way to go before the development model currently applied globally can be truly considered equitable. The shortcomings that the UN in Indonesia's 2021 gender, youth and disability scorecards reveal and allow to be corrected serve as a reminder that true inclusivity requires a compulsory, rigorous framework – the implementation of which does not depend on an individual's level of knowledge concerning the field being assessed. In many ways, where the UN is today on disability is comparable to where we were a decade ago on gender.

There are few more critical tasks. Until we adjust our approach to ensure that being born in Jayapura or Highland Papua, Indigenous Papuan or Javanese, with or without a disability, are no longer determinants of a person's likelihood of living a rich and fulfilling life, the world's promise to leave no one behind will not escape the realm of rhetoric.

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Simon Richards

Simon Richards joined the Life & Peace Institute in 2018 and now serves as strategic advisor. He has over 30 years of experience in the field of peacebuilding across diverse international environments and organisations on the African continent – particularly in the Horn region – Asia and the Pacific. His technical work in fragile states, conflict-affected and post-conflict environments has focused on supporting peace processes and programming in the areas of conflict management, stabilisation and peacebuilding, through programme design, implementation and evaluation. He has also provided technical, policy and strategic advice to various stakeholders, including national and local governments, civil society organisations, contractors and the corporate sector (including the extractive industries).

Shale Mohammed Billow

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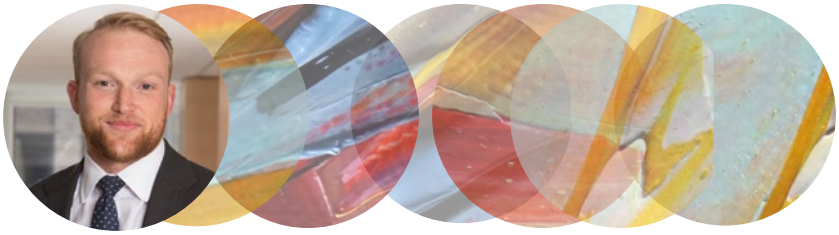

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The application of Intersectionality in Peacebuilding Praxis in Somalia

By Simon Richards, Shale Mohammed Billow and Aaron Stanley

Introduction

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) engages with 50 partners in six countries to support communities experiencing violent conflict. Our work links with multiple stakeholders to address conflict issues and respond to those experiencing violent conflict. LPI recognises that inclusive responses to structural causes of conflict require intersectional approaches. Yet, despite being identified as an example of a peacebuilding organisation integrating intersectionality into its approaches, we continue to grapple with the challenges of implementing this approach and the conceptual confusion related to its conflation and connection with other terms like inclusion, exclusion, marginalisation, power analysis and diversity.[1]

Intersectionality and points of confusion for LPI

We sometimes struggle to discern whether we are approaching a conflict from an intersectional perspective or merely recognising intersecting identities while emphasising inclusivity. What is the difference? Whereas intersectional approaches recognise the levels of power, privilege, societal hierarchy and systemic oppression present and attempt to address the structural and institutional experiences that result in these power differentials and systematic disadvantages, inclusivity – by including intersecting identities – attempts to bring diverse stakeholders into current structures and peace processes.[2] Inclusive approaches do not necessarily try to address the systemic disadvantages or power differentials within the process.

The case of male youth in Somalia provides an illustrative example of these challenges. Peacebuilding activities often include youth under the premise that they are key actors conducting violence and perpetuating conflict. With this framing, however, youth are considered homogeneously as being a single category. In the Somali context, however, due to security and financial distribution restrictions, internationally funded peacebuilding activities typically only reach formally organised urban youth. The groups that are engaged are those able to fulfil donor obligations, such as legal registration and audit requirements. While these activities do reach youth, they often miss those involved first-hand in the violence because these youth are not part of organised entities and are in rural areas. This includes youth responsible for looking after a clan's animals and who face clashes with other groups around water points or pastures.

Picture: Adobe stock photo

An intersectional lens breaks down the 'male youth' category to identify different distinctions and creates space for individuals to identify themselves differently based on their diverse experiences and backgrounds. From LPI's direct experience in the field, the 'warriors' in the rangelands consider themselves to be the 'custodians of clan identity' by defending the clan against the aggression of others. They are the first defenders that preserve the dignity and honour of the clan, often seeing themselves as the stewards of the critical resource and business foundation of the clan: livestock. In the eyes of such youth, urban male youth are 'softies' and so they look down on them. Conversely, urban young men generally see themselves as the elite intelligentsia and the future of the clan, and those best able to represent the clan in dialogues and other forums. By simply attempting to engage male youth, peacebuilding activities miss this important difference within the group, which is perpetuating conflict. The positions that the two groups hold, in this example, within the clan and vis-a-vis other clan members such as elders and women are subject to relational shifts and ambiguities. While an intersectional approach brings these differences to the fore, intersectional analysis is only the first step – how to actualise intersectionality in peacebuilding action is an additional challenge.

> *… the subtleties of intersectionality may sometimes appear to be a luxury, when considering the levels of needs of broader groupings in society.*

The international system's qualified support to, in this case, male youth who meet certain international donor and non-governmental organisation (NGO) criteria further complicates power relations. Urban male youth's greater ability to access funds and relationships both reinforces identities and exacerbates power differentials. This could also shift relative positions of power between the youth categories, with urban youth gaining status from obtaining donor resources. In turn, this affects their relations with other parts of society, such as elders who simultaneously condone and condemn rural warrior youth behaviour, and women, who express admiration and encouragement as well as condemnation.[3]

The challenge of implementing intersectionality is, then, twofold: firstly, how to practically identify the various intersectional power dynamics; and secondly, how to develop activities that can address conflict dynamics more successfully given these challenges and the associated cost, time and geographic spread implications.

The relevance of intersectionality

A further challenge to intersectional approaches is identifying how much intersectionality is enough and when intersectionality is useful. There may be cases when addressing power and inequality calls for a practical approach of accepting a more broadly defined group. The need to address the nuances of intersectionality may or may not be as important as being pragmatic in pushing forward the evolution of broader societal change. One LPI programme staff member pointed out that 'the subtleties of intersectionality may sometimes appear to be a luxury, when considering the levels of needs of broader groupings in society'.

An example can be found in the experience of LPI's support for the development of the Kismayo Women's Peace Platform, which was established in 2018 after a series of intra- and inter-clan dialogues between women from different clans and social groups within Kismayo. The dialogues' objective was to foster harmony and cohesion following the deep effects of conflict that had created enmity among them. The outcome of the dialogues was the creation of the Kismayo Women's Peace Platform, consisting of 39 women from diverse clans and social groups. Through a series of capacity-building exercises and efforts to connect them to power-holders, they were able to engage in positive and meaningful

peacebuilding in Kismayo. Development of the platform has enhanced their agency, allowing them to be more visible, effective and recognised by other stakeholders. During the process, LPI was focused on addressing the exclusion of women in peace processes and how the structural nature of power relations between women and elders are reinforced by the patriarchal nature of Somali society. This initiative required careful consideration of different sub-groupings, rather than simply identifying one group of 'women'.

Intersectionality theory identifies the different 'axes' that lead to the oppression of a person or a group. A single axis might be race or class, while a multiple-axes approach combines these identities – such as race *and* class – resulting in oppressions.[4] Recognising that the number of axes can continue ad infinitum, it appears as though there are three important areas of focus to delineate the scope: firstly, focusing on identities that are most consequential in the focus context; secondly, looking at identities that are most often overlooked; and, thirdly, identifying which identities people most want to reveal or conceal. This guidance provides a pragmatic approach to ensuring intersectionality is context specific and remains focused on the most marginalised.[5]

In this case, as support to the Kismayo Women's Peace Platform, LPI developed a participatory intersectional process that first examined intra-group dynamics and then integrated an inter-group perspective. The process can be likened to addressing intra-clan conflict dynamics before moving to inter-clan conflict dynamics. As a multi-axis approach, the process was lengthy.

The Life & Peace Institute regularly create opportunities for the communities to meet.
Picture: Life & Peace Institute

From the women's perspective, the process of undergoing training, working together, and developing and enhancing their capacities as individuals and as a group, was an important levelling process in breaking down perceived inequalities.

Initial steps in the selection of participants alone took months. Firstly, clan dynamics were taken into account. Both dominant and marginalised clans were included, with each clan able to propose five representatives. Other factors such as the mix of older, middle-aged and young women, including those of varying social statuses such as businesswomen, wives of elite politicians, representation from influential families, as well as low-income and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were also considered. An important point to note here is that all the individuals had different constituencies, and thus potential representational power. Still, they did not necessarily have exposure to peace processes or experiences beyond their community. The Kismayo Women's Peace Platform provided a springboard for individuals to extend their reach significantly. For example, one woman from a minority clan in Kismayo who previously only had narrow community-based experience was included in the delegations of women peace ambassadors advocating for achievement of the 30% women's representation quota in parliament.

Participants might reflect three layers of experience and marginalisation – for example, being a young woman, from a minority clan, and an IDP. A further consideration is the selection of diverse members not simply for the sake of diversity, but rather to create equality among the different women. One goal was to encourage empathy and create common experiences as a unit, with the intention of developing equality across the group and infusing the platform with the strength of multiple experiences and capacities. Participants could then draw on these strengths when tackling conflict and structural dynamics.

From the women's perspective, the process of undergoing training, working together, and developing and enhancing their capacities as individuals and as a group, was an important levelling process in breaking down perceived inequalities. At the beginning, there were women who had never stood in front of a group to present, or even at an individual level addressed people from other walks of life. It was reported that the initial perspective from the men during the two-year process was that these were just women 'doing women's things'. Rather than deeming the intersectional and potential differentiations between the women as significant, 'men' only saw 'women'. However, implementation of the Kismayo Women's Peace Platform action plan led to the men seeing changes, which altered their perceptions, with the elders realising the women had significant contributions to make to peacebuilding. This prompted their

expectation that the women should join their caucus and the council of elders – significantly, they actively started to accept and invite them into their structures. This established the principle and evidence that women have an important role to play in peacebuilding. It also built a foundation upon which the intersectional aspects of different women could be more fully explored.

Lessons from applying an intersectional approach

Tensions exist between intersectional approaches and societal norms: Intersectional approaches inherently come into tension with local norms as they focus on the most marginalised in society. Somali society is structured along age and clan groups, with each having responsibilities, expectations and power dynamics. The expectation is that individuals will abide by acceptable societal norms, with such norms also dictating how groups relate to each other. Depending on the context, they may or may not be in line with international peacebuilding strategies. In recognising the efficacy of customary institutions and their important societal role, peacebuilding organisations must grapple with how to integrate intersectional approaches into systems that, in the Somali context, have perpetuated marginalisation. For example, inclusion in, and acceptance of, sustainable peace activities by all members of society is critical to their achievement. However, this is challenged if participating communities firmly believe that peace-making is only the role of elders and should not involve women or youth. There is a potential clash of values.

Change requires space to shift power dynamics. In the case of Somalia, women and youth are not considered equal to male elders, and this has a strong influence on the power dynamics of community reconciliation and peacebuilding processes. Women and youth are excluded from customary institutions critical for peace-making. As a result, peace programmes have to walk a fine line as they work within societal norms while supporting inclusion and changing structures in ways that remove marginalising practices. If a peacebuilding organisation oversteps and pushes for change too quickly, or imposes perceived external values on the community, it risks rejection and failure. In a worst-case situation, the organisation may lose legitimacy and its ability to operate –without respect and access to all stakeholders, it will not be able to function. There is a risk that when introducing concepts like intersectionality to stimulate this evolution, external actors may inadvertently create resistance and backlash, ending up reinforcing societal norms.

The importance of contextual understanding of intersectionality: Our experience indicates that a lesson common to all aspects of social change and conflict transformation is the need to conduct a context analysis considering intersectionality. LPI has adopted elements of intersectionality into a 'power analysis' framework. Shifting from a context analysis to a power analysis has allowed us to be mindful of prevailing conflict and peace dynamics, include power dimensions that empower or exclude different groups, and consider how different groups experience peace and conflict in relation to each other and institutions. This enables stakeholders to identify what needs to change structurally and how to go about it.

Intersectional approaches are inherently process-oriented: Taking an intersectional approach is process-oriented and requires more time than traditional peacebuilding approaches. Stakeholder communities need to be prepared for change and accepting of the process. The development of the Kismayu Women's Peace Platform aimed to create structural change in small but significant ways, by attempting to create space for greater inclusivity of women in peace processes. It was a two-year process of continuous dialogue and work to achieve this level of change. Here, capacitating and empowering individual women, in doing so bringing together diversity and social status to form a cohesive unit, was critical. In this case, success hinged on enhancing the combination of individual and collective agency.

Incremental and parallel change processes lead to success: Within the group of women, discussions and dialogues were conducted at length on topics such as marginalisation, identity and their different experiences in order to develop trust and empathy. The marginalised groups received training to build their skills and knowledge, thereby strengthening their capacity within the process. This improved acceptance of them as positive contributors to peace, serving as a levelling process within the women and allowing the group to create a common agreed action plan addressing societal conflict more effectively.

Despite some aspirational actions being proposed that were well beyond the ambit or ability of the group to address, the process created a common vision and cohesion. Simultaneously, LPI lobbied power-holders – the local authorities and male clan elders – to develop space for the women to engage with them.

Picture: Adobe stock photo

Even if donors introduce intersectional concepts and approaches into their processes, it to some extent assumes a country's aid infrastructure is structured so as to be able to absorb funds and use them in ways that appropriately reflect intersectionality.

This parallel process of influencing the space controlled by power-holders while empowering the disadvantaged to use their space effectively, lifted the participating women's stature in society, both as a unit and as individuals. Moreover, it shifted the power dynamics away from the group having to directly challenge power-holders to instead creating space for them to be invited into power spaces.[6]

Curating the right voices and actions for change is critical: Supporting a group of marginalised women to prepare themselves, find a level of consensus, and develop a plan forward is a useful approach for actualising intersectionality (as illustrated in this example). Strategically choosing 'acceptable' voices for change in traditional societies is key to achieving the desired result. In the case of the Kismayo Women's Peace Platform, developing strength in numbers and increased organisation was critical. The women were able to support each other to achieve change by bringing on board those already with a voice in the community to inspire others. They engaged a broad range of voices, drawing on their reach into different constituencies and facilitating mutual understanding of their intersectional experiences. This provided space for developing equality within the dialogue process, as the voices of women with experience were used to inspire others, creating a strong force for advocacy and agency in the Kismayu Women's Peace Platform. In the process, the community created the possibility of structural change outside their own initial spheres of influence.

The role of intermediary agencies in the implementation of intersectionality

As alluded to in the example of urban and rural youth above, aid distribution can influence power dynamics both positively and potentially negatively (though this may not be immediately apparent). Even if donors introduce intersectional concepts and approaches into their processes, it to some extent assumes a country's aid infrastructure is structured so as to be able to absorb funds and use them in ways that appropriately reflect intersectionality. In Somalia, the landscape consists mainly of a few international and a large number of local NGOs. Challenges for donors in accessing locations outside Mogadishu and the secured areas of Somalia's major cities, as well as language and contextual barriers, further challenge the ability of aid actors to genuinely implement an intersectional approach.

In part as an attempt to mitigate these challenges, LPI has taken on the role of 'intermediary' in certain cases. As such, LPI's Somali team – with its close connections to broader civil society and community peacebuilding organisations, greater freedom of movement and access, and lack of language or cultural barriers – is able to work with formal and, importantly, informal Somali organisations to distribute funds and provide project accompaniment. Through multiple donor frameworks, such as partnership agreements and third-party granting, LPI is able to sub-grant funds to community-based organisations in ways that are inclusive and take into consideration intersectional dynamics.[7] For example, in a United Nations-funded project implemented in Baidoa, LPI partnered with the Somali organisation Somali Peace Line and were able to engage IDPs with varying overlapping identity categories with other residents of the city in Sustained Dialogue processes that also contained community development opportunities.[8]

While LPI's intermediary approach is one way to begin to address the aid restrictions impacting intersectional approaches, other organisations such as the Network for Empowered Aid Response have established community funds that are facilitating community-led participatory processes.[9] While each of these models have their merits as well as challenges, they point to opportunities for addressing current limitations within aid structures.

Intermediary agencies are also often better placed to take an intersectional approach through attempting to change structural power dynamics. In Somalia, this requires great understanding and sensitivity. It is LPI's experience that intermediaries can serve as innovating stakeholders when developing new mechanisms for testing alternative intersectional approaches. Ideally, this requires a shift in aid structures, which need to demonstrate greater flexibility towards process-oriented change, longer funding periods, and a willingness to take risks with the provision of funds to suitably accountable and monitored third parties. Otherwise, there is a danger of only paying lip service to the concept, while reinforcing the current structural norms of aid. Intermediaries have a delicate role when it comes to supporting social change at the community level while simultaneously managing donor expectations.

International NGOs are often complicit with donors in creating unrealistic expectations of change. The competitive aspect of funding application processes tends to encourage organisations to be overly optimistic about expected results and outcomes in an attempt to be selected over other organisations. Intermediaries can also assist in evidence gathering, providing examples of the benefits from intersectional approaches. This can then help reinforce and consolidate positive changes in the community. For example, without seeing the practical benefits of women's participation in peace processes it is unlikely power-holders in Somalia would have been prepared to invite participation in their spaces. Moreover, such evidence can help influence donors by demonstrating the benefits of more flexible and longer-term funding practices. This requires continuous engagement and time to change norms and their associated power dynamics and achieve their acceptance.

Conclusion

LPI's experiences in Somalia suggests that intersectionality can bring a nuance to peacebuilding that effectively connects people across communities. However, an intersectional approach requires additional effort and time, as it involves the transformation of power dynamics and existing social norms. These types of changes also require efforts that are beyond the scope of any one donor or NGO and need long time horizons, which is contrary to how the current aid system operates in project cycles.

Intersectional approaches are further limited by the way donors assess risk, which affects who can receive funds, as well as – due to security concerns – movement and access. Even if these barriers were removed, implementing nuanced intersectional approaches is difficult, requiring both cultural sensitivity and commitment. In this regard, donors and intermediaries need to intentionally team up to test new models, be willing to fail and learn from the experience, and deepen the discussion of intersectionality and the constraints/limits of its application in different arenas.

Notes:

1 Nicolas Larnerd, 'The Path to Intersectional Peacebuilding: An Ontology of Oppression ASEAN and Myanmar', European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Panteion University, 2021, http://dx.doi.org/10.25330/1279.

2 A good analogy in this field can be seen in the 'getting to yes' or 'win–win' approach in mediation processes. The example often given within this approach is that it is important to understand each conflict party's underlying interests when approaching the negotiation. This can be illustrated by the example of both parties wanting an orange. Here, it happily turns out that one party wants the flesh of the orange, while the other wants the skin. However, in reality both parties usually want the whole orange – which is why they are in conflict!

3 Life & Peace Institute, Peace Direct and Somali Women Solidarity Organisation, 'Women, Conflict and Peace: Learning from Kismayo', 2018, www.peacedirect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Kismayo_Report_WEB2-April-2018.pdf.

4 See, for example, Ahri Gopaldas, 'Intersectionality 101', *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 32/1 (2013), pp. 90–94.

5 This inference is drawn from a consideration of points found within a number of publications, including: UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and UN Women, 'Intersectioanlity Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind', 2022, www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit.; Olena Hankivsky, 'Intersectionality 101', Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy, Simon Fraser University, April 2014; and Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Leslie McCall, 'Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis', *Signs*, 38/4 (Summer 2013), pp. 785–810, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/669608.

6 While not necessarily an intersectional dimension, the longer-term consequences from this approach have not only been felt in the women's role in community-level peace processes, but also in increased in recruitment of women for government positions as the unit has interacted and lobbied for change with senior government officials.

7 Groups that represent intersectional dynamics are often not formally registered and may be more informal in nature, meaning they may not be eligible to access donor funds directly.

8 Life & Peace Institute, 'Peace Financing Case Study', October 2022, https://life-peace.org/resource/peace-financing-case-study/.

9 For examples of such community funds, visit www.near.ngo/the-change-fund and https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/grats/grn-0000272/.

UNITED NATIONS
MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND
FOR SUSTAINING PEACE

The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia is a tripartite tool made up of the Colombian government, the United Nations System, and donor nations. Its goal is to coordinate investments from the international community with national priorities in terms of efforts to implement the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP in 2016. The Fund finances four main areas based on the Final Agreement dispositions: Victims and Transitional Justice, Stabilization in the Regions, Reintegration of Former Combatants, and Communication about implementation progress.

Peacebuilding with an intersectional approach: Experiences from the Colombian Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace

By The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia

Introduction

The year 2021 marked five years since implementation of the final Peace Agreement between the Colombian state and the now-disarmed FARC-EP (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) guerrilla group began. The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia (hereinafter the Fund) is a tripartite mechanism between the Colombian government, the UN and 17 donors[1], with the participation of civil society. The Fund became a central mechanism for financing implementation of the Peace Agreement, and over the 2016–21 period reached 250 projects and more than 2 million Colombians, with a particular focus on the areas most affected by the conflict.

The Colombian Peace Agreement aims to address the underlying causes of the conflict in the country, including poverty, the high concentration of ownership of productive land, and exclusion from social and economic welfare for certain demographic groups, such as indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, women, and the rural population. Overall, the conflict has its roots in a series of intersectional discriminations and oppressions that historically exist in the country, and this implies that peace can only be achieved by generating the necessary conditions for all Colombians to be able to enjoy their basic human rights.

It is in this context that the Fund's peacebuilding vision has been based on attaining multiple results simultaneously. It is rooted in the Colombian state's efforts to eliminate barriers to accessing individual rights, support the reintegration process of ex-combatants, consolidate transitional justice, bring comprehensive reparations for victims of the conflict, and rebuild the social fabric. This multi-pronged focus has been possible thanks to the advantages this mechanism has in terms of channelling resources in a flexible and innovative manner, while articulating the efforts from different actors.

Intersectionality requires flexibility: Formulating and implementing visions to leave no one behind

Flexibility is one of the main advantages of the Fund's mechanism as it supports funding that is adaptable in terms of timescales, working areas, involved actors, and design and implementation methodologies. This strategy has allowed the Fund to include practices that favour an intersectional approach to peacebuilding, while simultaneously supporting individual and community

With an innovative, bottom-up methodology, the communities have – for the first time in the country's history – set the agenda for transforming their territories.

empowerment. For example, the Fund encourages communities to design and implement the interventions that will take place in their territories. This is in line with an intersectional approach because it gives individuals the opportunity to identify – using their personal experiences – causes that generate vulnerability and propose actions they deem necessary for transforming their reality.

In order to contribute to this purpose, the Fund supported the formulation of Territorially Focused Development Plans (PDET is the Spanish acronym). These instruments are described in the first point of the Peace Agreement, which states that they will prioritise actions for the implementation of the Peace Agreement which transform causes of inequality and vulnerability in the municipalities most affected by the conflict. At the same time, this strategy also modifies the power relationships that exclude communities from decision-making and the formulation of public policies in the country (see Box 1). With an innovative, bottom-up methodology, the communities have – for the first time in the country's history – set the agenda for transforming their territories. These plans are the results of dialogues between community leaders, social actors, institutions, the private sector, universities and civil society organisations, who together developed their own visions for peacebuilding in their territories.

In 2018, the Fund supported the formulation and implementation of the PDET for Chocó through a UN interagency strategy together with Pastoral Social Caritas Colombia – a civil society organisation.[2] In this process, UN agencies in the fields of humanitarian work, protection and development came together to create joint analysis, planning and implementation processes for sustainable peacebuilding actions.

The strategy developed had three objectives: 1) promoting community participation in the designing of the PDET using an ethnic approach[3]; 2) the improvement of access to basic health and sanitary services, and community infrastructure; and 3) the increase of income for families through improving production capacities, market access and value chains. All actions had a gender-sensitive approach, took into consideration the specific characteristics of Afro-Colombian communities, and worked with their political-administrative organisations (called 'community councils').[4]

Another critical element of the strategy design was to eliminate the main barriers to participation facing Afro-Colombian communities when formulating a PDET. In the case of rural Afro-Colombian women, specific actions were generated to overcome vulnerabilities, with interventions focused on female-heavy poverty by promoting economic independence. They addressed the labour of care which hindered female participation in decision-making spaces, through supporting day-care centres for their children. Moreover, the process, in responding to the lack of self-confidence and knowledge about participation and leadership, strengthened capacities for the inclusion of their proposals in the PDET. Risks of Gender-based violence (GBV) were addressed through the joint creation of prevention/attention channels by institutions, communities and women's organisations (see Box 3).

Box 1: Colombia Territorially Focused Development Plans: An unprecedented participatory planning tool.

The Territorially Focused Development Plans (PDET) are a special 15-year planning and management instrument, with the objective of stabilising and transforming the territories most affected by violence, poverty, illicit economies and institutional weakness. It is one of the most inclusive planning processes with 170 prioritised municipalities. The community planning dialogues included the participation of more than 200,000 people.

Communities and social actors formulated more than 32,000 actions aimed at closing gaps in the following areas:

1. social codes for rural property and land use;
2. infrastructure and land adaptation;
3. rural health;
4. education and early infancy;
5. housing, drinking water and basic rural sanitation;
6. economic reactivation and agricultural production;
7. systems for the progressive guarantee of the right to food; and
8. reconciliation, coexistence and peacebuilding.

This strategy provides the foundation for applying an intersectional focus to peacebuilding practices, as the analysis carried out to prioritise these municipalities and identify their main needs highlighted the unequal power relationships that have kept these communities in a position of vulnerability. Furthermore, the populations expressed their needs, and it was the citizens who decided which actions were the right ones to satisfy those needs, given that they would experience the effects of intersectional discriminations or oppressions.

This approach gave a voice to Afro-Colombian communities traditionally marginalised in planning processes and ensured rural Afro-Colombian women's voices were included. In line with this paradigm shift, communities were responsible for designing their own development visions, with the Fund promoting implementation of initiatives defined by local organisations and 'community councils'. To do this, the necessary conditions for delivery of small grants were facilitated, and organisations were strengthened to access these resources.

While increasing grassroots organisations' capacity for executing projects is important, building their capacity to analyse the problems of their communities with an intersectional approach is even more so. In order to meet both these goals, the Fund promotes a working network of civil society organisations, encouraging the partners with greater experience to support those less experienced in implementing projects.

Comprehensive projects for comprehensive transformation

The implementation of isolated interventions described in Box 2 would have been insufficient in overcoming barriers to participation in a region like Chocó. We have learnt that it is extremely difficult to finance processes with an intersectional approach without using comprehensive interventions that support individuals to simultaneously overcome several intersectional disadvantages and the resultant barriers they face. Using an intersectional approach requires contextual and conflict analysis, which generally does not fit very well in contemporary peacebuilding, humanitarian or development settings. Therefore, it is necessary to promote actions that ensure the greatest number of intersectional disadvantages are covered, something that is only possible if communities and local actors contribute to project formulation. In the case of Colombia, the Fund's capacity to articulate the efforts of various actors and align them strategically to achieve wide-reaching transformation has been key to maintaining this practice.

It should also be noted that a territory's geopolitical characteristics determine its level of development or underdevelopment. In turn, these factors define specific intersectional discrimination structures that affect individuals living

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The signing of the Peace Agreement in Colombia represented a space for collective reflection on intersectional discrimination, which caused the marginalisation of certain demographic groups and led to violence and conflict.

in such areas. This highlights the importance of including a territorial approach in intersectional analysis that takes into consideration the geopolitical and cultural diversity of a country like Colombia.

The Fund focused its efforts on generating interventions financed across the humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) nexus in Chocó, a region where – due to the structural racism present in Colombian society – the Afro-Colombian population is one of the most vulnerable and marginalised in the country. In backing the PDET, the Fund supported a new programme with 37 community-based organisations, eight 'community councils', the national government's Agency for Territorial Renewal and four UN agencies (the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Food Programme (WFP), UN Women and UNICEF). The programme was developed – and is now being implemented in two municipalities in Chocó (Ríosucio and Carmen del Darien) – based on community and institutional consultations, which guarantees that it addresses the needs of demographic groups such as children, youths and adolescents, women, the rural population, victims of the conflict, and the elderly.

Lessons learnt show that the inclusion of various actors allows for the collation of knowledge on how to generate transformation that contributes to eliminating intersectional barriers, while also ensuring commitment to the structural changes needed to achieve this objective. For example, as part of this intervention, government entities, UN agencies and communities carried out joint studies to identify the main factors behind school dropout figures in Chocó. With this information, actions were designed by each of these actors to contribute to closing the gaps that lead to children and young people abandoning their studies.

An intersectional dialogue to achieve paradigm shifts

The signing of the Peace Agreement in Colombia represented a space for collective reflection on intersectional discrimination, which caused the marginalisation of certain demographic groups and led to violence and conflict. The work carried out by the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition (SIVJRNR) – in particular, by the Truth Commission in the creation of

its report – has allowed Colombian society to recognise the power relationships that feed conflicts, as well as the differential effects of these conflicts on various, traditionally deprived, demographic groups.[9] In addition, to back this effort, the Fund supported not only the Truth Commission, but also the civil society organisations that worked alongside SIVJRNR entities to give communities a voice in the recounting and analysis of events that took place during the conflict.

For example, the Fund financed a project led by the Colombian Lawyer's Commission – a civil society organisation – promoting participation in SIVJRNR entities by 124 community councils in Chocó. The communities carried out investigative work, which led to a report being delivered to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and the Truth Commission, as well as an interactive tool summarising their histories.[10] The report was written, using the communities' voices, historic narratives and experiences, as a primary source of information and recounts the differential impacts of the conflict on these rural Afro-Colombian communities.

Box 2: Coping with intersectional oppressions: The case of Chocó, Colombia

Chocó is located in Western Colombia, bordering Panama, and has the largest Afro-Colombian population in the country. The community experiences Colombia's highest levels of multidimensional poverty[5] (62.8%) and unmet basic needs (65.5%).[6] Due to its strategic location, Chocó is a corridor for drug and human trafficking, as well as the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Furthermore, illegal armed groups – such as the National Liberation Army (ELN), dissident FARC-EP groups and criminal organisations – continue to operate in the region.

The local Afro-Colombian population has the country's lowest average level of education and the highest levels of illiteracy and is the community least likely to graduate from each educational level compared to the national population.[7] The 2018 national census showed that 14.3% of the Afro-Colombian population obtained a university degree, compared to a national average of 18.8%. This inequality is further evidenced in the context of livelihoods and general quality of life. A study on racism and segregation in Colombia indicates that being Afro-Colombian increases the chances of having a low-quality job by 2.8%.[8] Similarly, job stability for Afro-Colombians is 13.7%, while job stability for the rest of the population is 53.9%. The unemployment rate among these women is 19.8%, while for men the figure is 7.9%. These figures are reflected in the percentage of women over 15-years old who do not have their own income – a figure that stands at 36.3% compared to 11.8% for men.

Luz Nery Salon is a single mother of four living in a rural area of Chocó's Ríosucio municipality. Her family faces a series of vulnerabilities and challenges, such as access to education, because their time is dedicated to generating income. There is limited access to health services due to a lack of hospitals in Chocó's rural areas, and existing facilities are not properly equipped.

Moreover, there is a shortage of formal employment to generate income and improve quality of life. A woman without a steady income is unable to own a dwelling or land. She could also face a risk of domestic violence and feminicide due to the lack of programmes to prevent or deal with such occurrences. In addition, her children face the risk of low education and forced recruitment by criminal groups.

Luz Nery participates in a project financed by the Fund that seeks to economically empower communities and strengthen the social fabric for reconciliation. She is currently working on the construction of a road that will facilitate the sale of products from her community, as well as easing movement for people to access health and education services.

Local organisations are carrying out activities to enhance reconciliation and coexistence that foster preservation of Afro-Colombian culture and help integrate communities, with a particular focus on working with young people and children at risk of being recruited by criminal groups. Similarly, there are programmes at the school attended by Luz Nery's children aimed at preventing them from dropping out, and support is being given to construction of a university in order that they can continue their studies after secondary school. Furthermore, in the municipality where the family lives, local institutions are being trained to apply a gender-sensitive approach to their actions, raising awareness among civil servants and creating institutional protocols. Psychological and legal support is also being provided to victims of GBV, and women's organisations are being trained in supporting processes of prevention and attention relevant to this type of violence.

Luz Nery Salon pictured at the road construction site where she works (photo courtesy of UNDP, Colombia).

The leading role played by international cooperation in promoting these inclusive dialogues as part of peacebuilding is evident. Through the dialogues, communities can take ownership of the analysis and intersectional practices. This ensures they are the ones leading the changes in culture and beliefs vital to eliminating discrimination structures and barriers to rights access.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that peacebuilding requires a holistic view and adaptive learning capable of generating alternatives and empowering communities to design/materialise their own visions for peace, development and security. If our analysis methodologies are vertical and absolute, it is unlikely they will entirely discover the real vulnerabilities faced by individuals, which will also impede the designing of actions that can truly transform discrimination structures.[11]

Therefore, the first step to applying an intersectional approach to international cooperation should be posing the following questions: Which of our means of approaching social problems do not promote the empowerment of marginalised communities? How can we approach communities' needs and expectations without bias or privilege? And how can we innovate to transform the prevailing power relationships perpetuated by patriarchal, neoliberal and colonialist systems?[12]

Photo courtesy of UNDP/MPTFO Colombia.

Box 3: Barriers to intersectional participation identified for rural, Afro-Colombian women in Chocó, and actions financed by the Fund to overcome them

Disadvantages or vulnerabilities caused by intersectional discrimination	Actions implemented by the Fund-financed project in Chocó
Female-heavy poverty: Concerns over income generation impede women from participating in social or political processes, or taking on leadership roles, because the person providing for them – generally their husband – forbids it.	**Promotion of economic independence:** Women have started businesses to generate steady incomes and learnt how to efficiently manage household finances.
Lack of access to basic services: Women cannot participate or provide effective leadership if their basic needs are not met.	**Working with public institutions to promote women's access to basic services.**
Lack of safe meeting spaces: Women are unable to travel long distances, whether because of care responsibilities, because they lack the means to do so, or because their husbands forbid it.	**Building safe, local community meeting spaces for women.**
Traditional labour of care: Care responsibilities prevent women to participate in additional activities.	**Day-care centres with staff specialised in caring for children.**
Lack of self-confidence/knowledge of participation and leadership: Communities in territories like Chocó are unfamiliar with public policy formulation or participation in how such policy is designed. For women, the opportunity to participate is even more remote, as their voices are traditionally discounted in public decision-making processes, where men have a dominant role.	**Strengthening women's confidence and their potential for leadership:** Working alongside women to design and include their initiatives in the PDET in Chocó's municipalities.
Risk of GBV and lack of mechanisms for dealing with this type of aggression: In vulnerable communities, violence against women is normalised and there are no institutional attention channels. Participation in public decision-making processes may increase a woman's risk of becoming victim to violence, thereby discourage them from participating.	**Construction of GBV prevention and attention channels:** Working alongside government entities to generate prevention/attention channels and raise awareness among men and women of GBV and new forms of masculinity.

Notes:

1 The donors are 14 countries (Canada, Chile, United Kingdom, Finland, Germany, Ireland, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, and United Arab Emirates), two UN funds (the Peace Building Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund) and a philanthropic organisation.

2 https://caritascolombiana.org/, accessed on 14 April 2023.

3 The ethnic approach involves identifying protection gaps and risks for ethnic communities, as well as developing tools that provide solutions, promote equitable participation, and help in the planning and implementation of affirmative measures based on systematic characterisations.

4 A community council is an administrative entity that manages a designated area of Colombian territory. The most common type of community council can be found in Afro-Colombian territories, with communities planning and implementing policies in line with their own customs and worldview.

5 Colombia has two official indicators for measuring poverty: 1) monetary poverty; and 2) the multidimensional poverty index. The latter establishes households with deprivations according to five basic wellbeing factors: 1) educational conditions; 2) conditions of children and young people; 3) work; 4) health; and 5) domestic public services and housing. For more information, see: https://acortar.link/8u91Zp.

6 The unsatisfied basic needs methodology determines, with the help of some simple indicators, if a population's basic needs are being met. Groups that do not meet a minimum threshold are classified as 'poor'.

7 Luis Granja, 'Inclusión social de la población estudiantil afrodescendiente: Experiencia de un colectivo de estudiantes universitarios', *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 27/2 (2021). (Spanish text only.)

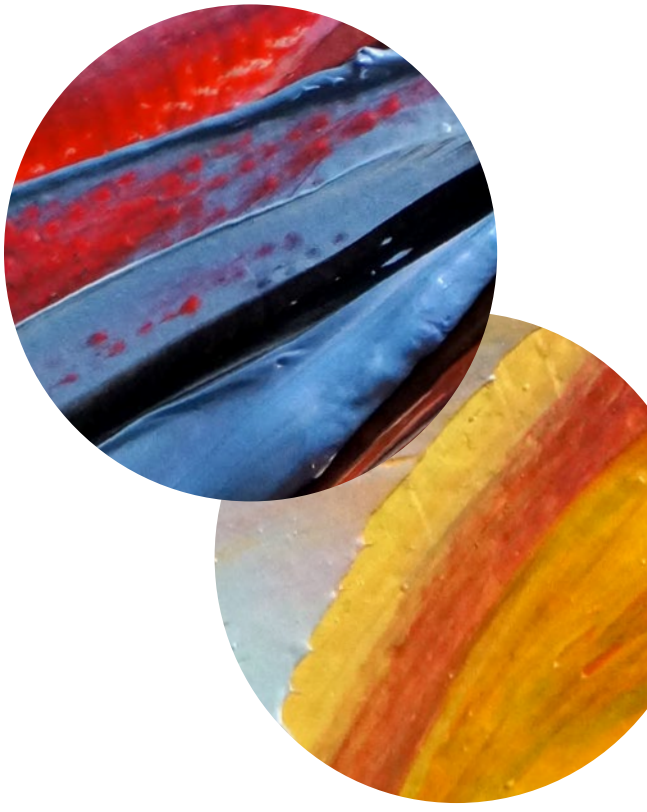
8 Martínez Tovar et al., 'Racismo y segregación en Colombia: Salud, educación y trabajo en la población afrodescendiente del Pacífico' [Racism and segregation in Colombia: Health, Education and work in the African-descent population of the pacific], *Trans-Pasando Fronteras*, 16 (2020).

9 The SIVJRNR is made up of the following entities: 1) the Truth Commission; 2) the Special Jurisdiction for Peace; and 3) the Search Unit for Missing Persons. The Fund supported the consolidation of these institutions, their joint work, and their cooperation with civil society.

10 Comisicón Colombiana de Juristas (CCJ) and El Consejo Comunitario Mayor de la Asociación Campesina Integral del Atrato (COCOMACIA) (note 2). (Spanish text only.)

11 Awid, 'Intersectionality: A Tool for Gender and Economic Justice', Women's Rights and Economic Change Facts & Issues no. 9, August 2004, www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/intersectionality_a_tool_for_gender_and_economic_justice.pdf.

12 This article was generally informed by the following three texts: M. Iza, 'Interseccionalidad y construcción de paz territorial en Colombia: Análisis desde el caso de las mujeres de Buenaventura', *Ciudad Paz-ando*, 11/2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.14483/2422278X.13757; Angela J. Lederach, 'Youth provoking peace: An intersectional approach to territorial peacebuilding in Colombia', *Peacebuilding* 8/2 (2020); and UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and UN Women, 'Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind', 2021, www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit.



Peride Blind

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This article is written in Peride Blind's personal capacity and does not necessarily reflect the views of the UN.

Funding Compact as a Logical Framework: Intersectionality-Nexus Dynamics

By Peride Blind

Introduction

The accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demands integrated policies. The Funding Compact[1] – a non-binding instrument based on voluntary commitments by Member States and United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) entities in their pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – offers a framework for such integrated, coherent and cohesive policymaking. Can the humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) nexus, also referred to as the triple nexus or cross-pillar coordination approach to programming at a macro-level, create an impetus for this logical framework to work at its best?

This paper explores the relationship between programming developed across the HDP nexus and the application of intersectional analyses in the UN System. It asks whether the principles that underpin the Funding Compact Agreement can enable the integration of intersectional analyses within UN joint programmes across the HDP nexus. The analysis does this in three ways. Firstly, it delves into their conceptual constructs to posit meaningful bridges between the two. Secondly, it explores whether nexus and intersectional approaches co-occur in a sample of 71 joint UN programmes (2004–26). Thirdly, it connects the findings to the principles of predictable, flexible and long-term policymaking within the Funding Compact. The paper concludes that intersectional approaches and nexus thinking go together in UN joint programming, and that compliance with the Funding Compact Principles can strengthen their synergetic dynamics towards the transformative change required to meet the principle of leaving no one behind.

Intersectionality and triple nexus: Conceptual linkages

Prominent anthropologist Clifford Geertz[3] sees the Balinese cockfight as providing essential insight into the psyche of the Balinese people – a social matrix of their cultural portrait. Accordingly, 'assumed givens' such as region, kin, religion, language and social practice create sentimental attachments and can only mutate with great strain.

Intersectionality – as already defined in various shapes and forms in this volume – can shed light on where, when and how these mutations might come about as race/ethnicity, indigenous background, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status and religion interact in connected power structures.[4]

A nexus bundle is a set of actions that deliberately targets a group of people to improve their conditions on more than one dimension.

The eight core 'enablers'[5] of intersectionality, as defined by the 'UN Women Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit', can act as guideposts for how cross-pillar coordination can invite intersectional approaches to programming in harmony with the Funding Compact's principles. The eight enablers are: 1) **reflexivity** over one's own biases, cognisant of the impact of 2) **time and space** on these very biases; 3) considerations of **relational power** as well as 4) **dignity, choice and autonomy** over who makes decisions for themselves and for others in different situations; 5) reflections over **intersecting identities** and 6) **diversity of knowledge**, with a predisposition to learn from anyone and everyone; 7) **accessibility** and **universal design** to eliminate barriers to participation, including of physical, transportation, information and communication; and 8) a willingness to address inequalities by transforming resource production and distribution structures based on **transformative and rights-based approaches**. These enablers are also where cross-pillar coordination could function at its best.

Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace plans actions. A nexus approach to programming seeks to strengthen the collaboration, coherence and complementarity of actions to create long-term impact on the lives of affected populations. Nexus is not joint programming – it is a way of thinking and acting with an explicit purpose to capitalise on the comparative advantages of each pillar to reduce vulnerability, manage risk and strengthen the resilience of communities. It includes coordination, programming and financing – jointly and yet without merging – to anticipate crises, prepare for disaster and prevent conflict, while continuously striving for the shared goal of positive self-sustaining peace.[6] The ultimate goal is one of leaving no one behind.

In practice, a triple-nexus approach – described in technical terms as promoting a '**bundle-array conceptualisation**' – may present an opportune entry point for the enablers of intersectional analysis. A **nexus bundle** is a set of actions that deliberately targets a group of people to improve their conditions on more than one dimension.

Figures 1 and 2 (opposite)**:** Intersectional approaches applied to the bundles and arrays of the nexus.

Source: Figure 2 created by the author. Figure 1 adapted from Paul Howe, 'The triple nexus: A potential approach to supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?', World Development 124 (2019).

Note: Other dimensions that can be added include defenders of human rights, the incarcerated, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/agender plus (LGBTQ+) persons, the unemployed. Age includes both youth and elderly. Gender includes all denominations. Migration status includes refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, irregular migrants, stateless, internally displaced persons. Locality includes rural, remote, marginalised areas. Bundles/array figure adapted from Howe.[9]

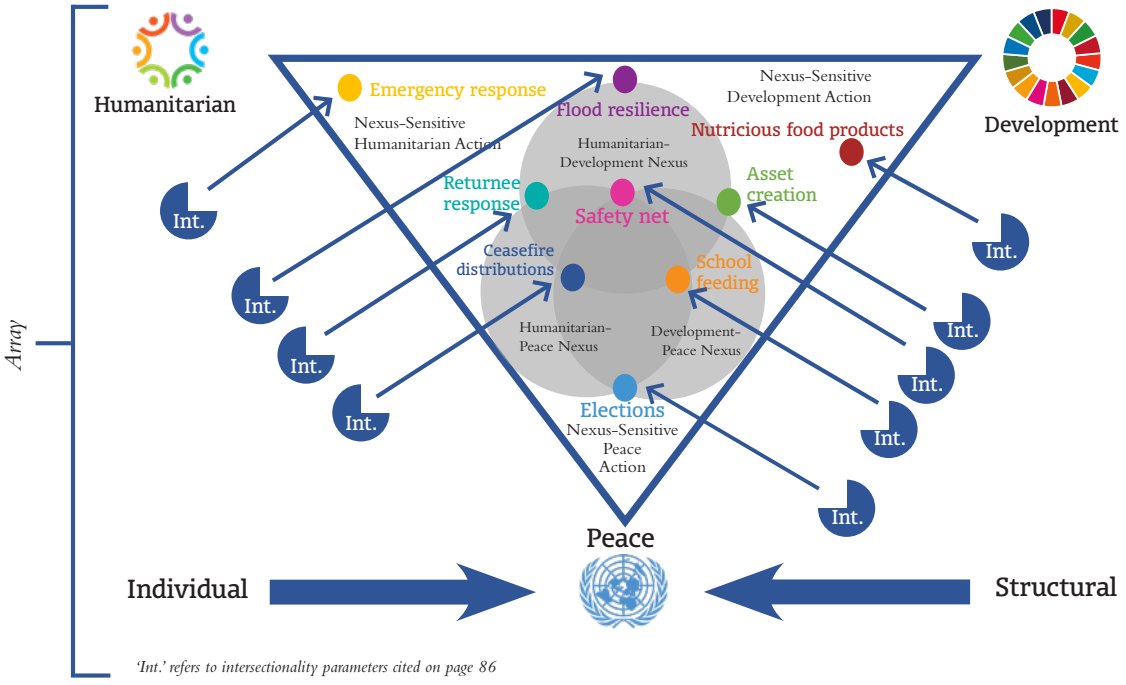


Figure 1: Nexus-Intersectionality Bundles Entry Points.

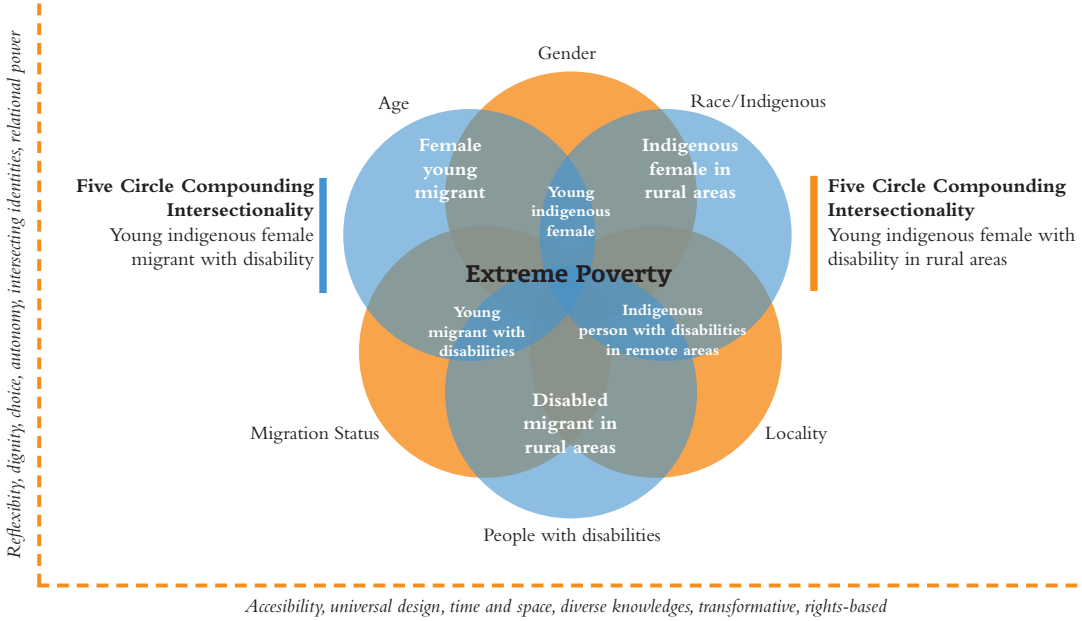


Figure 2: Six Circle Compounding Intersectionality.

For example, in developing programming to address the needs of internally displaced persons, efforts such as food assistance (humanitarian), together with land allocation (development) and/or conflict mitigation and training on women's empowerment (peace), may be considered. A **nexus array**, in turn, is a set of bundles that represents larger and longer-term strategic efforts to achieve outcomes for more than one target group.[7] Figure 1, for example, shows how an intersectional approach applied to the bundles of flood resilience, returnee response, asset creation, ceasefire distributions, safety net and school feeding can help connect the 2030 Agenda, the World Humanitarian Summit's New Way of Working, and the Sustaining Peace Agenda.[8]

Intersectionality and the triple nexus: Programmatic linkages

Do intersectional approaches and nexus thinking happen simultaneously in joint programmes? If so, how often? To find answers, the joint programmes (JPs) found in the UN Multipartner Trust Fund Database MyGateway[10] were analysed according to two sets of criteria: 1) the six intersectionalities[11] depicted in Figure 1 (ie age, gender, race/indigenous background, migration status, disability, locality); and 2) the HDP nexus (no nexus, double nexus, triple nexus).[12]

Of the 71 JPs, 12 were found to have a triple-nexus approach, 10 of which were deemed relevant for the scope of this analysis.[13] Twenty-nine JPs were identified to embody a double-nexus approach and 30 JPs a no-nexus approach (ie covering only one of the three dimensions, most frequently development). Of the 29 double-nexus-approach programmes, only nine were development–humanitarian nexus programmes, with the other 20 development–peace nexus programmes. No humanitarian–peace nexus programmes were detected. The presence of double- and triple-nexus approaches in joint programming in this first analysis shows a balanced approach in the UN's joint work on cross-pillar coordination.

The nexus JPs are diverse, as they come from all regions and cover income brackets from low to upper-middle income countries, with high actual or potential violence (Global Peace Index) and high humanitarian crisis risk (Inform Severity Score).[14] They have two-to-four intersectional focus areas, of which gender is the most prevalent, followed by youth and rural or disadvantaged localities. These programmes last anywhere from 24 to 56 months. Conversely, of the 30 no-nexus JPs, 20 include only either one element of intersectionality or none at all.[15] This analysis shows a potential correlation between the presence of nexus and intersectionality approaches in joint programming.

A good illustration of nexus-intersectional dynamics supported by the logical framework of the Funding Compact is the Living Better JP in Guatemala (May 2022–December 2025), financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization, Pan American Health Organization/World Health

Organization, UN Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The programme targets 59 communities in seven municipalities of the Dry Corridor, where humanitarian needs are dire and developmental needs perennial.

The programme, which reaches over 7,043 poor rural families living on small-scale subsistence agriculture and livestock, prioritises water security in order to help households adapt to climate events that jeopardise food production systems. From a humanitarian perspective, disaster prevention and vulnerability reduction are pivotal, while from a developmental perspective, access to public services, resilience-building and land planning with an eye to conflict prevention are crucial. Finally, gender-sensitive participatory governance is the crux of the programme.[16] Locality, rurality, gender and poverty are embedded in the nexus bundles of food security, rural development and women's empowerment, all with a view to long-term, system-wide impact. Again, this co-presence of nexus and intersectionality approaches supports the Funding Compact principle of long-term and policy-focused quality funding, and vice-versa.

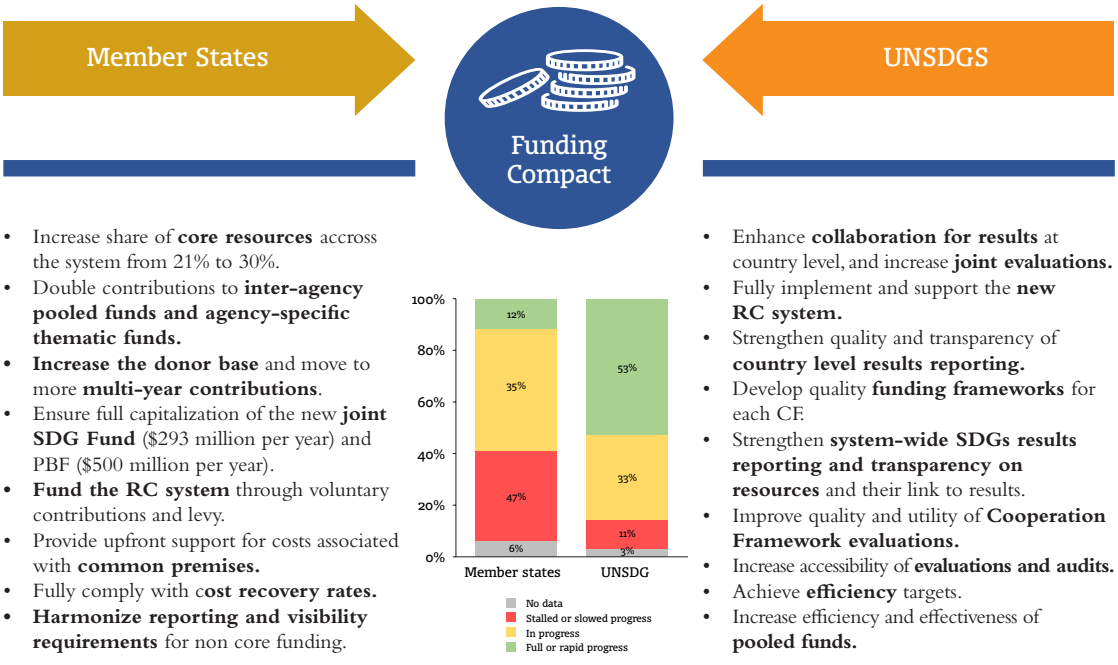


Figure 3: Principles of the Funding Compact.

The Compact embodies a set of parameters ranging from transparency and diversity to innovation and results or territorial focus. It also proposes a set of concrete, measurable commitments for the UNSDG and Member States.

Source: Summary Slide prepared by the UN Development Cooperation Office, 2022.

Conclusions and recommendations

This research shows that intersectionality feeds into cross-pillar cooperation, and vice-versa. The more intersectional a programme is, the more likely it is to embody a nexus approach. Intersectional approaches can enhance the inclusion of marginalised groups when humanitarian–development perspectives are interlinked and may even catalyse the mainstreaming of peace into programming. If governance actors are made cognisant of the compounding dynamics of intersectional and nexus approaches in joint programming, UNSDG and Member States signatories of the Compact can make further efforts to provide non-earmarked funding for intersectionally inclusive and cross-pillar programmes that are supportive of multilateralism.

The principles of the Funding Compact can create the long-term vision, coupled with quality funding, that the intersectional-nexus joined programming may require. After all, the needs of vulnerable groups with intersecting vulnerabilities are not short term, and nor are the protracted crises that humanitarian–development–peace challenges present. Both require policy-oriented transformative change that only predictable, flexible and quality funding can enable.

Notes:

[1] United Nations General Assembly and UN Economic and Social Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General: Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019: Funding compact', A/74/73/Add.1–E/2019/14/Add.1, 2 April 2019, https:// undocs.org/A/74/73/Add.1.

[2] Nexus, triple nexus, cross-pillar coordination is used interchangeably in this study.

[3] Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1963).

[4] Kimberle Crenshaw 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43/6 (1991), pp. 1241–99.

[5] UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and UN Women, 'Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind', 2021, www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit.

[6] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 'DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus', OECD/LEGAL/5019, 2022, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf.

[7] A bundle or arrays may be sequential, simultaneous, repeated, integrated or any combination thereof. Although not a bundle or array, some areas may still be related to the triple nexus or sensitive to cross-pillar cooperation. In the absence of a nexus focus, actions can still be nexus-sensitive – that is, actively consider their potential effects on each pillar. For instance, a peace action may not seek to directly contribute to outcomes related to humanitarian or development dimensions, but it should be both humanitarian- and development-sensitive in the sense of 'doing no harm' and not undermining durable solutions. Examples may include emergency response, nutritious food products and elections. For more, see Paul Howe, 'The triple nexus: A potential approach to supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?', *World Development* 124 (2019).

[8] The Sustaining Peace agenda encompasses the parallel resolutions introduced in 2016 in the Security Council (SC/2282) and the General Assembly (A/RES/70/262), as well as the Secretary-General's reports on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and follow-up resolutions.

[9] Paul Howe (note 7), p. 5.

[10] Country Level Joint Programmes, as of 26 June 2022, from 2004 to 2026. See https://mptf.undp.org.

[11] Programming which, for example, addresses both intergenerational and gender equality does not necessarily apply an intersectional approach to programming as conceived by the eight core enablers. However, for the purposes of analysis, this formulation allows for an initial exploration of the relationship between nexus programming and application of intersectional analysis within joint programming.

[12] Given that there are fewer than 500 people in the sample population, the Shapiro-Wilks test was used to investigate if data follows a normal distribution. It was determined that the data does not follow a normal distribution. A Chi-square analysis between intersectionality and nexus finds a p value of 0.07, which is slightly over the conventional significance threshold level of 0.05, meaning the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between intersectionality and triple nexus cannot be rejected. However, with a less stringent significance threshold of 0.10, the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between intersectionality and nexus can be rejected. In other words, at a p value of 0.10 we can accept the alternative hypothesis that there *is* a relationship between intersectionality and nexus approaches. Larger sample sizes can be used to verify the findings of this analysis.

[13] Two JPs were excluded for the purposes of analysis: one was the state of Palestine in order to limit the sample to Member States, and the other was a massive open online course (MOOC) for which units of analysis were harder to determine. The ten triple-nexus JPs were: two JPs in Bangladesh on cooking fuel needs, environmental degradation, food security for populations effected by the refugee crisis and on safe and sustainable fuel alternatives for Rohingya refugees; three JPs in Guatemala, centered on a string of SDGs and cross-cutting issue areas such as food and nutrition, resilience, climate variability, biodiversity, local governance, gender equality, cultural sensitivity, and rural and indigenous communities amid poverty and discrimination; two JPs in Yemen with focus on rural resilience and food security; one JP in the Democratic Republic of Congo on prevention of sexual violence; one JP in the Philippines on sustainable development in armed conflict; and one JP in Tunisia on societal change through women's empowerment.

[14] All scores are the latest available as of 29 June 2022, with SDG progress standing at (0 being the worst and 100 the best score): 70.7 in Tunisia; 66.2 in the Philippines; 64.2 in Bangladesh; 61 in Guatemala; 52.1 in Yemen; and 50 in the Democratic Republic of Congo; see the Sustainable Development Index, www.sustainabledevelopmentindex.org/.

[15] Ten of these JPs, which range anywhere from 18 to 174 months, were found to be intersectional (defined as 2–6 counts). The most frequent intersectionality covered is gender, followed by youth and location.

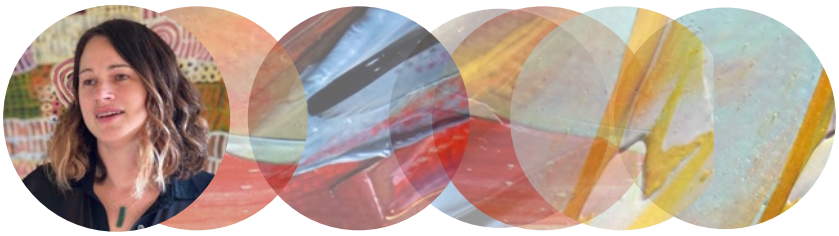
[16] See UN Multi-Party Trust Fund Office's Partners Gateway, 'JP Guatemala Corredor Seco', https://mptf.undp.org/fund/jgt40.

Jody Myrum

Jody Myrum is grounded in social work and a deep commitment to racial, gender and youth justice. She is a feminist activist, strategist and practitioner. Jody works across movements, organisations and philanthropy to centre girls and young feminists, and to move resources and power to those working to build their collective power. Previous roles include working as the Director of NoVo Foundation's Initiative to Advance Adolescent Girls' Rights and their efforts related to supporting girls and women in humanitarian crises. She co-leads the Global Resilience Fund at Purposeful and works as a social justice consultant with a range of funders and organisations.

Rosa Bransky

Rosa Bransky is co-founder and co-CEO of Purposeful, an Africa-rooted global hub for girls organising and activism. Purposeful has spent five years building a body of work that centres girls and young feminist power and reframes traditional philanthropic and development practices, so that girls have access to the resources, networks and platforms they need to remake the world for themselves.



Ruby Johnson

Ruby Johnson is a feminist activist, strategist, writer and practitioner based between Oaxaca, Mexico and Sydney, Australia. She was previously co-executive director of FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund, and currently co-leads the Global Resilience Fund at Purposeful. Ruby works with a range of feminist funders and organisations as a social justice consultant. She serves on the Women Fund Asia Australian Board and is a member of the United Kingdom's Comic Relief Social Impact committee.

Funding crisis response at the intersections: Lessons from a participatory humanitarian fund for girls and young feminists

By Jody Myrum, Rosa Bransky and Ruby Johnson

Introduction

Communities around the world are experiencing the devastating impacts of multiple crises, including health pandemics, ongoing civil wars in Ethiopia and Syria, and prolonged conflicts in Somalia and Occupied Palestine. While they impact everyone in a community, crises expose and exacerbate existing systemic oppression and violence, positioning girls as particularly vulnerable. And while systemic discrimination impacts all girls because of their gender and age, it is deepened for those who face other forms of structural discrimination including disability, sexuality, gender identity, race, ethnicity and immigration status.

Despite these deepening disparities, girls and young feminists are on the frontlines of response during moments of crisis, demonstrating bravery, resilience and organising power in their activism. They are, and always have been, critical first responders at such times, fuelled by the inter-relationships between youth, gender, racial, ethnic, economic and gender justice. Girls and young feminists organise around their intersecting identities – this is often a source of collective power, motivating them to address and disrupt the rules, norms and stories that reinforce all forms of oppression, and respond to the many ways these manifest during crises. The COVID-19 pandemic was no different in this regard. As the pandemic started to impact communities across the world in early 2020, it quickly became clear that the disparities faced by cis and trans girls, young women, and non-binary people would deepen and exacerbate, and that this group would be among the worst impacted by this outbreak.

In the face of such hardship, as state and traditional agencies retreated, and as lockdowns took hold across the world, girls and young feminists were responding and organising in their communities. In the context of harsh lockdowns and restrictions of movement across the world, young activists took the initiative to develop mutual aid networks and solidarity economies to move supplies and ensure their communities – consisting of some of the most marginalised groups – had access to food and healthcare needs.

Given the impacts of sustained isolation, groups created digital spaces of care and creativity, and found ways to organise even in the most difficult of circumstances. These efforts demonstrate their ability to effectively respond and organise throughout a crisis. Examples include Brown Girl Woke, a young women-led group in Samoa that provided access to menstrual hygiene kits for girls who are part of their community during the pandemic; and

Serena Morena, a young feminist network in Peru that supported people with home-based abortions and psychological support/accompaniment when they could not access medical support due to isolation and stigma. Showing up for their communities in times of crisis and claiming their existence against a backdrop of oppression, is a powerful political act and a source of solidarity and strength. However, despite this critical work, they are often shut out of key peacebuilding and recovery efforts, are vastly under-resourced, and go unrecognised for their vital contributions.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Purposeful and a group of funders from across the philanthropic ecosystem came together to resource the brave and creative efforts of girl and young feminist activists during this moment of profound and colliding crisis. Through that effort, the Global Resilience Fund (GRF) was born – a lesson in what it really takes to fund the young activists most excluded from donor priorities. Bringing a political, intersectional analysis to bear on understanding girls' lives and struggles – and building practical, structural and operational responses to these realities – the GRF has moved with speed, scale and agility to create a living example of solidarity-based philanthropy.

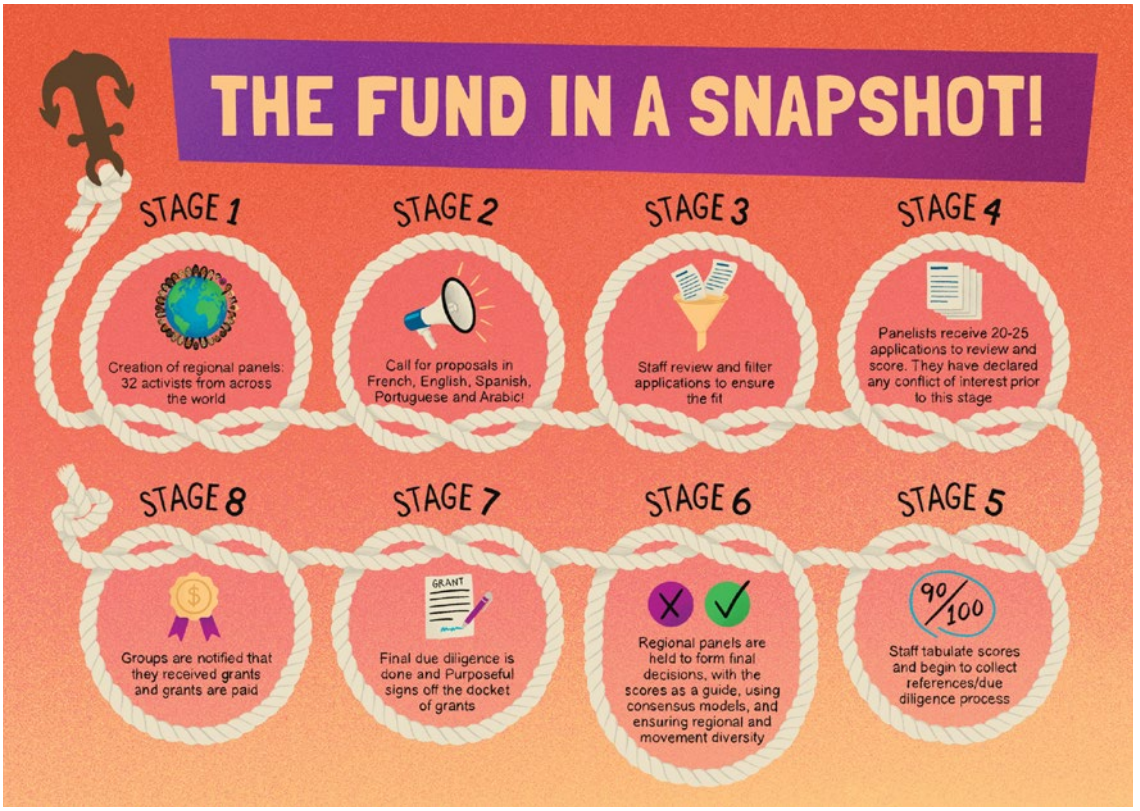
A collaborative feminist fund to resource girls and young feminists in crisis

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, Purposeful convened a group of funders who recognised that there was a gap in the funding ecosystem that was leaving girls and young feminists without the resources needed for their critical work.

In this context, the GRF was launched in May 2020. Housed and facilitated by Purposeful – a feminist hub for girls' organising – GRF disbursed US$ 1 million to 234 organisations led by girls and young feminists responding to the COVID-19 crisis globally by December 2020. Examples of grantee partners include: Adolescents Initiative for Reform (AIR), a girl-led group in Cameroon running a peer education programme on menstrual hygiene – sharing educational content through radio and social media, and distributing 'dignity kits' to internally displaced girls – at a time when schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; Taqatoa'at/Banan, a young women-led group in Jordan that published a report on the realities of women during the COVID-19 pandemic across areas such as education, domestic work, unpaid work, disability and health; and Di RAMONA in Mexico, a group of young lesbian and bisexual feminist psychologists who provided psychological support for girls and women, and accompanied women to access safe abortions – the number of which drastically increased during the pandemic.[1]

These interventions were well received, and due to their impact activists and funders are continuing to call on the GRF to bring flexible resources to girls impacted by and responding to crises. The most recent support is going to Ukraine, Palestine and Pakistan.

Source: Graphic supplied by Purposeful, illustrated by Judith P Raynault.



A diagram of the participatory decision-making model used by the Global Resilience Fund.
Source: Graphic supplied by Purposeful and illustrated by Judith P Raynault.

In Ukraine, girls and young feminists are using solidarity and mutual aid to reach remote villages near battlegrounds that have not been reached by larger humanitarian aid. In Palestine, young feminist-led groups are resourcing solidarity economies, feminist storytelling and providing critical mental health and trauma support. In Pakistan, groups are providing access to menstrual health supplies for girls and young women in flood-affected areas and working with young women with disabilities to ensure they can access basic support services, including food and medicine.

Across these contexts, the activist groups are embedded in their communities, reaching those who are often missed in more general response efforts, and continuing despite minimal resources. This situation reveals some of the larger systemic flaws in humanitarian aid. Therefore, as the GRF transitions from its current mandate as a COVID-19 pandemic response fund, it is deepening its work to support girls and young feminists who are organising and responding in crisis contexts more broadly.

The GRF has had many breakthroughs since its inception. It was the first of its kind, reaching those who are often invisible during crises because of their

identities. They are hard to reach due to issues of status and marginalisation, or because they do not fit into funding siloes or neat categories. The fund is also unique in that it is centred around a participatory model of rapid response crisis funding.

However, perhaps the greatest breakthrough is that it holds an **explicit intersectional lens** and has, from the beginning, intentionally focused on those who are impacted by multiple forms of discrimination. By centring these people within a participatory process, collaborating with a diverse range of funders, and using flexible funding and reporting practices that enable connection and collaboration between movements, the GRF has been able to unlock unprecedented possibilities to resource those at the frontlines of responding to the pandemic. The lessons from the GRF demonstrate that funders who care about achieving peace and advancing sustainable development will not achieve success without applying an intersectional lens to all aspects of their funding and programming.

An intersectional grant-making lens requires experimentation, flexibility and accessibility to create a supportive and connected community for activists

People who face systemic discrimination have historically been marginalised from funding opportunities. Many have not received funding because they are not a priority for funders, their identity does not fit into a funding category, or they organise across multiple issues rather than a single silo issue prioritised by funders.

For example, many of the groups the GRF resources tell us that the narrow thematic issue areas that most donors foreground in their funding calls – for example girls' education or child marriage – speak to isolated manifestations of structural inequality and force their work into narrow siloes that do not support them to challenge the root causes of their marginalisation. Registration is also often a barrier for girl- and young feminist-led organisations, either because of age or other factors where exposing their identity would put them at risk, such as being from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/agender plus (LGBTQIA+), disability and/or immigrant community. Therefore, to reach these communities, funders must create systems that are flexible and accessible, lowering the barriers to funding access.

Practically for the GRF this means funding unregistered groups; creating due diligence requirements that both meet compliance and are realistic for groups that have never received funding. This means creating accessible and simple application forms and receiving applications through multiple platforms. This could be from written forms to messages via the messaging service WhatsApp and through being deeply connected to communities to promote deeper reach within them. It also means making flexible funding available, thereby allowing those most impacted by injustice to determine their own needs, response and organising efforts, rather than be constrained by traditional programmatic siloes.

> *Girls and young feminists organise across a range of themes and movements, and this often connects to other aspects of their identities such as race, class, immigration status and sexual orientation.*

Girls and young feminists organise across a range of themes and movements, and this often connects to other aspects of their identities such as race, class, immigration status and sexual orientation. Centring an intersectional approach in funding strategies, instead of siloed programmatic areas, expands the range of movements the GRF can reach with its funding. These practices enable GRF money to reach groups such as LGBTQIA+ movements in contexts where it is criminalised and disability rights groups in contexts where people with disabilities have few rights, and within these movements those who are further marginalised by factors such as race, class and immigration status. Additionally, 25% of the groups funded by the GRF are led by people under 18 years old, an unprecedented proportion given how difficult adolescents are to reach and fund.[2] These are all communities that are almost always missed in funding calls due to the identity-based systemic oppression they face. By reaching those at the margins, we are leaving nobody behind in our funding and can resource some of the most creative and courageous work globally.

Bringing an intersectional analysis to funding also promotes more inclusive approaches across movements. This can be done by lowering barriers, decreasing competition for resources, and supporting groups who are often working in isolation to find common cause and connect across multiple struggles for justice. Across their processes, funders can play an active role in fostering cultures of collaboration and comradery.

The GRF actively supports grantees to build community with each other across varied struggles and identities. An example is using learning calls where organisations and collectives can connect and learn from each other. The GRF supported diverse activists to be in transnational dialogues through these online spaces, connecting young trans activists from the LGBTQIA+ movement in Central America, young indigenous women in the climate movement in the East Africa, and young women with disabilities engaging in work on sexual reproductive health and rights in South Asia. Another strategy is to offer activist-led accompaniment, that brings partners together around topics such as collective care, digital security and resource mobilisation, and creating a funding window where partners had the opportunity to apply for resources to seed and foster collaboration.[3] In using these strategies, the GRF supports groups from many movements to connect and build solidarity.

Participatory funding and collaboration with different donors yield funding accessibility to communities left behind, including those facing intersecting structural oppression

The GRF was launched by 25 funders to directly resource girls and young feminists' COVID-19 pandemic response strategies. These diverse funders came together around a common goal – to give money to girls and young activists in the time of a pandemic – which enabled the GRF to move and resource in intersectional ways. For example, each funder prioritises different thematic areas and movements, from disability rights to youth to feminist movements to LGBTQIA+ communities to girls' education. Having this diversity in funders around the table deepens access to a range of communities because each funder holds a different set of connections and relationships across geographies.

Further, many of the funding practices outlined above are considered too risky by many funders. By pooling resources and partnering with a feminist fund to re-distribute resources, funders are able to share that risk and experiment in ways that are otherwise difficult for many funders to do alone. This kind of collaboration in funding spaces can be critical to unlocking resources for movements led by those who face the deepest levels of systemic discrimination.

Key issues that the groups funded worked on, illustrating some of the array and intersectionality.
Source: Purposeful and illustrated by Judith P Raynault.

For example, the GRF has been able to resource organisations and collectives that would otherwise not qualify for funding, including a significant number of unregistered groups or groups that had never previously received funding. The GRF's ability to allow funders to experiment and take risks has enabled funds to reach girls and young feminists from marginalised communities that are most often excluded from funding opportunities and provide them with flexible, unrestricted grants.

Intersectionality requires the meaningful participation and leadership of those with lived experience

Taking an intersectional view or approach does not happen by accident – it requires intentionality and diligence to ensure it is embedded in all aspects of funding processes. This includes everything from designing the grant-making to taking decisions about who is funded to creating support systems for grantee partners.

In the case of the GRF, it was all possible because of deep and meaningful engagement with, and the leadership of, funder and non-funder activists from diverse backgrounds. At the heart of the fund are 32 young activists who are responsible for designing and making decisions about every aspect of the GRF. These activists are connected to movements in their communities with diverse experiences and identities, enabling them to draw on their knowledge and lived experiences across issues, movements and regions. Their participation and leadership continue to deepen the political analysis held through the process, making an intersectional lens possible. This builds on the strength brought to the GRF by the range of funders around the table.

One example to bring this to life is the participation of young activist panellists and funders from the disability rights movement. This partnership is with the Disability Rights Fund, Women Enabled International, targeted resources from the Ford Foundation, and the expert guidance of two activist advisors. It gives the GRF the ability to centre inclusion and accessibility in all aspects of the fund.

Purposeful has continued this process of centring disability inclusion across all our grant-making initiatives. As in the other areas, it has meant adapting proposals and reporting requirements to ensure they are accessible to girls and young people with disabilities – for example, providing Word versions of online application forms and accepting applications via WhatsApp. This has also meant centring inclusion in our approach to convening and accompaniment in both physical and virtual spaces, such as ensuring sign language interpretation, closed captioning, and accessible functions in online meetings. This has been about creating an environment of learning and vulnerability, recognising we need to do work to make spaces inclusive while acknowledging we do not have all the answers and are open to learning. Ultimately, centring inclusion in one part of our work transforms overall funding practices and programming.

Centring the words and wisdom of young activists allows for intersectional monitoring, evaluation and learning processes

Traditional monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) practices can be highly constraining across the field, but particularly so for young activists. It forces groups to define and narrate their work through narrow donor-driven frames and issue areas, inherently erasing intersectional approaches and identities. Part of our commitment to centring intersectionality in crisis response must transcend the grant-making or program deliverables and become a feature across all that we do, including our MEL projects and processes.

The learning agenda for the GRF is rooted in the same commitment to participatory approaches as the grant-making. It is collectively defined and informed by a commitment to leverage genuine learning for young activists, as well as those operating in the philanthropic field. Our approach is to move away from functional reporting and towards a format that does not exclude people based on literacy or numeracy levels, or fluency in the language of grant-

Collective nature of the work on the Global Resilience Fund.

Source: Purposeful and illustrated by Shreya Gupta.

reporting – this involves facilitating conversations and fostering community, unearthing reflections, and challenging philanthropy to be more responsive. Finally, it seeks to shift understanding on what counts as evidence, demanding recognition that young activists' experiences, stories and perspectives are more than just anecdotes and should be used to inform the field.

Speed and participation are not mutually exclusive

The GRF offers an example of how it is possible to shift power at relative speed and scale. It shows the many ways in which philanthropy can respond with the care, agility and pace movements so desperately needed in moments of crisis. This contrasts with the conventional understanding that it is not possible to use participatory models that centre those directly impacted during a crisis because it slows down the process.

While it does take time to design a participatory process, participation is ultimately central to applying an intersectional lens *and* it enables you to identify and select groups more quickly and set up efficient due diligence processes. This is because those with lived experience have the knowledge to adapt and transform processes, as well as the relationships and connections to reach communities. Without a participatory process, many people and organisations doing critical work in communities will be missed. And in fact, it is simply not true that participatory processes are inherently slower. For example, it takes an average of 14 days for resources to be moved to a group or collective from the time the GRF receives an application. All too often in philanthropy, values of solidarity, reciprocity and power sharing are pitted against notions of efficiency and scale.

The GRF is an example of what we have always known as feminist funders – it is possible to cede power to young activists, and to do it quickly. It also is possible to move a relatively large number of grants in ways that align with young activists' realities. In short, intersectionality and crisis response need not be mutually exclusive.

> *How girls and young feminists show up in the world is always, but particularly in times of crisis, deeply impacted by their intersecting identities. Their sexuality, gender identity, disability, indigenous identity and access to resources shape how they experience crises.*

Conclusion

How girls and young feminists show up in the world is always, but particularly in times of crisis, deeply impacted by their intersecting identities. Their sexuality, gender identity, disability, indigenous identity and access to resources shape how they experience crises. In such circumstances, the systemic failure of governments and philanthropic communities in times of crisis is deepened, as we saw in the COVID-19 pandemic and in other humanitarian contexts across the world. However, in the face of being rendered invisible, forgotten, or actively oppressed and discriminated against, girls and young feminists are claiming their intersecting identities as a political act and source of collective power. So often in philanthropic and development spaces, notions of speed and breadth are pitted against values of reciprocity and depth. The GRF is an evolving example of how it is possible to move with speed and urgency while redistributing power and centring values of solidarity and reciprocity. As the world continues to grapple with compounding crises, it is only through a truly intersectional lens that we might better weather future storms together.

Notes:

1 To read more about the responses of girls and young feminists to the COVID-19 pandemic, see Boikanyo Modungwa et al., 'Weathering the Storm: Resourcing Girls and Young Activists Through a Pandemic', Purposeful, May 2021, www.theglobalresiliencefund.org/_files/ugd/9f4592_9686444d84af49d7a4e27faf0849967c.pdf.

2 Mama Cash and FRIDA |The Young Feminist Fund, 'Girls to the Front: A Snapshot of Girl-led Organising', 2018, www.mamacash.org/media/publications/girlstothefront_report_web.pdf.

3 Dani Prisacariu et al., 'Sprouting Our Collective Wisdom: Towards a Politics of Practice for Activist-led Accompaniment: Lessons from the Global Resilience Fund', Purposeful, 2021, www.theglobalresiliencefund.org/_files/ugd/5774b2_1e3e4b7127164ca1814b1cc81207c80b.pdf.

Kellea Miller

Kellea Miller is Executive Director of the Human Rights Funders Network, and has worked in philanthropy for two decades, advocating for bigger, better, more responsive human rights grant-making. Her work has included leading Astraea's ground-breaking Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) Global Development Partnership with USAID, helping establish UN Women's US$ 65 million Fund for Gender Equality, and advocating for a robust feminist funding ecosystem at the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and Mama Cash. Kellea holds a doctoral degree in Sociology and a bachelor's degree in Public Policy and Feminist Studies. She lives in Northern California with her partner and children and serves on the boards of the International Accountability Project and Community Beyond Violence.

Rachel Thomas

Rachel Thomas is Director of Research Initiatives at the Human Rights Funders Network and manages its Advancing Human Rights initiative to map the human rights funding landscape and track changes in its scale and priorities. Prior to joining the Human Rights Funders Network, Rachel worked as a consultant providing technical assistance to foundations, supporting non-profit organisations to plan and evaluate their work, and conducting research to inform and advance advocacy. She spent nine years with the Open Society Foundations managing a grant portfolio focused on sexual health and rights. She also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Turkmenistan and holds a master's degree in International Development.

This article is adapted from 'Funding for Intersectional Organizing: A Call to Action for Human Rights Philanthropy', a report by the Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) that draws on data collected by HRFN,[1] Candid, Ariadne – European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, and Prospera – International Network of Women's Funds. Graphics have been provided by the Human Rights Funders Network.

Funding for Intersectional Organising: Calling human rights philanthropy to action

By Kellea Miller and Rachel Thomas

Introduction

The field of human rights philanthropy has spent much of the past decade talking about intersectionality. In strategies and conferences and board rooms, we have asked how we can break down silos and move money to movements organising in powerful, intersectional ways. Without an intersectional approach to funding, we miss the complex forces that shape inequality and oppression. We reinforce false divisions among human rights issues and movements. We are dividing the pool of funding, slicing the pie into smaller and smaller pieces. And we are failing to live up to our promise to meet the boldness, creativity and reality of social justice organising today.

We know the stakes. And yet, as our research demonstrates, the data resoundingly show that just a small fraction of foundation funding for human rights supports activism that cuts across multiple communities or issues. Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) offers this analysis as a call to action to the field to bring our practices into alignment with our promises, and meet the creativity, vitality and reality of social justice organising today.

Our research is motivated by the work of the many funders and advocates who have pointed to a lack of intersectional support.[2] Indeed, an increasing and heartening number of foundations, funder networks and development agencies are affirming the importance of intersectional approaches.[3] However, as we will show, this advocacy has yet to translate into a large shift in funding flows. This is, to our knowledge, the first comprehensive and global analysis of when and if grants for human rights reach beyond a single issue or community.[4]

Drawing on our Advancing Human Rights research and answering the call from many in our field, we add evidence to existing debates about the ethical and practical imperative to support intersectional organising.[5] Using grants data, we map the number of grants supporting organising across more than one human rights issue or population group. The results present a rather distressing window into the continued prevalence of siloed funding that is narrowly focused on single issues or communities. Of the more than 27,000 human rights grants made in 2018, approximately 6,000 (22%) were intended to benefit two or more populations, and 5,700 (21%) addressed two or more of 11 human rights issues.

It is important to recognise from the outset that our findings show where foundation funding is and isn't reaching across issues and communities. This is *not* a perfect measure of funding for *intersectionality*, which is a much more

complex confluence of forms of identity and power. To understand if funding is reaching movements where activism is led and enacted intersectionally is vital – but beyond what our present data can show. What we *can* show on this global scale is an indication of where we see funding approaches that begin to cut across communities and issues. We see this as an important bellwether of where funding for intersectionality may truly exist.

Defining intersectional grant-making

Applying an intersectional lens in philanthropy means being intentional about reaching people as they live. It means recognising that our multiple identities and characteristics combine in ways that can elevate privilege or compound injustice.[6] For example, Black women may encounter discrimination and oppression in ways that Black men or white women don't.[7] Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex (LGBTQI) people may experience gender bias differently than cisgender people, and uniquely based on their many other individual identities. Many modern movements are themselves powerfully, beautifully intersectional. When we look at today's most pressing issues – such as climate justice, racial justice or women's rights – women, LGBTQI people, people of colour, Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and many others are among those at the forefront of these struggles.

As feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins writes, 'Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice'.[8] Collins presents a 'matrix of domination' to describe the way power is organised within societies through four interrelated domains – structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal – that interact to engender varying levels of penalty and privilege for each person.[9] She lays bare the significant implications for social change work: 'Although most individuals have little difficulty identifying their own victimisation within some major system of oppression … they typically fail to see how their thoughts and actions uphold someone else's subordination'.[10] Philanthropy has an important role to play in supporting social justice organising that addresses the interconnected nature of all forms of oppression and seeks systemic change.

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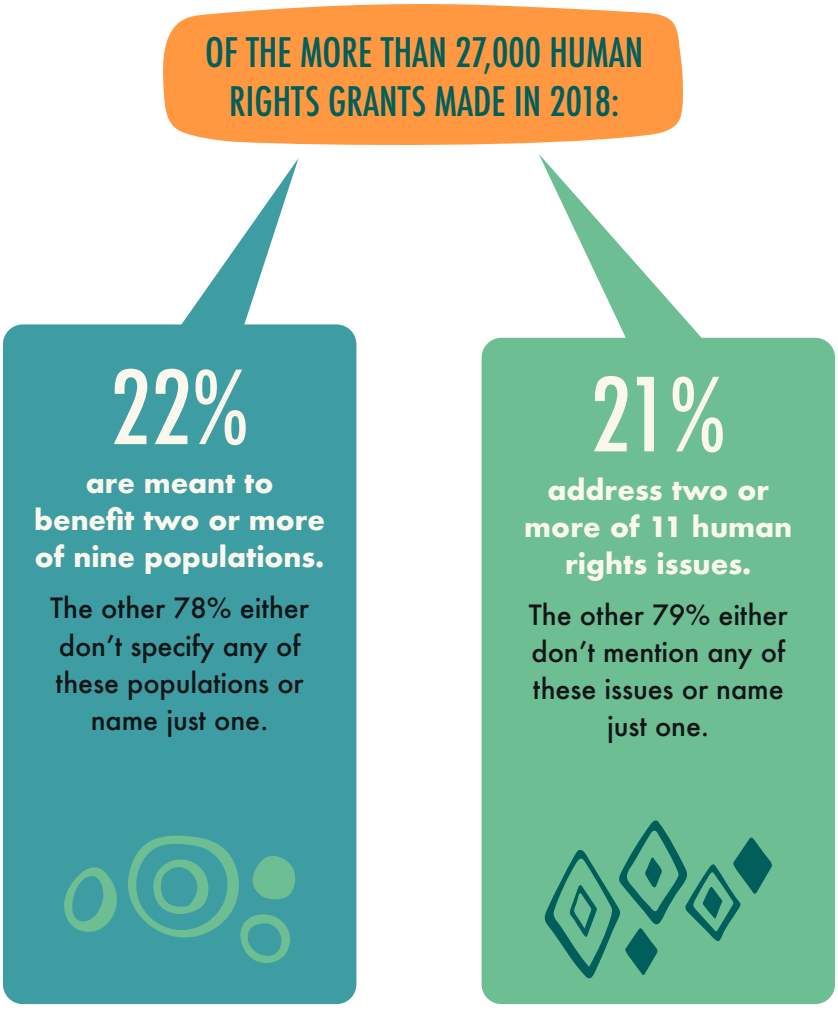


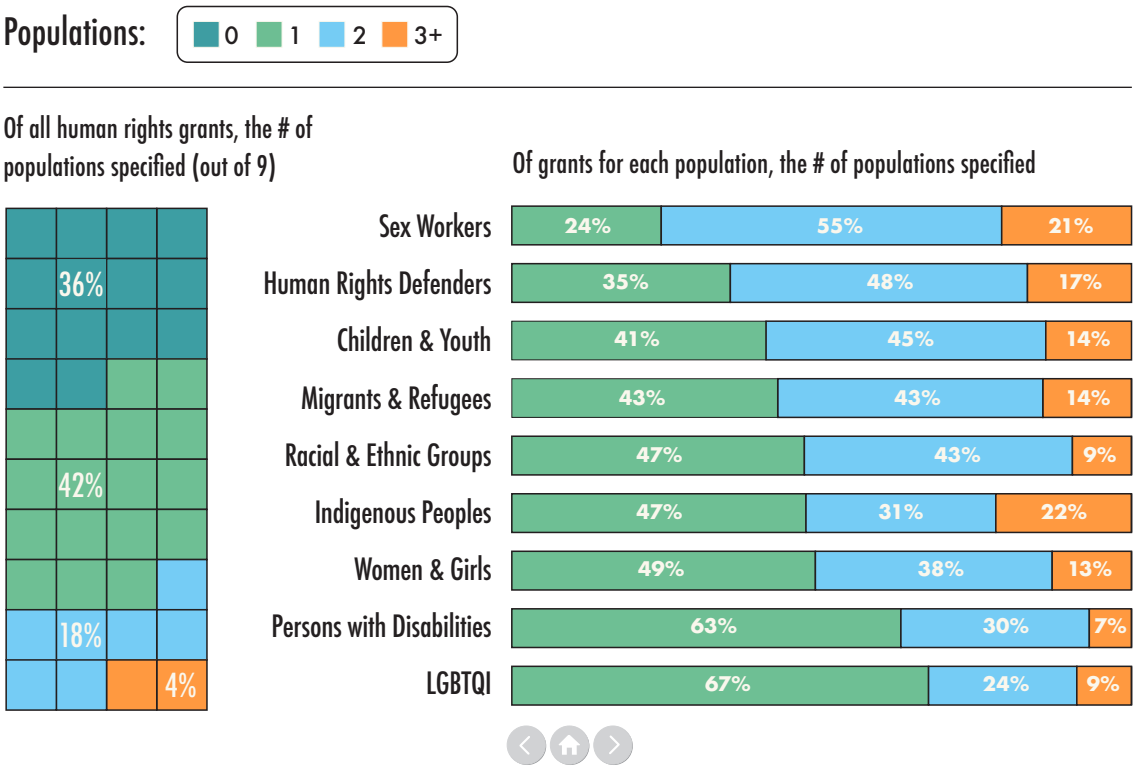
Applying an intersectional approach to philanthropy recognises how human rights are interdependent and interrelated. For example, the ability to cast a vote or demand justice is closely tied to the freedom to assemble, access to information, and opportunities to meet basic needs like adequate food and housing. The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored how rights and related inequalities are inherently intertwined. Around the world, communities that already faced discrimination based on factors like race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status have borne the brunt of lost wages, interrupted education and vaccine scarcity, as the pandemic erodes an array of economic and social rights. In many contexts, government measures to protect public health through restricted movement or increased surveillance have led to discriminatory implementation and unnecessary force, often aimed at these same historically marginalised communities.[11]

Methodology

In our Advancing Human Rights research, we tracked over 27,000 human rights grants made in 2018, totalling US $3.7 billion.[12] The grants were awarded by 826 foundations based in 44 countries.[13] We use a combination of grant descriptions, funders' own coding, and knowledge of funders or grantees to help us determine the groups of people and issues each grant is meant to support.[14] We know that just because a grant mentions multiple groups of people (termed 'populations' in our analysis) or issues, it does not guarantee that the funding approach is intersectional. Likewise, a grant may not mention specific populations or issues by name but still support intersectional work. This is a limitation of the data currently, and one we address in our findings and recommendations. Still, looking for patterns gives us a sense of when different groups and issues are considered together. The results are troublingly at odds with the desire for intersectional grant-making we see in our field.

Funding across populations

In order to understand who funding reaches, our research maps support for nine populations that are often the focus of human rights movements and funders. At first glance, we see two camps emerging. First, many funders do not report at all on which populations they support – the case in over a third of the grants in our analysis. Second, when funders do report on this, 66% of the grants only name one population. The first group points to a matter of data – despite our best efforts, getting accurate data on who and what is



% of Human rights grants by intersecting populations

very low overlap | low overlap | medium overlap

	Children & Youth	Human Rights Defenders	Indigenous Peoples	LGBTQI	Migrants & Refugees	Persons with Disabilities	Racial & Ethnic Groups	Sex Workers	Women & Girls
Children & Youth		5%	25%	7%	12%	20%	20%	3%	24%
Human Rights Defenders	1%		3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	14%	4%
Indigenous Peoples	8%	7%		<1%	3%	2%	<1%	1%	11%
LGBTQI	2%	8%	<1%		3%	1%	3%	24%	4%
Migrants & Refugees	8%	6%	5%	6%		3%	25%	9%	7%
Persons with Disabilities	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%		1%	0	2%
Racial & Ethnic Groups	20%	5%	<1%	10%	38%	3%		1%	10%
Sex Workers	<1%	4%	<1%	2%	<1%	0	<1%		1%
Women & Girls	32%	50%	42%	14%	15%	16%	13%	46%	

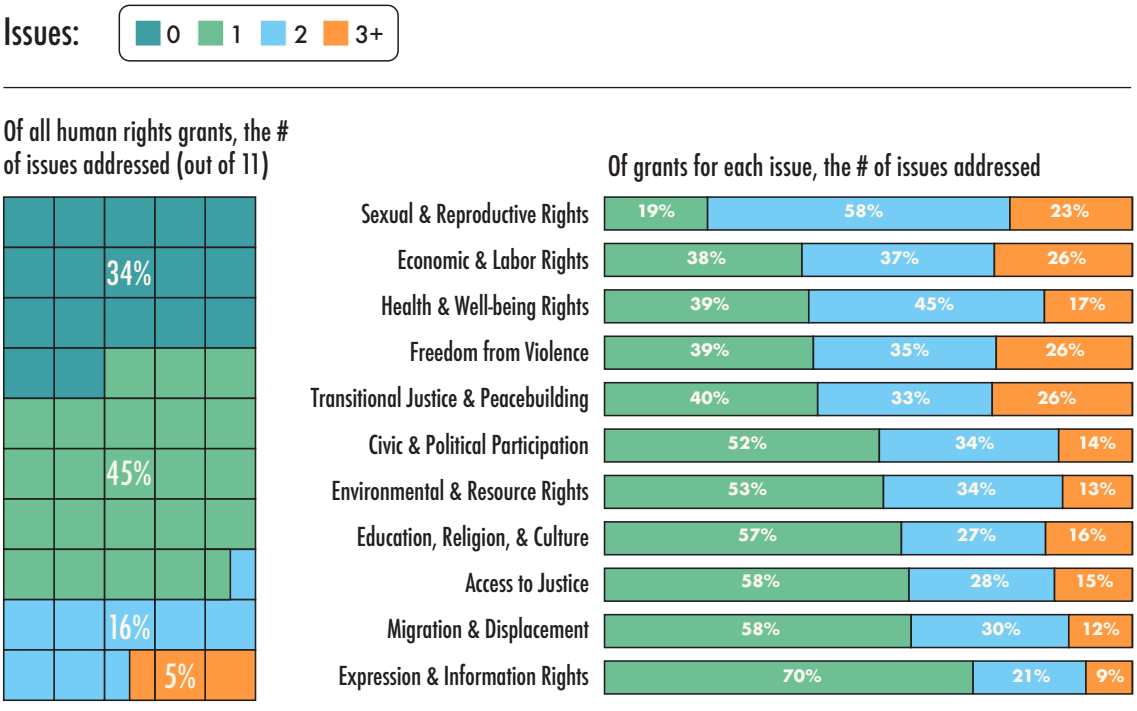
funded in philanthropy remains a challenge. However, the second group – those who identify populations – hints at something more dire. While little activism focuses on a single identity, much of the funding still does. Only 22% of all human rights grants reference two or more populations, and less than 5% references three or more.

Going deeper, we look at how the different populations interact. For example, 53% of the grants to support Indigenous peoples consider at least one additional identity. However, we see considerable disparities in *which identities* are mentioned in the same grants with Indigenous peoples, from the 42% of grants that also name women and girls and 25 % that name children and youth, to just 5% naming migrants and refugees and less than 1% naming LGBTQI people. We suspect that even fewer grants support work at the intersection of multiple identities (ie funding for Indigenous peoples who identify as LGBTQI). If intersecting identities are not considered when human rights actions are conceptualised and grants are awarded, there is a risk that these individuals will be overlooked, their needs won't be met, and actions and outcomes will fall short of their potential. The gaps highlighted here – and in the table below – suggest opportunities for more deliberate investment.

Funding across issues

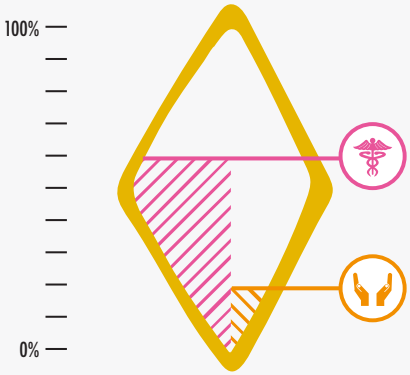
We also look at what issues the funding aims to address. In our analysis, we assign grants to a variety of human rights categories, including access to justice, freedom from violence, and environmental and resource rights.[15] Approximately 21% of all human rights grants focus on two or more of the 11 human rights issues on our list.

To explore the extent to which issues overlap, we look at every issue to see how likely it is to be addressed in combination with each of the other ten issues. We find that, on average, issue pairs are addressed together just 8% of the time. Of the 110 possible combinations, only six are addressed together at least 20% of the time, meaning at least one-in-five grants overlap. What is particularly striking is all of the issue combinations where we *don't see* significant overlap. For example, we don't see much overlap in grants related to the environment that address migration or access to justice, despite the deepening climate crisis. Moreover, in the face of growing concern over closing civic space, we don't see significant funding at the intersection of 'civic and political participation' and 'expression and information rights', or 'freedom from violence'. Though significant rhetoric points to these intersections as critical for human rights, the funding doesn't appear to adequately mirror the concerns.



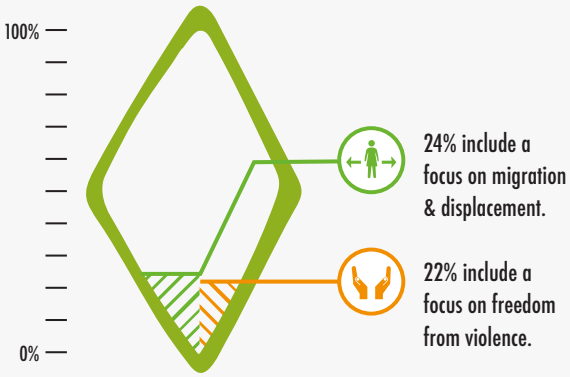
Only 6 issue combinations are addressed together at least 20% of the time.

OF GRANTS FOR SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS:

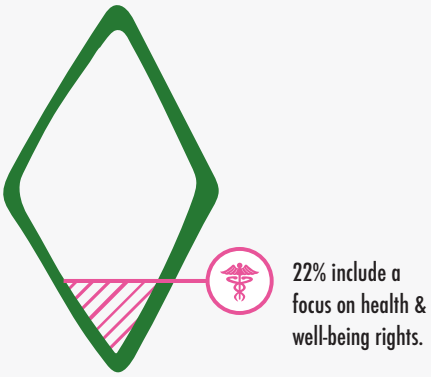


OF GRANTS FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE & PEACEBUILDING:

OF GRANTS FOR ECONOMIC & LABOR RIGHTS:



OF GRANTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL & RESOURCE RIGHTS:



A call to action: What funders can do

Our findings offer insights about identities and issues that are being overlooked and under-resourced in human rights philanthropy. Are grant-makers who support LGBTQI rights considering how their goals intersect with racial justice? Are funders who focus on human rights defenders actively engaging individuals on the frontlines of disability rights and ensuring their resources and processes are accessible? Most importantly, are those who take a universal approach to human rights funding – without regard for race, ethnicity, ability status or other factors – actually reaching communities most impacted by oppression?

All movements need more funding to do the critical work of social change. The goal is not for every grant to tackle the needs of every population or issue. However, there is a need for funding that acknowledges and addresses the complex ways we live. Much more can be done to increase the reach of human rights funding by supporting cross-movement and cross-sector initiatives that respond to intersecting forms of injustice.

Rethinking grant-making scope and practice

Funders for a Just Economy, a programme of the Neighborhood Funders Group, has developed helpful guidance on Best Practices in Intersectional Grantmaking.[16] We have drawn on those recommendations and adapted them with permission:

- Have a historical frame – particularly regarding how the legacy of slavery, genocide, the settler state, imperialism and hetero-patriarchy shape our economy and the broader structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power.[17]
- Establish funding practices that centre Black people, Indigenous peoples, migrants, LGBTQI people, women of colour (especially trans and queer women of colour), persons with disabilities, and other historically marginalised communities.
- Seek guidance from frontline community leaders and activists and invest in their priorities and strategies.
- Understand people's experiences holistically (not through identity or issue silos) and develop strategies accordingly.
- Support solutions that address root causes and seek systemic change.
- Take honest stock of your grant-making practices and divisions. Review grant portfolios with an eye to who the funding supports and who is being left out.
- Consider how the rights issues you work on are linked to other rights issues and engage with partners working in those areas to explore how your work could be mutually reinforcing.

Improving grants data reporting

Where and how funders talk about their grant-making matters. More funders need to share their grants data and ensure its quality as a step toward increasing transparency in philanthropy and a means for strengthening human rights work.

We encourage funders to take the following steps:

- Prioritise data tracking as good grant-making practice.
- Share timely, good-quality grants data with HRFN, our research partners at Candid, or through public sites like 360Giving so that your data can be included in a range of research to map and strengthen philanthropy.
- Submit your data in a spreadsheet, create a row for each grant, and include these fields: recipient name; recipient address (especially city and country); geographic area served by the grant; grant description; funding total; currency type; grant start date; grant end date.
- Provide clear, concise grant descriptions that describe the issues addressed and populations supported through the funding. For general support grants, include a brief description of the recipient's mission.
- Format your data so that it is easy to upload. List individual facets in separate columns (eg recipient city and country); avoid carriage returns, bullet points or other symbols; and leave cells blank when there is no information to add.
- Anonymise any identifying details that are too sensitive to be made public and could place grant recipients or communities at risk.

Transforming philanthropy

We see glimmers of hope. Funders recognise the ways issues and identities intersect. When asked which major human rights issues could be tackled at the same time, nearly half the funders we surveyed said all of the issues we suggested could be addressed together. What's more, a number of committed funders are showing us a way forward by modelling intersectional funding in practice.

Transforming grant-making so that it is truly intersectional, so that it reaches across issues and movements, is an ongoing imperative for the field. These findings are a start, and this evidence is a first pass – one that raises both hope and caution. As we continue to imagine a just and open funding ecosystem, we invite you to join us in reconceptualising philanthropy's responsibility and unleashing its potential.

To access more information about the human rights funding landscape, visit humanrightsfunding.org.

Notes:

1 www.hrfn.org.

2 Hakima Abbas and Kellea Miller, 'The dire state of funding for Black feminist movements – and what donors can do about it,' Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN), 23 August 2021, www.hrfn.org/resources/the-dire-state-of-funding-for-black-feminist-movements-and-what-donors-can-do-about-it/; Salote Soqo, Meerim Ilyas and Amber Moulton, 'Data at the Intersections: Advancing environmental and climate justice using a human rights lens,' HRFN, 23 May 2018, www.hrfn.org/resources/data-at-the-intersections-advancing-environmental-and-climate-justice-using-a-human-rights-lens/; and Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, 'The Feminist Innovation Fund: Resourcing climate justice through a feminist lens', n.d., https://urgentactionfund.org/2022/04/the-feminist-innovation-fund/?mc_cid=f3e3e42277&mc_eid=f4ece8ebcd.

3 Examples include Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Center for Disaster Philanthropy, Transforming Movements Fund, Disability Philanthropy Forum, Africa Philanthropy Network, Neighborhood Funders Group, UN Women, and Oxfam America.

4 Rachel Thomas and Kellea Miller, 'Funding for Intersectional Organizing: A Call to Action for Human Rights Philanthropy', HRFN, June 2022, www.hrfn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AHR-Intersectionality-Report-July-2022.pdf .

5 For further details, and to access more information about the human rights funding landscape more generally, visit https://humanrightsfunding.org/.

6 Identities and characteristics include, but are not limited to, race, caste, age, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, class, culture, and ability status.

7 Following Associated Press guidelines and in consultations with partners in the fields, HRFN capitalises the terms Black and Indigenous when referring to racial, ethnic or cultural identity.

8 Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 18.

9 Patricia Hill Collins (note 7), pp. 274–288.

10 Patricia Hill Collins (note 7), p. 287.

11 Sharifah Sekalala at al., 'Health and human rights are inextricably linked in the COVID-19 response', *BMJ Global Health*, 5/9 (2020), https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/5/9/e003359.full.pdf and Stéphanie Dagron, 'Going beyond the rhetoric: Taking human rights seriously in the post-COVID-19 new paradigm, Verfassungsblog, 27 March 2021, https://verfassungsblog.de/going-beyond-the-rhetoric-taking-human-rights-seriously-in-the-post-covid-19-new-paradigm/.

12 With support from our partners at Ariadne – European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, and Prospera – International Network of Women's Funds, each year HRFN and Candid collect and analyse grants data from foundations around the world working to protect and promote human rights.

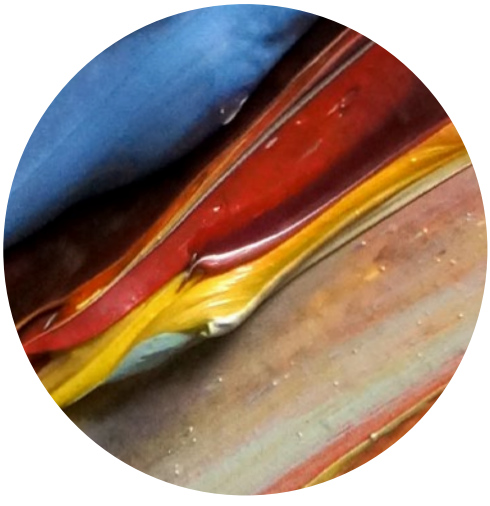
13 You can learn more about our methodology in our annual report on global foundation grant-making: Candid and HRFN, 'Advancing Human Rights: Annual Review of Global Foundation Grantmaking: 2018 Key Finding', 2019, www.issuelab.org/resources/38475/38475.pdf.

14 We recognise the need to differentiate between the grants meant to benefit a specific population and grants that are made to organisations led by those populations – a distinction we hope to shed more light on in the future. In the meantime, for more on the complexity of tracking this difference given current funder reporting, see Jacob Harold, 'What can data tell us about racial equity in philanthropy?, Candid, 16 September 2020, https://blog.candid.org/post/what-can-data-tell-us-about-racial-equity-in-philanthropy/.

15 Unlike with populations, all grants are assigned at least one of 13 issues. However, when we remove grants that are too broad to be attributed more specifically (ie coded 'human rights in general' or 'equality rights and freedom from discrimination'), we are left with just over 18,000 grants that focus on one or more of 11 issues. This allows us to better hone in on the relationships among issues. See Candid and HRFN, 'Issues: Share of total human rights funding from 2019', https://humanrightsfunding.org/issues/.

16 Mari Ryono, 'Journey Towards Intersectional Grant-Making', Funders for a Just Economy, 2018, https://drive.google.com/file/d/18iONNxBVz3Rj6DqpjSeaXmSJwi4uwkPh/view.

17 For more on the 'matrix of domination' and four domains of power, see 'Patricia Hill Collins: Intersecting oppressions', pp. 7–9, www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/13299_Chapter_16_Web_Byte_Patricia_Hill_Collins.pdf.



Åsa Regnér

Åsa Regnér is Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, a portfolio that includes policy, programme, civil society and intergovernmental support. Before joining the UN, she was the Swedish Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality, where she worked to implement gender equality policies that enabled a shift towards prevention of violence against women and bringing men and boys into gender equality issues. Åsa has extensive experience with gender equality and women's empowerment, having held leadership positions in government, non-governmental organisations and the UN. She previously served as UN Women Country Director in Bolivia and Secretary-General of Riksförbundet för Sexuell Upplysning (RFSU/Swedish International Planned Parenthood Federation) and holds a master's degree in Democratic Development from Uppsala University.

When age and gender barriers intersect: Supporting young women's participation for peacebuilding

By Åsa Regnér

Introduction

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) recognised the contribution of women to peace and security efforts, as well as the need to pay attention to their specific role and needs with the adoption of the landmark Resolution 1325 in 2000.[1] Fifteen years later, UNSC members voted in favour of Resolution 2250, a ground-breaking resolution that for the first time acknowledged young people's critical role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.[2] Both the women, peace and security (WPS) and youth, peace and security (YPS) agendas are closely interlinked, as they promote the inclusion of historically marginalised groups in peace and security. These agendas challenge existing power structures and share core commitments to inclusive prevention, participation and protection. Importantly, the WPS and YPS agendas have emerged from the tireless efforts of civil society and were institutionalised in the UNSC with support from a diverse group of Member States.

Mere recognition of the fact that women and youth inclusion is a necessity when it comes to achieving sustained peace is progress. However, inclusion cannot be sought through a one-size-fits-all approach. It is critical to resist the tendency to regard women and youth as homogeneous demographic categories and to lump them together in peacebuilding approaches. While some of the challenges faced by women and youth may be similar – such as cultural bias, patriarchal norms and discriminatory laws – each individual's reality is intrinsically determined by diverse layers of identity, shaped by age and gender, as well as factors such as ethnicity, class, cast, religious affiliations, sexual orientation and political affiliation.

Factors of vulnerability also play an important role in identifying challenges faced by women and youth. Experiences vary greatly among, for example, migrants, refugees or displaced persons; socio-economically deprived women and youth; persons with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/agender plus (LGBTQI+) individuals; homeless people; people living in informal settlements or rural areas; and people living with HIV/AIDS. Thus, when working on inclusive peacebuilding and sustaining peace, identifying and meeting the specific needs and challenges faced by each group requires adopting intersectional approaches to both the YPS and WPS agendas. Efforts are therefore required to ensure the YPS agenda is fully gender-responsive, and that the WPS adopts youth-sensitive lenses in its work, making it more attuned to age and generational power dynamics.

Intersectionality, a concept originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, recognises that people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors.[3] These combine to create differing forms for privilege and oppression depending on a person's context and the existing power structures, such a patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism. As expressed by Crenshaw, 'in essence, however, intersectionality is 'a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power".[4]

To date, insufficient attention has been paid to the intersecting patterns of exclusion faced by young women in peace and security initiatives. Yet, young women are at the forefront of many peacebuilding efforts around the world, from participating actively in democratic transitions or peace processes to defending human rights and civic space in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

This article highlights the main age- and gender-specific barriers faced by young women in peace and security; explores how UN Women understands intersectionality within its work; and proposes some key recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners on how intersectional lenses can be more systematically adopted. The text boxes highlight diverse forms of engagement and contributions to peace by young women peacebuilders and human rights defenders around the world.

Age- and gender-specific barriers to participation

Access to decision-making and peacebuilding spaces

Structural and institutional barriers, as well as cultural bias, contribute to the low representation of young women in formal decision-making and peacebuilding spaces. These multiple and diverse barriers include, among other challenges, minimum age requirements to run for elected position; gender-based violence deterring women from entering public life; and patriarchal norms and tokenism.

Box 1: Philippines – Young women's contribution to peace

'In the Philippines, during the 2010 negotiations between the Government and Moro Islamic Liberation Fund (MILF), most of the legal team members of the Government's peace panel were young people, along with two youth members in the MILF legal team. They prepared technical papers for the negotiating parties, including drafting of Bangsamoro Organic Law. Young women, in their mid-20s, chosen for their legal acumen, played key roles during the negotiations. They conducted discreet advocacy around bringing a gender lens to the peace agreement by the virtue of their active engagement with informal women's rights networks. Despite pushback and criticism, the young women in the legal teams were able to successfully include stronger provisions against domestic violence in the peace agreement and participation of women, noting that greater socio-political equality and the participation of women inherently relates to equality within the household.'

Ali Altiok and Irena Grizelj, 'We Are Here: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes', 2019.

Young women face multiple protection issues and intersecting forms of discrimination. Human rights violations such as slavery, child/forced marriage, conflict-related sexual violence or human trafficking are issues that intersect with cast, migration status, living in rural areas, socioeconomic status and ethnicity.

Although a lack of age- and sex-disaggregated data prevents practitioners and decision-makers from accurately measuring young women's exact representation and participation in peace, security and decision-making spaces, some proxy indicators reflect this gross participation gap. According to Inter-Parliamentary Union data, in 2020 women represented just 1.1% of parliamentarians under 30 years old, and 6.1% of parliamentarians under 40 years old. Studies or data on additional layers of identity or social factors is also lacking, limiting our ability to conduct thorough analysis of intersecting barriers leading to exclusion. However, while age and gender are primary factors limiting the participation of majority groups, intersecting discriminations are more strongly targeted at minorities within these groups.

These gaps are not just evident in government – young women are also grossly excluded in formal peace processes. Very often, the opportunities for women's participation are so scarce – for instance in peace agreement negotiations, where women represent only 6% of signatories – that any places that do become available are filled by more senior and experienced women leaders. Negative perceptions associating young men with violence and young women as passive victims also continue to side-line or undermine the positive agency of most young people in decision-making during peace processes.[5]

Young women face entrenched stereotypes and bias associated with both youth and women. Misconceptions about women and youth are widespread within society, from policy-makers and families to young women themselves. Patriarchal and societal norms can further limit their ability to engage. In addition to these challenges, young women who are willing to participate in political or public life tend to have weaker networks and support systems. As such, they are more likely to lack the financial and social support needed to pursue a public career, run for elections or engage in advocacy work.

Sexual- and gender-based violence against young women

Young women face multiple protection issues and intersecting forms of discrimination. Human rights violations such as slavery, child/forced marriage, conflict-related sexual violence or human trafficking are issues that intersect with cast, migration status, living in rural areas, socioeconomic status and ethnicity.

Sexual and gender-based violence against young women activists is all too common, with women human rights defenders, peacebuilders and civil society confronted by growing threats and increasing repression. Intersectionality plays an important role in this context too. While young women from all backgrounds may experience similar patterns of intimidation, misogyny, threats and harassment, for young women without national or international support, an online presence, or access to formal education or financial resources, the toll is greatly exacerbated.

A global research project titled 'If I Disappear' highlights the variety of gender-specific barriers reported by young women, including important issues such as 'feminism being labelled as a Western agenda; difficulties with implementing projects aimed at female empowerment due to fear of social stigma in the community; threats from traditional men and tribal elders; online hostility; harassment in the workplace; rape threats; and a lack of dedicated protection measures for young female victims (and women in general)'.[6]

The 'If I Disappear' report highlights that young women activists experience a wide range of harassment that intersects with sexism, and – for young women of colour – racism, as well as other forms of bias and discrimination. The rise of digital activism has also seen the development of gender-specific online harassment/attacks against young women activists and human rights defenders.

Access to civic spaces

Intersectional forms of threat and discrimination are also reported by young women seeking access to civic spaces and decent employment. In addition, young women note similar obstacles when seeking to participate in formal decision-making. The 'If I Disappear' report quotes young women from deprived

Box 2: Young women promoting peace in South Sudan

During the conflict in South Sudan, young women and their more experienced female peace activist counterparts worked across religious and tribal lines to raise international awareness of the conflict in South Sudan. Women's groups mobilised across different identities, jointly held prayers, conducted silent marches, and established peace committees in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Young South Sudanese women were part of the delegations of the Women's Coalition, which participated in the peace talks to present women's issues to the negotiators and mediation team. They were able to identify cross-cutting women's issues for presentation to the negotiators and mediators during the peace process leading to the Revitalized Agreement for Conflict Resolution for South Sudan (R-ARCSS). One such area of consensus was the need for promoting accountability towards addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases against women and girls.

UN Women, 'The Role and Contribution of Young Women in Peace Processes in Africa', 2022.

socioeconomic backgrounds who describe being forced to endure sexual harassment in order to secure their positions and facilitate a stable, successful future for themselves. Corruption and intimidation may have a stronger effect on young women who lack the support systems, networks and power to resist.

The COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has also taken a specific toll on young women. In the UN Secretary-General's most recent report on YPS, he highlights that the pandemic has significantly exacerbated the root causes of conflict and magnified the socioeconomic vulnerabilities and inequalities experienced by young people.[7] Specifically, he states that 'young people with specific needs are at a heightened risk and are particularly vulnerable, especially if their identities are intersectional, for example, young women, young LGBTQI+ people and young people living with disabilities'.

A study commissioned by UN Women on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young women peacebuilders confirms it had a negative impact on their efforts to build and sustain peace in complex contexts. In addition to the pandemic's wider effects, which have obstructed all activists and human rights defenders – due to, for example, concerted state efforts to close civic spaces in many complex and crisis-affected contexts – some challenges have had specific impacts on young women peacebuilders. The consequences of the pandemic for jobs and livelihoods have significantly hindered young women activists' capacities to continue their activism and volunteer work, especially when they have additional care functions, such as caring for young children, ill family members or elders. Many young women have had to give up on college education. Moreover, the 'shadow pandemic' – the rise of domestic violence – has had a disproportionate toll on women and young women.[8]

UN Women's approach to intersectionality

As mentioned above, while some of the challenges faced by women and youth may be similar – including cultural bias, patriarchal norms and discriminatory laws – the reality of individuals is intrinsically determined by a diverse layers of identities, shaped not only by age and gender, but – among other elements – ethnicity, class, cast, religious affiliations, sexual orientation, political affiliation. Factors of vulnerability also play an important role when identifying challenges faced by women and youth: experiences vary greatly for migrants, refugees or displaced persons; for socioeconomically deprived women and youth; for persons with disabilities; for LGBTQI+ individuals; for homeless people or those living in informal settlements or rural areas; for people living with HIV/AIDS; and so on.

It is important to remember the transformative potential of intersectionality, which extends beyond merely focusing on the impact of intersecting identities. UN Women therefore promotes the adoption of intersectional lenses as a necessity in reaching those left furthest behind, as well as achieving substantive equality

and responsive policy-making. This includes generating better use of resources – improved stakeholder collaboration, for example, can build better understanding of the context, solution and results, leading to more tailored services.[9]

This does not require an 'add and stir' approach, but rather a complete shift in mindset – one open to the discomfort that comes with exploring the relational nature of power and discrimination both within and beyond UN systems. As framed by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, intersectionality does not 'provide definitive answers to social problems' but reframes our understanding of marginalisation and 'create(s) spaces for reflexive consideration and critical engagement'.[10]

Intersectionality connects these international human rights instruments through a single lens, helping us to recognise how experiences of multiple discrimination are not discrete. It is a tool for equity that supports contextual approaches to development and rejects the 'one-size-fits-all' programmatic approach cautioned against by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.[11]

Picture: Adobe stock photo

Recommendations for supporting young women through an intersectional approach

Despite the numerous forms of discrimination and barriers that young women face, the world has witnessed their increased visibility at the forefront of peaceful protest movements everywhere from Algeria to Iran to Chile to Lebanon to Sudan. They march for greater democracy, rights, an end to violence, and gender equality. There are numerous examples of young women's leadership in organisations or initiatives aimed at preventing conflict and building peace; of their fighting for women's rights in transitional justice (eg Colombia); and of the empowerment of young women leaders in places as diverse as Libya, the Central African Republic, the Balkans and South Sudan. Peace and security practitioners and decision-makers bear a responsibility to support, nurture and protect young women's activism. As such, we need to proactively adopt intersectional lenses in all phases of our work: from conflict analysis to research; from programming for peacebuilding to monitoring and evaluation. This means a thorough analysis using a participatory approach needs to be conducted for any project design – for instance, by hiring young women researchers, or engaging young women-led organisations that can co-design and later implement project activities as equal partners.

Adopting operational intersectional lenses will be more time- and budget-consuming. It requires adequate planning and flexible policies – for instance, facilitating travel for a young woman peacebuilder who is breastfeeding her baby; covering the costs of a support companion for a young woman with disability; and allocating research time to map/identify grassroot organisations that are not connected to international aid organisations. This can be challenging, as most practitioners work to tight deadlines and limited budgets.

Box 3: Young women promoting safer activism in Colombia

A young activist from Colombia joined a mass protest in April 2021. She observed that many girls and young women at the months-long demonstrations were 'were abused and hit, not only by police officers, but [also by] protestors [who] began to do abusive actions against young women in the demonstration'. She was clearly frustrated by the danger posed to her and her peers – not only by security forces, but by fellow demonstrators. In response, her organisation designed safety protocols and publicly denounced abusers, posting 'so everyone could see on social media, names, places, hours, actions of abusers'. Women in her cohort also began marching with the symbol of la guardia, an indigenous 'guard' with spiritual power. 'We had to use this symbolic power, because men respect it. I guess things calmed down a little bit after', she explained.

Testimony from a young Colombian woman activist captured from research commissioned by UN Women on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young women peacebuilders.

Young women peacebuilders and activists, as well as local organisations led by young women, are key actors in building and sustaining peace.

More than applying 'lenses', the intersectional approach must be considered across all phases of project planning – otherwise, the pledge to 'leave no one behind' will remain merely aspirational. We need to systematically collect age- and gender-disaggregated data, and, going further, information on other forms of intersectional discrimination and vulnerabilities, including disability, socioeconomic background, geographic location, gender identities, race and religion. In addition, good practices involving, and diverse engagement of young women should be documented. It will also be important to analyse participation gaps and carefully monitoring/documenting instances of discrimination, threats and violence against young women peacebuilders, as well as working with authorities to ensure that impunity for these forms of violence comes to an end.

Support for young women's work should include accessible and flexible funding, such as institutional financing to support organisations that goes beyond project-based funding, or paid research and peacebuilding work opportunities. It also includes adequate and accessible capacity-building and learning opportunities that take into consideration potential access challenges they face.

Young women peacebuilders and activists, as well as local organisations led by young women, are key actors in building and sustaining peace. Recognition of their critical contribution to peace represents an incipient, essential step. We now need to accelerate efforts to nurture and make their work visible, and, as well as reducing barriers, create space and opportunities for all young women who remain marginalised.

Notes:

[1] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 31 October 2000, http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1325.

[2] UN Security Council Resolution 2250, 9 December 2015, http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2250.

[3] Kimberlé Crenshaw 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.

[4] In 2021, to help both organisations and individual practitioners/experts address intersectionality in policies and programmes, UN Women developed an 'Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit' – a collaborative initiative with the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and with support from both UN and non-UN entities. See UNPRPD and UN Women, 'Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind', 2021, www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit.

[5] Ali Altiok, Irena Grizelj, 'We Are Here: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes', UN, 2019, www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2019-07/Global%20Policy%20Paper%20Youth%20Participation%20in%20Peace%20Processes.pdf.

[6] Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, 'If I Disappear: Global Report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space', UN, 2021, https://unoy.org/downloads/if-i-disappear-global-report-on-protecting-young-people-in-civic-space/.

[7] UN Security Council, 'Youth, peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General', S/2022/220, 16 March 2022, https://undocs.org/S/2022/220.

[8] UN Women, 'Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Young Women Peacebuilders', 2022, www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Brief-Assessing-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-young-women-peacebuilders-en.pdf.

[9] UNPRPD and UN Women (note 3).

[10] UNPRPD and UN Women (note 3).

[11] UNPRPD and UN Women (note 3).

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Intersectionality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Responding to the climate crisis with reflections from civil society practices

By Raul Layo Cordenillo and Linnea Håkansson

Introduction

Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)[1] have the potential to strengthen people's capacity and resilience to the climate crisis.[2] Despite this fact, SRHR and reproductive justice considerations are often left out of national, regional and global climate change mitigation frameworks.[3] This means those subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (MIFD) are particularly at risk, as their access to – and realisation of their – SRHR is often compromised even before climate-related events strike. This article seeks to explore how intersectionality can be used as an operational framework by civil society actors in the SRHR sector to address the connections between these rights and climate change.

The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (known as RFSU) has a vision of a world in which *everyone* is free to make decisions about their own bodies and sexuality. Here, understanding how those who are most severely impacted by the climate crisis can be included in SRHR programmes and policies is critical. Disparities in SRHR outcomes created by MIFD amplify the risk of women, girls and marginalised groups – such as persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) – being left behind. It also risks exacerbating climate injustices and stripping people of their agency and bodily autonomy. Understanding and adequately addressing climate change through the work of civil society actors in the SRHR sector thus demands an intersectional approach.[4] This article presents learnings from current RFSU practices and strategies, building on illustrative cases from the work of RFSU partners in Kenya, Latin America and Cambodia. We conclude with recommendations on an intersectional feminist framework for advocating and realising SRHR, which can serve as a step towards responding to the climate crisis.

Relevant policy developments

The interlinkages between the climate crisis and SRHR have so far received limited recognition in the research sector and at a policy level.[5] This is despite a general acknowledgement that SRHR is essential for gender equality, as well as for social and economic development. Moreover, even where civil society organisations are calling attention to the critical connection between the climate crisis and SRHR, there is a need for further data, research and

policy commitments.[6] To date, the connections made between SRHR and the climate crisis have mostly focused on the link between gender equality and the climate crisis, rather than SRHR or reproductive justice directly.[7] There is growing evidence that the effects of the climate crisis are not gender neutral, with major climate negotiations and outcome documents having taken this into account to a certain degree.[8]

One example is the Paris Agreement, which acknowledges that parties to the agreement should respect, promote and consider their obligations on human rights and the right to health, though SRHR is not specifically mentioned.[9] The agreement does, however, mandate state parties to adopt gender-responsive action and capacity building to ensure adequate adaptation mechanisms in the context of the agreement's temperature goal.[10] In addition, the Lima Work Programme of Gender seeks to integrate gender considerations into implementation of the Paris Agreement.[11]

Meanwhile, the Glasgow Climate Pact adopted at the Conference of Parties 26 (COP26) in 2021 was silent on SRHR references specifically, but urged state parties to consider their obligations on gender equality and ensure gender-responsive implementation, including strengthening implementation of the Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan.[12] The extent to which these commitments are efficiently implemented remains to be seen, as considerable gaps in gender-disaggregated data and analyses at the national level remain.

One of the first times a clear link was made between the climate crisis and SRHR in an intergovernmental outcome document came at the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2022.[13] The agreed conclusions from the CSW session acknowledged that women and girls face specific challenges and reduced access to healthcare services – including sexual and reproductive healthcare services – as a result of the climate crisis and displacement.[14] They underscored the adverse impacts of the climate crisis on menstrual hygiene and management, including the need to expand women's and girls' access to adequate, safe and clean water and sanitation facilities.[15] The agreed conclusions also emphasised the importance of a gender-responsive approach[16] and taking into consideration MIFD, signalling that an intersectional approach is key in this context.[17]

The connections made between SRHR and the climate crisis in the agreed conclusions from CSW66 demonstrated broad-based support from member states in taking a gender-responsive approach to responding to the climate crisis.[18] There are, however, a number of limitations that indicate there is still a long way to go before the interlinkages between SRHR and the climate crisis within global intergovernmental spaces are fully addressed.

During the CSW negotiations, there was a general unwillingness to depart from the standard language used in COP negotiations, limiting the extent to

which progress could be made on concepts such as reproductive justice in the context of climate change. There has also been an unwillingness to include the language from CSW66 in subsequent intergovernmental negotiations, such as at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Finally, after the adoption of CSW66's agreed conclusions, a number of member states made Explanations of Position in which objections were made to SRHR, MIFD and related concepts. Such limitations indicate there is much more work to be done by civil society actors and SRHR allies.

> *RFSU recognises the importance of the nexus between climate change and sexual and reproductive health rights.*

A key strategy going forward is to ensure siloes are broken down, with policy processes devoted to responding to the climate crisis incorporating SRHR, and vice versa. This is critical to the creation of effective adaptive responses to climate change that are also inclusive of SRHR for all persons, and to ensuring the connection between SRHR and climate change is not side lined or omitted in policy-making.

Illustrative examples of the nexus between SRHR and the climate crisis

RFSU recognises the importance of the nexus between climate change and SRHR. We have prioritised these linkages in our work and consulted with several partner organisations around the world to better understand how the climate crisis has affected their lives and work. The illustrative examples below show how partner organisations and RFSU are only at the beginning of exploring how the climate crisis and its responses impact SRHR – much more needs to be done to bridge these two often siloed topics, both in policy and practice. In any such work, an intersectional analysis of who is most affected by the climate crisis and how their SRHR are impacted, is critical. Our examples are intended as a first step towards identifying the main challenges and opportunities in practice.

A population's ability to respond and cope with climate crises depends heavily on several factors, such as socio-economic status, access to resources, and gender.[19] Access to water, for example, becomes a major challenge when many areas in Kenya suffers from seasonal drought, with women and girls forced to walk long distances to gather water for themselves. Due to gender-differentiated roles, women and girls may also be responsible for collecting water for their families. Fetching water on foot increases their risk of being subjected to sexual violence or even killed, and greatly impacts their autonomy, health, ability to work, and access to sexual and reproductive health services.[20]

Responding to these challenges requires gender-transformative interventions that, beyond securing more accessible healthcare services, question gender roles and secure water supplies for marginalised populations. The Kenyan-based Q-initiative underscores that there is an acute need for more inclusive decision-making processes concerning the climate crisis.[21] Policies and investments targeting the challenges posed by prolonged periods of drought must centre SRHR and take into consideration how discrimination – in terms of, for

example, whether a person has access to housing with a functioning water supply – may be at play. Q-initiative works to enhance accountability at local and county levels by ensuring that persons of diverse SOGIESC and young people can participate in public meetings and have their voices heard. Through this work, Q-initiative has observed the lack of inclusionary processes and intersectional perspectives in policy and budget decisions related to SRHR and the climate crisis. Commitments made to improve greater access to water – which is of critical importance for the realisation of SRHR – have in certain cases been neglected, with implementation never achieved.

This highlights the importance of those who face the most risk (due to their lack of access to water and a high frequency of rationed water supplies) being represented in decision-making and policies – otherwise, climate crisis responses risk being ineffective. When SRHR are considered and the most marginalised are included, their climate crisis resiliency will be strengthened.

Q-initiative have also highlighted the need for gathering disaggregated data, such as sex and diverse gender identities, to help direct policy change processes that take SRHR challenges into account. They argue that research related to the interlinkages between SRHR and the climate crisis is lacking, and that consequences are even more difficult to predict when disaggregated data is missing. It is Q-initiative's contention that although progress has been made – Kenya now collects data on intersex people – the results remain to be seen, and that much more emphasis must be put on collecting further data and ensuring research gaps are rectified.

Klahaan is an organisation that builds evidence, organises and campaigns around issues affecting women's rights in Cambodia.[22] Although they do not work directly on addressing the climate crisis, Klahaan predicts that it could exacerbate existing harmful norms, gender roles and stereotypes. Their research has uncovered several instances in which gender stereotypes and norms in Cambodia severely limit women's and lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/agender plus (LGBTQIA+) persons' bodily autonomy.[23]

A prediction of what may come when the climate crisis worsens can be drawn from the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and what pandemic responses failed to take into consideration. During the pandemic, harmful norms and stereotypes were exacerbated, with several challenges surfacing regarding SRHR that indicated a significant increase in the burden on women. These include expectations regarding educating children in the face of school closures, increased pressure on women to be responsible for all family members, elders and the home, and expectations that girls should conduct household chores.[24]

Klahaan also noted an increase in cases of intimate partner violence during the pandemic. Cambodia faced a closure of clinics by sexual reproductive health (SRH) service providers, and although digital health interventions were introduced, these were not accessible to all. There were also instances where online providers were not trained in SRHR, resulting in harmful norms being compounded. As has been the case for the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for SRH services will not halt due to ongoing climate-related disasters. National climate crisis resilience interventions and policies must therefore include SRHR components that, among other aspects, consider how harmful norms and stereotypes discriminate against certain persons while privileging others.

Fòs Feminista is an international alliance that centres its work on women, girls and gender-diverse people, and with a specific mission to advance SRHR and voices from the Global South.[25] The alliance stresses the importance

of protecting the rights of persons already at risk of marginalisation and discrimination, such as women, girls, LGBTQI persons and Indigenous people, as well as understanding how racism and racialisation impacts not only people, but territories and land. Up to 80% of those displaced by the effects of climate change are women[26], and because their needs are often not prioritised in climate crisis responses, they lack access to crucial SRH services.[27]

Sexual and gender-based violence is also exacerbated against Indigenous women and girls due to the climate crisis intensifying conflicts related to resource extraction.[28] In addition, inaccessible healthcare facilities and communication barriers may worsen during disasters, preventing persons living with disabilities from accessing SRH care.[29] Fòs Feminista therefore

highlight the need for any response to the climate crisis to put SRHR at its centre – otherwise there is a risk of many people being left behind. Fòs Feminista argues that, in order to mitigate the challenges arising from the climate crisis, gender-transformative solutions must be fully funded.

Recommendations and conclusions

This article has highlighted a number of strategies and factors needed to operationalise an intersectional feminist framework that can ensure SRHR is considered in climate crisis responses.

Firstly, there remains an urgent need for data, research and policy commitments to advance and guarantee the SRHR of those most severely affected by the climate crisis. Without data and research, climate crisis interventions risk exacerbating current inequalities, and we miss out on opportunities to understand how intersecting identities may shape resilience to the climate crisis.

Secondly, the ongoing discussions and intergovernmental negotiations related to climate change constitute an opportunity – through adopting a reproductive justice lens – to resist treating SRHR as a narrow set of siloed health matters. Although the current negotiations have resisted references to reproductive (or climate) justice, such a lens would allow both the SRHR community and decision-makers to build bridges between different intergovernmental negotiations, such as the COP, CSW and HLPF. This would help in overcoming siloes in policy-making and the implementation of commitments, such as Agenda 2030, as well as emphasising the centrality of SRHR to people's lives and overall wellbeing. The time is right to explore all opportunities for utilising an intersectional approach that can limit pushback against SRHR by grounding any new climate crisis interventions in already existing global commitments to SRHR, such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action.

RFSU and its civil society partner organisations will continue – including through the International Planned Parenthood Federation – championing an intersectional feminist perspective on advocating SRHR for all, particularly as efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change increase. This represents the best way of ensuring no one is left behind, and we implore other actors, international organisations and UN agencies to consider the above recommendations and join the call to action.

Notes:

[1] When referring to SRHR in this paper, we use the definition established by the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission in 2018, which is comprehensive and recommends an essential package of SRHR services and information that is consistent with, but broader than, the sexual and reproductive health targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The package includes commonly recognised components of sexual and reproductive health (eg contraceptive services; maternal and new born care; prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS), as well as less commonly provided components (eg care for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) other than HIV; comprehensive sexuality education (CSE); safe abortion care; prevention and detection of, and counselling for, gender-based violence; prevention, detection and treatment of infertility and cervical cancer; and counselling and care for sexual health and wellbeing). The Guttmacher-Lancet Commission also recognises that action is needed beyond the health sector to change social norms, laws and policies in order to uphold human rights and realise SRHR for all. See Ann M. Starrs et al., 'Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: Report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission', *The Lancet* 391/10140 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)30293-9.

[2] The term 'climate crisis' is used in this paper for the purposes of underscoring the effects of global warming and climate change.

[3] Reproductive justice, as defined by the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, is closely related to the comprehensive definition of SRHR in the sense that it centres bodily autonomy and the right to have or not have children. Reproductive justice goes a step further, putting emphasis on the right to parent children in safe and sustainable communities, and linking a person's ability to control their reproductive life to the conditions and services available in their community. Reproductive justice therefore not only concerned with individual choice and access. In relation to the climate crisis, the provision of SRHR services is critical – therefore, excluding SRHR services from climate crisis responses in policies or programmes represents a type of reproductive injustice. For further reading on reproductive justice, see Loretta Ross, 'Understanding reproductive justice: Transforming the pro-choice movement', *Off Our Backs*, 36/4 (2006), pp. 14–19.

[4] Intersectionality, as termed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is an analytical framework used to understand how a person's multiple social, political and cultural identities intersect to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Bowleg offers a definition of intersectionality in a public health context: 'how multiple social identities such as race, gender … intersect at the micro level of individual experience to reflect interlocking systems of privilege … at the macro social-structural level'; L. Bowleg, 'The problem with the phrase women and minorities: Intersectionality – an important theoretical framework for public health', *American Journal of Public Health*, 102/7 (2012), pp. 1267–73.

[5] Where such research and connections have been made, they have had a limited focus – mostly on family planning, maternal health and gender-based violence. There is therefore a gap in relation to other aspects of SRHR in line with Guttmacher-Lancet's definition of SRHR, including STIs, CSE, abortion and infertility. See Women Deliver, 'The Link Between Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: An Evidence Review', 2021, p. 25, https://womendeliver.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Climate-Change-Report.pdf.

[6] See '*The time is NOW:* An urgent call to action on the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development', *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, 28/1 (2020). This call to action for example included: 'Immediate action to address the urgent global climate and ecological crises by placing bodily autonomy and integrity, and gender justice and human rights at the core of all climate responses; such that respect for the safety and wellbeing of all women and girls, access to health services including sexual and reproductive health, access to nutritious food and clean water, quality education, effective and unimpeded democratic participation, and ecological sustainability, are the ways we define and measure progress towards climate justice, and sustainable and just development.'

[7] Article 30 (j) of the UN's Sendai Framework specifies that access to basic healthcare services must include sexual and reproductive health services to enhance resilience. United Nations, 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030', www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren pdf?_gl=1*19egzfn*_ga*MTc0OTg4MzMzOS4xNjcwMzk0MTgw*_ga_D8G5WXP6YM*MTY3MDM5NDE4MC4xLjAuMTY3MDM5NDE4MC4wLjAuMA.

[8] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 'Gender and climate change: Enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan', FCCC/CP/2019/L.3, 12 December 2019, https://undocs.org/fccc/cp/2019/l.3.

[9] The preambular paragraph of the Paris Agreement reads: 'Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity'. United Nations, 'Paris Agreement', 2015, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf.

[10] In the context of Article 2 of the Paris Agreement and its goal of limiting temperature increase to 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. See also articles 7.1, 7.5 and 11.2 regarding adaption action and capacity building.

[11] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (note 8).

[12] The Enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan (see note 8) was adopted by the COP in Glasgow, but there is no mention of SRHR.

[13] The theme of the CSW session was 'Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes'.

[14] UN, Economic and Social Council, 'Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes: Agreed conclusions', E/CN.6/2022/L.7, 29 March 2022, p. 26, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N22/303/59/PDF/N2230359.pdf?OpenElement.

[15] UN, Economic and Social Council (note 14), pp. 45, 46 and 50.

[16] See UN, Economic and Social Council (note 14), op T. Further recognition was also made of the disproportionate impacts of climate change for women and girls living in humanitarian contexts in (op K) and a commitment to strengthen their full, equal and meaningful participation (op S). Reference was also made to CSE in the formulation of what has been agreed earlier in the Commission (op ff).

[17] UN, Economic and Social Council (note 14), pp. 19, 25 and op dd.

[18] Some of the main contentious areas during negotiations were, however, the gendered impacts of the climate crises, the Gender Action Plan, SRHR, Environmental Women Human Rights defenders, national priorities, MIFD and the inclusion of girls in paragraphs referring to participation in climate action.

[19] UN, Economic and Social Council (note 14), pp. 14 and 46.

[20] Itzá Castañeda Camey (eds), *Gender-based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality* (Gland: The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 2020), pp. xii–xv, https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf.

[21] The impacts of the climate crisis have already exacerbated existing inequalities in Kenya. Droughts and flooding are lasting longer than usual and have had large socio-economic impacts and high economic costs, especially in the poorest counties that are at particular risk of drought. If interventions are not introduced quickly, there is a significant risk that progress made on SRHR will be undermined and rolled back, with adverse impacts on health and SRHR increasing as temperatures change. See World Bank, 'Climate Risk Country Profile: Kenya', 2021, p. 2, https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/15724-WB_Kenya%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf.

[22] As one of the most at-risk countries when it comes to the climate crisis, it is estimated that Cambodia's GDP could be reduced by almost 10% by 2050. Young people under 30-years-old comprise two-thirds of Cambodia's population and have been found to be at higher risk of poverty and violence, particularly gender-based violence. See World Bank, 'Climate Risk Country Profile: Cambodia', 2021, p. 2, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36380/Cambodia-Climate-Risk-Country-Profile.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

[23] Klahaan's research found that 'a key function of Khmer culture has been to set out and maintain 'complementary' and mutually dependent (but largely unequal) roles between women and men, within which men hold a greater share of power and privilege at all levels of the community'. Klahaan has also found that women in Cambodia have been disciplined to

uphold 'a detailed set of teachings, norms and customs in order to become 'proper' women, and bring honour to the family'. As per one Khmer proverb, women are said to 'belong to the kitchen stove'. See Klahaan, 'A Perception Study on Virginity Culture in Cambodia', 2021, p. 9, www.klahaan.org/_files/ugd/091c7d_bd4ddf8581824780b90865e6381ebf50.pdf.

[24] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 'UNESCO Covid-19 Response: How Many Students Are at Risk of Not Returning to School?', 2020, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373992.

[25] To read more about Fòs Feminista's advocacy on climate change and SRHR, see Fòs Feminista, 'Climate Change is a Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Issue', 2022, https://fosfeminista.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FOS-FEMINISTA-FACT-SHEET-CLIMATE.pdf.

[26] Senay Habtezion, 'Gender and Climate Change: Overview of Linkages Between Gender and Climate Change', UN Development Programme (UNDP), 2016, www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Linkages%20Gender%20and%20CC%20Policy%20Brief%201-WEB.pdf.

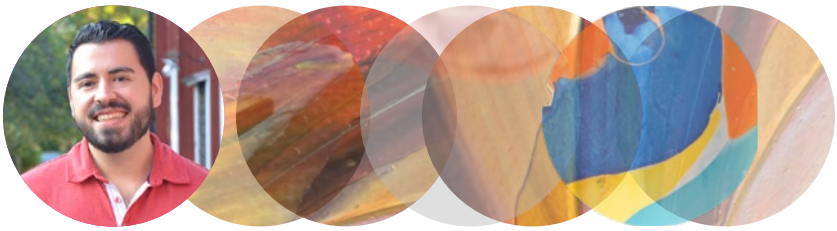
[27] These services include but are not limited to emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV infection, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and counselling and other psychosocial support services in cases of gender-based violence. See Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), 'Identifying Opportunities for Action on Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines', 2014, p. 9, https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/accessible%20pdf-1496/index.pdf.

[28] Szilvia Csevár, 'Voices in the background: Environmental degradation and climate change as driving forces of violence against indigenous women', *Global Studies Quarterly*, 1/3 (2021).

[29] Mihoko Tanabe et al., 'Intersecting sexual and reproductive health and disability in humanitarian settings: Risks, needs, and capacities of refugees with disabilities in Kenya, Nepal, and Uganda', Sexuality and Disability 33 (2015).

Nisreen Elsaim

Nisreen Elsaim is the former Chairperson of the United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. She started her environment and climate activist work in 2012 and was the Chair of the Sudan Youth Organization on Climate Change, where her regional and international work included mentoring young people. Nisreen holds a bachelor's degree in Physics from the University of Khartoum and is pursuing a master's degree in Renewable Energy.



José Alvarado

José Alvarado is a Programme Officer at Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation where he works on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, intersectionality and climate action. His experience includes coordinating roundtable discussions on the Sustaining Peace agenda focusing on the United Nations community. Previous experience includes working at several research institutions and publishing articles on gender and peace processes, arms transfer controls as well as climate change and peace. José is a Rotary Peace Fellow and holds a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from Uppsala University. Before moving to Sweden, he worked for the United States government in Guatemala and on social issues in the non-governmental sector in Mexico, Central America, and Colombia.

Nisreen Elsaim gave this interview in her personal capacity and the article does not necessarily reflect the view of the Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.

Climate change is intersectional: It impacts almost everything

Nisreen Elsaim is interviewed by José Alvarado

Introduction

Increasingly United Nations resolutions, declarations, and statements lift up youth as there is a growing realisation that young people, who in many countries constitute the majority of the population, must be given space to participate meaningfully in decision-making.

Mass broad-based social, political, environmental, and cultural movements such as #FridaysForFuture[1], Big Six Youth Organisations,[2] and initiatives like #ForYouthRights[3] continue to create momentum, pushing a global youth agenda in the multilateral arena forward. Decades of knocking at the door, protesting outside conference halls, and gathering in street marches built up to the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointing the UN Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change in July 2022. Their goal is to focus attention on 'practical and outcome-focused advice, diverse youth perspectives and concrete recommendations, with a clear focus on accelerating the implementation of his Climate Action agenda'.[4]

This group, brought together under the first system-wide youth strategy, Youth 2030, and the Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda, comprises youth voices and engages at the highest level in the UN as the organisation strives to fast-track international climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their collective experience includes climate change networks, advocacy, research, inclusive language, human rights defenders as well as the critical task of protecting and recording social and cultural heritage. Above all, the group represents youth from Africa, Europe, Melanesia, North and South America, and South Asia. In order to compensate for their size, their mandate is to also maintain wide levels of consultation with global youth networks to gather views from outside the group that could inform their advice to the Secretary-General.[5]

'We have seen young people on the front lines of climate action, showing us what bold leadership looks like, says António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General.[6]

In this interview Nisreen Elsaim, the first Chairperson of the United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change explores intersectionality. She speaks to the concept from a climate change activism perspective, touching on the lack of green energy, geographical inequalities, and the many challenges youth are facing when it comes to mobilising participation.

Picture: Adobe stock photo

Can you share with us your views on your United Nations experience and how it resonates with you in the context of intersectionality? Your role as Chair, speaking for youth, how does that resonate with you?

The main thing is that the issue that I am working with – 'climate change' – is an intersectional issue itself. I think it is very important for us to consider intersectionality, especially [with] the issue of climate change. It's not a standalone issue; it impacts almost everything. Finding holistic solutions to the problems that climate change causes and ultimately trying to stop climate change made us talk about other issues. For example, peace and security, economic growth, conserving culture, (etc).

I think one of the things that also made our work, let me say harder, is the youth itself. We are talking of a very wide range. We are not only talking about nationalities, we basically talk about the whole globe, but of course, in the same nationality, we might have different cultures. Even the youth themselves, in different ages and different stages - they have different needs and different perspectives. And in order for us to help them grow, not only personally but also to help the communities around them, all of this work requires a lot of intersections and a lot of connections, a lot of linkages, between the different themes and the different interests. Of course, managing the diversity itself is also a huge challenge. But every component comes with its own complexities, and I think it's hard and a lot [of] work, but I think it makes the work valuable. Challenging these complexities and making all of these intersections work is what makes our work mostly valuable.

Can you give us an example of how you do it?

Yes, for example in our own advisory group we are seven members functioning in six time zones. We have Moslem, Sikh, non-religious, LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender queer/questioning] groups, a Christian, an economist, a physicist, a researcher, a student and senior young people, almost mid-career. So, in our group itself, managing diversity … is really hard. But it is what makes our group really special. We were able to make successful decisions and manage a diverse group by meeting everywhere and we have been working together on this for two-and-half years now.

Nisreen, your country Sudan is often ranked as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change. As a leading figure on climate and security issues, how have you engaged with the concept of intersectionality in your context?

Climate change is the perfect storm; it impacts everything. All sectors: food, water, energy and even human security are triggering conflicts. Many issues in sub-Saharan Africa are triggered by climate change, where 70% of the population are in agriculture or [are] pastoralists. It is mentally frustrating, impacting gross domestic product, exported goods and water. Of course, there is also drought and water scarcity. We are lucky to have the Nile, but clean water is still a huge problem, and its access is difficult for nomads and pastoralists in rural areas.

Picture: Adobe stock photo

In Sudan, only 30% have access to electricity and 70% live in darkness. Renewable energies are not integrated in local policies. We are using charcoal as a burning fuel and cutting trees. Charcoal production increases greenhouse gases, emitting CO_2. Deforestation, where the wood is freely available to make charcoal and the charcoal is used to barbeque and make food. It is taken to urban cities from rural areas. While urban centres emit more, rural areas are affected more. There are no markets, no water, and deep inequality that impacts communities. It must also be said that because of the politics in Sudan, there is also an impact on climate change.

Which groups are experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality due to climate change? Could you provide examples?

Climate [change] does not segregate. It does not understand borders. It is a cross-cutting problem where everyone is affected. And, of course, we are affected at all levels. Like [the] COVID-19 [pandemic]. Adaptation efforts do not work if the big emitters continue working as they are. Because of global emissions we are all connected. We need holistic solutions, otherwise, adaptation does not work. Everything is interlinked. Charcoal [production and use] is an example. Household chores [in Sudan] are performed by women and girls. Some have to walk five to ten kilometres for their water. It is the same for dry wood for fuel, and this exposes women and girls to gender-based violence. They get raped and abused a lot and face domestic violence if they fail to get water and firewood. They are scolded by their families. It is one of the most heart-breaking situations.

Another example is [how] during the devastating floods in 2020 [in Sudan] two ladies went into labour and could not get to the hospital. We had to fly a midwife to them. Luckily it went well, but this would not be the case all the time. The impact of climate change puts the burden on women and girls as well. They do not go to school because of the impact of climate change. In many areas the women grow the crops, and they don't own the land. They are only workers there. If the crops fail, they do not get anything for their efforts.

You are a climate action activist and Chair of the UN Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. What is your perception of global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change?

I always say in sessions and at multilateral events that the Sustainable Development Goals are about leaving no one behind, but in reality, a lot of people are already being left behind. It is good to have a plan, but if you do not have parameters and enforcement mechanisms, these plans ring hollow. [One can say this about the] Paris Agreement as well. There is a lack of political will for sustainable development. Everyone is about doing it for themselves; it is the opposite of leaving no one behind. Some of the slogans are not realistic.

I have always said that there should be a plan for action [to deal with climate change] but if there are no strict rules or enforcement mechanisms to implement the SDGs' programme of action, there will be more meetings every year and reports, but no actions because there is no way to implement. I don't want to say that the United Nations is weak, but it is less effective that way.

How can we better connect these international processes to the regional, national and local levels to combat the climate crisis?

As you mentioned earlier, I've worked at different levels. I started young at the grassroots level and then negotiating with my country and the African Group of Negotiators[7] [on climate change] at the medium level. [Now] most of the work comes from bilateral influence through the UN Secretary-General. It is important to understand how to influence policy and try influencing it at the international level. I'm sure you've heard of the butterfly effect. If something happens in Fiji, it will have an effect in Sudan as well. Governance structures are also important to connect the different levels. There are four pillars of good governance structures which apply here: political will, strong institutions, laws and legislative processes, and stakeholder engagement.

What are the factors that must change in society for you and other population groups?

We have electricity cuts. There are villages that are less than an hour from the city with no electricity. There are huge gaps between supply and demand. We are without electricity, five to six hours daily. I have a solar battery that lasts for four hours, but we manage. There is also a relationship between climate change

and health. For example, there is also a health impact when we have floods. A lot of the time sewage water mixes in with drinking water. There is the risk of cholera, diarrhoea and bilharzia. In essence, communities are vulnerable due to a lack of development.

What solutions do you propose to enable the change that is needed?

Good governance structures are necessary. We must follow the four pillars of climate: political will, strong institutions, laws and stakeholder engagement, including the private sector, civil society organisations, ministries and academic institutions.

Can global climate framework processes create conditions to address the intersecting disadvantages and oppressions people experience because of the climate crisis?

[In Sudan] we have not had a government since 25 October 2021. This makes it extremely hard to trust actions and start anything working if there are not governance structures in place to make climate action sustainable over time.

How do you keep hope?

We don't have the privilege to lose hope. I can't go out to the Bahamas and wait by the sea and wait for the world to end. We have to keep going and do what we are doing.

Civil society organisations are emphasising the intersection of social and environmental injustices and the disproportionate impact climate change has on some groups over others, yet there is limited data to make these connections. How can we improve local level data collection to better understand people's unique experiences?

There are four ways from my own perspective:

1. Documentary films are strong tools and can be visually impacting. Documentary films usually bring people to the place, and it helps to put people in the other's shoes.
2. [Keeping track of] History, not only about science and data but also feelings and emotions; these are human reactions from someone with actual experience.
3. It is important to have institutions that collect data. To create and build the capacities of these institutes, basically teaching them how to fish. Give them tools to collect data and make sure that they are updated in modern ways to collect data. Contact points and institutes in different areas [to reach marginalised groups] are also important. There are [also] surveys and different ways to [evaluate conditions] based on geographical location. [This is] not completely accurate, but it gives you an idea of the situation. While the [academic] institutes provide more accurate data.
4. Freedom of access to information and [to] the internet. Using tools like surveys, Google forms and SurveyMonkey[8] can also create greater engagement with populations at risk.

Notes:

[1] https://fridaysforfuture.org.

[2] https://bigsix.org.

[3] Youth Forum, 'A global youth movement #ForYouthRights: challenges and next steps', https://tools.youthforum.org/policy-library/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Mobilising-the-global-movement-ForYouthRights-Report_-final.pdf.

[4] United Nations, 'The Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change' (New York, United Nations, accessed on 09 March 2023), https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/youth-in-action/youth-advisory-group#.

[5] United Nations, 'United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change Selection criteria for second cohort: 2023-24', (United Nations, New York, 2023), https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/yag_2.0.pdf, accessed on 09 March 2023.

[6] See note 4.

[7] 'The African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change (AGN) was established at the first Conference of the Parties (COP1) in Berlin, Germany in 1995 as an alliance of African member states that represents the interests of the region in the international climate change negotiations, with a common and unified voice'. See African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change homepage: https://africangroupofnegotiators.org.

[8] SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.co.uk/) is a service that can be used to create online surveys.

Conclusion

Around the world communities are experiencing the devastating impact of multiple crises including violent conflict, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted societal systems and exacerbated inequalities and poverty. Intersectional approaches ask us to recognise that different factors in a person's life, such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and migratory status interact to compound advantages or disadvantages and to mitigate the impacts of this on the overall risk of being left behind.

The contributors to this volume highlight different strategies for and experiences with applying intersectional approaches in policy and practice. While illuminating distinctive contextual examples, they all emphasise the imperative of starting from a holistic understanding of why and how people are marginalised and argue that the least that can be done is to listen to the voices of those directly impacted by and typically excluded from decision making processes that affect their lives.

In the volume examples are presented of how intersectionality is being operationalised, brought out in four diverse and interrelated themes — data, multilateralism, financing, and climate change. The contributions identify gaps and success factors as well as areas that require greater attention moving forward as we strive to accelerate the application of intersectionality in policy and practice. Intersectional approaches to data for instance is identified as a factor that is essential to derive a nuanced understanding of drivers of vulnerability and marginalisation among population groups in any context that allows for designing programming that can effectively address needs. While much more work and funding are still needed, it is important to recognise positive initiatives and progress that can serve as inspiration to go further.

Operationalising intersectionality — challenges in its application

This volume set out to identify efforts where intersectional approaches have been used to identify and address intersecting inequalities faced by people and their communities. The examples clearly indicate the inherent potential of applying intersectional approaches by practitioners and policymakers to advance peace, human rights, and sustainable development.

Still, some of the contributions raise awareness about potential challenges in its implementation. The first has to do with **brokering change within a society without doing harm**. Development processes might require including or prioritising different sub-groups and individuals to have a truly intersectional perspective, but it may be at odds with local customs or trigger historical grievances. When external actors fail to exercise caution against possible negative responses by local populations, their actions can lead to individuals getting hurt or a rejection of the efforts instead of achieving substantial change.

A second challenge has to do with **how to balance the constraints of scarce resources**. How do we meet the needs of those furthest left behind if they only account for a very small proportion of the population? Allocating resources in the most efficient way, to reach as many people in need as possible, is a starting point for multilateral action. Some of the contributions in this volume suggest that in a push to reduce inequality, there may be situations where addressing the needs of a broader group is considered the better option. They argue that 'the nuance of intersectionality may or may not be as important as being pragmatic in pushing forward the evolution of broader societal change'. As articulated by the Life & Peace Institute, '… the subtleties of intersectionality may sometimes appear to be a luxury when considering the levels of needs of broader groupings in society'. Again, priority should be given to those furthest left behind, but how thin can the cake be sliced before we must deal with considerations of efficiency?

Thirdly, there is the challenge of **the price, time and effort required for applying intersectionality**. Even among those who support the concept and application of inclusion, the discourse is often fraught with concerns about participatory processes being slow and resource intensive. The perception that an intersectional way of working will take longer and incur greater cost given that it requires more qualitative insight prevails. As such, it is difficult to guarantee that the application of such approaches and outcomes fits into set budgets and time constraints. This is a valid concern that must be addressed so that more voices are heard and deeper analyses made as this is an essential step towards intersectional responses by different agencies, organisations and institutions mandated to address the multiple issues.

Framing a new mindset – looking ahead at the future of intersectionality

The importance of inclusion is widely recognised in various international normative frameworks and agendas. Still, the commitments that have been made by the UN system and its member states risk remaining platitudes if intersectional approaches are not applied. Putting them into action can lift up the poorest and groups whose rights are repeatedly and egregiously violated. In the words of professor Kimberlé Crenshaw herself, 'intersectionality has been the banner under which many demands for inclusion have been made, but a term can do no more than those who use it have the power to demand'.[1] The effective application of intersectionality requires courageous and principled leadership to push for the maintenance of or, indeed demand the deeper analyses that holistic, intersectional approaches bring.

Through this volume, the Foundation aims to contribute to a better understanding of the concept and application of intersectional approaches in policy and practice We strive to advance its practice by sharing insights and lessons, recognising that the representation of these contributions merely scratches the surface of a deeply complex topic. Our ambition is to catalyse

and promote dialogue among those who are convinced of the merits of intersectionality and seek to promote it as well as with sceptics whose concerns deserve to be heard. It is understood that they may agree with the normative rationale for intersectional approaches but dismiss it as a luxury to be deprioritised to meet greater levels of need among broader groups in society.

In order to strengthen the application of intersectional lenses and approaches in practice we need to learn from more examples, in particular from practitioners in the global south. In follow up work to this volume, the intention is to use the Foundation's platform to highlight further examples and to facilitate exchanges to learn from these experiences. Through this, we hope that a more nuanced vision of peacebuilding and development that is firmly anchored in human rights for all will be fully realised.

Notes:

[1] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Why intersectionality can't wait', article in press. (Washington, Washington Post, 2015), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/, accessed on 27 February 2023.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AIR	Adolescents Initiative for Reform
ARROW	Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
AS	Al Shabaab
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPD	Commission on Population and Development
CRSV	conflict-related sexual violence
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSOs	civil society organisations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística in Colombia (National Administrative Department of Statistics)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army in Colombia)
EOP	Explanations of Position
FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
GBV	Gender based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRF	Global Resilience Fund
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
HR	Human Resources
HRFN	Human Rights Funders Network
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IDC	Inclusive Data Charter
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
IDPs	internally displaced persons
IGH	Institute for Global Homelessness
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISIM	Study of International Migration
Istat	Instituto Nazionale di Statistica (Italy)
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Agender Plus

LWPG	Lima Work Programme of Gender
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MIFD	multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Fund
NSOs	National Statistical Offices
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PDET	Los Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial [Territorially Focused Development Plans in Colombia
PEP	post-exposure prophylaxis
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement for Conflict Resolution for South Sudan
SAE	small-area estimation
SEND	special educational needs and disabilities
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIVJRNR	Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition
SOGIESC	sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SWDC	Somali Women Development Centre
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (The Joint)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UN Refugee Agency)
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UNMPTFO	United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the near east.
WEFGGG	World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap
WHO	World Health Organization
WPHF	Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security

This 65th edition of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's Development Dialogue Volume 'Intersectionality: Experiences, views and visions for change' aims to create a better understanding of intersectional approaches and methods in policy and practice. Everyone should be seen, recognised, and included in the design and implementation of policies and programmes.

The contributions broadly cover four themes. The first, **intersectional data**, look at comprehensive, disaggregated and accurate data use by practitioners to develop appropriate, evidence-based responses and policies to make populations more visible. Theme two examines the role of **multilateral institutions** and innovative development approaches in programmatic work through cross-mandate cooperation among entities including different UN agencies, funds and programmes. The third, **financing mechanisms**, reflects on flexible and creative ways to design and implement interventions and financing arrangements by various stakeholder groups to bring about transformative change. Finally, the fourth theme raises critical links between human rights, social equity and justice, gender equality, and **climate change**.

All the authors share experiences, reflect on globally diverse contexts and strive to deepen the understanding of intersectional approaches, while recognising the persistence of multiple forms of discrimination. They share examples and raise our awareness of people who are at risk of being left behind. Transformative changes are needed to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to bring everyone along at the country, regional and global levels. Every person has a role to play in making sure those changes happen.

Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation is a non-governmental organisation established in memory of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations with a vision of a peaceful, just and inclusive world where the fundamental values of the United Nations are universally applied. Building on Dag Hammarskjöld's legacy, the Foundation's mission is to advance dialogue and policy for sustainable development and peace.

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