

## LIBERIA

# Integrating gender into the Post Conflict Needs Assessment

Increasingly, Post Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs) are used as the platform for post-conflict recovery and reconstruction planning by international donors and actors such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank.

The PCNA methodology identifies gender as a crosscutting issue that needs to be integrated into all phases of a PCNA process, following these six principles:

1. Recovery needs differ by gender and age
2. Gendered marginalisation must be consciously reversed
3. Gender must be addressed from the start and adequate resources allocated
4. Gender expertise cannot be assumed, it must be commissioned
5. Cultural sensitivity should not be a cover for discrimination
6. Gender balance in team formation helps make PCNA teams more accessible to women in-country<sup>1</sup>

### Post conflict needs assessment in Liberia

In Liberia, the PCNA started after the Security Council deployed the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) on 19 September 2003.<sup>2</sup> The newly installed National Transitional Government of Liberia and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General agreed that an assessment of Liberia's needs during the official "transition period"—from 14 October 2003 to 31 December 2005—was required to secure both donor engagement and funding.

The PCNA, known as the "Joint Needs Assessment", was instructed by six guiding principles and five crosscutting themes.<sup>3</sup> The six guiding principles were:

- a) National ownership and participation
- b) National Transitional Government of Liberia leadership
- c) Broad support from all partners
- d) Legitimacy through immediate re-capacitation of key government agencies and institutions
- e) Security through full UNMIL deployment
- f) Economic stimulus and restoration of productive capabilities and humanitarian support and protection of vulnerable and special groups.

The five crosscutting themes were:

- 1) HIV/AIDS
- 2) Human rights, protection, and gender
- 3) Environment
- 4) Forestry
- 5) Shelter and urban management

The needs assessment effectively engaged the Transitional Government, which participated in consultations and technical meetings. National NGOs and members of civil society were invited, based on their expertise, to participate in meetings with sector working groups during the assessments. Some sector working groups also organised validation workshops exclusively for national actors. A number of regional bodies were also active in the Joint Needs Assessment and its implementation.

The *Joint Needs Assessment Synthesis Report* and accompanying *Results-Focused Transition Framework matrix* were completed in January 2004 and presented to and endorsed at multi-stakeholder meetings in Monrovia. These convened members of the Liberian legislative assembly, the business community and the media, and culminated with

1 United Nations Development Group, PCNA-TRF Toolkit: Note on Integrating Gender Perspectives, January 2009, <http://www.undg.org/docs/9925/FINAL-Toolkit-Note-Gender.doc> (accessed September 9, 2009).

2 UNMIL deployment began on 1 October 2003, while the National Transitional Government of Liberia was officially established and inaugurated on 14 October 2003. Also see: United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1509 (2003), S/RES/1509 (2003), 19 September 2003, [http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325\\_Monitor/RW/Res/1509%20\(2003\).pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325_Monitor/RW/Res/1509%20(2003).pdf) (accessed September 9, 2009).

3 United Nations Development Group, PCNA Review: Phase One. Liberia Needs Assessment Case Study, October 2006, [http://www.undg.org/archive\\_docs/8886-Liberia\\_PCNA\\_Case\\_Study.doc](http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/8886-Liberia_PCNA_Case_Study.doc) (accessed September 9, 2009).

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a high-level summit of the Transitional Government, the Economic Community of West African States, donors, civil society and international non-governmental organisations.<sup>4</sup> As a final step in the needs assessment process, a Liberia Reconstruction Conference was held in February 2004 at UN Headquarters in New York.

#### Integrating gender in the PCNA

As stated above, gender was identified as a crosscutting theme for the Joint Needs Assessment. To assist integration of gender into each priority area, in December 2003, the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women prepared a "Gender Checklist for Liberia."<sup>5</sup> The underlying idea was that determining the differences in how women, men, boys and girls experience conflict would help the assessment team to identify their respective needs and priorities. In particular, understanding the role women play in all sectors of activity (economic, social, cultural, political, etc.) would help ensure that reconstruction activities are planned in a way that does not reinforce past discrimination, and helps women to gain equal access and control over resources and decision-making processes.

The Gender Checklist posed general/cross-cutting questions related to men and women's experiences of the conflict, gender roles and resources, etc., as well as specific questions concerning gender dimensions of: the deployment of UNMIL; armed forces restructuring; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; refugees and internally displaced people; building of democratic institutions and the Governance Reform Commission; judicial sector and reform; police service sector and reform; human rights, protection and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; elections; basis services, such as health and education; livelihoods, employment, agriculture and development; infrastructure; and economic policy and development strategy.

The following parts of the Gender Checklist demonstrate how issues related to gender and security sector reform can begin to be addressed in an assessment:

#### Building of democratic institutions and Governance Reform Commission:

- What women's groups and networks existed before the conflict? What role did/do they play? Were they actively involved in policy-making?
- Will the emerging political system recognise and protect women's rights and interests? And will women be enabled to influence and participate in the political process? (OECD gender tipsheets)
- Are women included in transitional government and planning processes? Are they in decision-making positions? Do constitutional committees ensure gender perspectives?
- If data on participation in various committees or groups is supported, provide sex-disaggregated information.
- What are the government mechanisms dealing with women's issues (such as a Ministry or national machinery for women)? Is the government a signatory to CEDAW?

<sup>4</sup> National Transitional Government of Liberia, *Results-Focused Transition Framework*, Progress Review Report (Monrovia: National Transitional Government of Liberia, September 2004), <http://www.lr.undp.org/UNV%20protected%20data/RFTF%20Progress%20Review%20Report%20FINAL%2011%20Sept%202004.doc> (accessed September 9, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> The full Gender Checklist for Liberia is available at: <http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Peacekeeping/Liberiagender-checklist.pdf> (accessed September 9, 2009).

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#### Police Service Sector and Reform:

- What types of law enforcement services are available in the country? What are the numbers/percentage of women by grade and category? Are women police officers involved in all operational aspects of the police work or limited to administrative functions only? Are measures in place to actively increase the number of women in the security forces?
- Do law enforcement service personnel receive training on gender awareness, sexual crimes, domestic violence, and human rights?
- Are there facilities to meet the specific needs of women police officers (e.g. separate accommodation, hygiene facilities)? Is the working environment set up in a manner that is conducive to the needs of women police officers?
- Are there specific provisions to facilitate women police officers to be assigned closed to their home areas, or if married to police to remain together in the same location?
- Are breaches of discipline by women and men police officers dealt with in the same manner?
- What is the general/prevalent attitude of the current police leadership and of the male police officers towards women police officers?
- What are the main crimes committed against women and girls within the home and outside of the home? What are the cultural and other barriers that discourage the reporting of crimes by women/girls?
- Do police have established protocols, specialized personnel and units (e.g. crimes against women cell or family support units) for dealing with sexual crimes and domestic violence? Are such police cells staffed by policewomen?
- Are there separate police holding cells for women? Are women detainees supervised and searched by female officers and staff? Have feminine hygiene needs been addressed where women are kept in holding cells?
- What specific facilities and services are pregnant and nursing mothers provided with in detention?
- Are there traditional and non-traditional services (e.g. women help lines) available to women to facilitate their reporting of crimes, especially of a sexual nature?

#### Judicial Sector and Reform:

- Are there efforts to build the capacity of women and men in order to enable them to fully participate in legal/justice issues and governance?
- Are there plans to review the relevant legal (e.g., inheritance law, family code, credit regulations), policy (e.g., water, waste disposal, or housing fee subsidy policy), and institutional framework (e.g., current administrative system for concerned urban infrastructure services), and its gender implications?

#### Armed Forces Restructuring:

- What role do women play in the military, armed groups, police or any other security institution such as intelligence services, border police, customs, immigrations, and other law enforcement services (per cent of forces/groups, by grade and category)?
- Are actions supported to ensure women can be part of military, police or any other security institutions such as intelligence services, border police, customs, immigrations, and other law enforcement services?
- What plans are in place on giving women ex-combatants the option of joining the peacetime army and other security institutions such as intelligence services, border police, customs, immigrations, and other law enforcement services?
- What are the training needs of women in the military and armed groups?
- Is gender training included in the training package for the new army and other security institutions?

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The focus on gender in the Joint Needs Assessment helped to highlight how Liberian women have unequal access to areas such as education, public administration, the justice and political systems, and development and post-conflict peace building efforts more broadly.<sup>6</sup>

The Joint Needs Assessment Synthesis Report called for:

- Under the heading of *protection and monitoring*: a) establishing policies and related medical, psycho-social and economic interventions and legal redress for victims of sexual and gender-based violence; and b) establishing community monitoring mechanisms and advocacy campaigns against all gender-based violence.
- Under the heading of *transitional justice and peace building*: a) starting a nationwide inclusive reconciliation process through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission with broad-based national consultations, involving women and vulnerable groups; and b) establishing a fully functioning administration of justice, including an independent judiciary and a police service in conformity with international human rights standards in particular relating to juvenile justice and the protection of women's rights.
- Under the heading of *national capacity building in the fields of human rights, protection and gender*: a) building an adequate government capacity to promote and protect human rights, including women's rights, through the strengthening of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Gender and Development; and b) ensuring the organisational, human rights and protection capacity of Liberian human rights, child welfare, and women's civil society organisations in order to create a culture of accountability.<sup>7</sup>

The methodology for Liberia's PCNA was reviewed by a multi-stakeholder group in 2006, which looked at how crosscutting issues were dealt with in the PCNA process. The examination highlighted that, during the PCNA, mainstreaming crosscutting issues into sector assessments represented a major challenge. In the case of gender, for example, the extensive checklists that were produced for each cluster, and of which the UNMIL Gender Checklist is an example, revealed themselves far too ambitious, and were not necessarily reflected by concrete implementation in the post-conflict reconstruction phase.<sup>8</sup> Analysis by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) of needs assessment in Liberia confirms these findings, further recommending that "future guidelines should clearly define the mechanisms for integration of cross-cutting sectors in the cluster analysis and reports."<sup>9</sup>

### Outcomes of integrating gender into the PCNA

That gender was integrated into the PCNA in Liberia from its inception allowed gender-related issues and concerns to be raised during the Liberia Reconstruction Conference, with calls for donors' acknowledgement of and attention to the gendered dimensions of the Liberian conflict and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

The findings of the PCNA process in Liberia influenced, at least in part, the integration of gender into the security sector reform process. The PCNA helped highlight that women must be included in the disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation programme. By February 2005, 22,370 women and 2,440 girls had been disarmed and demobilized (out of a total of 101,495 persons). By the end of 2006, 13,223 of these women had been "reinserted" mainly into agriculture, formal education or vocational training.<sup>10</sup> UNMIL developed a Gender Policy for the reform and restructuring of the Liberian National Police, under which

6 African Development Bank, *Liberia: Country Dialogue Paper 2006* (Abidjan: African Development Bank, September 2006), <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/ADB-BD-WP-2006-99-EN-LIBERIA-2006-COUNTRY-DIALOGUE-PAPER.PDF> (accessed September 9, 2009).

7 National Transitional Government of Liberia, United Nations and World Bank, *Joint Needs Assessment, Synthesis Report*, February 2004. [http://www.lr.undp.org/needs\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.lr.undp.org/needs_assessment.pdf) (accessed September 9, 2009).

8 United Nations Development Group, *PCNA-TRF Toolkit: Note on Integrating Gender Perspectives*, January 2009, <http://www.undg.org/docs/9925/FINAL-Toolkit-Note-Gender.doc> (accessed September 9, 2009).

9 Thomas Schaef, "Needs Assessment in Post-Conflict Situations, Case Study: Liberia" (Working Paper No.9, GTZ, January 2004), [http://www.undg.org/archive\\_docs/4941-PCNA\\_-\\_Country\\_Studies\\_-\\_Liberia.pdf](http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/4941-PCNA_-_Country_Studies_-_Liberia.pdf) (accessed September 9, 2009).

10 UNMIL, Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation web-page: <http://www.unmil.org/1content.asp?ccat=ddrr&zdoc=1> (accessed September 9, 2009).

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a female recruitment program was established.<sup>11</sup> More than 100 female police recruits had completed their basic training by the end of 2007.<sup>12</sup> A Women and Child Protection Unit was institutionalised within the Liberian National Police in April 2005, tasked with, inter alia, the training of selected police officers to address crimes against women and children.<sup>13</sup> A Women and Children's unit was created in Liberian prisons.

In the 2006 *Common Country Assessment for Liberia: Consolidating Peace and National Recovery for Sustainable Development*, a follow-up from the PCNA, an even more explicit gender-sensitive lens was adopted. For example, the assessment notes the need for finalising a national plan on sexual and gender-based violence, involving strategic interventions such as reform of the legal system (e.g., the establishment of fast-track courts and of psycho-social support mechanisms and 'safe homes' for survivors of gender-based violence), and ensuring that planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation processes are supported by gender responsive data and analysis.<sup>14</sup>

To date, gender constitutes one of the main pillars of Liberia's development strategy. For example, the UN Development Assistance Framework for Liberia 2008–2012 considers gender equality and women's empowerment as a cross-cutting issue, to be mainstreamed into all its programmed activities. Under the heading of peace and security, the UN Development Assistance Framework identifies the need to ensure that "national security policy and architecture is functioning in conformity with Liberia's human rights obligations, with particular attention to violence against women".<sup>15</sup>

Although it would be hazardous to say that the above results derive solely from the attention that was paid to gender during the PCNA process, they illustrate the importance and benefits of identifying gender-related concerns and issues from the initial assessment phases of any peace building and development processes.

11 William G. O'Neill, "Liberia – Background", *Paper prepared for UNDP*, January 2007. See also, UNMIL, *Launching of Special Education Programme for Potential Female Recruits of Liberia National Police* (UNMIL Press release, 22 January 2007).

12 From : [http://gender.developmentgateway.org/Print-Item.10966.0.html?&no\\_cache=1&tx\\_dgcontent\\_pi1%5Btt\\_news%5D=272592&MP=10966-8509](http://gender.developmentgateway.org/Print-Item.10966.0.html?&no_cache=1&tx_dgcontent_pi1%5Btt_news%5D=272592&MP=10966-8509) (accessed September 9, 2009).

13 UNICEF, *New women and children protection section for Liberia's police*, (UNICEF Press Release, September 2005), [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_28159.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_28159.html) (accessed September 9, 2009).

14 United Nations, *Common Country Assessment for Liberia: Consolidating Peace and National Recovery for Sustainable Development*, (Monrovia: UN, June 2006), <http://www.lr.undp.org/CCA%2028%20July%20FINAL%20FULL%20SMALL.pdf> (accessed September 9, 2009).

15 United Nations, "Consolidating Peace and National Recovery for Sustainable Development", *UN Development Assistance Framework for Liberia 2008-2012* (Monrovia, May 2007), [http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Liberia/Liberia\\_UNDAF\\_2008\\_2012.pdf](http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Liberia/Liberia_UNDAF_2008_2012.pdf).