Gender Financing at the UN Peacebuilding Fund

In 2015, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which supports the Peacebuilding Commission and administers the Peacebuilding Fund at the United Nations, became the first and only UN entity to allocate 15 per cent of peacebuilding funds to gender-specific projects. PBSO then surpassed this target in late 2016, having allocated almost 20 per cent of its peacebuilding funds that year to projects in conflict-affected countries linked to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To find out more about how this happened, Julie Marie Hansen spoke to PBSO’s Gender Advisor Sarah Douglas.

Could you give us some background to the PBSO and peacebuilding funding?

The PBSO was created in 2006 after the 2005 World Summit, which was a follow-up meeting to the 2000 Millennium Summit that led to the creation of the Millennium Development Goals. It became more apparent that there was a big gap between the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council which on one side deals with development and longer-term issues, and the UN Security Council which on the other side deals security matters. Also around that time, countries like Burundi, Liberia and others had been falling into repeated cycles of conflict and there wasn’t enough support to prevent this from happening.

So in October 2006, the Peacebuilding Fund was launched. There are about 20 to 30 countries at any given time that are eligible to receive peacebuilding funds. The Fund was originally envisaged to be at around USD 100 million per year, and although this has fluctuated up and down from year to year, this amount remains the goal.
How did the 15 per cent target for gender-specific projects come about?

In 2010 the UN Secretary-General was requested to develop a report on women’s participation in peacebuilding. So PBSO worked together with UN Women (UNIFEM at that time) to develop the report and also developed a seven-point action plan on a gendered response to peacebuilding. The action plan set out a very clear and targeted agenda for increasing women’s participation in all aspects of peacebuilding.

One of the commitments in the action plan was on financing. It basically says that all UN funds that support peacebuilding must allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of all of their resources to gender equality and women’s empowerment. Because PBSO manages the Peacebuilding Fund, which is exclusively dedicated to peacebuilding work, the Office was very keen to take this 15 per cent target on board and champion it.

How did the PBSO manage to not only meet the target but surpass it too?

We realised that we were not going to be able to reach the target through “business as usual”. We saw that it was very hard for smaller agencies, like UN Women and UNFPA, as well as gender advisors within larger agencies working in conflict-affected countries, to get enough traction to submit proposals to have their projects funded through the Peacebuilding Fund. It was mostly the larger agencies that were able to capture the resources available, and so we needed to create a special incentive to submit proposals that were specifically on gender. This is where the Gender Promotion Initiative comes in, which is a special call for proposals to the Peacebuilding Fund that has so far been carried out in 2011, 2014 and 2015.

PBSO wants to incentivise everyone to gender mainstream and be cautious about encouraging gender projects to be separate. While we have opened up these special calls for funding gender projects, we do not want all of the gender projects to be marginalised, off on one side. We know we have to continue to do these special Gender Promotion Initiatives to make sure that we meet the 15 per cent target and to increase women’s participation in peacebuilding in conflict affected countries. But ideally these initiatives are a special temporary measure that the PBSO will carry out as long as it has to until the 15 per cent target is met through the regular processes.

Another thing we did was to look closely at how we had been allocating funds to projects. PBSO uses a gender marker rating peacebuilding projects from 0 to 3. Put simply, 3 is the best and means a project is exclusively oriented towards gender; 2 means the project mainstreams gender well; 1 means gender is an insignificant objective in the project; and 0 means the project does not consider gender at all. In PBSO’s most recent business plan for 2014-2016, it was decided that no projects with a gender marker of 0 would be accepted to receive resources from the Peacebuilding Fund. This was a decision not only to promote more projects specifically on gender but also to exclude any projects that do not consider gender. You can be sure that if you’re working on any kind of peacebuilding project, from security sector reform to economic recovery, no matter what the project is there will be some implications for gender. So there is no excuse to have a project with a gender marker of 0 in the peacebuilding field.

We also looked more closely at the gender marker 2 projects. In previous years, we had only counted projects rated gender marker 3, yet projects with a gender marker of 2 are usually much larger projects, dealing with for example disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, that are unlikely to be rated gender marker 3. So it was important to also calculate how much had been allocated within these larger projects to gender and then count them as part of the 15 per cent. Otherwise we would have been missing out a huge piece of the puzzle.

What do you think others can learn from the PBSO’s experience?

Throughout this time since the 15 per cent target was set, PBSO has always had a gender advisor. It’s essential to have gender expertise in the Office to be able to actually follow these processes and make sure there is consistent attention to gender issues. PBSO has also had very high political will from its senior management throughout the process, which is critical.

Another key factor is that, together with UN Women, PBSO has developed a really strong evidence base which has allowed us to make strong and convincing arguments whenever we’ve been proposing interventions to UN agencies working in conflict-affected countries.

And at a more normative level, PBSO has shown to the world that gender and women’s participation is really part and parcel of peacebuilding. That it’s not an afterthought; it’s not something you do later when you have time. A few years ago you would see gender-blind funding proposals coming in and people talking about peacebuilding but never mentioning 50 per cent of the population. Now awareness and understanding of gender issues in peacebuilding has changed significantly. We have come a long way.

Recommended Reading


Developing an Index on Women, Peace and Security: Inclusion, Justice and Security

PRIO has teamed up with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) to develop a new global Index on Women, Peace and Security: Inclusion, Justice and Security (WPS Index). The WPS Index will reflect the fact that women are at the heart of efforts to achieve peace, justice and inclusion worldwide. The Index will capture both women’s empowerment and peace and security for the first time, and thereby will provide the most comprehensive measure of women’s well-being ever constructed.

Bridging insights

The WPS Index will be unique among existing indices since it aims to bridge insights from gender and development indices with peace and security. While gender indices are typically limited to aspects of inclusion in politics or the workforce, and do not address women’s or girls’ lack of security, traditional security indices include an array of indicators and assessments, but rarely indicators assessing systematic bias and discrimination against women and girls.

The WPS Index will be designed so that it is easy to use and understand. It will reach out to a range of audiences spanning from the international community to policy makers, academics, the business sector and civil society.

The research team

Work on the Index has been led by Jeni Klugman, Managing Director at GIWPS. The GIWPS team also includes Melanne Verveer, Roslyn Warren, Patty Chang, Sarah Rutherford, Roudabeh Kishi and Arjun Krishnan. The lead researcher at PRIO is Senior Researcher Marianne Dahl. The PRIO team also includes Torunn L. Tryggestad, Senior Researcher and Director of PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security, and Henrik Urdal, Research Professor and incoming PRIO Director.

On 26 February, members from both the PRIO and GIWPS teams, including Inger Skjelsbæk from PRIO, met in Washington DC for a workshop. During the workshop, the teams discussed the broader purpose of the Index, what has been done, what needs to be done and the launch of the Index. “The meeting was extremely fruitful,” says Marianne Dahl. “It allowed us to engage in a broader discussion of how we can make the most out of this Index.”

The Index will be launched in the second half of 2017.

New Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation

The number of women and gender experts involved in formal peacemaking processes remains low and few peace agreements include gender-relevant provisions or harness the resources women may contribute to reach more sustainable peace. As part of efforts to address this situation, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (UN DPA) has launched a new Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies.

The guidance was launched at an event on 27 March at the UN headquarters in New York, hosted by UN DPA together with UN Permanent Missions of Colombia, Finland and Norway. It aims to “enhance gender-sensitive mediation capacity at international, regional and national levels and to create more consultative mediation processes through the promotion of both the effective participation of women and gender sensitivity in the design and substance of peace agreements.”

The guidance offers information and advice on international normative frameworks on Women, Peace and Security; mediation preparation, such as doing gender-sensitive conflict analyses; process design, such as how to make mediation processes inclusive; and how to add a gender lens to substantive issues, for instance by including gender-relevant language in ceasefires and peace agreements.

The guidance draws on the materials, notes and participant feedback from the series of High-Level Seminars on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes, which are tailored to peace envoys, medi-
ators and senior mediation experts. The seminar series is a joint initiative by UN DPA, the Crisis Management Initiative in Finland, PRIO, and the governments of Finland and Norway, and has been held annually in Oslo and Helsinki since 2013.

New Appointments at the PRIO GPS Centre

The new year began with two exciting staff developments at the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security, both of which have strengthened the links between the PRIO GPS Centre and its sister centres in the UK and Australia.

Inger Skjelsbæk, Research Professor at PRIO, was appointed Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Women, Peace and Security at the London School of Economics in January. She will be affiliated with the LSE centre in the period 2017-2019 and will attend workshops, meetings and contribute with guest lectures. Skjelsbæk leads the project ‘Equal Peace? Women’s Empowerment and Multicultural Challenges in War-to-Peace’ at the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security.

“I am very pleased and honoured to have been accepted as a Visiting Fellow,” says Skjelsbæk. “This is a great way to establish closer collaboration between the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security and the LSE centre.”

Jacqui True, Professor of Politics and International Relations at Monash University in Australia, was appointed as a PRIO Global Fellow in February. She will work closely with researchers at the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security. PRIO Global Fellows are academics with strong scholarly records and a commitment to the research agenda on peace and conflict. They all have their main positions elsewhere but work closely with PRIO researchers and regularly spend time in Oslo.

True is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow at Monash University and Director of the university’s Centre for Gender, Peace and Security (Monash GPS). She is a specialist in gender and international relations, women, peace and security, and feminist methodologies. Her current research is focused on examining gender and foreign policy cross-nationally, and on understanding the political economy of post-conflict violence against women and the patterns of systemic sexual and gender-based violence in Asia Pacific conflict-affected countries.

New project: Dynamics of conflict-related sexual violence

PRIO Senior Researcher Ragnhild Nordås has been awarded a Young Research Talent grant from the Research Council of Norway for a project to study the dynamics of sexual violence in armed conflict. The project will address why sexual violence occurs during conflict and what might be done to reduce or eliminate it, focusing on two main challenges.

First, a fundamental challenge for research on conflict-related sexual violence is methodological – how to establish reliable systematic evidence and overcome problems of potential data biases. Such biases can occur, for instance, due to sexual violence being fraught with taboos, the conflict contexts in which the violence occurs, and the phenomenon being potentially overlooked and discounted.

The other main challenge that the project will focus on is substantive and concerns the lack of understanding of the relationships between different forms of sexual violence and other types of violence in conflict settings. Sexual violence is generally studied in isolation or as a collective category, but different forms of sexual violence, such as rape, sexual slavery and sexual torture, might have different causes and consequences.

The project will therefore be looking at what the strategic relevance and function of different forms of sexual violence in contentious politics are. Based on this and the characteristics of groups that perpetrate sexual violence, the project will also be able to ask the critical question of which interventions and policies will significantly reduce or eliminate the use of sexual violence atrocities.

In seeking to answer these questions, the project aims to produce new knowledge critical to understanding the phenomenon of conflict-related sexual violence and its possible prevention.

The project lasts four years, starting in 2017.
July 2017. As part of her research team, Nordås will be working with PRIO researchers Marianne Dahl and Helga Malmin Binningsbø, as well as Dara Kay Cohen at Harvard Kennedy School, and Chris Fariss and Priyamvada Trivedi at the University of Michigan.

**Research Workshop on Gender and New Wars**

On 9-10 March, the Centre for Women, Peace and Security at the London School of Economics organised a workshop to discuss research on ‘Gender and New Wars’. The workshop was hosted by Director of the LSE WPS centre Christine Chinkin, and LSE Professor Mary Kaldor, who coined the concept of ‘new wars’ which refers to characteristics of warfare since the end of the Cold War. Around thirty researchers from all over the world attended to present their current research and participate in in-depth discussions about various aspects of how gender is constructed in the context of new wars.

Presentations at the workshop covered a wide range of topics: from gendered tactics of new wars and women combatants, to men and boys in new wars and gender and the ‘war on terror’. PRIO’s Julie Ma Cohen at Harvard Kennedy School, and Malmin Binningsbø, as well as Dara Kay Cohen at Harvard Kennedy School, and Chris Fariss and Priyamvada Trivedi at the University of Michigan.

**Recommended Reading**


**International News**

Sweden started a two-year term as non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in January 2017. One of Sweden’s focus areas during the term 2017-2018 will be the link between conflict prevention and women, peace and security.


The Institute for Inclusive Security hosted its 18th annual colloquium on ‘Strengthening women peacemakers around the world’ on 7-12 January, where “women leaders from conflict regions around the world [exchanged] lessons learned and [refined] strategies aimed at changing the way decisions are made about war and peace”.

Italy, together with the United Kingdom, organised an *Arria formula meeting* of the Security Council on 27 March titled ‘Increasing the Participation of Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation: Toward the Creation of a Mediterranean Women Mediators Network’. Norway gave a statement at the meeting on behalf of the Nordic countries, and made reference to the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM).

Ambassador Marriët Schuurman stepped down as the NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security on 30 March after two and a half years.

Brazil launched a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in March.

Hilary Clinton gave a speech at Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security on 31 March about women’s roles in global politics, as part of the annual Hillary Rodham Clinton Awards for Advancing Women in Peace and Security ceremony.

The 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took place at the United Nations in New York on 13-24 March. A transcript of the UN Secretary-General’s remarks to the CSW on ‘Women, Peace and Security and Prevention: New directions and opportunities’ is available online.

**News from Norway**

The Norwegian Burma Committee organised a panel discussion on 15 February entitled ‘No Women, No Lasting Peace’ about women’s participation in peace processes in Guatemala, Colombia and Myanmar, as part of the Human Rights Human Wrongs documentary film festival in Oslo.

The SCR 1325 Network in Norway (Samarbeidsorganet for kvinner, fred og sikkerhet) met at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 1 March.

The University of Oslo organised the conference ‘Global Challenges - Nordic Experiences’ on 20-21 March including two panels on ‘State Feminism in Nordic Foreign Policy’ and ‘Gender and Diplomacy’, chaired by PRIO Research Professor Inger Skjelsbæk. The following papers were presented:

- ‘Gender, Status and Ambassador Appointments to Militarized and Violent Countries’, by Ann Towns (University of Gothenburg)
- ‘Gendering Diplomacy’, by Halvard Leira (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs)
- ‘Women, Peace and Security: the Case
of Norway as Norm-Entrepreneur’, by Inger Skjelsbæk and Torunn L. Tryggestad (PRIO)

- ‘The Nordic Gender Equality Model’, by Mari Teigen (Institute for Social Research)
- ‘The Nordic Countries and Gender Equal Peace’, Louise Olsson (Uppsala University)

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised an event to mark International Women’s Day on 8 March in Oslo about ‘Women’s Rights in Crises and Conflict’.

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom – Norway (IKFF) and the Oslo Association for the Rights of Women (Oslo Kvinnesaksforening) organised an open meeting about ‘Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution and Peace Work’ in Oslo on 16 March. PRIO’s Torunn L. Tryggestad gave a talk on Norwegian Women, Peace and Security policies and participated in a panel debate.

Elisabeth Slättum, Special Envoy to the Philippines peace process, worked on the successful backchannel talks in the Netherlands on 10-11 March, leading to an agreement on the resumption of the formal peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

Marita Sørheim-Rensvik, Coordinator for Women, Peace and Security at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated in an open meeting about ‘Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution and Peace Work’, organised by the Norwegian section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (IKFF) and the Oslo Association for the Rights of Women (Oslo Kvinnesaksforeningen).

Hilde Frafjord Johnson, NWM Advisory Group member, participated in a PRIO seminar on 5 April about peace mediation and the Nordic experience.

Nordic Women Mediators - Norway

This is a new feature highlighting activities of the Norwegian branch of the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM). Read more about the NWM here.

Rita Sandberg, former Deputy Special Envoy to the Colombian peace process, shared her experiences as facilitator in the peace processes in Colombia at a high-level conference on mediation hosted by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 14 February.


News from PRIO

Inger Skjelsbæk, Research Professor, has been appointed Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics Centre for Women, Peace and Security (see separate story).

Jacqui True, Professor at Monash University, has been appointed a PRIO Global Fellow (see separate story).

Ragnhild Nordås, Senior Researcher, was awarded a Young Research Talent grant from the Research Council of Norway for a new project entitled ‘Dynamics of Conflict-related Sexual Violence’ (see separate story).

The PRIO GPS Centre and Director Torunn L. Tryggestad are now on Twitter! Follow @prioGPS and @TLTryggestad for regular updates on gender, peace and security.

Jenny Lorentzen, Doctoral Researcher, was interviewed about gender in peace and conflict for the podcast Peace Out in January 2016. Listen to the podcast here (in Norwegian and Swedish).

Torunn L. Tryggestad, Senior Researcher and Director of the PRIO GPS Centre, gave a presentation on ‘The UN Peacebuilding Fund and Gender’ at an international seminar on the UN Peacebuilding Architecture organised by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo on 5 January.

Torunn L. Tryggestad was interviewed in the Norwegian newspaper Dagsavisen on 8 January about the UN’s failure to reach gender parity in top-level positions. Read the full article here (in Norwegian).

The PRIO GPS Centre, together with NOREF and the Consortium for Gender, Security and Human Rights, organised a seminar on ‘Gendering Public Finance Following Political Settlements’ at PRIO on 16 January. The seminar was chaired by Torunn L. Tryggestad. A podcast of the seminar is available here.

Torunn L. Tryggestad organised a meeting at PRIO on 25 January with a Canadian government delegation visiting Norway to learn more about Norwegian Women, Peace and Security policies.

Inger Skjelsbæk gave a presentation at the conference ‘Researching Sexual Violence in Conflict: The politics of methods and approaches’, organised by the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security and King’s College London, on 27-28 January.

Torunn L. Tryggestad and Inger Skjelsbæk gave a lecture on ‘Gender and Peacebuilding’ at the MA course in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University in Oslo on 14 February.

PRIO Senior Researchers Gudrun Østby and Håvard Strand presented a paper together with Ole Magnus Theisen (NTNU) entitled ‘The ethno-political dimension of maternal health care deliv-

Julie Marie Hansen, Research Assistant, presented a paper at the ‘New Wars and Gender’ workshop at the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security on 9 March (see separate story).

Gudrun Østby, Senior Researcher, was interviewed in the Norwegian magazine *Bistandsaktuelt* on 30 March about research findings from the project that she leads on maternal health and armed conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. Read the interview here (in Norwegian).

Torunn L. Tryggestad gave a presentation on Norwegian Women, Peace and Security policies for an official delegation of women from Sri Lanka in Oslo on 31 March, organised by FOKUS.

Céline Fürer, MA student, presented her MA thesis entitled ‘Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Peacekeepers. Quantitative Analysis of variation in sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers in African missions – In what environment do peacekeepers sexually exploit and abuse women and children?’ at a PRIO brownbag on 4 April. Fürer’s supervisor at PRIO is Senior Researcher Siri Aas Rustad.

Torunn L. Tryggestad gave a presentation about the ‘NATO Civil Society Advisory Panel’ for the organisation Forum 1325 Norway, in Oslo on 5 April, organised by FOKUS.

Other Recent Publications

The *International Feminist Journal of Politics* released a special issue (volume 19, issue 1, March 2017) with a focus on ‘The Difference that Gender Makes to International Peace and Security’, edited by Sara E. Davies, Nicole George and Jacqui True.


*Deiana, Maria-Adriana & Kenneth McDonagh* (2017) ‘It is important, but…’ translating the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda into the planning of EU peacekeeping missions. *Peacebuilding*. Published online 20 March 2017.


Recent PRIO Publications


Upcoming Events

‘A gender perspective on demography and conflicts’: conference co-organised by the Research Council of Norway, Norad and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Oslo, 27 April.

Annual Meeting of the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM): hosted by UNU-GEST in Reykjavik, Iceland, 8-9 May 2017. By invitation only.