SHORT COURSE ON ADVANCING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN AFRICA

A partnership between Sonke Gender Justice, MenEngage Africa, Institute for Peace and Security Studies, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

2021
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>IPSS</td>
<td>Institute for Peace and Security Studies</td>
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<td>MATI2021</td>
<td>MenEngage Africa Training Institute 2021</td>
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<td>MEA</td>
<td>MenEngage Alliance</td>
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<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Action Plan</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>TFN</td>
<td>Transnational Feminist Network</td>
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<td>WILPF</td>
<td>Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom</td>
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<td>WPS</td>
<td>Women’s Peace and Security</td>
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<td>WPSA</td>
<td>Women Peace and Security Agenda</td>
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<td>YPS</td>
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MenEngage Africa, Sonke Gender Justice, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University co-convened this year’s MenEngage Africa Training Initiative (MATI) and focused on the theme of advancing the WPS agenda. The course brought together academics, activists, and practitioners working for gender equality in Africa for a ten day virtual training course.

**MATI background:**

MATI was established in 2010 to expand the skills and knowledge among gender equality advocates, civil society practitioners, policymakers and other stakeholders within Sub-Saharan Africa on engaging men and boys, and to build a regional network of leaders and gender justice advocates. It has been held almost every year since in countries across East, Central and Southern Africa. MATI is typically a two-week, intensive, residential course which seeks to expand the skills and knowledge of advocates in the Sub-Saharan Africa region to scale up work on engaging men and boys in gender equality and build a network of leaders and gender justice advocates. In doing so, it has strengthened existing work on the effective and meaningful involvement of men and boys in the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and AIDS, fatherhood, child sexual exploitation and abuse, LGBTI rights and other issues on gender equality and social justice.

MATI has historically been organized in partnership with leading universities in Africa and globally such as the University of Cape Town, University of California, Wits University, University of Pretoria, Kenyatta University, University of Botswana and the University of Pretoria. MATI has been organized with university partners to provide an opportunity for community leaders to engage with academia and to acquire new skills and competencies to support the work they do in their respective communities. Through this partnership, we contribute to broadening perspectives and joint learning while strengthening evidence collection of activists.

**MATI 2021:**

MATI 2021 aimed to contribute to the growing knowledge and understanding of key concepts on peace and security work as well as share strategies on strengthening a gendered approach to conflict understanding, resolution and peacebuilding. It also seeks to strengthen initiatives to support women’s involvement in leadership and peace processes through engaging men and boys.

Initially scheduled to be held in Zambia in late April, then postponed to late July for an in-person course at the University of Addis Ababa in Addis, the continued high rate of Covid infections and mortality across the continent meant that MATI was ultimately held virtually from September 20 to October 1 alternating between four hour morning sessions in the first week and three hour afternoon sessions during the second week.
M ATI Participants:
Co-convened by MenEngage Africa, WILPF, Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at the University of Addis Ababa, MATI was attended by 35 participants from WILPF sections and MenEngage Africa networks in 17 countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Africa, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, Namibia, Rwanda, Madagascar, Mali, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

M ATI Faculty:
The faculty was drawn from civil society, academia and the diplomatic community from across the continent, each an expert on their topic. The full set of faculty bios is available here. In addition to members of WILPF and MenEngage, Speakers included Dr Yonas Adaye Adeto, Director of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at the University of Addis Ababa; Dr Joy Onyesoh, WILPF International President and President of WILPF Nigeria; Delphine Brun, senior inter-agency GenCap advisor in Cameroon; Ambassador Osman Keh Kamara, the Permanent Representative to the African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; Dr Amon Ashaba Mwiine, Lecturer in the School of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University; Christian Ngendahimana, Executive Director, Isoko Partners for Peace and Gender Equality; Esther Oman, the Executive Director of Reach Out, Cameroon; Benoît Ruratotoye, Director of Training and Research at Living Peace Institute, Eastern DRC; Yasmin Sooka, Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa; Dr David Ngendo Tshimba, Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for African Studies at Uganda Martyrs University.

Faculty addressed ten course themes:
1. Theme one: Introductions to concepts
2. Theme two: the gendered dimensions of war, conflict and violence: personal connections and key concepts
3. Theme three: the gendered dimensions of conflict and the WPS & root causes
4. Theme four: root causes and structural drivers of conflict and violence (cont)
5. Theme five: WPS agenda and peace processes
6. Theme six: understanding and using international human rights frameworks to advance the WPS agenda
7. Theme seven: international and regional mechanisms and commitments for advancing the WPS agenda
8. Theme eight: planning joint advocacy to advance the WPS agenda in Africa
9. Theme nine: men, masculinities, peace
10. Theme ten: conclusions and next steps

The programme for the two week course is available here. The programme itself contains links to many journal articles, videos and other relevant resources, each linked to the key themes and faculty presentations so as to facilitate participant learning. In addition to the resources contained in the programme, an additional and extensive reading list was provided to MATI participants which is available here. All recordings of the sessions are available here, and all powerpoint presentations here. A smaller selection of presentations is available on the project website here.
MATI learning objectives and outcomes were as follows:

**Objectives of the Course**

1. Increase understanding of participants on key concepts of conflict and peace building;
2. Strengthen participant skills and understanding of causes, drivers and analysis of conflict from a feminist and gendered lens;
3. Strengthen participants understanding of women, peace and security international and regional instruments and how to engage with them;
4. Strengthen the capacity of MEA partners to efficiently mainstream WPS agenda in their work and effectively advocate for the involvement of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes;
5. Strengthen the capacity of MEA partners to effectively counter militarised masculinities and mobilise men for feminist peace.
6. Create an opportunity for MEA to identify and link with various initiatives, campaigns and institutions working on advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda on the continent for collaboration purposes.

**Expected Outcomes**

1. Increased understanding of key concepts on conflict, conflict transformation, resolution and peacebuilding;
2. Increased skills and understanding of conflict causes, drivers and analysis from a gendered lens;
3. Better understanding of WPS mechanisms from the national to international levels and how to engage with them to promote the WPS agenda and advocate for women’s participation and leadership in peace processes;
4. Increased capacity to mainstream peace & security in MEA’s work and to address conflict from a gendered lens;
5. Increased capacity of MEA partners to counter militarised masculinities & mobilise men for feminist peace.
6. Opportunities for MEA partners to link up with other organisations and campaigns across the continent to support women, peace and security work are created.

**MATI Multi-Media:**

To make the course more interactive than online formats often allow, and to ensure that participants reflected deeply on the course content between sessions, throughout the course, participants were encouraged to use photography and video to document their own experiences and to explore course themes. To assist participants with this, and to orient them to the use of photography, we invited Pete Muller, winner of the World Press Photo of the Year Award and a documentary photographer who has focused much of his work on masculinity and conflict, to present on the second day of the course. His powerful presentation can be viewed here and his body of prior work on masculinities and conflict seen here and here. A set of questions for the day was developed and participants encouraged to share responses to these using video and photography via a participant WhatsApp group. Submissions were then loaded onto a closed MATI Instagram page which now contains over 100 video entries. Along with the photographs submitted, these videos will be curated on an open Instagram page and shared on WIL-PF and MenEngage’s social media platforms.
Evaluation results indicate that the course was a success.

4. Were the expectations for this workshop met?/ Les attentes de cet atelier ont-elles été comblées?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>28</th>
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<td>No</td>
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Across the board, participants also indicated that they had learned a lot from the course as the following pie chart illustrates:

23. I feel as though my knowledge has increased due to this workshop / J’ai l’impression que mes connaissances ont augmenté grâce à cet atelier.

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<th>Yes / Oui</th>
<th>29</th>
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<tr>
<td>No / No</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Sure / Pas certain</td>
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In addition to the survey results, written evaluations provide useful insights into participant experiences of the course:

Edwick Madzimure, President of WILPF Zimbabwe shared the following reflections on the course:

“After the training I had a deeper understanding of the Women Peace and Security Agenda. Before the training I regarded it as women and girls centred. However, the training made me realise that to achieve gender equality we need both men and women. Therefore, men and masculinities must be placed within the Women Peace and Security Agenda. Men are an integral part of gender equality; they need to be in support of gender equality and the participation of women in decision making platforms. The full realization of the women, peace and security agenda demands the engagement of men and boys. Social changes in the position of women will redefine their relationship with men and the acceptance of this change will involve a shift in male gender norms that are referred to as masculinities.”
The session we had by Pete Muller on photography and on representations of men in conflict setting really had an impact on me and it really helped me realise that pictures do have an important role to play in advocating for peace and sharing information. I realised the importance of pictures and capturing moments as the pictures can tell more and can be used as reference in the work I do.

I will also mainstream peace building in our projects because I realised peace begins in the home then it cascades into the community therefore it is important to have a component of peace education in our work. Prevention of conflict is better than conflict management.”

Sekinah Temitope Lawal, a journalist and member of MenEngage Nigeria, shared her thoughts on the course:

“ I learnt a lot of new things in the area of policies, treaties, instruments of work and strategies. I got really empowered and excited about learning new knowledge particularly the gendered impacts of armed conflict on women and girls; as well as the reason why we need to support women’s participation and involvement in decision-making and peace processes using the Women Peace and Security Agenda. I was acquainted through the MATI Course to the causes and drivers of conflict, the situation and role of women affected by armed conflict, strategies to engage and mobilise men as agents of change and champions of feminist peace, or within peace-keeping and peacebuilding operations.

I can now engage better simply because of the training which has further empowered me on women, peace and security international and regional instruments.

Going forward, the training will make me do certain things differently because it will be a lot easier to efficiently mainstream the WPS agenda in my work and effectively advocate for the involvement of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. This can also be said about advocating for women into leadership positions. It will also help my advocacy work subsequently because I can now effectively counter militarised masculinities and mobilise men for feminist peace.

One thing I didn’t like is the timing, especially not giving a break for the Friday Muslim prayer. This is like putting a class on Sunday morning during church service. This might make some devoted faithful to miss classes they would not have loved to miss ordinarily.”
Raymond Kakuba from The Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), a member organisation of MenEngage Uganda, wrote:

“When it comes to attending trainings on gender, I didn’t understand the appeal. I’d attend one after another for personal edification not understanding what all the fuss was about. However, the moment I attended the MATI Course, it was like my advocacy eyes opened for the first time. It stirred love within me for the kind of work we do as activists that I didn’t realize could exist.

When I was first given the assignment of recording myself telling about what I had done to ensure peace in my community, like many of the participants, I scoffed. With an eye roll, I internally calculated how much time I would have to take off and record a video. I sighed at the loss of time for an obvious tale on peace (because to me I thought that it was so easy to talk about what I had done for peace in fact, it is my daily work schedule to protect women from VAW- so I thought). But it later proved that it wasn’t a waste of time, in fact, it helped me reflect on where I could do better.

I attended the MATI Course for 14 days without missing a day and the delivery of the program, the participation and the timing was a wonderful experience.”

Attending the MATI course made a huge impact on my life as a gender worker and activist. In one of the MATI last classes, I was fortunate to carefully follow the conversation of Benoit Ruratotye and Aloys Mahwa, of the Living Peace: From Conflict to Coping in Democratic Republic of Congo. They presented a good research report but most catching for me was the element of living peacefully #what are you doing to be a peaceful man?

I found it interesting that a simple gesture of putting on a face mask to protect your loved ones from contracting Covid-19 was an act of peace. The act of putting on a Condom to protect yourself and others from contracting HIV/AIDS was an act of peace. Etc. This to me was so mind blowing yet it is as simple as that, the narrative here was that peace doesn’t mean that I will be called to the UN security council to sign a ceasefire agreement or something of the sorts but it can be as simple as simply wearing my face mask. I pledged to be a peaceful man in my society, put on the face mask, encourage others to do so, and hopefully (if need ever arises) put on a condom to protect my partner.”
Dr Chiemezie Atama from Equity Watch Initiative in Nigeria wrote:

“The focus on UNSCR 1325 as the first of the twelve resolutions on WPS and the first international political framework that acknowledged and addresses the impact of conflict on women and girls and women participation and leadership in conflict resolutions was awesome. Prof Joy Onyesoh’s clarifications on WPSA concept as a transformational agenda that centers on substantive participation of women, protecting individual and providing them with freedom from threats and mainstreaming gender perspective in peace and development was well taken.

It was pointed out that despite all the resolutions and conventions, including the quota system, women participation in politics remains low. Thus, Prof. Joy Onyesoh’s presentation on Women’s Situation Rooms in Nigeria, was very interesting. The point made that efforts to promote gender inclusive political organizations should be the work of both men and women, was an important insight for me. Immediately after the MATI training, we launched an initiative tagged “Student’s Conversation” a platform we use to engage both males and female students to promote female participation in politics.

The issue of accountability as was raised in the training was also very interesting, and for me, accountability is not only about those in government, it is about everyone. But focusing on the training, it entails how men can regularly share in the perspective of women.”

WILPF CAR President Bernice Ouango-Ndackalla shared her positive and more critical reflections on the course as follows:

“In a few words, I would say that: “The training was very useful for any committed activist. For me, it allowed me to find new arguments to defend the ideas that I defend for example for the participation of women in peace processes.

Themes like that of the place and role of images in the work of activists really caught my attention as did the impact of conflicts on men. We always made them feel guilty when they tell us they too undergo conflict related impact.

The other problem with me is the internet network which was constantly unstable. But I note all the same that during the first week of my participation, I noticed a lot of delay in the arrival of the participants except the 1st day when people were punctual.

Also, the organizers should also be aware that it is difficult in practice to participate in an uninterrupted way in an online training that lasts 2 or 3 weeks.”
The meeting began at 10 a.m. SAST/CET, with the host welcoming everyone to the Zoom session. Mpiwa Mangwiro, the session’s facilitator, welcomed all attendees and established the tone for the official opening comments. She briefly mentioned in her opening remarks that the motivation for this year’s MATI theme was inspired by the fact that, despite all of the men’s contributions and efforts in conflict and violence resolution processes, the continent continues to face challenges in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and violence resolution. Girls and women are equally affected by war, conflict, and violence, yet they are left behind and given an insufficient room in the peace negotiating process.

Official opening
Mpiwa continued with the official opening comment for the 2021 MATI program by welcoming representatives from Sonke, MEA, WILPF, and IPSS.

WILPF International President and President of WILPF Nigeria, Dr Joy Onyesoh, began by expressing her gratitude for the opportunity to work with Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute for Peace and Security Studies on this year’s MATI training. In her speech, she emphasized the importance of this course saying it is timely and reflects what is going on across the continent, as well as the importance of having gender justice advocates well equipped with frameworks to address the issues seen on the ground. She discussed WILPF’s efforts, stating that the organization focuses on tackling the underlying causes of the problem.

Sonke Co-ED: Rev Bafana Khumalo began by expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the training, which aims to mould and nurture the knowledge and skills of leaders who work to shape today’s world for the better future, in his speech he also outlined and emphasized on the current human rights issues such as militarization, militarized masculinity, xenophobia, endangers women and girls’ lives and escalates gender-based violence. He drew attention to some of the issues raised by the UBUNTU symposium conducted by MenEngage Global, MenEngage Africa, MenEngage Rwanda in partnership with Sonke; and finally, he closed his remarks by requesting the audience to take advantage of the platform not just to participate in the training, but also to network and build valuable connections.

Chair MenEngage Africa, Sariaka Nantenaina, welcomed all attendees and emphasized the importance of everyone participating fully and actively in the training. Her speech focused on issues of peace and security, and the critical importance of involving women and girls in the conflict and peacebuilding process, as well as the necessity of looking into the causes and consequences of conflicts and wars.

Frank Djan IPSS: Frank spoke on behalf of the management of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, where he extended his warm greeting to all MATI 2021 participants.
The organizers’ team and all participants introduced themselves by their names, organizations, and countries they are from, as well as opening their video and exposing their faces, immediately following official opening remarks by Dean Peacock, Director of WILPF’s multi-country initiative to mobilise men for feminist peace and co-founder of the global MenEngage Alliance. Following the introduction, Dean took the attendees through a program overview, with this year’s MATI focusing on ten main themes, which include:

**THE MATI 2021 THEME**

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<tr>
<th>1 Introductions to concepts</th>
<th>6 Understanding and using international human rights frameworks to advance the WPS agenda</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 The gendered dimensions of war, conflict</td>
<td>7 International and regional mechanisms and commitments for advancing the WPS agenda</td>
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<td>3 The gendered dimensions of conflict and the</td>
<td>8 Planning joint advocacy to advance the WPS agenda in Africa</td>
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<td>4 Root causes and structural drivers of conflict</td>
<td>9 Men, masculinities, peace</td>
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<td>5 WPS agenda and peace processes</td>
<td>10 Conclusions and next steps</td>
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He provided a brief overview of the objectives and expected outcomes of the course as listed above, and he provided an overview of the methodologies that would be used throughout the course.

**Overview of photography and video components of the programme**

Dean explained that the participants would use photography and video as key tools to deepen their learning and gave an overview of the photography and video components and screened Mama Hope’s video, “African Males, Hollywood Stereotypes,” a short film that parodies the all-too-common racialized portrayal of men in Africa as violent was. This set the tone for the rest of the explanation: Throughout the course, video and photography will be utilized to reflect on the gendered expressions and effects of conflict, violence, and military masculinities. As a result, participants were given the task of making three-minute short videos documenting their experiences, opinions, and talks with others about the program’s topics in response to daily questions.
Miss Mpiwa led the Gender values clarification session, which was conducted utilizing the Mentimeter, in which participants were given questions to respond individually, given a code, and told to go to www.menti.com to submit their responses by selecting their stance from the STRONGLY AGREE TO STRONGLY DISAGREE alternatives, as the screengrab below indicates:

The table below lays out some of the responses to certain questions and provides insights into participants positions on these issues.

**QUESTIONS:**

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<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
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<td>First Question: Gender equality will come at a high price for men.</td>
<td>8 PEOPLE</td>
<td>8 PEOPLE</td>
<td>Gender equality is going to be a freedom for men since society is putting much pressure on men therefore equality will freeze those pressure from the society</td>
<td>For the equality of gender, it’s not a woman to pay it’s a community/society to pay.</td>
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<td>Men take a more prestigious position and benefit more from the exclusion of women therefore if we want to change, we need to pay the big price since they are not going to easily give up their positions</td>
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<td>Based on social and economic imbalances that exist between men and women it’s not going to be easy for man to let women take their positions</td>
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<td>Thinking about the patriarchal system in Africa where the man is the final decider, so when we shift the course and achieve gender equality, we will think women are going to take their position so it will be a wake-up call and they might not be ready for that.</td>
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To conclude, Mpiwa posed a question for participants to consider: “Do we believe there is a chance, a win-win situation when resources and opportunities are distributed and accessed equally, both men and women being able to participate in decision making and being treated as equal, or is it about a man losing and a woman winning when achieving gender equality?” Finally, she summarized the feedback from participants by saying, “There is a win-win opportunity when Gender equality is achieved, no one is to benefit more than the other because resources and opportunities will be accessed and shared equally, reducing the burden on men and giving women equal opportunity as men.”

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<th>Women are more peaceful than men</th>
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<td>The experience from the work shows where women are recognized there is more peace</td>
<td>A man can be peaceful as well as a woman, they are supposed to be given tools and skills to help them decide</td>
<td>If we say that women are more peaceful, we are biased, women are conditioned with the ability to negotiate better than men, their act is influenced and socially constructed</td>
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<td>E.g., from Liberia, when our former president was in power, there were no wars and conflict as there is today. Women listen to both genders compared to men who tend to listen to their fellow men.</td>
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<tr>
<td>70% of the world population is made up of women but most of the conflicts are influenced by men and women have no chance in the resolution process. So, if women are given chances there will be a great resolution</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women are more negatively affected by war than men</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women in times of wars and conflict are scared that their life can end anytime, they also experience trauma and stress. On the other hand they take responsibilities of taking care of their families and provide psychological and other basic care in a very difficult environment.</td>
<td>Lack of data to support the statement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>They are victims of violence; they lose their lives and they undergo trauma and affecting their dignity and humanity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The session was concluded by highlighting some of the effects of wars on men, with attendees contributing that men are also affected by wars because they are at the forefront of fights where they fear their lives, losing body parts, failing their society, experiencing sexual violence, and not being given the chance and space to express their issues. Furthermore, society places so many expectations on people that they experience mental and psychological stress, losing their ability to love and care for their loved ones as they once did, as well as experiencing trauma and excessive anxiety.

EXERCISE 2:
Dean Peacock led the session, in which participants were divided into small breakrooms and given 20 minutes to reflect on the moment that transformed their lives and inspired them to become involved in gender, peace and security activism.

Reflections from the groups:

● One participant shared her story about how she became a gender activist at a young age; as a first child, she grew up witnessing her mother repeatedly giving birth to have a boy child. Society and the community regarded their family as worthless because they had a large number of “un important” girls. As a result, she took these challenges, as well as the challenges that other women face, and began to engage in activism.

● Some identified the injustice and discrimination against women, as well as the gender violence that women face, as the impetus for their participation in gender activism.

● A participant from Liberia also shared his personal lived experience, as he, his siblings, and their mother were abandoned, marginalized, and faced numerous challenges. His family’s experience influenced him to become involved in human rights activism to fight for justice.

● Their experiences of homophobia and discrimination against members of the LGBTI community

● The patriarchy and stereotypes in my community, where men have more advantages to own properties and women are always overlooked, motivated another participant to act and challenge the social injustice that women face in their community.

● Another described growing up in a home where their parents motivation toward equality and justice served to inspire their activism.

Finally, Mpiwa concluded the first day’s session by thanking participants for their active participation and full engagement in the session. and finally, participants were given the question of the day assignment in which they were asked to use video and photography to reflect and share on the question: “what is the cause of conflict and violence in your country.”
Recap session
The day began with a recap of day one, the morning session was moderated by Rumbidzai Chidoori, and the day began with the highlights of the International Day for Peace, with this year’s theme being “Recovering Better for An Equitable and Sustainable World.” Furthermore, participants reflected and unpacked the cause of wars and conflict in most African countries, as well as the impact and consequences of conflict and war on both men and women, through diverse groups’ work and introductory sessions.
The facilitator continued to share a few videos from the day one assignment in which participants shared their success stories on the change they had contributed to in advancing gender equality and peace-building and participant videos were shared from the MATI 2021 Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/mati.wps.2021/.

a. Reflection assignment: What are the sources of conflict and violence in your country?

Sharon Trigo from Gender initiative Uganda shared three major causes of conflict in Uganda:

- **Social**, Gender exclusion in access to resources such as land has been a significant cause of conflict, with people finding themselves in wars and conflicts as a result of their struggle for inclusion to access and own land.
- **Political**, fighting for power and political positions have been a major course of conflict
- **Cultural/ unequal power relation**, The patriarchy system, which has defined roles for men and women, has been the source of wars and conflict; when women try to engage men in domestic activities, men refuse to accept equality, participate, and share responsibilities such as dealing with domestic chaos.

Chelsea Gwamessia: The source for conflict in Cameroon is driven by three major sources;

- **Boko haram in the north**, the Boko Haram activities in Cameroon that seek to Islamize the Lake Chad basin, the central African crises and conflict have driven the refugee’s problem which influences riots and fights in the region.

- **Anglophone crisis**, fighting for reforms and against marginalisation.
Zimbabwe shared tribalism from the Ndebele and Shona, political drivers of conflict, a monopoly in the transport sector, rising unemployment, and drug substance abuse.
b. How does the process of reflecting on the sources of conflict in your country make you feel?
• I felt like there was still so much to be done in my home country of Nigeria because there are so many factors driving conflict in the country; advocacy and empowerment programs must be implemented. I considered involving girls and women in the peace process, but the need for capacity building to improve women’s participation and representation in decision-making positions and power drive change from a different platform is too great.

c. What does it make you want to do?
• I think sensitization has to continue, since the election is around the corner in my country, we need to empower women and young women to take part and assume the position in the decision making.

The gendered impact of war, conflict and violence: clarifying key terms and concepts and an overview of the issues leading up to the development of the WPS agenda: Mpiwa Mangwiro and Henny Slegh

The session focused on unpacking the gendered impact of war, conflict and violence being facilitated by Mpiwa Mangwiro. The session started with a question to reflect on: What do participants understand by a “Gendered lens to conflict”

Respondent 1: Looking at something with perspective of the contribution of men and women

Respondent 2: Finding gender equity and equality through different spaces such as political and economic spaces.

Respondent 3: Examining the negative effects on both genders and the positive effects on both genders, as well as establishing priorities and solutions based on gendered perspectives.

Following the participants’ responses, the facilitator emphasized that conflict affects both genders and has a different impact on men and women due to power imbalances and inequality; the gendered lens enables key actors to understand the different impacts on both genders and leads us to consider the different genders in solution making.

A gendered lens on conflict, according to the facilitator, allows us to delve into designing interventions that are inclusive and varied in the peacebuilding process. To begin, the participants were shown a moving Ted Talk by Zainab Salib, which prompted them to consider other aspects of the impact of war and conflict, as well as the contributions made by women in such situations. The reflection drew attention to the perspectives of warring parties that are often overlooked while dealing with issues and initiatives related to wars and conflicts.

The video reflected on the two sides of wars and conflict: apart from the side of shooting, bombs, explosions, and guns, there is another side that women experience that is not given attention or even spoken about; she explained that wars are not about sound; they are about the silence of war, the fear of losing loved ones, the fear of losing an eye, the fear of dying at any moment, and no one understands.

She clearly stated in the video that women play an important role in crisis situations, such as being caregivers and caretakers when men are fighting, providing emotional and psychological support, and providing security to her loved ones, despite the fact that they are raped, abused, and experiencing physical, emotional, and psychological abuse.
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Henny Sleigh, a medical anthropologist and the Director of International Programs at the Living Peace Institute, presented various research studies on the impact of wars and crises on gender relations. She presented the International Men and Gender Equality (IMAGES) study, which was carried out in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Mali, North Cameroon, and Lebanon/Syria. In each country, the study focused on exploring men’s experiences with gender-related issues, including the impact of wars and conflict on men, and the study came to the general conclusion that:

a) Gender Relations and Attitudes: intimate and sexual violence are on the rise, gender inequality is the norm, and men often believe that women’s empowerment is hastening intimate partner violence.

b) In men’s mental health: - Coping with stress and the impact of wars leads to men feeling insecure about their masculinity and overcompensating by using violence to demonstrate their manhood, including violence against women and violence perpetrated against other men.

**Loss of militarized masculine power & weapon**

Men cannot be victims: loss of control and power generate strong emotions of fear, anger, shame.

- **Shame:**
  A real man is the one who is autonomous, has work, money, intelligent and able to procreate children but a real woman is the one who takes care of her husband, prepares food and welcomes visitors properly. I have no value since my reintegration into civilian life because I no longer have an army that produces money for me by using force. (XC-24)

- **Fear:**
  I am too anxious at home because of the vulnerabilities I have experienced. It is only with the weapon that I can protect myself (XC-32).

- **Violence:**
  He goes out of the house, and smokes chanvre, drinks alcohol from morning to night, when he comes back, it’s to quarrel with me, with the children, with all our neighbours, with my friends, even with my family, to break the goods in the house, really he makes a lot of messes (wife X Com).
c) Gender and Youth Vulnerability; girls are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse, while boys are more vulnerable to violent being recruited into extremism and criminality.
d) Men’s vulnerability in (post) conflict areas; men and boys are recruited at a young age to join war and conflict, recruited by terrorist and armed groups, trained to kill, rape, or rob to be a good soldier, motivated to perform violence to show their abilities and role as a soldier, forced to witness violent acts such as kill, rape other men/women, and they cope with victimizations as men, keep silent, and show power and control.

In addition, the study looked into which men use more violence against their partners. Men who have experienced or were exposed to violence in childhood and/or war-related violence, including witnessing rape or killing, men who support traditional and rigid gender norms, and men dealing with psycho-traumatic stress and mental health problems are more violent against their partners, according to research.

The study also focused on mental health and revealed that more than half of all women and men reported negative mental health consequences from exposure to conflict. Henny reported that those men often carry the feeling of being a bad person, lose reputation in family, lose the ability to trust, and lose the ability to love, which accelerates violence as they work to deal with their mental problems. Furthermore, the study investigated how men and women deal differently with mental health problems afterwards and came up with the idea of rethinking Disarmament, Dismobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programming as well as rethinking gendered lens programming towards combating the impact of wars and conflict conflicts.

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

More than half men and women report negative consequences of conflict

(IMAGES DRC 2012)

Finally, the researcher presented recommendations based on the findings, stating that a gender perspective on male trauma and vulnerabilities of men and boys is required to design interventions, that a gender lens should be used to design interventions, that understanding gendered coping responses of men and women in a specific context helps to go beyond women as victims, and that a gender transformative approach in the context of war and conflict should target women and girls.

The session concluded with discussions and reflections, during which participants raised the following issues:
Questions:

Qn 1: PTSD is not diagnosed easily. What should be done?

Response: People in the immediate vicinity should be involved in the intervention. As an example, in Congo, the community created a program to address the problem, but in the process, the women/wives and close family members were engaged in the program to help the man overcome the problem.

Comment & contributions:

“My father was a police officer who fought in the war, and when he returned, he was a different man, more aggressive and powerful, and our family had to suffer as a result”. To support men’s mental health after wars, I believe we should consider social support and encourage men to open up and attend counselling sessions

“In Most African societies’ men do not open up easily, this is influenced by how we were brought up, men are grown being told not to cry, not to show remorse and express their emotions. Where in dealing and fulfilling these social expectations they end up becoming aggressive and violent.”

The gendered impact of war, conflict and violence and women’s responses in Cameroon: clarifying key terms and concepts and an overview of the issues by Omam Njomo Esther, Executive Director, Reach Out Cameroon;

Esther started by sharing her story on women’s exclusion in economic and social decision making, she shared how patriarchal systems are accelerating the exclusion of women. In her story, she shared a case where the women were put in the kitchen to prepare goat while men sat to discuss with investors what their resources should support. It was realized that men considered only their needs in the discussion and did not present women’s issues. Esther described how she was able to challenge and bring the women and girls to the table and ensured women issues were discussed and incorporated into the contract with the investors.

This led to her introduction and started looking into gender as an analytical tool for conflict and wars. The presenter highlighted that gender is always intertwined with social-social-economic, cultural and political factors, which may enforce men and women to join armed groups to avenge wrong done against them or their families, support their political ideology, improve their social status and escape poverty e.g. in Cameroon some girls joins the conflict because they are provided with financial support and security shared Esther, also men join war or armed conflicts to get pay to support their families.

Esther went on to say that gender stereotyping and patriarchy systems, which force men and women to behave and perform certain roles, are key motivators for some men and boys to join wars and armed conflicts to meet social expectations. Furthermore, social exclusion, a weak and unaccountable government, security and justice systems, a lack of health care services, ethnic groups, as well as education and employment opportunities, are among the conflict and war causes in Cameroon.
In her presentations, Esther continued to explore the impact of wars and conflict on gender, revealing that women are subjected to varying forms of abuse and violence, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence from intimate partners, family members, and conflicting parties. Furthermore, wars and conflicts have a health impact, with men being at high risk of death, women being at high risk of traumatic stress, and maternal mortality being at an all-time high during wars and conflicts.

Furthermore, Esther continued to unpack the gender economic impact of conflict and war, where women suffer the economic impact in their household and society, wars increase women’s economic vulnerability due to limited environments to conduct economic activities, loss of jobs, loss of properties, and much more, all of which leads to sexual abuse and exploitation.

In her presentation, Esther also discussed the efforts and contributions made by women in the pursuit of equality, as well as their efforts to increase women’s participation in peace and conflict resolution processes. As an activist, Esther mobilized and organized various women’s group movements to ensure that they claimed and continue to fight for their full participation in various decision-making spaces and peace negotiations processes. Because of her courage in promoting gender equality, Esther has been able to empower women to take a stand, voice their concerns, and drive change in their community. Esther concluded with recommendations that there is still much work to be done in terms of protecting girls and women from SGBV, promoting better coordination between government agencies and international bodies, and ensuring that legal instruments against SGBV are effectively implemented.

The session was followed by a discussion and comments from the participants. Pearl from Zimbabwe stated that peace advocates and activists are being kidnapped, beaten, and sexually abused in Zimbabwe. Again, sexual violence and gender-based violence are being excluded from the peace process, with the sole focus being on ending wars and putting down guns. Pearl emphasized the importance of bringing women into peace talks so that they can speak up about issues that affect women and girls.

Mpiwa also stated that the peace-making process ignores sexual violence and other forms of violence affecting the lives of women and girls during and after conflict and wars, with the center of attention being on making peace and putting guns down. Therefore, she emphasized the importance of raising these issues and paying close attention to them during peace processes, as well as ensuring women’s participation in peace negotiations spaces so that they can articulate and bring to light the issues that affect them, thereby accelerating the process of looking at issues through a gendered lens.

Pete Muller, a photographer who has received numerous awards for his work, presented the session. He shared photographs taken in a variety of settings, including church services, wildlife trafficking, societal disruption, and climatic change. Through various photographs shot from various conflict zones, the presenter tapped into men and masculinity. Pete’s work centered on highlighting various forms of violence against women and girls; and young boys’ involvement in violence, as well as understanding how unmet societal aspirations among men and boys accelerate violence against women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pete’s work also centered on understanding the forces that drive violence among men and boys.

The presenter displayed various images of boys performing various tasks and being motivated to demonstrate their ability to handle cruel tasks such as shooting, killing, witnessing violence, and not displaying pain emotions when their bodies were cut. He showed a picture of a young boy being encouraged by his family to kill and slaughter a wild animal as a sign of strength, while another showed an African boy participating in traditional practice who was in a lot of pain but was told not to cry or show any signs of pain. He emphasized in his presentation and photo sharing that, boys are constantly exposed to perform or witness violence, which affects their behaviours and conduct. Peter’s presentation raised participants’ awareness and understanding of the importance of using a picture to depict social issues such as GBV sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and war zones for documentation and evidence, social engagement, and accountability.

Pete’s work on conflict and masculinities in the DRC can be seen here:

• https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/419643/the-search-for-humanity-in-war-photography/
Comments and reflections;
“Because of the patriarchal system, men are taught not to express their feelings and emotions, whereas women are viewed as vulnerable and frail. I believe that photography can help to bring much out of women and portray their power and ability to drive positive change in their communities.”
“People can relate to and understand a picture better than they can words, thus using images to transmit messages is essential in advocacy work.”

THEME THREE: THE GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT AND THE WPS & ROOT CAUSES:

3.1 Recap and reflection session:
The day began with a recap and reflection from the previous day, which was facilitated by Joy and Jude. During the recap session, the facilitators welcomed all participants who had joined in the third day of the MATI 2021, followed by playing a few inspiring videos submitted by participants in response to the day’s question “Highlighting the change, they have made contributing to peace and security as well as gender equality issues.”

The gendered impact of war, conflict and violence. Cameroon Case Study:
Delphine Brun and Guy Feugap

On day three, Delphine Brun, GENCAP Advisor from UNFPA Cameroon, and Guy Blaise Feugap, Program Manager at WILPF Cameroon, led a discussion on the gendered impact of war, conflict, and violence.

Case Study of Cameroon:

Before Delphine began her presentation, participants were divided into six groups to discuss questions relating to the gender impact of wars: the discussion and presentation were based on three questions:
QN1 (group 1&2): Discuss how armed conflict affects women and girls, and boys and girls

Discussions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women &amp; Girls</th>
<th>Men &amp; Boys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Women are exposed to physical violence such as beating, trafficking and slavery</td>
<td>Men are forced to join armed conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Undergo sexual violence such rape and prostitution and sexual traffic</td>
<td>Forced to perfume or witness violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Women are exposed to forced marriages</td>
<td>Raped and sexually tortured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Men are forced to achieve balance: when there is conflict, men are expected to intervene; if they are unable to do so, society typically labels them as people who lack power and thus are not men enough.</td>
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</table>

QN2 (group 3&4): What are the likely effect of armed conflict on gender roles and relations (in the family in the community and workplaces).

Discussion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Work places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the absence of males, Women fulfil the roles of men in the family by providing necessities and security to family members.</td>
<td>Increase of rape cases children and women,</td>
<td>Decline of financial transactions eg Bank closes, loss of jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a husband returns from a war or conflict, his wife and children suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder; men are often aggressive and abusive.</td>
<td>Survivors of conflict and war face numerous stigmas.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men who have been involved in the conflict are feared, and the community fails to hold them accountable when they commit crimes and engage in wrong actions.</td>
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QN 3 (group 5&6): How do armed conflicts challenge men’s ability to fulfil what is socially expected from them (masculine norms and ideals)

Discussion:

- Men experience physical injuries which prevent them from working and providing for their families
- War and conflict have a psychological impact on men, causing them to develop aggressive behaviours that are difficult to trust and love.
- Men are subjected to violence in which they are forced to witness or / and rape women and girls or their fellow men, as well as human trafficking.
Following the group presentations, Delphine continued to share the findings on the Effects of the North West and South West crises on adolescent boys and men. In her presentation, she stated that 13% of GBV survivors are men and boys, and 9 victims out of 10 are men and boys, with the presented situation resulting in poverty, insecurity, and psychosocial situations among boys and men. She also revealed that those men face a variety of threats, including being forced to fight in the front lines and participate in armed conflicts, as well as being subjected to violence from state and non-state military groups, being beaten, illegally detained among men and boys, tortured, and abducted, and having no freedom to make choices.

Delphine shared case stories on the Poverty, insecurity and psychosocial costs from actors and victims of wars and conflict.

"Boys are stuck in their community. They don’t have education and nowhere to go. There are no means of livelihood, which puts them at great risk of recruitment”
Director of a local NGO, Northwest

"I feel powerless, like I can’t do anything. Also, I don’t know what the future looks like. The crisis has delayed so many things I was planning to do”
Divine, IDP, 36 years old

Depression has really increased among adolescent boys and men. Addictions are on the rise too. Some face mental disorders”
Psychiatric nurse, North West

The presenter also touched on gender discrimination, highlighting how men’s issues are often overlooked. She identified that different actors’ interventions for the aforementioned issues do not pay attention to masculinities; there is a perception that women and children are the most vulnerable groups; society is constructed to believe that men are strong enough to cope with any situation and that women and children should come first; however, this is not the case in this situation; men face multiple forms of violence and abuse that require attention and collective interventions.
To conclude the presentation, she made the following recommendations:

**Recommendations**

1. Ensure your response is based on facts and not presumptions: Identify vulnerabilities and provide a response that goes beyond assistance to predefined categories.
2. Take into consideration the barriers men and boys can face in accessing assistance: Feeling of shame, fear of being arrested on the way or at services.
3. Take into account distinct protection needs of adolescent boys and men, including in GBV programs.
4. Build a protective environment by working simultaneously with women, men, girls, and boys, allowing to reinforce gender equality and to prevent GBV.

Exploring “The root causes and structural drivers of armed conflict: focusing on gender and political economy, Dr Yonas Adaye, IPSS Executive Director.

Dr Yonas Adaye, moderated the discussion and began his presentation by emphasizing the importance of participants being interactive and active, and he urged them to come in whenever they had a concern or a comment to make. To continue with the introduction, he invited participants to think about what image(s) come to mind when they hear a word. a) conflict b) violence c) the word “Africa” as African or non-African, c) gender d) if people think gender issues are only for women... Do you concur with them? e) Consider armed violence, militarism, rebel movements, poverty, ethnic extremism, and coups as distinguishing characteristics of the African continent; How do they react to this prejudice, and do you believe it is true?
Responses from participants:
Most non-Africans think of Africa, they think about violence, poverty, disease, political instability, people who rely heavily on aid, and people who are unable to resolve internal issues and disputes.

Conceptualizing and contextualizing violent conflicts in Africa:
Dr Yonas emphasized that conflict and war are motivated by behaviours and goals. There will be no conflicts if the goals and behaviours are compatible, but there will be a latent conflict if the behaviours meet incompatible goals. Furthermore, if the behaviours are incompatible and the goals are compatible, there will be a surface wall, but if the behaviors and goals are all compatible, there will be a surface wall. Incompatible relationships can lead to open wars and conflict. He also discussed the core causes of conflict, stating that conflict can begin as a dot, with people not saying hello to each other, not talking to each other, and a failure of communication, or it can begin as a drop of water and grow into a tremendous conflict and war. To continue, the presenter cites structural causes such as specialization, common resources, aim disparities, dependency, authority relationships, status inequalities, role and expectations as sources of conflict.

- Triggering (immediate) and proximity (proximate) causes (near or related causes).

In addition, Dr Yonas discussed the political economy of violent conflict.

Violent conflicts’ economic and political ramifications:
• Political instability and volatility/fragility of countries
• Vulnerability of everyday life of ordinary citizens
• Further instability, armed conflicts (violence breeding violence) with long-term effects on a society
• Military spending at the expense of education, health, infrastructure, and social development

Following an intensive presentation and discussion, Dr Yonas concluded his presentation by laying out the next steps toward achieving the WPS agenda. He emphasized the importance of acknowledging that women are all too often subjected to rape as a weapon of war and to forced labour. As a result, he said, the emphasis should be placed on building women’s capacities, developing resilience, and making women’s security issues a priority in national development policies and strategies; involving more women in political and military leadership and decision-making levels and paying special attention to girls’ education from the primary level onwards. Furthermore, he advocated for educating society about the prejudices against women, educating men, and encouraging equal participation in the fight against misogyny; and, finally, institutionalizing economic liberty (economic independence) for women in Africa by promoting resilience-building, entrepreneurship, and equal access to all opportunities for women.
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Recap and reflection session:
The day began with a recap of day and the viewing of a few videos submitted by participants in response to the assignment of “recording a video sharing the most significant change participants have made in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.”

To continue, Annie Mbambi, President of WILPF DRC, shared her experience and the gender impact of a war in Congo, as well as the role of civil society in intervening for this impact caused by conflict and wars. The majority of activities are associated with extractive companies in the mining sector and people fighting for access to power and resources, where people with power and money deploy militaries and polices. And, while men are also affected, women are usually at the center of the impact of the Congolese conflict and wars.

She went on to describe how CSOs have strengthened the space for women to participate in various decision-making settings, and how they now take part meetings to ensure that decisions made represent women’s concerns. Women are now being included in decision spaces, as well as creating community groups and carrying out other empowerment conversations, as a result of a series of advocacy meetings at various levels.

Annie closed her presentation by stating that in the mining business, women’s rights are violated, and they experience exploitation as well as health difficulties such as menstrual problems as a result of their exposure to toxins. There is also a great deal of inequity, with poor pay and a hostile work environment. Women and girls must be empowered to be able to stand up for their rights and oppose injustice and exploitation.

Following that, Edwick Madzimure, President of WILPF Zimbabwe, discussed violence in the mining sector based on her research of Zambia’s militarized mining sector. In the mining industry, there is a lot of fighting influenced by political and ethnic groups. Guns are legally carried throughout the mines by mining groups, and corruption is rampant, fostering conflict between the mining’s company and minerals traders. Conflict and war have an impact on young boys because they are groomed to use weapons and participate in conflicts at a young age. In addition, cases of gender-based violence have been reported on a large scale; women are raped and sexually exploited, and women are highly exploited due to their biological makeup; they are given little work and no salary, instead of being given the mines left over for them to continue processing.

Edwick also spoke about the organization’s efforts to ensure equality and dispel myths about women’s participation in mining activity. “The organization has designed some implementations, such as conducting a community engagement outreach program for both men and women to conduct dialogue sessions to address the culture of violence that surrounds communities and address the myth surrounding women in gold extraction.”
The session was followed by a discussion and reflection from the participants. Question to guide reflection and discussion from Dean Peacock: As activist, how do we address the harmful conduct of the mining sector?

**Participant’s Contributions.**

- Conflict in mining is also relevant in South Africa, where there is too much politics surrounding it. The colonizers made a law that the land within the mining belongs to them, and anyone wishing to conduct extraction activities on that land must obtain a permit from the colonizers, which is causing a lot of frustration and hunger among the people”.

- To ensure that inclusive extraction policies are enforced, we must continue to press our advocacy efforts at a global level, where external and international extractors sit. Furthermore, it is critical to developing strategies aimed at reducing human rights violations, particularly those affecting women and girls.

- We should reexamine the national laws and policies that govern the existence and operation of malt cooperation to see if they are gender-sensitive. If not, it is our responsibility to ensure gender mainstreaming and to demonstrate the role that men and women should play in those policies, laws, and guidelines. Again, as we revisit the laws, we should also evaluate the malt cooperative policies to ensure gender mainstreaming and equal treatment of men and women in all processes. Furthermore, there should be capacity building among transnational companies’ leaders and those in top positions to be inducted and sensitized on gender issues to change their attitude and ensure they champion gender issues in their organizations’ structures and guides.

**The root causes and structural drivers of war/conflict and militarization of people and places: gender and political economy.**

Dr. Yonas Adaye of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies moderated this session. He began his presentation by circling the fact that conflict can be caused by human nature or condition, which can be traced back to history and religion.

The presenter continued to present the mapping guide or procedures to be taken into account by different actors when attempting to intervene in conflicts and wars; -

- Understanding the source of conflict can start from the family level, can be society, national or international level,
- look at what the issues are, power issues, recognition issues, respect issues, ethnicity issues, look into the behaviors of the people involved in the conflicts.
- Historical claims, debates on the veracity of claims about history

Comment: What is justice? African systems had justice systems that were used to address issues in the past. Their objectives were to restore harmony and punish constructively. The system allowed the wrongdoer to learn while also keeping track of his actions. As a result, there is a need to return to African history and adopt some of the mechanisms used to settle conflicts.
The history of the WPS agenda, its content, an assessment of its impact, challenges, and opportunities, including the role of women in peace processes, Dr Joy Onyesoh, President WILPF Nigeria

Joy facilitated the session on the overview of the women’s peace and security agenda as well as the approaches to implementing the WPS agenda (WPSA). The WPSA is the women’s peace and security transformative agenda. It is a framework that has three key elements such as substantive (influential) participation of women and the general move towards gender equality, protecting individuals and providing them with freedom from threats (human security), ensuring that all individuals can participate in their communities and be free from exploitation and uncertainty.

In her presentations, she shared that the WPSA started from the UN Charter Reaffirming the fundamental human right that all individuals are equal, there should be equal rights between men and women. Furthermore, she gave a background on UNSCR 1325, the first of twelve resolutions on women, peace and security, which is built on a body of international human rights law and legal instruments and stands as the first international political framework that addresses the impact of conflict on women and girls and their participation in leadership in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding processes and negotiations.
Key Element that characterizes the UNSCR resolution 1325:

- To proceed she shared different approaches to implement the UNSCR 1325 being-
  - Prevention framework, Initiative that mainstream gendered lens into peace processes, being proactive to prevent GBV before the conflict happens.
  - Participation framework, looking into areas of women’s activeness and participation in the peace negotiation and peace mediation process, representation of women in formal and informal decision-making spaces.
  - Protection framework, Encompasses initiatives that strengthen and amplify efforts to secure the safety, physical and mental health, well-being, economic security, and dignity of women and girls and promote and safeguard the human rights of women and mainstream a gender perspective in legal and institutional reforms.

In her conclusion, she discusses the challenges that the country faces in implementing the UNSCR 1325 budget. She also emphasized the importance of collaborating with youth to drive change and ensure a long-term effort in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
The day started with a recap and sharing of the video submitted by participants for the reflection question shared the day before, followed by a session facilitated by Yasmin Sooka (Former Director of the Foundation for Human Rights, South Africa) on mainstreaming gender into peace processes: peace negotiations, DDR, SSR, and transitional justice. Her presentation began with a brief history of the Nuremberg trials, which took place during World War II. The transition emerged in the 1990s from the experiences in Latin America and followed by the experiences in South Africa. Transitional Justice not only for accountability and silencing the abuser but rather how you use it in Peacebuilding. Transitional justice has four particular pillars which are:

- Right to Truth, this pillar entails the rights of individuals to be told the truth of what happens to their loved one and the right of the society to know the source of the conflict and the remains of the victims
- The right to Justice - the victims to see the abuser face justice and they are held accountable
- Guarantee of non-recurrence,
- Rights to reparations, it talks about the right of victims of conflict and wars to be acknowledged by the state, and to ensure the issues of compensation are addressed.

She stressed that transition Justice should not only look into political rights issues rather there should be an intensive exploration on the different drivers of conflict such as looking into production and transfer of militaries and weapons, deepen into the questions of how identity, ethnicity and religion, and structural violence contributes to conflict and violence in the region.

She discussed the relationship between Transition Justice Gender and the Women’s Peace and Security Agenda in her presentation. She discussed the UN Security Council’s adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000, which addressed conflict-related sexual violence. She pointed that the Women’s and Peace and Security Agenda acknowledged the impact of conflict on women and girls, but failed to acknowledge the impact of war and conflict on men and boys. But then the in 2013 the UN secretary Council resolution 2106 specifically mentioned men and boys as victims of sexual violence in armed conflict the presenter shared.

Truth Commissions and Gender- Intersectionality:

The presenter emphasized the importance of defining the focus and structure of a truth commission’s work in each context through an intersectional analysis that critically explores issues of race, gender, ethnicity, geographical, legal, and political position, social-economic class, regional location, sexuality, religion, caste, and age to achieve equity and equality for all. She goes on to discuss how various movements in South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and other parts of the region have worked to incorporate gender perspectives into various levels of conflict negotiations and peacebuilding, such as policy processes and official and non-official peace negotiation meetings.

To continue, she shares women’s experiences in conflict and violence, where most women do not talk about what happens to them, but rather what happens to their families, children, and spouses, even though they are subjected to multiple exploitations and abuses. A photograph taken in Sierra Leone depicted what happened there, where women, girls, and children were amputated, multiple sexually violated, gang-raped and exploited by various groups of armed men.
As a result, the Truth Commissions in Sierra Leone took a comprehensive approach, resulting in the development of a gender policy. Women were represented in the labour force at a rate of more than 50%. The statement-taking staff and by arena was both made up of women. Women were trained on how to document sexual violence, and non-actor partners such as the media, CSOs, and women’s groups were brought into the ground level, where other 14 regions were reached and women were engaged in healings and documentation of women’s experiences.

To conclude her presentation, the presenter emphasizes the importance of discussing gender issues beyond advancing women’s rights, she stressed on the importance of uncovering women’s experiences from the discriminatory systems and gender based violence: and even challenging gender inequality by dipping into the experiences and impact of wars and conflicts for both men and women, as well as members of LGBTIQ communities, for the better advancement of the peace process.

David N. Tshimba of the Refugee Law Project joined as discussant at the end of Yasmin Sooka’s presentation. David emphasized that political violence affects men and women differently due to the perceived roles that society has subscribed to, and that sexual violence among men and boys is typically reported as cruel and inhumane, whereas it is unlikely to affect women and girls because the majority of this violence is not given voice. The discussion also prompted participants to think about and deepen their understanding of how to ensure justice beyond normative justice in the aftermath of mass violence, emphasizing the importance of taking a gendered lens justice approach and ensuring the safety of all survivors.

Discussion from the participants:

Abbas-Sierra Leone: Youth and young people have been socially excluded where they play a big role in spreading violence and contributing positively to the democratic transition, whereas women also undergo sexual and physical violence.

Women’s resistance to war and conflict: Women’s Situation Rooms in Nigeria to maintain peace during elections, Joy Onseyoh, President WILPF Nigeria and President of WILPF Global

The Women’s Situation Room:

In her introduction to the topic of women’s Situation Rooms in Nigeria to maintain peace during elections, Joy Onseyoh stated the learning objectives as follows:

1. Women Situation Room as transnational feminist network,
2. Understanding how the WSR works in the implementation of the WPS agenda,
3. Understanding the WSR as a transnational feminist network performs a decolonizing function of the WPS agenda.

WSR, according to the facilitator, is a women’s civil society initiative/process that seeks to increase women’s participation and inclusion in the political process and conflict resolution to achieve long-term peace. The WSR investigated specific actions such as training.
Women’s Peace and Security agenda as a Transnational Feminist Network:

Transnational Feminist Network: structures organized above national efforts that bring together women from three or more countries around a common agenda of women's inclusion in the political and peace processes. This effort is usually mobilized when an election is approaching to ensure that women participate equally in the electoral process, but for the WSR Nigeria, they expanded the structures to include issues of peace and security, as well as conflict mediation processes in Nigeria.

WSR’s goal is to provide a platform for women’s groups to strategize, plan, and respond quickly to election-related issues, as well as to strengthen women’s solidarity beyond the border and to establish a network.

The facilitator identified in the presentation that WSR in the country of replication is designed to culturally translate UNSCR 1325 to respond to local realities shaped by context with a lesson learned and best practices documented for future use. She goes on to say that WSR has gained attention in Africa as a process that mobilizes women and youth to ensure their active participation in the peaceful and democratic electoral process, as well as the strategic engagement of stakeholders in replication countries to commit to peace before, during, and after elections, as well as the use of mass media campaigns in the implementation.

Institutionalizing the WPSA through WSR
- The WSR is conceptualized as the process to increase women’s participation in implementing the WPS agenda within the country and transnationally.
- WSR’s expansive and diverse membership of women’s groups has become a viable tool for the institutionalization of the WPS agenda within and across countries. This is through the fostering of women’s participation in the election process as coordinators, voters, observers, mediators, reporters, and analytics.
- WSR works to investigate early warnings and implement early response mechanisms to ensure conflicts are maintained and peace remains pre, during, and post-election.

Finally, the speaker discussed the WSR as a post-colonial feminist strategy. The WSR was described as a post-colonial feminist strategy that recognizes the local and historical realities of women in multiple spaces, informing the WPSA’s agenda. This is based on the realization that there is a need to strengthen women’s agency in order for them to fight for their rights regardless of their perceived position.

Questions and discussion from the participants:

Ambassador Emmanuel: “Knowing the African context, when it comes to elections, women do not have enough budget to support their campaigning activities, and the government does not support women in purchasing political tickets or ensuring women have financial support for their campaigns, which affects their campaigning activities because they do not have luck supporting even their fellow women.”

- Therefore, what ways can be used to change the narrative and empower women and let them understand that politics is beyond money?
- How do we ensure that their representatives will channel the issues of women in the policies process?
Chiemezie commented: My take on women’s participation in the political process should start from the local communities, should be capacitated and empowered to grow from the grass-roots and lead them to grow to take positions at a national level.

Response: There is a lot of focus even at the community level, but as the intervention is done at the grassroots level, that goes in line with the focus of the intervention at a subregional and national level. As for the work at the grass-root level, the work is done in partnerships with local women’s groups and coalitions, with the main focus of engaging the political parties to increase the space of women in the political parties. Through the participation of political parties ranging from local communities to the national level, as well as the participation of women’s stakeholders and supporters. The challenge has been the lack of a strong legislative framework, which will result in strong monitoring of how the strong legislative system is implemented and elections are held. The lack of this legislation has resulted in a delay in the necessary push for change. As a result, countries should put in place a strong accountability framework for election monitoring bodies, as well as a push for responsive gender policies and monitoring tools to ensure that women participate equally in elections.

Raymond; Can we see the Women’s Situation Room going to educate women on what they need to do to ensure their full commitment, participation, and not only occupying the space that they are given in different political spaces?

Comment, Sakinah: Women also need to do more. Therefore, sensitization and capacity building should be continuous to ensure women are knowledgeable and capable of standing for their decisions and driving change.

Responses: Society has higher expectations for women towards making social change than they have in men, moreover their expectations do not consider the patriarchal system behind women’s issues. There should be the same level of expectations between both women. And capacity building on understanding the issues should happen for both women and men and let the change happen.

Comment from the chat: There is great importance in engaging female students in the political process.

The wind up of the day and the end of week one: The day ended by allowing participants to share what they felt had been the best and worst moments of the past five days of the training.

Elize, “The speaker did a great job. The assignments and video made me reflect on my current professional work and build my capacity. For my further interventions, it was an interesting and thoughtful week.”.

Celine: Through this training, I have learned and got an understanding of what happens to other countries. I thank the organizer and the presenters.

The questions for reflection were then provided, taking reflection of the activity happening during the week and creating a short news report and requesting it to be shared on WhatsApp groups.
Day six began with opening remarks by Dean Peacock, who took the floor to welcome all participants to the second week of MATI 2021 training. This was followed by watching a few interesting videos shared by participants in response to the day’s assignment. The participants were required to create a short news report based on their reflections of the first week of MATI 2021.

Jenny Bruno Rodriguez, Advocacy Coordinator for the MenEngage Global Secretariat, then kicked off the session on using international law and human rights mechanisms to advance the WPS agenda. Among the international human bodies to be discussed are CEDAW, UPR, the UN Human Rights Council, treaty bodies, special procedures, and so on.

The presenter emphasized in the introduction that the human rights framework exists to protect rights by taking action against perpetrators, to fulfil rights by providing individuals with information on how to fulfil their human rights, and to respect rights by not violating them.

**Human Rights Conventions**: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)

**Treaty Bodies**: These are bodies used to monitor the implementation of the Convention – ie – the CEDAW Committee.

**National State Party Reviews**

**Human Rights Council**: Established on 15 March 2006 by the General Assembly and reporting directly to it. The Council is made up of 47 member states, selected through regional distribution.

**Universal Periodic Review**: Reviews the human rights records of all 193 UN member states once every four years. Countries’ reports and civil society can provide shadow reports and hold accountable their governments.
In the presentation, the facilitator touched on the different laws and their level of accountability where they were divided into Hard vs. Soft Law + Reports. Moreover, the presenter touched on special procedures of the UN HRC and the political framework. To continue the presenter touched on accountability advocacy. Accountable advocacy can be understood as the application of our accountability standards and guidelines in our work on policy advocacy, this is because within the political sphere is where the power concentrates and the masculinities agenda can replicate gendered power dynamics within the spaces.

**Accountable Advocacy;**

- a) Building meaningful relationships and partnerships with feminist leaders and organizations in the space
- b) Work in tandem with the feminist advocacy agenda thereby amplifying the agenda through the advocacy efforts that the Alliance and members are involved in
- c) Prevent from competing or, working in silos in the advocacy efforts - foster effective partnership and solidarity with the feminist and social justice groups
- d) Stand together and take on appropriate responsibility to support the advancement of the feminist agenda for gender justice
- e) Add value to the broader feminist and social justice agenda, as appropriate, through the transforming masculinities lens

To show how it looks like in practice, the presenter shared different cases such as;

- The Global Gender Equality Conference had a Special Session with Policy-Makers on Engaging Men & Boys in the main room without the presence of civil societies.
After sharing different accountable advocacy case studies, the facilitator allowed participants to share their comments and reflection, and this led to the wind-up the advocacy session; And allowed the presenter to talk about Normative Framework on men and masculinities. In her presentation she talked about different framework such as: -

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)**
This convention direct on modifying the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, to achieve the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

**In the General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 (2017),**
The Committee regards gender-based violence against women to be rooted in gender-related factors such as the ideology of men’s entitlement and privilege over women, social norms regarding masculinity, the need to assert male control or power, enforce gender roles, or prevent, discourage or punish what is considered to be unacceptable female behaviours. These factors also contribute to the explicit or implicit social acceptance of gender-based violence against women, often still considered as a private matter, and to the widespread impunity for it; And underpin structural inequality of women with men as well as target stereotyped gender roles and promote values of gender equality and non-discrimination, including non-violent masculinities.

**Beijing Platform for Action**
Recognize the Encourage men to participate fully in all actions towards equality. The Platform for Action emphasizes that women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world.
Understanding this framework put the participants in the position to take collective action and engage boys and men towards the achievements of the WPS agenda and advocate towards gender equality.
Reflection and Recap of day 5: And Engaging with the AU, EAC, ECOWAS and SADC member states (including a focus on 1325 NAPs, the Silencing the Guns Campaign and the current AU Chair’s role).

The day began with participants reflecting on the videos they had shared in response to the day’s question: “What does it look like when men are accountable to women and work for gender equality?” Several participants discussed women’s working environments and stated the following:

• Njuki-
Reshaping of patriarchal mindsets and transformed opportunities that put an end to sexual entitlements and exploitation of women, resulting in less violence against women and the observance of mutual respect and accountability. People can together to work in harmony and peace, thereby avoiding conflict.

• Jane-
As patriarchy has been ingrained in cultural, religious, social norms and values, traditional practices, and thus unbalanced creating power relations, more men being accountable to women works as the first step towards promoting gender equality. As a result of men being held accountable to women, there will be a shift in the balance of power, stereotypes, and cultural and traditional practices that undermine women. In the long run, men will realize that they are not competing with women, but rather collaborating to create equal access to opportunities.

The Moderator thanked the three participants for their videos and emphasized the importance of advocacy and accountability. He urged organizations that work with boys and men to align their priorities with those of women’s rights organizations in order to avoid taking political space and attention away from women’s rights activists. He invited discussion about how the theme of accountability might manifest itself.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

All human rights activists must understand the framework within which these rights can be advocated for. One of the risks of involving men in gender equality work is that it leads to men taking on leadership roles and men’s voices being privileged in a way that reinforces the patriarchal status quo, as demonstrated by the recent UN men-only gender equality conference. As a result, women were excluded from conversations in which their voices should have been heard.

Masculinity persists in some spaces where key policy implementors’ voices should be heard. He gave an example from Uganda, where the Chief Justice threw out a very experienced female Supreme Court judge’s ruling and denied the press access to her minority report because she was dissenting from other judges’ rulings. This raises concerns because, if a highly educated and experienced woman can be humiliated to such an extent in a public space and in a court of law, what hope is there for a woman at the grassroots who did not even have the opportunity to attend school and faces other multidimensional barriers?
There is a need for us to work on men and boys taking responsibility for their actions, as well as ensure we monitor government policies in terms of the impact they have on addressing men and boys’ roles and responsibilities. Although the laws are in place, gender insensitivity and stereotypes have an impact on our work.

- Men and boys must also be engaged in order to foster positive, respectful relationships, with an emphasis on denouncing all kinds of discrimination and violence against women and girls.
- Need to persist in terms of changing the narrative and documentation of the historical and structures of equal power relations between men and women.

The moderator posed the question, “At what age should men begin to engage in promoting change?”

He explained that research shows that boys who are engaged at a young age are more open to new ideas and are easier to reach in school and similar settings. However, according to another study, grown men are open to change in some situations. He also shared his father’s experience, saying that while he was quite rigid in his gender norms between the ages of 30 and 50, once he retired, he became more gender flexible and supportive of gender equality within the family, even joining female family members in a protest march against the Trump administration years ago. As a result, he urged the participants not to abandon the older men.

The moderator touched on the subject of services for men who have experienced sexual violence, including sexual violence in a conflict setting. “Will making the services available to them have less of an impact on the women survivors?” He expressed his reservations about this and shared his thoughts on how political attention on men’s sexual violence experiences will help to strengthen attention on women’s experiences as well. He suggested that a debate be held on the subject.

Engaging with the AU, EAC, ECOWAS and SADC member states (including a focus on 1325 NAPs, the Silencing the Guns Campaign and the current AU Chair’s role).

The session was facilitated by Ambassador Osman Keh Kamara (Advisor to the AU on Silencing the Guns)

In the presentation ambassador Osman Keh Kamara (Advisor to the PAPS Commissioner on Silencing the Guns at the AU) outlined the WPSA and how member states could implement it. He explained the AU campaign’s goals, which include achieving a conflict-free Africa, preventing genocide, making peace a reality for all, ridding the continent of wars, violence, and human rights violations, humanitarian disasters, and creating conducive conditions for social justice and sustainable economic development for all. He emphasized how social justice encompasses fair treatment of women, guaranteeing that women are treated equally even in times of war. He explained the following regarding their decisions to ensure the rights of women and girls in conflict situations are protected:

- Introduction of a program (National Action Plan - Resolution 1325 WPSA) that will cascade to all member states with all aspects of conflict prevention including empowering women, protecting their rights, making them a part of peacebuilding and conflict prevention process to create a conducive condition for social justice. He further explained how this will provide a blueprint for government, multilateral institutions, CSOs, and all implementers to set priorities, simplify decision making, coordinate action, track progress and hold government accountable for protecting the rights of women in various...
member states. He further clarified that, although there is the Master Road Map which provides all pillars concerned on how to end the conflict in Africa; it is not enough to inspire immediate action thus the reason for developing the National Action Plans for member states so that the rights of women, protective measures, social justice of women are incorporated and tailored specifically to a particular country’s context while providing a structural, sequence of actions to achieve outlined goals in the Master Road Map. He further shared how this inspiration came up after the AU Assembly last year had adopted a resolution to extend the implementation of the Master Road Map for 10 more years.

- They believe it will go a long way to empower women in the country and improve their status due to:
  - The NAP Creation of a platform to consult with CSOs and ensure diverse perspectives are reflected; and establishment of a coordinated structure committed to facilitating implementation with clearly assigned roles and responsibilities to enhance the role of women in society especially if the agreement is reached on regarding bi-annual M&E mechanisms developed.

The following was asked, with their responses from the Ambassador:

- Corruption and its relation to conflict taking into consideration the selling of small arms to gang groups in South Africa which have led to a spike of homicide, in DRC the FARDC has been implicated in the selling of weapons to armed groups, corruption related to minerals, etc.

**Response:** Ambassador Kamara stated how in his practice he identified a few criteria responsible for the conflict in the country. This being: Illicit/illegal inflow of weapons in the continent/countries through maritime and illicit circulation within and in hands of corrupt officials thus leading to manslaughter. He continued to explain how this is caused by poor governance and corrupt systems which causes deficit and unrest in society. Thereby, a direct relation between the two.

- How best CBOs and NGOs can be incorporated to be part of the project moving forward:

  **Response:** Ambassador Kamara explained how at the moment the AU is trying to partner with the private, non-political entities nationally and internationally to be part and parcel of the project and how they have liaised with different actors including artists and musicians. Thereby, encouraging every aspect of society including youth, women, school children, and others, and are open to working with all CSOs and CBOs.

- What strategies are in place to address the transnational corporations that are responsible for bringing weapons into the continent?

  **Response:** The Ambassador explained the various mechanisms in place including the Arms Trade Treaty which is a global framework whereby all agreed to prevent illegal inflow of weapons from one country to another, and on the mechanisms for dispute settlement to protect member states from activities of manufacturers so that weapons will not be sold to non-state actors. But explained how unfortunately they are facing challenges on the implementation of the treaty (non-compliance) due to poor governance systems. Thus, insisted on the need to address poor governance in society as a panacea to peace and security.
What is the campaign saying about the role of the African diaspora?

Response: Ambassador Kamara explained how they are doing their best to ensure the diaspora is conscientize, informed, and mobilized to be part of the campaign. Have created the 5th region of diaspora within the African Union to bring them on board and for them not to be used to create instability in their countries but rather help to prevent conflicts. There are Diaspora Youth Ambassadors.

GROUP WORK

The Moderator, Dean Peacock invited participants to break into small groups for reflections and debate on different aspects including:

• The roles of young men and women in the WPS agenda. How do we increase their participation? It was raised how there is a strong need for actors to engage young men and women, create champions and ambassadors, clubs in schools and universities, media engagement, etc. There is a need for peer sensitization, and involvement in planning and implementation to enhance the WPS agenda at a young age. Need for intergenerational awareness.

• The lack of political will and accountability in ensuring gender equality. Although conventions signed but not feasible. Participants explained how there is a need for countries to respect the treaties they have signed and to be held accountable in case of violations to reduce the impact of illegal possession of arms. Resolved that going forward everyone be on board and commit to ensuring communities are free of arms, ending all forms of violence, and engaging political leaders to do what they are supposed to.

• Discuss eliminating the violence at HH, local level, denial of access to SRH services for WPS agenda.
  • How to best collaborate to strengthen voices and actions
  • And the Impact of firearms and the role of international borders.

The moderator ended up the day with the Question for the day.

“What are the positive masculinities in the WPS agenda? What are some concrete examples of this?”
Recap and reflection of the previous training session:

The session began with a reflection of the day, in which participants were invited to provide their reflection for the training on previous days:

Respondent 1: This course was extremely beneficial in a variety of ways, particularly in domesticating and binding our intervention on the Women’s Peace and Security Agenda. Initially, we had little knowledge of driving interventions in our local communities. However, we have had the opportunity to reflect on bringing men and boys to implement the WPSA in our local communities as a result of this training.

Respondent 2: The respondent stated that the training was very informative; all of the sessions were very informative, and it added more expertise. To supplement the training, new approaches have been implemented throughout. I look forward to continuing to engage, collaborate, and partner with traditional and religious leaders to challenge negative masculinity and promote gender equality.

To continue the discussion, participants were invited to share their thoughts and understanding of masculinity and militarized masculinity.

Respondent 1: Militarized masculinity is when the use of the army, guns and application of forceful mechanisms to prove masculinity.

Respondent 2: Masculinity is the social expectation to prove that you are a man.

Participants were invited to watch Ted Talk by Tony Porter video titled “A Call to Men” for further reflection on masculinity and gender equality. The video provided an opportunity for participants to participate in a discussion and further reflection on Masculinities, Peace, Conflict, and Gender Equality: Concepts, Challenges, and New directions.

Masculinities, Peace, Conflict, and Gender Equality: Concepts, Challenges, and New directions:


To begin, Dean provided a quick summary of the report from Equal Measure 2030 Policy Maker Report, which enlisted policymakers in a study to assess their grasp of major women’s rights issues. In general, the research revealed that there was a large knowledge and understanding gap on these topics.

Jossif Ezekilov then presented the National Democratic Institute’s Men, Power and Politics approach which aims to engage men in political organisations to get them to support women’s full political participation.
The sessions began with a presentation and discussion from Josiff on men’s power and the political approach, with the presenter emphasizing in the beginning that, despite the adoption of gender quotas, women’s engagement in political organizations and in political leadership is still lagging. As a result, the new paradigm encourages intervention at three levels: individual, institutional, and social-cultural levels.

The strategy is aiding in engaging male leaders as change agents for gender equality by making them aware of the gender dynamics in place and bridging the gaps by educating them on gender issues regularly. The focus is divided into three processes: 1. personalize by training men to see themselves as gender beings; 2. shift narratives to politics: why should men change gender at work; and 3. implement accountability and commitment tactics and cultures. Joseph described the monitoring mechanism as measuring knowledge, attitude, and behaviors to ensure that men in political parties’ change.
The presentation was summarized by experience from working with men in political parties and women activists in various countries, and it was followed by a participant exercise.

Participants were introduced to a 15-minute exercise in which they were asked to play the roles of each member of the group being in political power and one member playing the role of impunity, with the group attempting to hold (the impunity player) accountable.

**Definition of Accountability and Impunity**

Respondent 1: Accountability are systems used to remind those in the power of their promise and responsibility

Impunity: Organization or individual who violates the right of women and girls

Respondent 2: Impunity occurs when men believe they are entitled to a variety of things and that they should be reserved for their specialty; even when they commit violence against women, they should not be punished for their actions.

Finally, participants shared their experiences in groups, and Micheline closed the day by thanking the presenters and participants for their full participation.
Exploring the ambiguities of the narratives on “male champions” of gender equality in Uganda Parliament.

Amon Mwiine, Lecturer, School of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University, joined the conversation near the end of the training and reflected on the ambiguities of the narratives on “male champions” of gender equality in Uganda Parliament. In his presentation, Amon focused on sharing the paper he wrote for his PhD, which looked into how parliament, as a tool, facilitates conversation and gender equality by examining two legislative processes (a) the Legislative of Domestic Violence Act, 2010, and (b) the Legislative of Prohibiting Female Genital Maturation, 2010. In the study, he noted that since post-independence, the Ugandan parliament has been dominated by men, with men holding the majority of leadership positions, and even when the quotas system was implemented, the decision-making process was still dominated by men. As a result, the law and policy on gender issues received little attention during the legislative process.

To make progress, women activists in parliament and those working with non-governmental organizations realized that the only way to progress and address gender issues is to include men as partners and change agents. “They identified and recruited men who occupied influential power and men who supported women’s issues, invited them to their spaces, trained them on gender issues, and engaged them in championing gender equality reforms issues, all while monitoring their actions,” says the presenter.

The presenter emphasized the importance of forming alliances with men by sharing the findings of the study. Women activists in Uganda used existing patriarchy reforms and formed alliances with men to push for gender equality reforms, which contributed to the agenda’s success. Despite this progress, the same male champion refused to champion some of the gender issues. This raised the question of what might be required for men to champion issues that appear to challenge the notion of being a real man.

The presenter identified that sometimes men lack cultural knowledge, do not know how to respond, and are unaware of the consequences of conforming to those cultural practices, as well as the resources available to help them transition into positive masculinity. To conclude, the facilitator emphasized that, while working with men as change agents and allies may result in success, we must keep in mind that there comes a point when men lack cultural knowledge, which may limit their ability to bear the cost of being transformed men; thus, education and resources should be invested in gender transformative efforts.

Programmatic interventions to mobilize men for feminist peace

The day continued with a presentation by Christian Ngendahimana, Executive Director, Isoko Partners for Peace and Gender Equality, on interventions to mobilize men for feminist peace and gender equality. The presenter began by providing a context analysis and overview of the Great Lakes Regions of Africa, where endemic violence and rapes are used as weapons of conflict and war, and where vulnerable populations face significant sexual and physical violence. Despite existing laws and regulations outlawing physical and sexual abuse, women’s rights to bodily integrity and equality before the law have yet to be recognized on a local level.
The presenter then shared the theory of change for men and women as a partner of the peace and
gender equality model. The theory of change encourages men and women to collaborate as equal
partners in addressing domestic, gender-based violence. The model emphasizes:

Men and women can work together to promote a culture of peace by modeling gender equity, respect,
and collaboration, as well as a commitment to nonviolent conflict resolution. This will result in a greater
impact of existing engagement and mobilization efforts.

- The partnership model allows the documentation and dissemination of best practices to provide
practical guidance to a new generation of gender-sensitive leadership at all societal levels.

- The model allows stakeholders to implement the WPS and YPS agenda at the country level.

Following monitoring and evaluation, it was discovered that there were changes in the implemented
areas where men changed on how they see women and women changed on how they see and perceive
men and what they do, these changes lead to value, where men value the work being done by women,
caring, where both men and women care about what happens to one another, and mutual respect of the
dignity of men and women.

Participants were created to facilitate reflection and discussion.

**Questions and discussions:**

**Is it possible to talk about the discomfort and resistance from men’s participation and partnership in
addressing the gender equity issues?**

**Response:**

Yes, it has been difficult to shift the culture that has been established because religious and traditional
leaders are still hesitant to change. The promotion of dialogue involves a large number of people in the
socialization process. As a result, the model focuses on youth and developing the capacity of young
women in peace and security processes.

The two presentations were concluded by asking everyone to consider who they are if they are gender-
sensitive nonviolent men and women ready to build an equal society. The question was raised to call on
everyone who identifies as a gender-sensitive actor to take action on building movements, advocating,
and educating from the local to the national level.

**Living Peace Institute’s work to address conflict-related trauma.**

Benoit Ruratotoye and Aloys Mahwa, Directors from Living Peace Institute based in Goma, DRC, shared
a case study on the experience and effects of violence on men and communities and their strategies to
address it; the study was conducted in Congo and revealed that more than half of men and women are
negatively affected by conflict and wars; it was reported that they lose their ability to trust, men consider
themselves as bad people, they carry survival guilt by blaming themselves for not being able to protect
their loved ones, lost capacity of love, and so on.
The facilitator showed Abby's story, a video of men and women sharing their experiences with the effects of conflict and war on their lives. It can be viewed here: https://vimeo.com/139017582.

**From the video:** “The conflict has made me look like nothing in my community, I failed to protect my family and I lost everything” speaker from the video

“But conflict has caused the immense problem in my family, till now my wife has heart problems” speaker from the video

“He began communicating with me in a different manner, arrogantly, beating me, and we ended up not having good communication in the family.” speaker from the video

Facilitators shared their approaches in the video-sharing where they started conducting therapeutic sessions with groups and individuals (survivors and their families) affected by war and conflict in Congo, as a way of restoring their capacities and mitigating the effects.

**THEME 10: PLANNING JOINT ADVOCACY TO ADVANCE THE WPS AGENDA IN AFRICA, CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS:**

**Recap and reflection:**

The day began with reflection and sharing of a video in which participants were asked to respond to what they do in their daily lives to challenge restrictive gender stereotypes.

**Video 1:** I advocate for women and girls by ensuring inclusivity in public spaces and encouraging women and girls to participate in political processes. Currently, I run an empowerment program at the university, where I help women build capacity and run for presidential seats in elections that are always reserved for men. My faculty at the University of Nigeria has always been dominated by men, but they are now working to ensure that women have equal access to seats. Says, Chiemezie- Nigeria

**Video 2.** When I see discrimination in my community or at work, I speak up and engage the authorities to ensure that action is taken. Furthermore, I collaborate with other change-makers to challenge GBV and discrimination against women, and I bring the conversation to the workplace to challenge norms and transform men’s attitudes toward women. Says Njoki Allan-Uganda

**Video 3.** I grew up as the only girl in the family, and throughout my childhood, my father was present and would assist the family with domestic tasks such as swiping, washing, and cooking, but then I married a man who was raised in a patriarchal system. As a result, in order to challenge restrictive gender stereotypes, I train my daughter and son to share household responsibilities equally; they both clean their rooms, wash dishes, and prepare breakfast etc. Says Edwick Zimbabwe.
Participant’s reflection on the MATI2021 -session,

Dk Chiemezie:
It’s been a wonderful experience; yesterday’s session helped me reflect on how I began to engage men and boys at my university to advance the WPS agenda (University of Nigeria). Most of the time, we assume that lecturers and academicians are aware of all of these resolutions, but the majority of them are unaware of gender issues. As a result of yesterday’s discussion, I’ve been considering strategically shifting conversation and men and boys, lecturers and students at the university right away.

Says Sakinah
It’s been an interesting and enlightening week, and it’s reminded me that I need to do more to achieve gender equality. Through the sessions, I learned how to focus more on male groups, as they are also affected by war and conflict; and over the course of two weeks, I met interactive minds, which has expanded my network and I look forward to future collaboration.

Ellisa
The last two weeks have been a fantastic learning experience for me; I’ve learned a lot that will help us in our efforts to achieve equality. Many engagements in Namibia have focused on religious leaders, but I now realize that this is insufficient to drive change. I have reflected on the need to engage men and boys, traditional communities, and political communities in order to effect change.

To continue, the discussion was opened, and participants were divided into break room sessions to discuss the “Key lessons they have learned in MATI 2021 training, as well as what they will do differently in their work.”

Following the conversation in the break rooms, participants in the main group shared the following:

- We now have a more complete understanding of the WPS agenda and the inclusion of men and boys in interventions aimed at achieving equality. Moving forward entails putting our organization’s and community’s skills to use, so participants stressed the importance of technical and financial assistance.

- The training has enlisted us in the importance of including both men and women in the advancement of the WPS agenda; therefore, I commit to changing the narrative by starting a conversation and engaging traditional leaders and religious leaders to
- Champion gender equality in the future.

- The photograph presentation was eye-opening; I learned that there is a great need for using pictures to engage with key stakeholders in peacebuilding.
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