Policy Agenda
Generation Equality Fora (GEF)
WPS & Humanitarian Action Compact
MenEngage Alliance Joint Recommendations for Action Coalition Leaders

Rationale

Research tells us that socially-constructed gender norms which associate masculinity with power, violence and control, play an important role in driving conflict and insecurity worldwide[1]. These norms are enabled by institutions and ideologies that glorify violence and fund the war system. Institutions of war and the people who hold power are highly masculinized: war is built on the mobilization of men's bodies to fight. Men and boys, together with women and girls, need to be supported to better understand these dynamics and be **resilient to political strategies that harm them**. To advance feminist peace, it is therefore critical to work towards transformation of the currently accepted norms, ideologies and institutions.

Feminist activists and scholars continue to note the ways in which this nationalist rhetoric of control and protection is both masculinized and militarized; **nationalism, militarism and patriarchal masculinities have always been closely linked**. To address conflict and militarized masculinities we have to draw attention to the political and economic forces that drive the war economy and exploit and manufacture ideas around militarized masculinities.

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 there has been significant progress on attention for women's needs and participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Through the participation of women in formal peace processes has been inching up, a study of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 revealed that only 9 percent of negotiators were women[2]. Furthermore, the current implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda is often translated as "making war safer for women and girls" rather than being about preventing crises, conflict and war. **The agenda thus largely fails to challenge the underlying gender norms that fuel violent conflict.**

In 2015 the total global cost of violence and conflict around the world was US $13.6 trillion, more than US $1,800 per person on the planet[3]. **There is an urgent need, and opportunity, for this money to be redirected towards investments in gender equality, health and poverty reduction**. Gaining deeper **understanding into the drivers of conflict, and the roles that men and masculinities play in creating, reinforcing and escalating violent hostilities, is imperative to finding pathways for change toward more peaceful, just and harmonious societies**.

Simultaneously, exploring the varied perceptions and experiences of men and boys, and how they can positively contribute to peace and security efforts, is a crucial step in the inclusion of 'men and masculinities lens' in shaping gender-sensitive peace and security policies and achieving the transformative potential of

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[1] Wright, H., (2014), "Masculinities, conflict and peacebuilding: Perspectives on men through a gender lens", SAFERWORLD

[2] Castillo Diaz and Tordjman (2012), Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence, UN Women

[3] UN Women (2016), Facts and Figures: Peace and Security & UN Secretary-General's remarks at the Peacebuilding Fund Pledging Conference (2016)

In order to challenge militarism, prevent conflict and achieve gender equality, it is **necessary to destabilize stereotypical male gender roles and hegemonic expressions of manhood,** and support "alternatives": manifestations of non-violent, equitable and inclusive notions of manhood, by changing social norms that shape boys' and men's behavior.

In order to challenge militarism, men and boys can be engaged through educational and leadership training that challenges militarized masculinities and violence as a dominant narrative and **promotes opportunities for alternatives through non-violence, as well as programs that engage men and boys to strengthen gender equality and women's participation in peace and security processes and to prevent and respond to human rights violations in conflict situations, including sexual violence.**

Important is that, in identifying and discussing the forces behind the **political economy, feminists must guard against men claiming particular analytical expertise and situating themselves as "experts". Women's lived experiences and analysis must remain front and centre and women's expertise acknowledged and normalised.**

Tactics

- Provide psychosocial support to boys and men in conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly ex-combatants, in order to deconstruct ideals of masculinities that encourage them to use violence and train them on active non-violence and alternative masculinities.
- Identify and work with male allies in political systems to support the increased participation of women in political and peacebuilding processes.
- Address militarism as a cause and consequence of patriarchy and work to redefine security and protection towards a human security model.
- Carry out gender audits of military, law enforcement, and the justice and security sectors to assess whether they perpetuate violence or progress toward respecting human rights, and to provide recommendations accordingly.
- Address risks of imperialism and militarism: Violence by men and 'masculine and patriarchal' state must be understood within the context of colonial violence, including in the name of development. Systemic change requires addressing the links between harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse within international institutions, as well as the colonial legacies outside of those systems (i,e., illicit arms flows, environmental degradation, etc.)
- Identify strategic groups: Interventions should be focused on key populations (i.e., family, faith leaders, media, government, military) and target institutional spaces in which men hold powerful positions and set standards of masculinity, or strategic pathways that lead to these spaces (i.e., men and boys before they join the military or police).
- Address risks to men and male-identified people: Interventions should recognize that men and boys who participate in gender equality and nonviolence training may risk ostracization for being "feminized" or colonized by "Western" ideas. As part of contextualizing interventions, trainings should be grounded in local history and context.
- Address risks to women and female-identified people: Recognize that women who work with male "allies" risk undermining women's political agenda for equality and peace if patriarchal violence is simply replaced by benign patriarchy. Initiatives must ensure that men learn more than just the language of gender equality and actually challenge unequal power relations, including by

learning to step back and support women's leadership, rather than continue to dominate spaces under the flag of being a "gender champion".