Food security, sustaining peace and gender equality: conceptual framework and future directions

SP5 DISCUSSION PAPER

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Preface

FAO has long acknowledged the importance of better conceptualizing the linkages between food security, sustaining peace and gender equality. To this end, a centre of excellence – the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex – was selected and commissioned to complete a literature review and develop a conceptual framework to better understand how addressing the specific priorities of men and women in food and nutrition interventions in conflict-affected contexts might shape processes for sustaining peace and improve gender equality in the aftermath of violent conflicts.

Improving understanding of FAO's role in this regard is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which makes an explicit link between sustainable development and peace, and calls for a transformative approach with improved collaboration on conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution and recovery. The universality, breadth and indivisibility of the SDGs have important implications for work on food security and nutrition and gender equality in conflict-affected settings.

Whilst this study was being finalised, the sustaining peace agenda[1] was evolving, the term being introduced by the Advisory Group of Experts conducting the 2015 review of UN peacebuilding architecture. This concept has since been adopted and elucidated by the UN's member states through General Assembly (UNGA) and Security Council (UNSC) resolutions in 2016.

In this study, peacebuilding is defined as "action[s] to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (UN, 1994). These actions can be at local, regional,national and international levels. The concept does not apply only to post-conflict situations but may also be extended to encompass measures and actions that can prevent conflicts from taking place, as well as measures during the conflict that could facilitate peace processes. Peacebuilding includes, therefore, a range of formal and informal actions – including food and nutrition security interventions – that may prevent and mitigate conflict, promote social cohesion and stability, and contribute to peacebuilding processes in post-conflict settings. Indeed, this study recommends that a broader understanding of peacebuilding may allow us to better identify what policy interventions – including food and nutrition security interventions – are more or less likely to contribute to gender equality and peace in the long term.

This conclusion is very much in line with the emerging terminology of sustaining peace. As such, when the term peacebuilding is used in this paper, it should be undertood as having this broader perspective, and in the context of contributions to sustaining peace.

Sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, including addressing root causes and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development. Opportunities exist for interventions supporting food and nutrition security and agricultural livelihoods to contribute to conflict prevention and sustaining peace, and gender equality - so that not only the symptoms, but also the root causes, of conflicts are addressed.

As part of a system-wide recommitment to promote peace and prevent conflict, building on and within the differing scopes and foci, its mandates and work, FAO has recently been developing a corporate Framework to Support Sustainable Peace in the Context of Agenda 2030. It is hoped the findings and recommendations in this paper, articulated around five key pathways, will help stimulate further debate on how FAO food and nutrition security interventions may contribute towards peace and gender equality, and the design of those interventions.

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1   The definition of sustaining peace as set out in General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions, A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282:
    "sustaining peace ... should be broadly understood as both a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and..."
    "emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance."

Acknowledgements

Acronyms

CDD   community-driven development

CFS   Committee on World Food Security

CFS-FFA   Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises

FARC   Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

HAZ   height-for-age z-score

IDS   Institute of Development Studies

IFAD   International Fund for Agricultural Development

INGO   International Non-Governmental Organization

IPA   Innovations for Poverty Action

UN   United Nations

WFP   World Food Programme

WHS   World Humanitarian Summit

Executive summary

The main objective of this study is to generate knowledge and make meaningful, evidence-based and actionable recommendations to governments and other stakeholders, particularly international organizations and FAO staff, on the nexus between supporting food and nutrition security, building peace and stability, and striving for gender equality. To this end, the study offers a framework to better understand how addressing the specific priorities of men and women in food and nutrition interventions in conflict-affected contexts may shape peacebuilding processes and improve gender equality in the aftermath of violent conflicts. In building this framework, the study explores the following questions:

→ How can food and nutrition security interventions support and encourage the dual processes of peacebuilding and gender equality?

→ What mechanisms shape the interaction between food and nutrition security, gender equality and peacebuilding?

→ How do these mechanisms affect how food and nutrition security interventions may support pathways towards sustainable peace, and what are the gender dimensions of such pathways?

The study begins by reviewing existing literature on three complementary relationships that inform the answers to these questions by exploring: (i) the relationship between armed conflict and food and nutrition security, (ii) the relationship between gender equality and food and nutrition security, and (iii) the relationship between gender roles, violent conflict and peacebuilding. The review revealed the following patterns:

1. Exposure to conflict has immediate effects on food and nutrition security, resulting in adverse legacies that are long-term, intergenerational and often irreversible. Food and nutrition security interventions may therefore have a considerable role to play in the economic and social recovery of populations affected by conflict.

2. Interventions that improve food security and provide for basic needs may go some way towards weakening some – but not all – of the welfare-related motives that can lead individuals to become fighters or support armed groups. There is also a potentially important association between food price stability and peacebuilding outcomes, indicating that food stability and the recovery of local agricultural and food markets could help vulnerable individuals and households overcome the adverse legacies of armed conflict. These effects are largely mediated by the manner in which local wartime institutions affect (negative or positively) the lives and livelihoods of populations living in these areas.

3. Food and nutrition security outcomes are strengthened when gender equality improves.

4. There is very limited systematic evidence on the effects of food and nutrition security interventions on gender equality – either in peaceful or conflict-affected contexts. Some findings suggest, however, that food and nutrition security interventions that include specific measures for gender equality programming may have the potential to increase gender equality outcomes, while also being more effective in their food and nutrition security outcomes.

5. When appropriately supported, women's organizations and local forms of collective action can potentially play an important role in contributing towards gender equality and peace in post-conflict contexts.

6. While strong assumptions prevail in the literature about the role of women in peacebuilding, hard evidence on the potential effects of gender equality on peacebuilding outcomes is very scarce. The findings to date suggest a need to broaden concepts of formal peacebuilding, which may allow for better identifying what policy interventions – including food and nutrition security interventions – are more or less likely to contribute to gender equality and peace in the long term.

These results form the basis of the study's conceptual framework, which is grounded in five key pathways that shape how food and nutrition security may affect dual processes of peacebuilding and gender equality: (i) behaviour, agency and aspirations; (ii) social norms for gender roles and equality; (iii) institutions and governance, including governance systems by different armed factions, informal networks, and land tenure rights; (iv) agriculture and employment markets, in particular the role of exchange markets and prices, the role of employment markets, and how market recovery could operate in tandem with safety net transfers and private remittances; and (v) social cohesion and inclusive collective action. These lead to a number of recommendations for the design and implementation of food and nutrition security interventions that may contribute towards peace and gender equality:

1. **Interventions should aim to support individual agency and foster aspirations.** Food and nutrition security interventions that aim to support processes of gender equality and peacebuilding – as well as building the resilience of populations to further economic and political shocks – could be strengthened by promoting women's agency and positive aspirations among populations affected by armed conflict. The gender-responsive and participatory community and group-based approaches that FAO already employs, such as the Dimitra Clubs or the Farmer Field and Life Schools, could provide avenues for fostering such behavioural changes.

2. **Interventions must strive to transform gender roles in order to address the causes of gender-based inequalities.** Interventions that foster changes in gender relations to improve women's position and bargaining power within the household and the community may contribute positively to peacebuilding processes and reduce the likelihood of reigniting conflict. It is, however, important to note that effective social change requires long-term engagement of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors, because social norms only change gradually over several years or (more typically) decades.

3. **Interventions must acknowledge wartime institutions and work with informal structures of governance.** Food and nutrition security interventions cannot be decoupled from institutional and political processes that emerge during violent conflict and continue to persist in its aftermath. An effective intervention that contributes positively towards the dual goals of gender equality and peacebuilding requires systematic engagement with state and non-state political actors to learn how they act and compete throughout the conflict, and how they interact with local populations as well.

4. **Interventions that aim to strengthen markets and provide equal market access for men and women will have long-term benefits.** In particular, exchange, credit, insurance and employment markets are central to the effectiveness of food and nutrition security interventions, and have the potential to support peacebuilding and gender equality objectives.

5. **Interventions must support positive collective action.** Food and nutrition security interventions may be better able to influence gender equality and peace outcomes when combined with measures that strengthen collective action among women, men and excluded population groups – for instance, through agricultural cooperatives and producer or community organizations that provide local public goods and engage both men and women on an equal basis.

6. **In order to generate these positive pathways, it is important to think and act over the long term.** The above pathways and recommendations involve the interaction of food and nutrition interventions with complex processes of social change that shape and are shaped by individual and household behaviour, social norms, institutions, the operation of markets, and collective action. These involve processes of change that operate over the long term, requiring serious time and commitment.

7. **Above all, it is fundamental that the existing evidence base be strengthened considerably.** The key finding from this review is the serious lack of evidence on the role of food and nutrition security in achieving peace and gender equality outcomes. This is in part a reflection of the lack of action with regards to the design of food and nutrition security interventions that are sensitive to the different social dynamics that characterize conflict-affected contexts, as well as to the measurement, rigorous assessment and evaluation of what actions work or not in such contexts. The studies and policies reviewed in this paper suggest that there is great potential for food and nutrition interventions to have considerable positive effects on gender equality and peace outcomes in post-conflict contexts through the five recommendations outlined above. This requires improving substantially the evidence base to support the design, targeting and implementation of such interventions.

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Democratic Republic of the Congo 〈 FAO Dimitra community listeners' club

Introduction

Introduction

Over one and a half billion people live in countries affected by conflict and violence (World Bank, 2011). At the end of 2016, an unprecedented 65.3 million people around the world were forced from home, among them are nearly 21.3 million refugees.[2] To better assist women, men and children affected by wars and violence, FAO has identified the need for a more holistic and people-centred approach to supporting countries in the transition towards peace and the prevention of conflict. At the global policy level, FAO has been instrumental in the finalization of the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA), a global policy guidance instrument formally endorsed by CFS in October 2015. The CFS-FFA has a specific principle on the links between food and nutrition security interventions and peacebuilding and conflict mitigation, and another principle on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (FAO, 2015a). To further mainstream gender equality into FAO Strategic Objective 5 on "Increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises", and to contribute to the implementation of the FAO Gender Equality Policy (FAO, 2013a), there is a need to address the gender dimension of building resilience in conflict-affected situations, and to better understand how this may contribute to conflict mitigation, prevention and peacebuilding processes with the ultimate goal of achieving food security for all.

Food and nutrition security interventions may in principle build resilience to conflict by helping countries and people to cope with and recover from conflict; by reducing social inequalities through targeted implementation; and by contributing to conflict prevention through broad support for economic development. In addition, there is widespread recognition that violent conflicts affect men and women differently and that both have important roles to play in the economic recovery and peaceable transition of countries affected by conflict. This recognition has led to significant policy efforts to further involve women in peace and economic processes in post-conflict contexts through, for instance, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (issued in 2000). Also relevant to the focus of this paper are two global events from 2016 that acknowledged the rapidly rising numbers of vulnerable, at-risk people, owing to a variety of causes.

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was called by the United Nations Secretary-General in May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The summit convened 9 000 participants from around the world to support a new shared Agenda for Humanity and to take action to prevent and reduce human suffering. Working around five core responsibilities, the WHS marked a shift towards more decisive and deliberate efforts to reduce need, anchored in political will and leadership to prevent and end conflict and to bridge the divide between efforts across humanitarian, development, human rights, peace and security interventions. The summit confirmed that ensuring gender equality, the fulfilment of women's and girls' human rights, and women's empowerment in political, humanitarian and development spheres are universal responsibilities. It also emphasized that the skills and experience of women of all ages and their role as leaders and agents of change are pivotal to sustaining conflict prevention and resolution, to peacebuilding, and to building resilient communities. FAO made commitments at the WHS,[3] many of which are already reflected in its Programme of Work and Budget. Among others, these include commitments to strengthen conflict-sensitive programming and interventions; to develop a corporate policy of FAO contributions to sustainable peace in the context of the 2030 Agenda; and to support catalysing action to achieve gender equality.

In September 2016, the UN General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. This Global Migration Summit culminated in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, expressing the political will of world leaders to protect the rights of refugees and migrants, save lives and share responsibilities. Once again, gender equality was central to the discussion: the New York Declaration states that Member States will ensure that responses to large movements of refugees and migrants mainstream a gender perspective, promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and fully respect and protect their human rights. In addition, it recognizes the significant contribution and leadership of women in refugee and migrant communities, and commits to ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in the development of local solutions and opportunities.

Finally, there has been a shared understanding across the UN system that peacebuilding, conflict prevention and equality for all are complementary goals, to be addressed across all agencies and requiring integrated approaches – a notion that

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2   See www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html
3   See www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/414467

has been enshrined within the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development. This integrated approach includes the role of food and nutrition security interventions and programming (UN, 2015; UN Women, 2015; FAO, 2013a).

However, to date, there is very limited knowledge or evidence on the links between food and nutrition security; gender equality; the onset, duration, mitigation and prevention of armed conflict; and peacebuilding processes in post-conflict societies.

The main objective of this study is to provide a framework to better understand how addressing the specific priorities of men and women in food and nutrition interventions in conflict-affected contexts may shape peacebuilding processes and improve gender equality in the aftermath of violent conflicts. The study explores the following questions:

→ How can food and nutrition security interventions support and encourage the dual processes of peacebuilding and gender equality?

→ What mechanisms shape the interaction between food and nutrition security, gender equality and peacebuilding?

→ How do these mechanisms affect how food and nutrition security interventions may support pathways towards sustainable peace, and what are the gender dimensions of such pathways?

In order to address these questions, the study brings together different strands of literature and evidence to develop a conceptual framework that (i) allows for thinking more systematically about potential interactions between food and nutrition security, peacebuilding and gender equality; and (ii) identifies concrete entry points for policy interventions that support nutrition and food resilience among men and women in conflict-affected contexts, in ways that promote sustainable peace and gender equality.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 briefly outlines the methodology and key concepts used in the study. Section 2 provides a detailed review of the existing literature on the relationships between (i) armed conflict and food and nutrition security, (ii) gender equality and food and nutrition security, and (iii) gender roles, violent conflict and peacebuilding. These bodies of literature are critically reviewed in order to allow the systematic identification and mapping of a set of pathways that shape the relationship between food and nutrition security, peacebuilding processes, and gender equality. These pathways then form the backbone of the conceptual framework developed in Section 3, which is used to derive hypotheses about the relationship between food and nutrition security, gender equality and peacebuilding processes to be tested in future empirical work. This section also suggests entry points for practical recommendations for food and nutrition policy action in conflict-affected contexts. Section 4 summarizes the main conclusions and suggests how the findings of this study can support the design and evaluation of interventions that may support positive dynamics between food security, peacebuilding processes and gender equality. Particular attention is paid to the need for in-depth data collection and compilation, and for the rigorous design and evaluation of policy interventions.

⟨ Central African Republic, Samba ⟨ A Junior Farmer Field and Life School facilitator teaching children in the school garden

Chapter 1

Methodology, focus and
key definitions

1.   Methodology, focus and key definitions

The study is based on an extensive literature review using the wealth of research produced in the Households in Conflict Network;[4] in-depth literature searches in sources such as *IBSS*, *Scopus*, the *Social Science Citation Index*, *Ingenta Connect* and *Google Scholar*, and pertinent grey literature produced by relevant international organizations, donor agencies and INGOs. In addition, an online consultation was conducted at the start of the project[5] to gather relevant information. This consultation was followed by interviews with key individuals over the phone and on Skype.

The study focuses on the relationship between food and nutrition security, armed conflict, peacebuilding and gender equality at the individual, household and community levels, but recognizes that national, regional and international frameworks affect these microlevel processes. The overall microlevel perspective of the study is particularly useful for policy purposes, as understanding how these processes develop at these levels of analysis will pinpoint how policy incentives to prevent conflict, maintain peace, promote gender equality and ensure food and nutrition security may be designed, implemented and fine-tuned to the needs of specific individuals, groups and communities.

The study also includes a discussion of how the capacity of states to govern and ensure the rule of law and security may play an important role in how women, men, households and communities build food and nutrition resilience in post-conflict societies. The study takes a predominantly rural and country-centric focus, largely due to the fact that most violent conflicts are largely internal and take place in rural areas, with data collection usually taking place within country boundaries. Issues concerning urban violence, cross-border conflicts, cross-border informal and formal trading, refugee displacement and other migratory movements, and the role of food and nutrition security in these contexts are extremely important to gender equality and peace outcomes in conflict-affected countries, but outside the scope of this paper.

For the purpose of this study, peacebuilding is defined as "action[s] to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (UN, 1994). These actions can be at local, regional, national and international levels. The concept does not apply only to post-conflict situations but may also be extended to encompass measures and actions that can prevent conflicts from taking place, as well as measures during the conflict that could facilitate peace processes. Peacebuilding includes, therefore, a range of formal and informal actions – including food and nutrition security interventions – that may prevent and mitigate conflict, promote social cohesion and stability, and contribute to peacebuilding processes in post-conflict settings. The usefulness of this broader concept of peacebuilding beyond the end of fighting is discussed in more detail in later sections.

The most widely used definition of armed conflict is that proposed by Uppsala University/PRIO (and subsequently adopted by the World Bank) as "contested incompatibility, which concerns government and/or territory, where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths".[6] Events resulting in more than 1 000 battle-related deaths are defined as major conflicts (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 2001). The analysis in this paper refers mostly to one form of major conflict, civil wars – defined as "armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities" (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 17). Although other types of violent conflict also affect the roles, actions and behaviour of individuals, households and communities (albeit through different mechanisms), the study concentrates on civil wars given the scarcity of evidence on other forms of armed conflict. Following Justino, Brück and Verwimp (2013), armed conflict is conceptualized here as "occurring in non-linear cycles, where conflict and peace do not represent opposite ends of a continuum, but rather coexist in different degrees of intensity in different time periods". We also distinguish between the definitions of conflict and violence (Kalyvas, 2006). While armed conflict represents a political process of negotiation or contestation of sovereignty, it is the process of generating violence by different factions (against each other and as a form of control over territory, resources and populations) that shapes individual and household behaviour, and changes in that behaviour, during and after the conflict (Justino, 2011).

The post-conflict period is the period directly after conflict. The start of the post-conflict period can be marked by the signing of an official peace agreement, or by the end of fighting and violence for other reasons. Defining when this period starts and ends is heavily dependent on each individual context. This is a controversial issue, as a post-conflict country will be entitled to receive different aid and financial interventions from one still considered to be experiencing conflict. In addition, it is important to note that some parts of a country may enter a post-conflict period before

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4   See www.hicn.org
5   See www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender-and-peace-building
6   See www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/definition_of_armed_conflict

others, while other parts can remain unaffected by direct violent conflict throughout the conflict period. The post-conflict period in many cases can also be characterized by high levels of violence and instability. All these situations are addressed in this study.

A large component of gender equality processes involves the support to women's empowerment. Empowerment is defined in this study as the expansion of freedom of choice and action: the process through which women or men improve their capacity to make life choices, and to transform these choices into actions and outcomes (see discussion in Justino *et al.*, 2012a). This study attempts to address issues of women's empowerment as a path to achieving gender equality, but also considers gender issues more broadly, including the agency of men and how gender equality is defined by relationships between men and women, and by social and cultural norms in specific contexts.

Finally, food and nutrition security is understood broadly as encompassing the availability of adequate calories, protein and other nutrients; the ability of individuals and households to access nutrients and the markets and networks that shape their supply; and the capacity of individuals and households to utilize food and its nutrients to maintain or improve well-being (Sen, 1982). In other words, "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996). This study extends this definition to also encompass the capability to use nutrients and food in ways that make vulnerable and at-risk individuals, households and communities resilient to shocks and volatility in political and market forces. This concept of resilience is defined in FAO, IFAD and WFP (2015) as "the inherent capacities (abilities) of individuals, groups, communities and institutions to withstand, cope, recover, adapt and transform in the face of shocks". This definition is in turn related to the notion of human resilience proposed in Almedom *et al.* (2007) as "the capacity of individuals, families, communities, systems and institutions to anticipate, withstand and/or judiciously engage with catastrophic events and/or experiences, actively making meaning out of adversity, with the goal of maintaining 'normal' function without fundamentally losing identity" (see also Parker *et al.*, 2013).

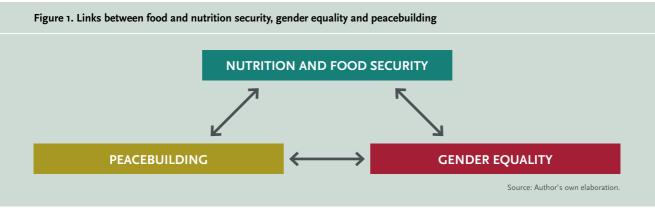Kyrgyzstan, Kulundu ⟨ Participants in a traditional handicrafts training

Chapter 2

Literature review: what we know and what we need to know

2.   Literature review: what we know and what we need to know

Large bodies of literature have provided evidence to support the importance of food and nutrition security, gender equality and peace for development processes. However, very few studies have examined the interactions and synergies between these three important pillars of development. How can we better understand how food and nutrition security interventions may be able to support and encourage the dual processes of peacebuilding and gender equality?

Three complementary relationships shape the answers to this question: (i) the relationship between armed conflict and food and nutrition security, (ii) the relationship between gender equality and food and nutrition security, and (iii) the relationship between gender roles, violent conflict and peacebuilding. These processes are typically analysed separately in the literature. This section discusses this literature, while Section 3 attempts to bring them together as depicted below (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Links between food and nutrition security, gender equality and peacebuilding

Source: Author's own elaboration.

2.1   The relationship between armed conflict and food and nutrition security

2.1.1   From conflict to food and nutrition security

A growing number of studies have documented in detail the causal effects of violent conflict along several dimensions using state-of-the-art econometric methods (see review in Justino, 2012a). One of the most important findings in the literature concerns the impact of violent conflict on food and nutrition security outcomes, particularly during childhood. Overall, the evidence shows that exposure to armed violence results in substantially adverse effects on food and nutrition security, with lasting legacies for the lives of those affected.

Exposure to conflict has immediate effects on child nutrition and food security. Several studies have examined the impact of individual and household exposure to armed violence on food and nutrition security across a range of different conflict-affected countries. Despite wide differences in conflict duration, war strategies and other context-specific characteristics, the magnitude of the effects of exposure to armed violence on food and nutrition security are remarkably similar (and devastating) across the various case studies.

The strongest evidence comes from a series of studies by Richard Akresh, Philip Verwimp and Tom Bundervoet on Rwanda and Burundi. For instance, Akresh, Verwimp and Bundervoet (2007) found that boys and girls under the age of five born in regions in Rwanda affected by armed violence had height-for-age z-scores (HAZ) that were 0.30 and 0.72 standard deviations lower, respectively, than boys and girls that were not affected by violence. The study was able to trace these adverse effects largely to disruptions in agricultural production during the conflict. Bundervoet and Verwimp (2005) studied the impact of the civil war in Burundi, and the subsequent economic embargo, on the health status of children aged 0–5 years, showing a reduction of one standard deviation in height-for-age when compared with similar children who had not experienced these events. The authors advanced some potential explanations for these results, including the breakdown of the economy and health systems, the consequent spreading of infectious diseases among displaced people, and increases in food prices during the economic embargo. In a follow-up paper, Bundervoet, Verwimp and Akresh (2009) showed that one additional month of war exposure in Burundi was associated with a reduction in children's height-for-age z-scores by 0.047 standard deviations. Similar effects have been found in other conflicts, including in Colombia (Camacho, 2008; Duque 2014), Côte d'Ivoire (Dabalen and Paul, 2013; Minoiu and Shemyakina, 2014), India (Tranchant, Justino and Muller, 2014), Iraq (Aldoori *et al.*, 1994; Guerrero-Serdan, 2009), Mexico (Brown, 2014; Nasir, 2015) and Nepal (Nepal, 2015).

Exposure to conflict and associated nutritional shocks result in adverse long-term, intergenerational legacies. A related body of evidence has shown that many of the effects listed above may be irreversible throughout the lifetime of those affected, and may be transmitted across generations. Several studies have found that adults observed today who were affected by violence in their childhood are likely to be shorter, less educated, and to earn less than comparable individuals that did not experience violence at an early age. The main factor explaining these adverse long-term effects is the persistence of malnutrition due to food shortages and changes in food composition. For instance, Akbulut-Yuksel (2009) shows that German children who were of school age and lived in areas bombed by Allied Forces during Second World War are now about a half inch shorter, and 8 percent less likely to be satisfied with their current health, than similar children not affected by violence. Similar results have been found for modern conflicts. Alderman, Hoddinott and Kinsey (2006) analysed the long-term effects of the 1970s war in Zimbabwe showing that, in 2001, on average, children (under 5 years old) affected by the war and drought in Zimbabwe during the 1970s would have been 3.4 cm taller had the war and adverse weather conditions not taken place. The loss in stature, in addition to school losses, resulted in reduced lifetime earnings of about 14 percent. Akresh *et al.* (2012) investigated the impact of the Nigerian civil war of 1967–1970 and found that women exposed to the war between birth and adolescence are shorter than other comparable women not exposed to the war. Very similar results and causal transmission channels have also been reported by de Walque (2006) for the case of the Khmer Rouge (1975–1979) regime in Cambodia, Domingues (2010) for the case of Mozambique, and Akresh, Lucchetti and Thirumurthy (2010) for the Eritrea-Ethiopia war.

A complementary emerging body of evidence suggests that the effects of conflict on children through nutritional channels may take place even before the child is born, which points to important intergenerational effects of violent conflict. Several studies have shown that pregnant women who suffer from undernutrition and stress related to violence exposure give birth to low-weight and low-height children – which in turn multiplies the adverse effects of conflict across generations. In a pioneering study, Camacho (2008) showed that, throughout Colombia, the exposure of women to violence during the first three months of pregnancy resulted in lower birth weights and premature deliveries. Similarly, Valente (2011) found that maternal exposure to conflict before conception during the conflict in Nepal was negatively and significantly correlated with lower height-for-age of newborns and young babies. Similar evidence is reported in Parlow (2012) for the case of Kashmir.

Taken together, **these results suggest that the adverse effects of exposure to armed violence on food and nutrition security may be irreversible**. Adults that were affected by violence in their childhood (and are alive today) are likely to be shorter, less educated and to earn less than comparable individuals that did not experience violent conflict in early ages. Furthermore, armed violence may affect food and nutrition security outcomes even before the child is born. The causal mechanisms explaining both immediate and long-term effects are remarkably similar across case studies, including (i) the direct destructive effects of fighting and violence, which result in the breakdown of the economy, agricultural markets, health systems and infrastructure; (ii) the consequent spreading of destitution and infectious diseases, particularly in displacement and refugee camps; and (iii) increases in food prices and shortages of basic foods during conflicts. **These findings suggest that food and nutrition security interventions may have a considerable role to play in the economic and social recovery of populations affected by armed conflict. But can such interventions also support more sustainable peace and stability?**

2.1.2 From food and nutrition security to conflict/peace

Even though there is now a wealth of evidence on the effects of violent conflicts on food and nutrition security, we have limited knowledge about the role played by food and nutrition security in igniting, preventing or mitigating conflicts and, potentially, in supporting peacebuilding processes. The literature reviewed above showed that individuals, households and communities face serious constraints in coping with conflicts and maintaining adequate nutrition levels and food security. However, many people live in the midst of conflict and violence. Some do well, some live in fear of destitution and violence, and others get by (Justino, 2013). Does food and nutrition security matter for their resilience? And if yes, do processes whereby access to food is ensured affect conflict and peace processes?

Evidence on these complex relationships is scarce. Based on a number of disperse findings in the literature, a series of potential mechanisms is discussed below, whereby food and nutrition security may affect conflict (or peace) outcomes. For example, at the individual and household levels, it may affect participation in armed groups (or other forms of armed group support), which is a common coping strategy used to address food insecurity and potential destitution in conflict areas (Justino, 2009). A range of additional mechanisms may operate at the community level, including local food prices, the functioning of agricultural markets and asset recovery, and how local resources are controlled by different warring factions.

Individual and household survival in conflict areas may sometimes involve participation in or support for armed groups.
People living in areas of violent conflict face enormous challenges, and often adopt a mix of legitimate and illegal
(and formal and informal) activities in order to survive and protect their livelihoods. This may include participation
in and support for warring factions. Most of the available evidence on the relationship between civilians and armed
groups has focused on recruitment (forced and voluntary). There are, however, several accounts of civilians surviving
and protecting their livelihoods – including ensuring food security – through forms of voluntary and involuntary
support for armed groups that go beyond recruitment, including the provision of shelter, food and information
(Nordstrom, 1997; Kalyvas, 2006; Wood, 2003). Recent empirical evidence has suggested that ordinary individuals
join armed groups in order to avoid destitution and hunger, and to secure protection from violence for themselves
and their families. In one of the pioneering surveys of ex-combatants, Humphreys and Weinstein (2008) discuss
how armed groups in Sierra Leone helped recruits meet their basic needs, and also provided food, shelter and
physical security for their families. Ex-combatants reported improved prospects of getting a job, money, food and
protection for their families as some of the most important motivations for having joined armed groups.
Walter (2004) discusses the importance of "misery" and "lack of voice" as incentives for the retention of fighters in
armed groups, while Justino (2009) argues that the risk of destitution and poverty may be factors leading to support
for and participation in armed groups.

This evidence suggests that **interventions that improve food security and provide for basic needs may weaken some
– but not all – welfare-related motives that can lead individuals to become fighters or to support armed groups**.
This is because such motives are very complex. Some individuals choose to participate in and support armed groups
because they may gain from the conflict in terms of improved opportunities, looting, and the appropriation of
assets (Grossman, 2002; Hirshleifer, 2001; Keen, 1998). Others are forced into armed groups through coercion and
abduction (Blattman and Annan, 2009; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008), fear of violence (Kalyvas, 2006; Kalyvas
and Kocher, 2007) and because of peer pressure and group norms (Petersen, 2001; Verwimp, 2005). Others still join
for socioemotional motivations such as the "pleasure of agency" (Wood, 2003), ideological and cultural identification,
revenge, grief, anger and pride (Goodwin, 2001; Wood, 2003; Petersen, 2001). Many participate to voice discontent
and grievances (Gurr, 1970), while many often cannot afford to stay out, because non-participation is very costly
in terms of both physical and economic survival (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007; Justino, 2009). Given these complex
processes of recruitment, support and relationships between armed groups and civilian populations, it is unlikely that
food security interventions on their own may succeed. However, to date the long-term welfare and economic security
impacts of recruitment and of the relationships between civilian and armed groups remain under-researched.

Changes in food prices have been at times associated with the onset or reignition of violent conflict. An emerging body of
literature links the rise of food prices and resulting levels of food and nutrition insecurity to the onset and duration
of conflict (see, for instance, Brinkman and Hendrix, 2011a, 2011b; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2012; Bohstedt, 2014). This
literature suggests two mechanisms whereby food security may shape violent conflict – one that operates at the
group level, and another at the individual level.

At the group level, increases in food prices and food insecurity may raise perceived deprivations and forms of
exclusion, which may then aggravate existing grievances. When grievances are formed along ethnic or religious
(or other forms of social cleavage) lines, the potential for civil unrest may increase to levels sufficient to cause
violence (Brinkman and Hendrix, 2011b, 2012; Hossain and Kalita, 2014). At the individual level, food insecurity
resulting from price increases may reduce the opportunity costs of individuals participating in, joining or supporting
armed factions, thereby increasing the feasibility of armed conflict, as discussed above.

In addition to these factors, food insecurity in certain regions or countries that results from global uncertainties,
such as climate change and price fluctuations of certain commodities, may also potentially affect conflicts across
borders and between groups that depend on agriculture or trade in specific commodities for their survival.
There seems to be a plausible association between the rise of food prices in 2007/08 and the rise in civil unrest in
many parts of the world (Brinkman and Hendrix, 2011a; Simmons, 2013). Both mechanisms discussed above also
seem probable. **There is, therefore, a potentially important association between food price stability and peacebuilding
outcomes**. However, evidence on how food prices and food markets change during armed conflict and affect local
markets and socio-political relations is scarce.

The recovery of local agricultural markets and assets may support livelihoods in conflict-affected areas. One of the most
devastating impacts of armed conflict is the deliberate destruction and plundering of property, markets and assets
(see review in Justino, 2012a), which limits the ability of households to produce food for subsistence or for sale,

forces them to sell assets as a coping strategy, reduces their productive capacity, and constrains their access to (formal or informal) markets.

The sale of livestock is a common coping strategy used by rural households in developing countries in times of crisis. However, during armed conflicts, livestock can become a risky form of savings, since it can be easily stolen or killed (Bundervoet, 2006; Verpoorten, 2009) and, as a visible asset, may make households targets of violence. Therefore, many households tend to minimize this risk either by moving somewhere safer, destroying or hiding their livestock (and other visible assets), and by resorting to activities that will not attract undue attention from warring factions, such as subsistence crop farming (Brück, 2004; Bundervoet, 2006; Deininger, 2003; McKay and Loveridge, 2005).

Although resorting to low-risk, low-return coping strategies may have adverse long-term consequences, it can also provide immediate protection against uncertainty and fear. For instance, Brück (2004) shows that subsistence farming led to improvements in the economic security of households living in extreme poverty during the civil war in Mozambique, as market and social exchange offered only limited welfare gains. McKay and Loveridge (2005) report how the adaptation of subsistence modes of agriculture production in Rwanda was associated with improved nutritional status of children in the post-conflict period. These effects of subsistence modes of production during conflict must, however, be balanced against the long-term effects of violence on household economic vulnerability. At the same time, many households affected by armed conflict depend on informal activities (mostly petty trading) and in some cases illegal activities (Jaspars, O'Callaghan and Stites, 2007). This is particularly the case for internally displaced people and refugees that move from rural to urban areas (Engel and Ibáñez, 2007; Ibáñez and Moya, 2006; Kondylis, 2005, 2007).

Taken together, **these disperse findings suggest that the recovery of local agricultural and food markets could help vulnerable individuals and households overcome the adverse legacies of armed conflict by encouraging affected people to move beyond subsistence agriculture, rejoin exchange markets, enhance their resilience to future economic and political shocks, and perhaps reduce the appeal of illegal activities**. However, due to the lack of evidence, more work needs to be done to better understand how the functioning of agriculture markets may shape household and individual livelihood choices in ways that will reduce the risk of reigniting conflict.

Local political control critically shapes how food policies will succeed in supporting peace. The availability and effectiveness of coping strategies adopted by individuals and households in areas of armed violence are determined not only by their own choices, but also by the formal and informal institutions and organizations that emerge from the conflict, and how these institutions shape people's access to markets and social and political opportunities. Re-establishing food security and food markets in the aftermath of violent conflicts may also crucially depend on these institutions. By learning about them, it may be possible to devise food interventions that will support the resilience of households and help avoid reigniting conflict.[7]

One important aspect of institutional change in conflict-affected contexts is related to the emergence of governance and order in areas outside the control of the state (Gáfaro, Ibáñez and Justino, 2014; Justino, 2012b, 2013; Kalyvas, 1999; Mampilly, 2011). Although not all insurgent groups intend to take on state functions, many conflicts are characterized by the emergence of non-state actors that aim to replace weak, inexistent or inappropriate state institutions. Some examples include the FARC in Colombia, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Al Shabaab in Somalia, among many others. Many of these groups provide security and recourse to justice, ensure that populations under their control have access to basic needs, build infrastructure, and regulate local markets and social relations. Some groups exercise state functions in full as a way of demonstrating their capacity to rule (Mampilly, 2011), others act in Mafia-like structures (Gambetta, 1996), while still others play intermediary roles between local populations and state institutions (Mampilly, 2011). **These forms of local institutional formation during wartime are likely to have substantial effects – negative and positive – on the lives and livelihoods of populations living in these areas. They also determine and control to a very large degree how aid and development programmes, including food and nutrition security interventions, may reach vulnerable populations**. However, current understanding of these institutional changes is extremely limited, which has constrained political and development efforts at promoting positive change in conflict contexts.

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7   See also CFS-FFA Principle 11 (FAO, 2015a).

2.2 The relationship between gender equality and food and nutrition security

2.2.1 From gender equality to food and nutrition security

A large body of literature spanning the last three decades has demonstrated that improving gender equality has positive effects on food and nutrition security, particularly for children. Evidence has shown that changes in intrahousehold distribution of resources, assets or power that favour women are associated with positive welfare effects. One of the strongest case study examples is that of Brazil. For instance, Thomas (1990) shows that child survival rates increased twenty-fold following small increases in female (but not male) earned income. In a later study, Thomas (1997) reports that when the individual incomes of women increase, spending on education and health increases six-fold, child weight-for-height scores increase eight-fold, and height-for-age scores are four times higher. Rangel (2006) has further found that increased female decision-making power within the household results in increased investments in the education of children, particularly girls. Similar results have been reported for Côte d'Ivoire (Hoddinott and Haddad, 1991; Duflo and Udry, 2004), Mexico (Attanasio and Lechene, 2010) and China (Qian, 2008). In a ground-breaking study, Duflo (2003) shows further that pensions received by women (grandmothers) in South Africa resulted in significant improvements in the height-for-age and weight-for-height scores of girls. Another related study conducted in Nicaragua found that conditional cash transfers paid to women resulted in more than doubling household expenditure on milk, and in a 15 percent increase in food expenditures (Gitter and Barham, 2008). FAO (2011a) estimates that agricultural outputs in developing countries could be increased by between 2.5 to 4 percent by granting male and female farmers equal access to productive resources. Other sectors and occupations could benefit from similar positive impacts by facilitating the entry of women (World Bank, 2012).

One of the key channels through which female empowerment gains result in household food and nutrition security (as well as other welfare benefits) is education. For instance, Fafchamps and Shilpi (2011) have found that improvements in women's primary education in Nepal are associated with higher survival rates of children and better educational outcomes for both boys and girls. Moreover, von Grebmer *et al.* (2009) show that higher levels of hunger are associated with lower literacy rates and lower access to education among women, with higher health and survival inequalities between men and women.

Another channel is the increased involvement of women in local decision-making processes and politics at the community level. Recent empirical microlevel evidence has shown a positive impact of women's social and political participation and empowerment not only on intrahousehold welfare distributions but also on community welfare and institutions in India (Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras, 2011; Beaman *et al.*, 2006, 2011; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004). Beaman *et al.* (2006) show that children in villages in India headed by female leaders benefit from higher immunization rates and improved school attendance rates (particularly girls). Other research in India has shown that women in positions of power within their communities invest more in drinking water (in West Bengal and Rajasthan) and in roads (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004). A recent study found that increases in women's political representation in India have resulted in significant reductions in neonatal mortality (Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras, 2011). Furthermore, a new study (Justino *et al.*, 2015) has shown that improvements in gender awareness and specific gender equality programming within humanitarian interventions may result in considerable improvements in the access to and use of services in humanitarian settings, as well as increased effectiveness of humanitarian outcomes. Taken together, **these studies provide a strong body of evidence showing that food and nutrition security outcomes are strengthened when gender equality improves**.

2.2.2 From food and nutrition security to gender equality

The links between food and nutrition security and gender equality are less clear. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. According to FAO (2014) and WFP (2009), between 2012 and 2014 over 60 percent of individuals affected by chronic and severe malnourishment were women and girls. The nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women and of small children are particularly significant, as malnourishment in the womb and in the first few years of life can lead to decreased life chances for affected children, further exacerbating cycles of poverty and gender inequalities (Guerrero-Serdan, 2009). The disproportionate number of women and girls affected by food insecurity is largely due to entrenched gender inequalities that limit women and girls' access to income, agricultural technology, education, credit, inputs and land. In addition, family and cultural practices often favour men and boys' direct access to food within the household, and limit women's decision-making power over family spending and food distribution (Brody, 2015; FAO, 2015b). Gender inequalities also tend to persist despite the dependence of female workers on agriculture – in Africa, 63 percent of working women are dependent on agriculture (versus 48 percent of male workers), and in Asia, 57 percent of female workers are dependent on agriculture

(versus 48 percent of male workers) – and increases in women working in the agriculture sector, as men shift their employment away from agricultural jobs (Agarwal, 2013; see also Fukuda-Parr, 2016).

However, **the question still remains as to how food and nutrition security may affect gender equality**. Justino *et al.* (2015) have made some – albeit limited – progress in this area by examining the effect of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes. They have found that food programmes that exhibit a high level of gender equality programming have positive effects on a variety of humanitarian outcomes, including on norms and behaviours that shape gender equality. Their study had three key findings pertinent to the question above.

First, greater gender equality programming was shown to be strongly associated with improvements in access to education and in educational outcomes among boys and girls. The most relevant interventions were the provision of in-kind incentives to households (such as sugar) if girls attended school, the distribution of free school uniforms, the supply of scholarships for girls, the provision of school meals, the implementation of awareness campaigns about the value of girls' education, the provision of sanitation facilities in schools, the provision of school buildings, and the implementation of income-earning opportunities for women in food-for-assets programmes (which enabled women to afford school fees and stationery materials for their children).

Second, gender equality programming was found to improve access to sanitation, water and better health, particularly among women and girls. The building of infrastructure and the participation of women in local decision-making processes proved to be some of the most significant pathways to achieving these outcomes.

Third, and of particular relevance to this study, the study showed that gender equality programming in humanitarian interventions – of which food interventions play a large role – was associated with dual improvements in both food access and food security, and in gender equality in terms of food access and consumption.

The most successful interventions were those that (i) prioritized women as the collectors of food, (ii) ensured women's participation in economic activities (notably, food-for-work programmes), and (iii) distributed seeds to women. Other studies have also found that policy responses that aim to empower women and increase their role and bargaining power within the household have been successful at reducing food insecurity for the whole household, as well as increasing household resources directed towards health, food and education (IFPRI, 2003; Brody, 2015; FAO/ADB, 2013). **Overall, however, there is very limited systematic evidence on the effects of food and nutrition security interventions on gender equality – either in peaceful or conflict-affected contexts. But some of the findings above suggest that food and nutrition security interventions, with specific measures in place for gender equality programming, may have the potential to increase gender equality outcomes, while also being more effective in achieving their food and nutrition security outcomes**.

2.3 The relationship between gender roles, violent conflict and peacebuilding

2.3.1 The effect of violent conflict on gender roles

Several studies have shown that violent conflicts have specific gender-differentiated impacts (see reviews in Justino, 2012a, 2015). This is particularly true in terms of nutrition, food security and educational outcomes. However, to date, econometric studies have not shown a clear pattern: sometimes women and girls suffer more during armed conflicts (particularly in terms of sexual violence, malnutrition during pregnancy, and not returning to school); at other times boys and men are more victimized (in terms of conflict-related deaths and injuries, education losses, and recruitment and abduction). Nonetheless, violent conflicts have substantial effects on gender roles. Notably, armed violence typically results in changes in (i) how families are structured and the role of individuals within, (ii) the economic roles of women and men, and (iii) how men and women participate in society and in political life (Justino *et al.*, 2012a).

Violent conflict has a large impact on family roles. One of the key findings in the emerging research on the consequences of violent conflict is that **during violent conflicts women tend to adopt new roles within their families, notably as household heads and breadwinners**. Studies on conflicts in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, Guatemala, Kosovo, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Timor-Leste have found evidence showing a substantial increase in the number of female household heads in conflict-affected areas (Bouta, Frerks and Bannon, 2005; El-Bushra, El-Karib and Hadjipateras, 2002; Kumar, 2000; Menon and Rodgers, 2011; Schindler, 2010; UN, 2001; Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2009). Women also tend to marry and have children at younger ages due to male shortages (Shemyakina, 2011; Schindler, 2010). This is accompanied by increases in female participation in labour markets across most conflict-affected countries (see review in Justino *et al.*, 2012a), which is due to two factors. The first is the aforementioned increase in the number of female-headed households, owing to the death or

disappearance of male workers. The second is the fact that income-generating opportunities that were relied upon before the conflict (such as land, animals and other assets) may not be available, particularly when these assets have been targeted by armed groups, or when people are forced into displacement and refugee camps. Survival needs ultimately result in considerable changes in the economic roles of women and men.

Violent conflict leads to substantial changes in the economic roles of men and women. One of the major livelihood adaptation strategies adopted by households in conflict-affected countries is a change in the customary gender divisions of labour: women typically take on earning roles within the household during and shortly after the conflict to replace lost (male) workers (see review in Justino *et al.*, 2012a). Examples of these effects range from World War II (Acemoglu, Autor and Lyle, 2004; Akbulut-Yuksel, Khamis and Yuksel, 2011) to modern civil wars (Menon and Rodgers, 2011; Shemyakina, 2011; Lehrer, 2010; Kondylis, 2010; Calderon, Gáfaro and Ibáñez, 2011; Kumar, 2000; Date-Bah, 2003; Alldén, 2008; Adam, 2008; El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005).

However, it is important to note that rarely does the resulting increase in female labour market participation translate into improved gender equality. This issue was researched in detail in Justino *et al.* (2012a) using microlevel statistical evidence from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Kosovo, Nepal, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste. In line with the existing literature, the study found that women participated more actively in labour markets during conflict in all case studies. But the results also showed that despite increases in labour supply, women faced limitations in terms of access to employment, the types of employment available to them, and the levels of wages received. Notably, women were typically employed in low-skilled jobs in the informal sector, earned less, and tended to lose their jobs once the war was over because of pressures to return to traditional roles and high levels of unemployment among returning men (see also Kumar, 2000; Date-Bah, 2003). Another finding of the study was that, in general, economic vulnerability among women increased during conflict (particularly among female-headed households) due to increases in dependency rates, increases in labour market participation without any visible reduction in other obligations, and the low salaries received. However, and against all odds, the study also found that increases in the labour participation of women in conflict-affected areas were in some cases associated with increases in overall household and community welfare. This result was more significant when women were employed in better-paid jobs, but positive effects were still found in some case studies despite the low-status jobs being performed. This is an interesting finding because it emphasizes how **women's agency during conflict may benefit their families and communities – a process that could potentially be supported through well-targeted food market interventions**.

Violent conflict also results in changes in women's social and political roles. Some case studies have shown evidence of intensification in the levels of female civic engagement, individually and through women's organizations, in conflict and post-conflict contexts. This may be due to changes in gender roles within households and the increased allocation of women's time to productive activities outside their households (as discussed above), which may promote social relations and increase women's preferences for political and social engagement. Women may also have to step in during conflicts to fill leadership positions left vacant by migration, displacement or the deaths of male relatives. These results, however, are weaker than the labour market effects discussed above, and based mostly on a small number of descriptive case studies. Rigorous empirical evidence on the impact of conflict on civic and political engagement is extremely limited and, within it, gender-differentiated analyses are practically non-existent due to lack of appropriate sex-disaggregated data on social capital and political engagement in household surveys. Overall, descriptions abound of women in conflict areas engaging with a number of organizations including churches, schools, hospitals and charities, self-help groups, and local political institutions (Kumar, 2000; Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002; Sörensen, 1998). **These examples suggest the potential role women's organizations can play in supporting gender equality and peace in post-conflict contexts. Nevertheless, there is limited evidence so far on how women's organizations involved in peacebuilding remain active in the long term, and on their contribution to post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding processes**.

2.3.2   From gender equality to conflict and peace

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions have highlighted women's role as key actors in economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy. Notably, UN Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013) recognizes that "the economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the stabilization of societies emerging from armed conflict". The recent empirical findings highlighted above show the differentiated impacts of violent conflict on men and women, suggesting that they experience and participate in economic recovery and sustainable peace efforts in different ways. Despite these important advances, there is still limited understanding about the ways in which interventions can strengthen the inclusion of women, alongside men, in peacebuilding processes. **While**

strong assumptions prevail in the literature about the role of women in peacebuilding, hard evidence on the potential effects of gender equality on peacebuilding outcomes is very scarce. This is due to the still limited body of evidence on the differential impact of violent conflict on gender roles, the scarcity of sex-disaggregated data on peacebuilding interventions, and the lack of rigorous evaluation of these interventions in terms of their gender equality outcomes. Therefore, what evidence is there of the effect of gender equality on peacebuilding?

Measures of gender equality are associated with reduced potential for conflict. There is some evidence that increases in female civic and political engagement in conflict-affected areas positively affect the quality of local institutions, thereby contributing to more stable peace outcomes. For instance, the cross-country analysis by Petesch (2011) of conflict-affected communities shows that economic recovery and poverty reduction are greater in communities reporting higher levels of female empowerment. Another body of literature shows that gender equality – measured in terms of low birth rates and a high percentage of women in parliament – has been found to be associated with a lower risk of interstate conflicts (Regan and Paskeviciute, 2003). Proxies for gender equality have also been linked to lower risks of intrastate conflicts across countries. Caprioli (2005) reports that countries with high fertility rates (3.01 and higher) are nearly twice as likely to experience internal conflict as states with low fertility rates (3 and below). Similarly, states with 10 percent women in the labour force are nearly 30 times more likely to experience internal conflict than are states with 40 percent women in the labour force. Gender equality has also been linked to improved respect for human rights (Melander, 2005), the promotion of democracy (Barro, 1997), and lower levels of corruption in society (Swamy *et al.*, 2001; Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 2001), factors that are arguably central to successful peacebuilding processes. This evidence, however, is patchy and subject to certain statistical concerns having to do with reverse causality and omitted variable biases.

Women's participation in formal peacebuilding activities is usually short-term. In contrast with the evidence above, there is strong evidence that even though women take on new responsibilities during the conflict – many as peacebuilders – traditional patriarchal values tend to restrict these opportunities once the conflict ends (Handrahan, 2004; Date-Bah, 2003). Furthermore, some studies on gender roles in post-conflict periods have reported alarming increases in domestic violence, which can be a decisive factor in rolling back women's gains and limiting their roles in peacebuilding activities (Date-Bah, 2003; Calderon, Gáfaro and Ibáñez, 2011). These findings suggest that **although gender roles may change during the conflict, gender identities remain unchanged and women are generally left out of formal peace processes** (Justino *et al.*, 2012a). Whether further inclusion of women in peace processes will generate the expected positive outcomes depends on the type of recovery and political trajectories followed by different conflict-affected countries, where different economic and political interests often clash. There is limited ability at present to answer these questions, as too little is known about how gender programming might work in post-conflict settings.

There is a need to broaden concepts of formal peacebuilding. One challenge faced by peacebuilding initiatives is the limited understanding of what peace, security and peacebuilding mean to local communities and to the men and women in them. State- and internationally led peacebuilding efforts emphasize "ending the war" (Anderlini and Tirman, 2010, p. 11). But often, local communities understand peace and security to be more than the absence of physical insecurity, and include within notions of peace broader concepts such as access to employment and basic services, political participation, and freedom to adopt cultural identities and practices (Donini *et al.*, 2005). In a recent study, Justino *et al.* (2012b) found large gender differences in notions of peace, which may go some way towards explaining the limited roles women have to date played in (formal) peacebuilding activities. While men generally adopt traditional notions of peacebuilding (i.e. the avoidance of armed fighting), women associate peace and peacebuilding with the fulfilment of basic human rights such as access to education, food and livelihood opportunities, and the reduction of household conflicts (including domestic violence). The study also found that women's involvement in peacebuilding is usually carried out through their participation in a number of support networks and groups in the domestic sphere, whereby they mediate disputes among themselves and with other members of the community; promote the involvement of women in power positions within communities (like school teachers, community police members, and women's representatives in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms); support women's access to justice; undertake productive activities (such as cooperative farming, commercialization or credit schemes); and conduct community campaigns (such as promoting children's attendance at school). Women also make a strong contribution to local resource management, which could potentially be another entry point to understand women's contributions to maintaining peaceful relations at the community level (UNEP *et al.*, 2013). This evidence suggests that **broadening our understanding of peacebuilding may allow us to better identify what policy interventions – including food and nutrition security interventions – are more or less likely to contribute to gender equality and peace in the long term**.

South Sudan, Aweil │ Farmers clear land under the FAO-implemented Building Resilience through Asset Creation and Enhancement (BRACE) programme

Chapter 3

Pathways for action

3. Pathways for action

The sections above reviewed existing evidence on the two-way relationships between (i) armed conflict and food and nutrition security, (ii) gender equality and food and nutrition security, and (iii) gender roles, violent conflict and peacebuilding. The key finding from this review is the serious lack of evidence on the role of food and nutrition security in achieving peace and gender equality outcomes. However, lack of evidence need not constitute a bottleneck for action. **In fact, lack of evidence on these complex relationships is in part a reflection of lack of action with regards to the design of food and nutrition security interventions that are sensitive to the different social dynamics that characterize conflict-affected contexts – and with regards to the measurement, rigorous assessment and evaluation of what actions work in such contexts**. How then can food and nutrition security interventions support and encourage the dual processes of peacebuilding and gender equality?

Taken together, the literature above suggests a number of pathways through which food and nutrition security interventions may affect the dual processes of peacebuilding and gender equality. In this section, a conceptual framework is proposed that maps out five "pathways for action" that shape these complex relationships:

→   behaviour, agency and aspirations;

→   social norms about gender roles and equality;

→   institutions and governance;

→   agriculture and employment markets; and

→   social cohesion and inclusive collective action.

These pathways suggest important theoretical hypotheses about how food and nutrition security interventions may shape peacebuilding processes and gender equality in post-conflict societies. They also provide potential entry points for the design, implementation, measurement and evaluation of nutrition and food policy in conflict-affected contexts that can test these hypotheses on the ground, in order to learn how food and nutrition interventions may (or may not) help achieve the dual objectives of sustainable peace and gender equality.

3.1   Behavior, agency and aspirations

One key lesson from the literature review is that **individual and household behaviour may shape how food and nutrition security affects the dual processes of sustainable peace and gender equality**. This is because, as argued in Justino, Brück and Verwimp (2013, p. 4): "At a fundamental level, the factors that explain the outbreak, the continuation, the end, and the consequences of violent conflict are closely interrelated with how people behave, make choices, and interact with their immediate surroundings, and how all these factors may shape the lives and livelihoods of those exposed to conflict and violence …. [I]ndividuals, households, groups, and communities are at the centre of processes and dynamics of violent conflict. Understanding these processes is critical, shaping how we support institutional, social, political, and economic capacity in areas of violent conflict, identify factors leading to the success or failure of conflict prevention measures, and improve options for conflict mediation, prevention, and resolution". The literature review contains several accounts of how individual and household behaviour may shape the outcomes of food and nutrition security interventions. The focus here is on two important examples: women's agency and the role of aspirations among conflict-affected populations.

Women's agency. As discussed in Section 2, changes in gender roles during violent conflicts – although often temporary – have important implications for how individuals, households and communities cope with and recover from violent conflict, with implications for both peacebuilding and gender equality objectives. These include how individuals and households access markets and livelihoods; how intrahousehold decisions are made (for instance on children's education, food distribution, marriage or daily expenditures); how community relations, local markets and local politics are structured; and how men and women relate to each other and to their social and economic networks in the aftermath of violent conflicts. Notably, the literature shows that women, both individually and collectively, contribute to peacebuilding in many ways. Yet their contributions are often overlooked because they take unconventional shapes, occur outside formal peace processes, or are considered extensions of women's existing gender roles. Examples include the roles of women in household welfare distributions (IFPRI, 2003), in community-level economic recovery and peacebuilding (Justino *et al.*, 2012b), and in local resource management (Agarwal, 2013; Cenerini, 2014; FAO, 2012; UNEP *et al.*, 2013).

These roles are generally perceived as limited. But when different forms of individual behaviour are taken into consideration, there may be scope for interventions to strengthen the ability of women and men to contribute towards sustainable peace processes. For instance, Justino *et al.* (2015) show how gender equality programming in food-for-work programmes has played a crucial role in ensuring gender equality in humanitarian settings. Although there is limited evidence, it is possible that enhanced confidence among programme beneficiaries may allow for further participation of women in peacebuilding activities. In this, it is important to remember that boys and men also have specific needs, aspirations and hopes that at times remain unaddressed.[8]

The role of aspirations. Issues centred on confidence, hope and dignity shape people's aspirations about their future lives and relations with others – including perceptions and attitudes towards social cooperation and social cohesion, which are arguably key to sustaining peace. Recent research on behavioural economics has shown that aspirations are crucial mechanisms for shaping economic development and social interactions (Bernard, Dercon and Taffesse, 2011; Manski, 2004; Ray, 2006; see also Parker *et al.*, 2013 for a concrete application among conflict-affected populations). Some of these results have led researchers and practitioners to advocate for the implementation of social training programmes and improved skills training among young people involved in violent conflicts.

One example of these programmes is the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund and Youth Opportunities Program implemented by Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) (Blattman, Fiala and Martinez, 2014). This programme provided cash transfers (US$7 100) to groups of young adults (16–35) to be used in skills training and self-employment trades. Among other results, the evaluation of the programme found evidence for modest increases in social cohesion (measured by an index of community participation). A second example is the Ex-Combatant Reintegration in Liberia programme implemented by IPA and Landmine Action (Annan and Blattman, 2011). This agriculture training programme included meals, clothing, basic medical care and personal items, with participants receiving an additional benefit of US$1 250 worth of tools and supplies. The evaluation of the programme revealed increased engagement of youth in agriculture and fewer hours spent in illicit mining. The programme had no effect on measures of aggressive behaviour, but programme participants were much less likely to have joined local armed groups involved in an outbreak of violence in Côte d'Ivoire at the time of the programme implementation.

More recently, Blattman, Jamison and Sheridan (2015) have shown that interventions aimed at improving self-control and fostering positive aspirations among criminally engaged young men in Liberia reduced acts of crime and violence by 20–50 percent. Another interesting example is that of the FAO-funded Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools. These initiatives have been set up in a number of conflict-affected countries to bring together communities affected by armed violence and promote reconciliation and trust (FAO, 2013). Many "schools" target youth (boys and girls) involved in fighting or affected directly by violence (FAO, 2008). These are all important examples of how excluded population groups can be supported to engage in forms of constructive citizenship in the post-conflict period through small behavioural changes that enhance positive aspirations and, hopefully, minimize the risk of reigniting violence.[9] These programmes have rarely been evaluated in ways that allow for an in-depth understanding of how they can contribute towards the dual objectives of peace and gender equality. However, combining some aspects of these initiatives within food and nutrition security interventions could potentially generate positive outcomes in terms of sustainable peacebuilding.

3.2   Transforming social norms on gender roles and relations

A second important pathway through which improved food and nutrition security may affect gender equality and peacebuilding processes is the strengthening of gender-equitable social norms within households and in the wider community. Some of the evidence reviewed in the previous section suggested that (i) gender equality may have important positive effects on food and nutrition security outcomes, and (ii) gender equality may improve – albeit temporarily – during conflicts. Taking these findings together, it is plausible that **interventions that improve women's position and bargaining power within the household and community may improve gender equality, have positive impacts on peacebuilding processes, and reduce the likelihood of reigniting conflict**.

The evidence so far shows that despite increases in female labour market participation in conflict-affected areas and their active engagement in local peacebuilding activities, improvements in women's empowerment are often temporary. However, some studies indicate that increases in women's civil engagement during and after violent

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8   Justino *et al.* (2015) report that men who are not included in gender equality programming tend to be uneasy and resentful towards the targeting of women and girls, something that may restrict progress in achieving gender equality and peacebuilding outcomes.

9   See also the guidelines produced under the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office's Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security (available at www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/policy.shtml).

conflict may influence important social attitudes. In Guatemala, for example, women's groups have been central to changing social attitudes towards domestic violence through awareness-raising campaigns, while in Sierra Leone women's groups have promoted the social acceptance of women's political participation (see review in Justino *et al.*, 2012b). Changes in women's social roles seem also to be associated with a more visible presence of women in the political sphere of post-conflict countries (Sörensen, 1998). For instance, in Sudan and Kosovo, women's groups have been able to mobilize women to take part in elections and local consultation processes (Castillejo, 2010), and lobbying campaigns by women have been associated with improved representation of women in parliament and in government positions (Castillejo, 2010; O'Connell, 2011; Kumar, 2000; Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2009; UNIFEM, 2002).

Evidence gathered in India has further demonstrated that when opportunities are available, cultural norms for gender roles will change. Beaman *et al.* (2011) have shown that small increases in female leadership positions in villages across India led to increases in the aspirations of girls and their parents through a role model effect. Jensen (2010) has, in addition, found that the creation of employment opportunities for girls in villages across India caused other girls to enrol and remain in school – with support from their parents – in the expectation that they would also be able to access those better jobs. This evidence suggests that specific policy interventions that improve political and economic opportunities for women may result in significant changes in norms and beliefs about gender roles. Adapting the design of these interventions to food and nutrition security policy could potentially yield similar benefits. It is also worth remembering that women are also responsible for how social norms concerning violence are embedded within households and across generations (Moser, 2001). Therefore, supporting changes in social norms that encourage gender equality may also have important effects in terms of ensuring sustainable peace outcomes.

3.3   Institutions and governance

The literature review in the previous section illustrates the **strong influence of institutions on how food and nutrition security interventions may affect the dual processes of gender equality and peacebuilding**. Three institutional mechanisms appear to play key roles: wartime institutions, informal institutions and land tenure rights. Armed conflicts are to a large extent a contestation of the role of incumbent state institutions. As a result, state structures tend to be absent, ineffective, or seen as illegitimate in the eyes of some population groups. In the absence of the state or in the presence of weak and fragile state institutions, non-state armed actors and other informal structures emerge to provide security, food and basic services, and to control access to land and markets.

Wartime institutions. The types of institutions that emerge during the post-conflict period are largely determined by wartime institutions that arise from the interaction between civilians and different warring factions. These institutions are important for the success of food and nutrition security interventions in supporting gender equality and peacebuilding objectives because (i) they tend to persist even after the conflict is over, and (ii) they determine control over local markets, local politics and social norms, including gender norms. Notably, wartime institutions enable individuals and households to access educational opportunities, to buy land and other assets, to borrow funds and invest them in productive activities, and to have a voice in socio-political decisions (including voting) in their communities. Institutions that favour corrupt and rent-seeking behaviour will encourage dysfunctionality. But organizations that promote some rule of law and impose sanctions for undesirable behaviour may improve the living conditions of those under their control and administration.[10]

Further advances in understanding the impact of political institutions on the economic well-being of individuals and households – including food and nutrition security – during and after armed conflicts requires, however, more detailed analysis of the endogenous dynamic relationship between violence and governance than what is currently offered in the literature. Of particular importance is to study the governance role played by a variety of non-state armed groups including rebel groups, militias, paramilitary groups, warlords, gangs, mafia, drug trafficking factions, private security providers, and vigilante groups. The author has not been able to identify any studies to date that have investigated the impact of wartime institutions on the effectiveness of food and nutrition security interventions in post-conflict societies.

Informal institutions. Another important characteristic of conflict-affected countries is that authority is typically fragmented. Existing models of food delivery and other food and nutrition security interventions implicitly assume that there is some form of state authority that can support programmes, particularly large-scale programmes implemented at the national level. This is not the case for conflict-affected countries – or post-conflict situations – where state institutions and authority are weak and fragmented. A small but growing body of evidence suggests

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10   This argument is akin to the distinction of Olson (1993) between "stationary bandits" and "roving bandits".

that the governance of food and nutrition security is an important but largely overlooked dimension of food and nutrition security policy responses (Gillespie *et al.*, 2013). In particular, the multisector coordination required to ensure adequate food and nutrition security is rarely possible when state capacity is weak. Food insecurity and undernutrition are thus increasingly more prominent in contexts of widespread state failure or extremely weak state capacity (FAO, 2010). One important feature of such contexts is the emergence of a myriad of non-state actors and organizations that provide food and regulate access to markets, aid and local services. These include village councils; self-help groups; local private providers of water, sanitation and security; traditional authorities; and community volunteer mobilization groups (Beaman *et al.*, 2006; Wilson *et al.*, 2013), as well as armed actors as discussed above (Mampilly, 2011). These hybrid or parallel structures of local governance are likely to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of food and nutrition security interventions, but to date this remains under-researched.

Land tenure rights. Land is central to the success of any food and nutrition security intervention. Access to land is also closely related to processes of gender equality and peacebuilding. Unequal access to land has been at the centre of many violent conflicts, and systems of land redistribution typically feature heavily in many peace processes.[11] Land tenure rights remain elusive, however, in most post-conflict contexts, particularly for women. One of the common challenges for women in the post-conflict period is their limited access to land and credit (Agarwal, 2013; Kumar, 2000; Lastarria-Cornheil, 2005; Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2009). Some laws governing access to land include inequitable and exclusionary provisions, while customary rules and practices often limit women's access to key resources such as land and credit, which in turn is likely to affect household food and nutrition security.

Improvements in food and nutrition security that are coordinated with effective changes in property rights to include women are more likely to lead to benefits that are gender-equitable and sustainable in the long run (UNEP *et al.*, 2013). Notably, women's ownership over agricultural and forest lands can encourage better food production as well as the security of women,[12] particularly since women's dependence on the agriculture sector in most conflict-affected countries has grown as men are recruited into armies or choose non-farm jobs in the aftermath of the conflict.

3.4   Agriculture and employment markets

Empirical evidence to date on the operation of markets during armed conflict is scarce and contradictory (see Azam, Collier and Cravinho, 1994; Bundervoet, 2006; Verpoorten, 2009). Available evidence suggests that if households are not able to diversify livelihood activities or to access credit, insurance or alternative employment, economic shocks and exposure to violence during armed conflict may result in significant reductions in household welfare. These households typically resort to subsistence activities which, as discussed in Section 2, may protect households against severe destitution and insecurity, but may also hinder their long-term welfare and reduce their levels of resilience to future economic and political shocks. **Market recovery may therefore be an important pathway for food and nutrition interventions to support conflict-affected populations**. A more detailed discussion follows below on the role of exchange markets and prices, the role of employment markets, and how market recovery could operate in tandem with safety net transfers and private remittances.

Exchange markets and prices. One key factor that determines the operation of local markets and how people access them is prices – food prices in particular. When food prices increase, we expect households to reduce their food consumption. But if a given household is a consumer as well as a producer of those goods, we must take into consideration the positive profit effect of the price change, which may outweigh the negative effect of price increases on consumption (Singh, Squire and Strauss, 1986). Empirical evidence on the effects of armed conflict on prices is scarce, though two studies have reported an increase in prices of staple foods during civil wars (see Verpoorten, 2009; Bundervoet, 2006). However, the same studies also reported large reductions in prices of commodities produced and assets held by households in areas of conflict, particularly cattle and other livestock. Some evidence has suggested that rises in food prices may feed into violent protests and riots, although evidence for an association with armed conflict is more limited. Understanding the role of food and nutrition security in peacebuilding processes therefore requires understanding further the role of exchange markets, both as an opportunity for predatory behaviour and as a source of livelihood for those involved in armed conflict (Justino, 2011).

Employment markets. Employment markets also matter considerably, both in terms of how food interventions may affect peacebuilding outcomes and how gender equality may be achieved. Very few studies to date have analysed the

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11   See, for instance, Brockett (1990) and Richards *et al.* (2007). FAO-WFP (2010) discusses how inclusive consultative processes to develop a new land law contributed to peace in Mozambique.

12   See for instance the example of the Indian state of Odisha (available at http://wcdodisha.gov.in/sites/default/files/pdf/Odisha%20State%20 Policy%20for%20Girls%20and%20Women%2C%202014%20%28English%29.pdf). Similar programmes are underway in other Indian states such as Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal.

relationship between armed conflict and employment markets, whether it be the supply of labour by the household or the demand for household labour from off-farm sources. Studies on the causes of armed conflict often mention the presence of a large group of unemployed youth as a precondition for the effective recruitment of fighters and, therefore, for the rise of armed rebel groups (Collier, 2007). In addition, some of the evidence reviewed in Section 2 suggests that individuals may join armed groups in order to ensure their access to basic needs. It seems likely that interventions that reduce food vulnerabilities and improve access to (rural) employment may have positive impacts on peacebuilding processes, and may also reduce the likelihood of reigniting conflict. As far as the author can assess, however, no study has provided solid evidence on whether improving food and nutrition security will prevent participation in and support for violent armed groups. There is also to date very limited knowledge and evidence on how labour market characteristics (e.g. unemployment, discrimination, exclusion, and so forth) may shape violence during armed conflict (aimed at controlling populations, resources and territories), and how labour markets are in turn shaped by armed conflict.

In terms of gender equality, the evidence is also scarce. However, there is some indication that employment generation programmes – food-for-work interventions in particular – that target women in humanitarian settings may improve women's economic autonomy, leading to improved outcomes in terms of food and nutrition security and health (Justino *et al.*, 2015). But there is also evidence that many employment training activities for women tend to be gender-stereotyped (i.e. sewing, knitting and hairdressing), resulting in the oversupply of certain products and services (Date-Bah, 2003). The evidence largely shows that any gender equality gains in terms of employment during conflict tend to be lost in the post-conflict period, and it is unclear whether existing employment generation programmes are able to support the continuing involvement of women in labour markets during the post-conflict period. This may be due to an almost complete lack of rigorous evaluation of existing programmes and the dominance of untested assumptions about the role of women and men in post-conflict societies (Justino *et al.*, 2012a).

Cash transfers and remittances. Some recent evidence has shown that safety net interventions may complement market effects in conflict-affected contexts. Some examples of ongoing programmes are the food distribution programme in Afghanistan (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov, 2012), the Familias en Accion cash transfer programme in Colombia (Bozzoli and Wald, 2011), the Punjab Education Voucher Scheme and the Benazir Income Support Programme in Pakistan (UNICEF, 2013a) and the Samurshi Poverty Alleviation Program in Sri Lanka (UNICEF, 2013b). Results on the impact of these programmes are so far mixed, and interventions have rarely been evaluated in terms of food security, gender equality or peace outcomes. But cash transfers and other safety net programmes could provide interesting entry points for future food and nutrition security interventions in post-conflict settings. Remittances may also potentially complement access to markets and jobs. Several international efforts are currently in place to monitor and limit the international transfer of funds to conflict regions (Collier, 2007). But at the micro level, remittances seem to play a key role in mitigating some of the negative effects of armed conflict on livelihoods and household welfare, and in improving the economic resilience of conflict-affected populations at the initial stages of economic and market recovery programmes (Engel and Ibáñez, 2007; Lindley, 2007). Future work to improve credit, employment, exchange and insurance markets in conflict-affected countries should potentially take into greater consideration the role of complementary safety net transfers and remittances.

3.5   Social cohesion and inclusive collective action

The final pathway through which **food and nutrition security interventions may support gender equality and positive peace outcomes in the aftermath of armed conflict is the improvement of social cohesion and local collective action**. A large body of literature has argued that social cohesion and strong local institutions are fundamental for the establishment of economic stability in conflict-affected contexts (Justino, 2009), and are critical elements in the state's ability to mediate between competing groups within society (Hutchison and Johnson, 2011). Local collective organizations, in particular, are important institutions in areas where public goods provision is limited and state institutions are weak (or non-existent), shaping key development outcomes – including food and nutrition security outcomes. In these settings, local collective action may solve coordination problems (Ostrom, 1990) and provide networks of support (Foster and Rosenzweig, 2001; Fafchamps and Lund, 2003). One of the key findings in Justino *et al.* (2015) is that gender equality programming in humanitarian interventions improves gender equality mostly by contributing to women's social and economic empowerment, increasing their participation in decision-making in collective processes, and – crucially – increasing their presence in leadership positions of local collective organizations.[13]

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13   See www.safwco.org/home for examples of work done to improve collective organizations that promote food security and gender equality among conflict-affected populations.

The importance of local collective organizations in conflict-affected countries has been emphasized by the growing number of community-driven development (CDD) programmes implemented in post-conflict settings (World Bank, 2006). CDD programmes, which are supported by the World Bank, are based on an approach that emphasizes community control over planning decisions and investment resources. Despite the often explicit objective of CDD programmes to contribute to social cohesion, their effectiveness in improving peacebuilding outcomes has been at best mixed (Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson, 2014; Barron, Diprose and Woolcock, 2011; Crost, Felter and Johnston, 2014; Casey, Glennerster and Miguel, 2012; Fearon, Humphreys and Weinstein, 2009). Moreover, in some cases the CDD interventions appear to have led to increased conflict (Barron, Diprose and Woolcock, 2011; Crost, Felter and Johnston, 2014; Nunn and Qian, 2014). One possible explanation, however, for their weak peacebuilding performance could be that the design of these programmes doesn't support the genuine empowerment of excluded groups (the poor, women, and minorities in particular): if excluded groups do not acquire sufficient bargaining strength and organizational skills to withstand the pressures and influence of local elites, these programmes are likely to be ineffective (Platteau, 2004).

Other forms of collective organization such as women's groups and farmers' organizations appear to have more positive outcomes both in terms of gender equality and local peace outcomes (see DasBarwa, 2014; IFAD, 2014). Interventions that promote dialogue across communities also appear promising, as illustrated by a recent programme implemented by Mercy Corps in the Central African Republic (Mercy Corps, 2015). This programme arranged for Muslim and Christian communities to work together in order to manage local tensions and rebuild community cohesion in Bangui and Bouar, resulting in improved trust and cooperation between communities exposed to violence. A related example is that of FAO and its partners' Cultivating Peace initiative in Kara Suu, Kyrgyzstan, which aimed to bring communities together in the delivery of irrigation water. The main objective was to promote reconciliation and dialogue through equal access to resources and the establishment of collective, local conflict management structures (FAO, 2013c). An interesting and relevant feature of this project was the provision of compensation to participants in terms of fortified staple foods through collaboration with a local ongoing WFP Food for Work programme, which targets severely food-insecure households to volunteer as active participants in the project. Another interesting example is that of the FAO Dimitra Clubs, a set of community listeners' clubs of women, men and youth, facilitated with a participatory and empowering approach to mobilize collective action and dialogue. The Dimitra Clubs have so far been set up in the Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Ghana and Senegal (FAO, 2011b).[14]

These initiatives provide potential entry points for food security interventions to strengthen collective action in ways that promote community cohesion and gender equality. However, evidence on these effects is to date unsystematic and localized to small case studies. Though a promising pathway, we are still far from having a clear understanding of how collective action can help food and nutrition interventions succeed in supporting gender equality and peace outcomes in conflict-affected countries.

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14   See also www.fao.org/dimitra

Philippines, Liliongan | A former rebel fighter with his wife and children shows his Certificate of Amnesty, as part of an FAO rehabilitation programme

Chapter 4

Future directions for action

4. Future directions for action

The conceptual framework outlined above puts forward five pathways through which food and nutrition interventions may support the dual goals of peacebuilding and gender equality. These pathways suggest in turn five recommendations for the design and implementation of such interventions to strengthen individual agency and aspirations, social norms about gender roles, institutions of governance, markets, and inclusive collective action – without forgetting that each of these pathways interacts closely with all others, since individual behaviour, social norms, and political, economic and social institutions do not operate (and thus cannot be affected) in isolation from each other.

This section discusses these recommendations in detail, and proposes two further points for action that cut across the five main recommendations: the importance of thinking and acting over the long term, and the need for much more engagement and action from FAO and its partners in evidence collection and programme evaluation.

(1) **Interventions should aim to support individual agency and foster aspirations.** Food and nutrition security interventions that aim to support processes of gender equality and peacebuilding – as well as building the resilience of populations to further economic and political shocks – could be strengthened through simple behavioural changes in terms of promoting women's agency and positive aspirations – such as hope, sense of meaning, dignity, and confidence – among populations affected by armed conflict.

In particular, early interventions during conflict or in its immediate aftermath could yield important benefits, if they manage to take advantage of changes in gender roles that take place during the conflict before the roles are permanently reversed. Some promising interventions include the provision of in-kind food incentives to keep girls in school, the provision of school meals, the implementation of awareness campaigns on the economic and social value of gender equality that engage closely with men and boys, the support for and provision of rural income-earning opportunities for women, and the encouragement of women's participation in local decision-making on the distribution of aid and development programmes (including food).

Harnessing women's knowledge about resource management and improving their access to land could also provide an important entry point for intervention (UNEP et al., 2013). Women are generally the primary providers of water, food and energy at the household and community level. Their role in the management of natural resources can therefore be used to enhance women's engagement and empowerment in peacebuilding processes. More equal access to land will be important in supporting women's agency in conflict-affected contexts, as it will allow more autonomy in agriculture and livestock production, as well as access to credit, insurance and other markets (see discussion below in point 4).

Another important dimension is the strengthening of aspirations and hope among people affected by violence, particularly young people. Training and cognitive development programmes such as the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (FAO, 2008; Friis-Hansen, Duveskog and Taylor, 2012) seem quite promising, and could easily be integrated with more traditional agricultural and food provision interventions.

(2) **Part of the solution to ensuring greater gender equality in post-conflict societies requires changes in social attitudes and norms regarding gender roles and relations.** Recent evidence in the context of India has shown that when economic opportunities are made available locally, cultural norms for gender roles may change quite rapidly (Beaman et al., 2011). It is therefore possible that food and nutrition security interventions may achieve similar goals when designed in ways that promote effective change in social norms for gender roles. Promising interventions include combining traditional food supply interventions with training activities and awareness raising campaigns on gender inequality and women's empowerment; and actions that hone women's leadership and negotiation skills, for example in producer organizations, agricultural cooperatives and water user associations. It is, however, important to note that effective social change, through training and educational campaigns and, importantly, the promotion of women's leadership skills, requires long-term engagement of humanitarian and development actors – because social norms only change gradually over several years or (more typically) decades.

(3) **Interventions must acknowledge wartime institutions and work with informal structures of governance.** Food and nutrition security interventions cannot be decoupled from institutional and political processes that emerge during violent conflict and continue to persist in the aftermath of the conflict. Effective intervention that contributes positively towards the dual goals of gender equality and peacebuilding requires systematic engagement with state and non-state actors to learn how they act and compete throughout the conflict, and how they interact with local populations as well. The institutions that emerge from these complex processes

of interaction (between state actors, non-state armed actors, other informal actors and different population groups) are important for the success of food and nutrition interventions, because they shape how property rights, justice, security, food distribution systems, employment programmes and social service provision may support or fail to support local populations. Although engagement with some non-state (and often armed) actors may cause concerns about the political feasibility of nutrition and food programmes, at the very minimum, having an awareness of the role and actions of non-state political actors – and concrete plans for dealing with these institutional and governance challenges – will be crucial to the success of any interventions in conflict-affected countries.

(4) **Interventions that aim to strengthen markets and market access will have long-term benefits.** Exchange, credit, insurance and employment markets are central to the effectiveness of interventions in improving food and nutrition security and potentially supporting peacebuilding and gender equality objectives. Particularly important are policies that support agricultural production (e.g. provision of seeds, tools, fertilizer and other inputs; irrigation technologies; extension services) and market access (e.g. infrastructure such as feeder roads and processing facilities), as they may help households to move away from subsistence agriculture and allow them renewed access to markets. These forms of local intervention also require the creation of policies that prevent price volatility – particularly of staple goods – at more macro levels, as well as the restructuring of rural credit and insurance markets. It is also important to acknowledge that market interventions may affect women and men differently. Part of the solution to ensuring greater gender equality and sustainable peace in post-conflict societies will require therefore a restructuring of markets and economic structures away from the low-paid, low-skilled job opportunities for women that emerge during civil wars and towards more stable, skilled and better-paid jobs along the value chains that offer women (and men) better economic prospects. This will require bridging the gender gap in access to productive resources, assets and services, as well as targeted support to women in agriculture. Experimentation with policy interventions aimed at improving food and nutrition security through local markets may yield interesting lessons in terms of peace outcomes that are worth pursuing. In particular, market recovery interventions that are combined with public and private complementary transfers (cash transfers, other safety nets and remittances) may further facilitate equitable access to livelihoods, credit and social insurance, and improve resilience by providing buffer mechanisms against future shocks.

(5) **Interventions must support positive collective action.** Despite the lack of hard evidence, it is likely that food and nutrition security interventions may be able to better influence gender equality and peace outcomes when combined with measures that strengthen collective action among women, men and excluded population groups – for instance, agricultural cooperatives, community organizations and women's networks, which provide local public goods and engage both men and women on an equal basis. This is because collective action is typically associated with higher levels of social cooperation, which is central to how people trust and relate to each other, how society is organized, and how countries and populations affected by violence recover in the aftermath of violent conflict. There is also a fairly large amount of evidence that nutrition and food outcomes among households and communities improve when women are better able to organize themselves, and when they hold leadership positions at both local and national levels. Interventions that combine food and nutrition security policy with the strengthening of local collective action are likely to have positive impacts in terms of gender equality and local peace outcomes.

(6) **It is important to think and act over the long term.** The pathways and recommendations discussed above involve the interaction of food and nutrition interventions with complex processes of social change that shape and are shaped by individual and household behaviour, social norms, institutions, the operation of markets, and collective action. These processes of change operate over long periods of time, because social change occurs gradually; therefore, reducing entrenched gender inequalities and supporting sustainable peace requires interventions over long periods of time as well. This long-term approach to improving food and nutrition policy and action in conflict-affected contexts has particular implications for the longstanding debate over the distinction between humanitarian aid and development intervention. The pathway approaches discussed above emphasize the impossibility of separating the two. In particular, they suggest that humanitarian interventions should be used to sow the seeds for long-term positive and sustainable institutional change. This requires much better coordination between humanitarian and development actors than what exists today, in order to ensure that early food and nutrition security interventions result in long-term positive change in terms of gender equality and sustainable peace. Even the best-designed food and

nutrition security interventions in humanitarian contexts will have limited success in fostering sustained gender equality and stability if not coordinated with development and economic recovery policies once the conflict is over.

(7) **It is fundamental that the existing evidence base be strengthened considerably**.

The studies and policies reviewed in this paper suggest that there is large scope and potential for considerable positive effects of food and nutrition interventions on gender equality and peace outcomes in post-conflict contexts. The evidence base to support the design, targeting and implementation of such interventions is, however, abysmally weak. Strengthening the evidence on these complex relationships will involve:

Collecting more and better data on causal mechanisms: To date, there is very limited hard evidence on the causal mechanisms that may shape the relationship between food and nutrition security, peacebuilding and gender equality. At the very minimum, better efforts need to be made to ensure the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age at small geographical units, as well as information on conflict experiences. This requires that humanitarian and development agencies and governments alike build the capacity of their statistical apparatus to compile this data and make it available at all administrative levels. In the more immediate term, large gains can be made by adapting ongoing survey data collection in countries of interest. For instance, Brück *et al.* (2013, 2015) have designed a conflict-sensitive module that can be easily integrated into ongoing socio-economic surveys, as well as in programme evaluation baseline or endline surveys.[15] Alternatively, ongoing surveys can be combined or merged with external information on localized conflict event data, which often provides reliable information on conflict exposure.[16] Another easy solution is the incorporation of behavioural experiments that test for mechanisms of social cooperation, trust and aspirations within these ongoing data collection efforts, in order to test more rigorously some of the behavioural and normative pathways suggested above.

Evaluating programmes rigorously: There is also a lack of rigorous programme evaluation. Notably, policy interventions implemented in conflict contexts – including food and nutrition security interventions – very rarely attempt to assess how local human and institutional experiences during conflict may shape the intervention, or how the intervention may affect peace outcomes or the likelihood of reigniting conflict. Some projects report information such as gender ratios in user committees, workforce participation in cash and food transfer programmes, and outcomes in terms of social cohesion, which provide information on how many people are attending certain meetings and training programmes (and how often). This information is relevant but of very limited use for assessing peacebuilding and gender equality outcomes that involve actual changes in behaviour, norms and institutions. Rarely do programmes include rigorous baseline data that can be used for future evaluations – a situation that needs to change rapidly in order to better support how food and nutrition security interventions may successfully result in better peace and gender equality outcomes. Defining baselines and agreeing on the measurement of specific outcomes in precise ways is important for the rigorous design and implementation of research methods, but also fundamental to establishing the boundaries of what food and nutrition interventions can do to promote specific and realistic gender equality and peacebuilding outcomes.

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15 Research programmes at the forefront of new data collection efforts in conflict-affected countries include the MICROCON programme at IDS funded by the European Commission FP6 Framework (www.microconflict.eu), the Households in Conflict Network (www.hicn.org), the Program on Order, Conflict and Violence at Yale University (http://ocvprogram.macmillan.yale.edu), and the Centre for the Study of Civil War (2003–2012) at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (https://www.prio.org/CSCW).

16 There are several sources that can be used for this purpose, including the IISS Armed Conflict Database (www.iiss.org), CEWARN Reporter (www.cewarn.org), ACLED (www.acleddata.com) and CERAC (www.cerac.org.co), among others.

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