GENDER, SMALL ARMS AND DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF SOUTHERN SUDAN

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The Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group
The Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group (GPWG) aims to translate the general international commitments that have been made on gender equality and peacebuilding into concrete actions and to promote the active participation of girls and women in peacebuilding. The GPWG is designed to strengthen collaboration among Canadian organizations, activists, and academics by providing a forum for the exchange of resources, facilitating dialogue between and among civil society and government, and contributing to the direction of programming and policy.

The Small Arms Working Group
The Small Arms Working Group (SAWG) seeks to engage Canadian civil society in the development and promotion of national and international policies and measures to reverse the diffusion and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Through meetings, workshops and roundtables on small arms, the Working Group provides a forum, which encourages members to exchange information, share lessons learned and explore specific areas of collaboration. SAWG informs members about ongoing work by Canadian and international agencies active on small arms issues, including transnational networks such as the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and serves as a link between the NGO community and the Canadian government by engaging in policy dialogue with relevant departments.
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Gender, Small Arms and Development: The Case of Southern Sudan
Women, Peace and Security: The Canadian NGO Experience
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Fact Sheets:
- Understanding United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
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Armed Violence Reduction and Development Programming: The Canadian Experience and Status
Review of the Progress in Canadian Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms
The Illicit Trade in Small Arms: Addressing the Problem of Diversion
Canadian Policy on Small Arms Transfers and the Arms Trade Treaty
Canadian Perspectives on Gender and Small Arms and Light Weapons
Armed Violence Reduction through Development Programming: Implications for Canadian Policy
Gender, Small Arms and Development:
The Case of Southern Sudan

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Executive Summary

The role of small arms is intimately linked to pragmatic security and economic needs and to the definition of the appropriate roles of women and men in meeting those needs. Development and disarmament projects must meet those pragmatic needs, but they cannot do so without taking into consideration the gender roles of the community actors with whom they are engaged. The international community has become increasingly aware of the inter-linkages between the issues of gender, small arms and light weapons and development. Though there is an increasing awareness both at the policy and programming level, there is still a lack of information on and understanding of this crucial nexus.

This paper examines the situation in Southern Sudan from the point of view of the challenges faced in working with gender, small arms and light weapons and development issues. It looks at the efforts of local administrative structures, local civil society organisations, international organisations and international civil society organizations in addressing these challenges. In particular, it examines Canadian and Canadian-supported efforts in this field.

Small arms continue to play a significant functional and symbolic role in the lives of the Southern Sudanese population. A return to pre-civil war values is not desirable from the point of view of women’s human rights. However, some of the existing values within these communities could provide an important basis for disarmament and development efforts.

The paper concludes that increased coordination amongst civil society, national, bi-lateral and multi-lateral actors at the policy and programming level is essential to effective development and small arms control. Coordination needs to take place not only at the level of programming and projects but also at the policy level. Specifically, there is a need for the coordinated implementation of international norms such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Mechanisms for knowledge-sharing on existing policy and practice and past lessons learned on issues of gender, small arms control and development need to be further developed and supported. Development actors need to provide structural mechanisms for the assessment of security issues and small arms reduction actors need to provide structural mechanisms for the assessment of development issues. All actors need to provide structural mechanisms for the assessment of gender issues.

Finally, the intersection of small arms, gender and development exists, in each case, in a specific local context. The function of small arms and light weapons, security and development needs, and gender roles and relations must be understood within that local context in order to provide an effective and locally-relevant programming.
Introduction

Over the past decade, the international community has become increasingly aware of the relationship between the control of small arms and light weapons, and effective development. The significance of gender roles has been recognized within the fields of development and arms reduction, respectively. However, research and policy development concerned with the interrelationship of the three factors—gender roles, small arms and light weapons control, and development--is relatively recent. This paper sets out to examine those relationships through the specific example of Southern Sudan.

Southern Sudan is a post-conflict setting where understanding the relationship between gender roles and security are essential to effective and sustainable development and where effective and sustainable development is essential to preserving security, averting conflict, and addressing the basic needs of women, men and children.

Figure 1

![Diagram showing the interrelationship between conflict, gender roles, and development](image)

**Figure 1:** Gender identities and conflict—a tentative model of possible links

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2. For example, the International Action Network on Small Arms has a “Women’s Network” and is a member of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. The UN has committed, through UNSCR 1325, to gender mainstreaming in its own security operations and institutions. There are numerous organizations devoted to supporting gender and development policy development and most major bi-lateral and multi-lateral development agencies have a gender and development policy.

3. For the purposes of this paper, Southern Sudan is defined as the ten provinces of Sudan which are covered by the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement. For a map of Southern Sudan, see Annex A.

Southern Sudan: Background

The ten provinces forming Southern Sudan cover a vast, often sparsely populated area. The total area is approximately 589,745 km² or approximately the same size as the land area of the province of Saskatchewan. There are several hundred different ethnic groups in the region, the largest of which are the Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Shilluk and Azande. In addition to the main languages of English and Juba Arabic, over 400 different dialects are spoken in the region, though some sources place the number much higher. The population of South Sudan is mostly Christian (Episcopal and Roman Catholic, some Coptic Christians), as well as animist. Sedentary, pastoral and nomadic societies live in the area. The major urban centre is the rapidly expanding capital Juba (with an estimated population of 560,000). Following the influx of international aid, many of the urban and semi-urban centres are experiencing rapid growth. The majority of the people, however, continue to live in rural areas. The human development figures for Southern Sudan are amongst the very lowest in the world. The area is marked by low life expectancies, high rates of infant and maternal mortality and high illiteracy rates, especially amongst women.

Following decades of civil war, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed by the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement and the Government of Sudan in January 2005. In the CPA, the Government of Sudan granted the ten provinces of Southern Sudan far-reaching autonomy under the Government of Southern Sudan and the creation of a power-sharing Government of National Unity comprised of National Congress Party and SPLA/M representatives based in Khartoum. The CPA provided for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants as well as the withdrawal of Sudanese Armed Forces units from the South. The CPA also included the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sudan to oversee the implementation of the agreement. In addition to the SPLA/M, the so-called Other Armed Groups, which included the South Sudan Defence Force, were for the most part integrated into the new South Sudanese security sector institutions, including into the police force and penal service.

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6 ibid
7 ibid
8 ibid
9 ibid

The CPA functions moderately well, though there have been sporadic fights between various armed groups. The lack of a solution to resolving the border delineation between the North and the South of Sudan remains a key stumbling block and among other issues related to power and wealth-sharing, led to the SPLA/M withdrawing from the Government of National Unity in late 2007.

Currently, much of the violence which still occurs in the region is motivated by cattle-raiding. Politically-motivated violence can, however, restart easily, as numerous tensions exist between the various actors in the region. A census was carried out in the ten provinces in April 2008. According to the CPA, the census should be followed by elections in 2009 and a referendum in 2011 in Southern Sudan on whether or not to secede from the rest of Sudan. These processes increase the risk of a return to full-scale warfare in the region. Furthermore, Southern Sudan is surrounded by numerous armed conflicts which often spill over into the region.

The Small Arms and Light Weapons Situation in Southern Sudan

Southern Sudan is awash with small arms and light weapons. In addition to the small arms and light weapons which are in the hands of the Government of Southern Sudan security forces and other armed groups operating in the region (e.g. the Lord’s Resistance Army), an estimated two-thirds of small arms in Sudan as a whole are in private hands, according to the Small Arms Survey (see Figure 2). No separate data for civilian gun ownership in Southern Sudan is available.

Figure 2. Overview of estimated SALW in Sudan and Southern Sudan (Abridged version)\(^\text{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Small arms rate</th>
<th>Estimated small arms</th>
<th>Confidence range (+/- 25 %)</th>
<th>Percentage of all Sudanese small arms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civilians(*)</td>
<td>35 000 000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed gun owners</td>
<td>6 724</td>
<td>6 724</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlicensed</td>
<td>5/100</td>
<td>1 750 000</td>
<td>12 000</td>
<td>1.3 – 2 200</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gun Owners</th>
<th>Residents</th>
<th>000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GoSS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLA</td>
<td>110 000</td>
<td>1.6/combatant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intelligence and security services</td>
<td>5 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLA police</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>1.2/sworn officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison service</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1.2/sworn officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other armed entities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLA-aligned groups</td>
<td>42 000</td>
<td>1.6/combatant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAF-aligned southern groups</td>
<td>8 000</td>
<td>1.6/combatant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1.6/combatant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* N.B.: Figure for civilians is for the whole of Sudan

While the CPA deals with the overall framework of arms control in Southern Sudan, there is no over-arching policy framework for dealing with arms in civilian ownership. Efforts to formulate this policy framework are, however, underway with UNDP and Saferworld assisting the Government of Southern Sudan within the framework of the Community Security and Arms Control initiative. A major reason for the delays is the continuing mistrust between the National Congress Party and SPLA/M in the run-up to the 2011 referendum as well as general insecurity in the area. The Government of Southern Sudan is, however, determined to reduce the number of small arms and light weapons in civilian hands.

In addition to arms which are left over in the region from the conflict, there are inflows and outflows of small arms and light weapons between Southern Sudan and other adjoining conflict zones, such as Darfur, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and the Central African Republic.

Relatively little has been undertaken to date in terms of small arms and light weapons reduction in the area. So far, there have been a handful of disarmament efforts in
Southern Sudan, some of which have been voluntary and some of which have been on a more or less coerced basis. These have been mainly carried out by the South Sudanese authorities. The results have been sub-optimal for the concerned communities, to say the least. SPLA/M attempts to forcibly disarm civilians in 2006 have resulted in fighting and increased insecurity as disarmed communities have become vulnerable to cattle raids by neighbouring communities. Forced disarmament has become a highly politicised issue in Southern Sudan, with targeted communities feeling that they are being specifically targeted for political reasons by the SPLA/M.

As noted in a training manual by BICC for local civil society organizations, "Local SPLA/M officials have occasionally tried to disarm civilians in Southern Sudan by using coercion. The most notorious event was in March and April 2006 when SPLA/M tried to disarm elements of the ‘White Army’ and Nuer civilians in Jonglei State. This campaign resulted in the death of hundreds of civilians as well as the burning of villages and the looting of cattle. With the assistance of the UN, a following voluntary disarmament program yielded more than 2,500 guns in Jonglei."

Thus the forced disarmament approach initially used by the SPLA/M led to a reduction of overall security for the affected communities, highlighting the need for comprehensive approaches to small arms and light weapons reduction which take into account the security needs of the affected communities. Much of the effort in terms of small arms and light weapons work, including the Canadian-funded projects outlined below, therefore, concentrate on small arms and light weapons control and sensitisation rather than disarmament, as this makes little sense for communities which would be placing themselves into extreme danger. Furthermore, the projects seek to create baseline studies on small arms and light weapons numbers, ownership and use in the area to inform future efforts.

Guns, Gender and Culture in Southern Sudan

Decades of civil war have affected the societies of Southern Sudan in unique ways. Existing cultural values and social roles with respect to the use of weapons have

evolved and adapted to the shifting circumstances created during the conflict and in the current post-conflict setting. In order to understand how best to decrease the use of small arms and light weapons, it is important to understand the changing functional and symbolic roles they play within the societies of Southern Sudan. Small arms and light weapons function as a perceived 'solution' to a set of utilitarian and social problems. Small arms control projects must understand those problems and be prepared to present alternative solutions to them if they are to be effective.

The traditional weapons of Southern Sudanese societies have included the spear, the club and the knife. The spear, in particular, carries strong symbolic value. Amongst young Nuer men, engaging in combat by spear has been a mark of the entry into manhood. Although guns have been in use in Southern Sudan since the period of British colonization in the early 20th century, it was only during the civil war that guns began to replace spears in a significant way. Since the 1980s, small arms have played an increasingly important symbolic role as "complementary symbols of wealth, physical strength and, hence, marriage worthiness" for young men.

The primary unit of value within most Southern Sudanese societies is cattle. The value of cattle, however, is not to be understood in terms of western economic systems of currency. The value of cattle lies not only the important utilitarian aspects of milk and meat provided by the cattle, but also in the role of cattle in linking community members to each other and to other communities. Some Southern Sudanese communities traditionally engage in marriage alliances within the community and some engage in marriage alliances with other communities. Almost all engage in a common practice in which the groom’s family gives cattle to the bride’s family. For the groom, the cattle signify his readiness to act in the role of husband and father. For the bride, the cattle signify her value to the community as a mother, caretaker, domestic worker and as a means to increase community bonds. Because the groom is not generally able to provide all the cattle himself, the gift of cattle from many of his relatives to their

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13 Ibid
counterparts within the bride’s family, symbolizes a network of bonds between families and, in some cases, communities.¹⁸

The value of small arms is necessarily linked to the primary marker of value in the community: cattle. Prior to the civil war guns were generally held collectively. They functioned as a common community asset which had a use value and a symbolic value. Small arms increased the security of the community and its cattle and increased the capacity of the community to engage in cattle-raiding—thus, increasing the community’s capacity to engage in establishing further relationships internally and externally through the exchange of cattle on the occasion of marriage.

The civil war saw a shift in the definition of small arms in the community. Small arms increasingly became the possessions of individuals and/or leaders of armed groups. They preserved their security function, but they were increasingly detached from their previous role as potential means to strengthen relationships.²⁰ A study of Nuer and Dinka attitudes about the possession and use of small arms found significant negative associations with small arms. In particular, the communities interviewed identified the conflict associated with the civil war and with the use of small arms in particular as distinct from the "real wars," the wars in which ‘the manhood’ of Nuer and Dinka men were tested."²¹ The use of small arms in violent conflict was described as "wars fought by cowards who kill defenceless women and children."


²⁰ ibid.

For men, small arms still serve an important function as "a safe economic investment, and a strong symbol of masculine identity." The extremely low levels of human development experienced in the region mean that the importance of the economic functions of small arms cannot be underestimated. Further, guns remain a significant means to establish power over other men and over women—including through gender-based violence. That said, "these attitudes have been tempered by negative experiences." In particular, the actions of ex-combatants and the leaders of the conflicts were seen as self-interested and destructive to community bonds. For example, although rape may establish the power of the individual man to have access to the sexual use of a woman, it decreases the value of the raped woman to the community – as she is no longer considered a potential bride and therefore a potential source of establishing inter- and intra-community bonds.

As male roles and definitions of masculinity have shifted, so too have female roles and definitions of femininity. It should be noted that pre-civil war Southern Sudanese customs were hardly emancipatory by the standards of international norms such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women or the UN Charter of Human Rights. Nonetheless, women have always played an active role in defining the values of their communities. During the civil war women "actively reinforce[d] the militarized mentality. Not only do they directly encourage their male relatives (husbands, brothers, and sons) to join the military, participate in communal cattle raiding, and seek revenge on neighbouring ethnic groups, but they also use such indirect methods as songs and comments to 'shame' the men in their communities who did not participate."

Women's roles were further impacted by the level of internal displacement which occurred during the conflict. In urban settings, the value of women's work was no longer held exclusively by the community, but also by her as an individual wage earner. This represented a shift towards greater self-determination, but is also a site of alienation from the community. A study of displaced women in Juba described the effects of the conflict as including: "the fragmentation of households, displacement, demoralization and trauma, inter-generational mistrust, and discrimination against the displaced and the younger generations" as well as an increase in domestic violence and

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23 Ibid.
"destructive coping strategies like violent crime and sex-work."26 Women returning to rural communities after the civil war were "often perceived as 'freer' in their interactions, dress, and behaviour" than those who stayed in rural areas or in garrison towns in Southern Sudan.27 This lead, in turn, to internal conflict within the community over the appropriate role of women and, in some cases, a backlash of increasing restrictions placed on women and increasing levels of violence against women.

Small arms continue to play a significant functional and symbolic role in the lives of the Southern Sudanese population. The role of small arms is intimately linked to pragmatic security and economic needs and to the definition of the appropriate roles of women and men in meeting those needs. Development and disarmament projects must meet those pragmatic needs, but they cannot do so without taking into consideration the gender roles of the community actors with whom they are engaged.

A return to pre-civil war values is not desirable from the point of view of women's human rights, even though it may represent an improvement of the current situation with respect to the role of small arms. However, some of the existing values within these communities could provide an important basis for disarmament and development efforts.28 The projects examined below provide examples of how these issues can and have been addressed.

Gender, Small Arms and Development: Canadian-Funded Programming and Policy Responses

The inter-relationship between gender roles, small arms reduction and development has been recognized by the Government of Canada in its work in Southern Sudan. Canada has played a key role in supporting a number of efforts in Southern Sudan in the fields of small arms and light weapons control, development and promoting gender equality.29

26 Ibid. p. 256.
28 The role of women as key conduits to establishing relationships between communities has been used in several instances to increase peacebuilding and disarmament efforts. Ibid. p 50-51.
The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade identifies "reducing small arms and improving community security" as one of three priority areas for its programming in Sudan. Under this rubric, there are two Canadian-supported small arms and light weapons projects which integrate a gender component currently running in Southern Sudan. One project is the "Human Security Baseline Assessment" being carried out by the Small Arms Survey and the Graduate Institute of International Studies. The gender-focussed elements of the project include the collection of gender-disaggregated data, urging the local civil society partners to develop gender-sensitive approaches, looking at gender-based violence issues and, in two new initiatives, looking at gender roles in the SPLA/M during and after the conflict as well as women’s attitudes to small arms, cattle raiding and disarmament. The other project is "Training in Small Arms and Light Weapons Control in South Sudan," which is a component of an ongoing program on "Capacity-Building On Small Arms Control And Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration In Southern Sudan," administered by the Bonn International Center for Conversion, which will be examined in more detail below.

Other activities supported by Department of Foreign Affairs have included financially supporting the work of United Nations Population Fund on addressing gender-based violence in customary courts, the Community Security and Arms Control work of the United Nations Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration unit and supporting women’s participation and the inclusion of gender perspectives in the Sudanese peace talks.

The Canadian International Development Agency programming in Sudan is also focussed on the relationship between peace, security, and development. Their three priority sectors are: “1) reintegrating returnees into host communities; 2) safe access (through mine clearance activities); and 3) governance.” CIDA explicitly identifies their development work as "efforts [that] help to promote lasting peace in conflict-affected communities.” The bulk of CIDA funding is administered through grants to multi-lateral organizations, including $20 million to the World Bank and $26 million to

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30 Ibid.
31 Interview.
32 Ibid
34 Ibid.
the African Union. CIDA has supported three bi-lateral projects which address gender and disarmament. The first is the Civil Society in Action Fund which "supports peacebuilding activities, good governance, and human rights initiatives in Sudan to help improve livelihood security among target communities, in particular women's civil society organizations." The second is "Gender and Conflict in Sudan and Uganda," a research project which focuses on "the roles, experiences and voices of women and girls to develop a better understanding of responses to armed conflict, peace processes and long-term peace building." The third was a dialogue project on implementation of security elements of the CPA by Project Ploughshares and Africa Peace Forum (APFO, based in Kenya). The project built the capacity of indigenous Sudanese researchers, interacted with, and served as a resource to, civil society groups in Sudan and external stakeholders to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. Roundtable meetings on the research findings enabled further dialogue between officials and civil society stakeholders. The last roundtable included a paper on gender and SALW in Southern Sudan.

**Small Arms Control And Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration In Southern Sudan**

The objective of the Canadian-funded program run by the Bonn International Center for Conversion is "to promote awareness on the threat of small arms and the importance of control measures at all levels of society, and in a sustainable manner" through training courses delivered to civil society and government officials. In June 2006, BICC hosted a workshop, funded by the Government of Canada, on "Training in Small Arms Control in South Sudan." One of the key conclusions of the workshop was the need to understand the local contexts in which conflicts can and do emerge. One of the primary contextual factors which is identified as a source of conflict is marriage and, in particular, negotiations over the contribution of cattle at the time of marriage. The workshop report notes that "for virtually all ethnic groups in South Sudan, related women (daughters and sisters) represent a potential source of wealth and prestige for..."
the family, since no marriage is considered legitimate unless a full bride price has been paid. In the absence of a full bride price, men often resort to elopement and kidnapping, which complicates the problem extensively. This reality is exemplified in the stringent efforts made as a consequence of the Abyei Peace Agreement (2004) between the Nuer and the Dinka peoples in which large numbers of women were either repatriated to their natal groups, or the bride price was paid by their abductors.”

The report goes on to outline some of the difficulties posed in involving women and men equally in training, concluding that although it is difficult to engage women in training, it is necessary. In particular, they note that mixed-sex training groups are important because "capacity is necessary not only among women but also between men and women to work collectively for positive change. Confronting gender issues in a vacuum—without the participation of men—would thus be ineffective in changing gender dynamics over the longer term.”

Figure 4

The emphasis on the centrality of gender roles and relations is carried through in the two training documents produced by BICC: "People Safe from Guns in South Sudan: A Training Manual for Local Stakeholders" and "Communities Safe from Small Arms in Southern Sudan: A Handbook for Civil Society." Both documents draw attention to the importance of understanding the reasons why different actors (youth, men, women) might use small arms. Both include an assessment of some of the distinct ways in which women and men use small arms,
the different roles women and men play in fighting forces, and the associations of small arms with gender roles. Both also discuss the relationship of small arms use to development, although neither link the three together.

A workshop was held in 2007 to provide a follow up assessment of the program. The report emphasises the need for more coordination amongst local, bi-lateral and multi-lateral actors in the region. Further, it emphasises that small arms control must be addressed within the context of humanitarian and development work – in particular, that “peoples’ ‘basic needs’ and issues around security and small arms control are strongly interlinked.” The report identifies the importance of assessing the needs of the participants in the training. To this, it would be useful to add a question about how small arms have helped the participants respond to those needs. The report notes that their programming now includes a component designed to give young men alternate means to achieve status. This is a clear example of understanding the symbolic need addressed by small arms and providing an alternative solution. Aside from this example, the workshop does not provide analysis of the gendered aspects of the effectiveness of the project or the needs of the participants in their training programs. The workshop recommendations do not address the significance of gender roles and relations in achieving the objectives of the project as a whole, although they are clearly an important element within the training materials.

Conclusion: Challenges and Opportunities

Several lessons can be drawn from an examination of the example of Southern Sudan and the BICC project concerning the challenges and rewards of integrating gender and development perspectives in small arms reduction. The conclusion of the 2007 BICC workshop is that more coordination amongst actors working on small arms control in Southern Sudan is needed. However, the Canadian experience suggests the need for a further level of coordination – between development organizations and small arms reduction organizations. Canada employs a “whole of government” approach to its work in fragile state and conflict-affected areas. The whole of government approach is designed to bring together the arms of the government working on defence, diplomacy and development at the programming and policy level. Development agencies in Canada and elsewhere have experience in integrating a gender perspective throughout

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their work. This experience could be usefully drawn upon by those working on small arms and light weapons control. Likewise, small arms and light weapons control projects bring insights into the inter-relationship between development needs and security needs that are of use to development agencies.

The BICC workshop also concludes that context-specific knowledge is essential to the effectiveness of any project in this area. Gender roles and small arms are defined differently and serve different symbolic and utilitarian functions in every community. Information sharing amongst partners, particularly between local actors and multi-lateral actors, is essential.

There are a number of significant challenges to implementing these recommendations. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral actors often lack mechanisms for internal policy and programming coherence on the issue of integrating a gender perspective into their work. Canada is currently working on a national action plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, which calls for the involvement of women and girls and attention to their needs in all peacebuilding processes across all arms of government and with all partners. Such a mechanism is needed in order to ensure that Government of Canada’s whole of government approach more consistently integrates a gendered perspective into policy related to peace and security.44

Even when a gendered perspective is integrated at the project level, implementing agencies report further difficulties. Agencies working on Canadian-funded projects in Southern Sudan report a number of problems, including: the resistance to or a lack of interest in addressing gender issues, the difficulty of gaining reliable information and/or a lack of knowledge about gender issues, and the difficulty of gaining access to women. Research on some issues, such as domestic gender-based violence, is seen as being too intrusive by the communities, making it difficult to gain any meaningful information on the issue. Further difficulties are posed by insecure environments and uneven or non-existent infrastructure. Finally, some Sudanese civil society organizations report an increasing reluctance to provide information based on experiences in which they perceive themselves as being used as a source of local knowledge but receive no return. That is, they do not feel that multi-lateral actors are sharing knowledge or expertise with them, in exchange for the provision of knowledge about the local context.

44 Baranyi and Powell argue that “gender analysis can sharpen our understanding of local contexts and help us identify opportunities for promoting both gender equality and state building” (3). Yet they note a “virtual silence on gender equality in the defence, diplomacy and commerce chapters” of the government’s policy statement on its whole of government approach.
In spite of these challenges, including a clear and comprehensive gender perspective in programming aimed at addressing small arms and light weapons as well as development issues directly benefits the quality of the project work. A comprehensive gender perspective leads to a fuller understanding of the needs of the whole of the community rather than only a part of it.

The three themes of gender, small arms and development are intricately linked to each other and to the larger theme of human security. Without sustainable, broad-based development, there is little hope for security, and vice-versa. Without a broad definition of security as encompassing the various needs, fears and aspirations of all men and women, there can be little hope of broad-based development small arms and light weapons. Without security and development, there is little hope of reducing the amount of in a given society.

The Canadian-supported efforts examined in this paper have provided a range of insights and lessons-learned on the interlinking issues of gender, small arms and light weapons and development in Southern Sudan. In the process of their implementation, they have built networks with various actors addressing these issues in the region. These efforts, which have been undertaken in conjunction with the local administrative structures, local and international CSOs as well as by international organisations can form a basis which further efforts can build upon.

**Recommendations**

One of the most significant recommendations presented by the BICC project and others working in Southern Sudan is the need to consider the local context as the defining factor in the relationship between gender roles, small arms, and development. The recommendations below are therefore focussed on bi-lateral and multi-lateral actors. Recommendations pertaining to the local context should be viewed as a prompt to consider these issues, rather than a readily translatable prescription for policy and programming.

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• Increase coordination amongst civil society, national, bi-lateral and multi-lateral actors at the policy and programming level, including
  • Ensure the adoption of a national plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 by the Government of Canada
  • Ensure that Government of Canada’s whole of government approach more consistently integrates a gendered perspective into policy related to peace and security, including adopting the mechanisms already in place in CIDA for gender mainstreaming in other arms of government
  • Include a mandate and capacity for peace and security programming within CIDA
  • Form a unified gender architecture body within the UN system
• Mechanisms for knowledge-sharing on existing policy and practice and past lessons learned on issues of gender, small arms control and development
  • Support virtual and actual meeting fora, with specific attention to accessibility to local actors
• Assess the utilitarian and social problems to which small arms and light weapons offer a perceived solution. Present alternative solutions to those problems.
• Assess and respond to the real and perceived security needs of the local communities.
• Disaggregate all information on the use of small arms and the effect of small arms by gender
References


"People Safe from Guns in South Sudan: A Training Manual for Local Stakeholders." Bonn International Centre for Conversion.

Sudanese Women’s Priorities and Recommendations to the Oslo Donors’ Conference on Sudan, 11-12 April 2005.
Methodology

Given the limited financial and time frame of the project, it was unfortunately not possible to carry out a field visit to the case study area. The paper is based on a review of literature published on the topic as well as interviews with key people involved in the various efforts to reduce small arms and light weapons-related violence in Southern Sudan. I would like to take the chance here to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the interviewees for their time and co-operation with this undertaking.
List of Interviews

Alexander, Emily, CIDA Ottawa
Ashkenazi, Michael, Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), Bonn
Douglas, Sarah, UNMIS, Khartoum
Farr, Vanessa, UNDP-BCPR, Geneva
Isikozlu, Elvan, Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), Bonn
McEvoy, Clare, Small Arms Survey, Geneva/Juba
Miller, Derek, UNIDIR, Geneva
Niimura, Yuki, SSC, Juba
Ohlstedt, Pontus, UNDP-BCPR, Geneva
Paes, Wolf-Christian, Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), Bonn
Waters, Esther, Geneva Call, Juba
## Acronyms Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BICC</td>
<td>Bonn International Center for Conversion</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFAIT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>GONU</td>
<td>Government of National Unity</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoS</td>
<td>Government of Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoSS</td>
<td>Government of Southern Sudan</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>HSBA</td>
<td>Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment</td>
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<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army</td>
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<td>NCP</td>
<td>National Congress Party</td>
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<td>SAF</td>
<td>Sudan Armed Forces (Government of National Unity)</td>
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<td>Small Arms Survey</td>
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<td>Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement</td>
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<td>South Sudan Defence Forces</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution</td>
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