

OG 5.10: Women, Gender and DDR

Objectives

This module will:

- ✓ provide policy guidance on gender aspects of DDR programmes;
- ✓ show how DDR programmes can become gender responsive; and
- ✓ outline gender-aware and female-specific interventions in key components of DDR.

1. Introduction

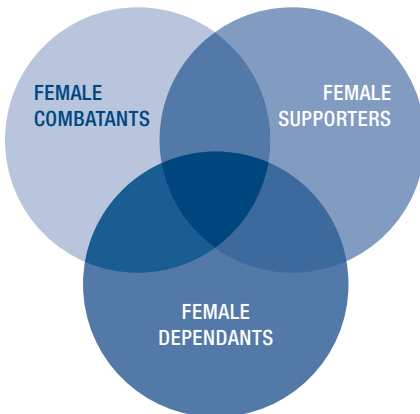
UN DDR programmes have become increasingly gender responsive by taking into consideration the specific needs of female and male combatants, supporters and dependants during negotiation, assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (see Box 5.10.1).

Box 5.10.1: A key international norm

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants”.

Contrary to general assumptions, women and girls participate in conflict in many different ways, and can also contribute to insecurity and violence in post-conflict situations. Dealing with their needs and harnessing their capacities and potentials will improve the chances of achieving more sustainable and effective DDR.

Figure 5.10.1: Types of female roles



Gender roles and relations are defined by cultural, geographic and communal contexts. Interventions should therefore be carried out with sensitivity to and understanding of the specific context in which a DDR programme is taking place.

Women and girls are involved in armed conflict in three main types of roles and capacities, as shown in Box 5.10.2:

Box 5.10.2: Definitions of females involved in armed conflict

Female combatants: Women and girls who participated in armed conflicts as active combatants using arms.

Female supporters/Females associated with armed forces and groups (FAAFGs): Women and girls who participated in armed conflicts in supportive roles, whether coerced or voluntarily. These women and girls are economically and socially dependent on the armed force or group for their income and social support. Examples: porters, cooks, nurses, spies, administrators, translators, radio operators, medical assistants, public information workers, camp leaders or women/girls used for sexual exploitation.

Female dependants: Women and girls who are part of ex-combatants' households. They are primarily socially and financially dependent on ex-combatants, although they may also have retained other community ties. Examples: wives/war wives, children, mothers/parents, female siblings and female members of the extended family.

Note: Some women and girls might fall into more than one category, owing to their multiple and complex roles during conflict. Some women and girls may have been coerced and other may have volunteered to participate in the armed groups.

2. Obstacles to female participation in DDR

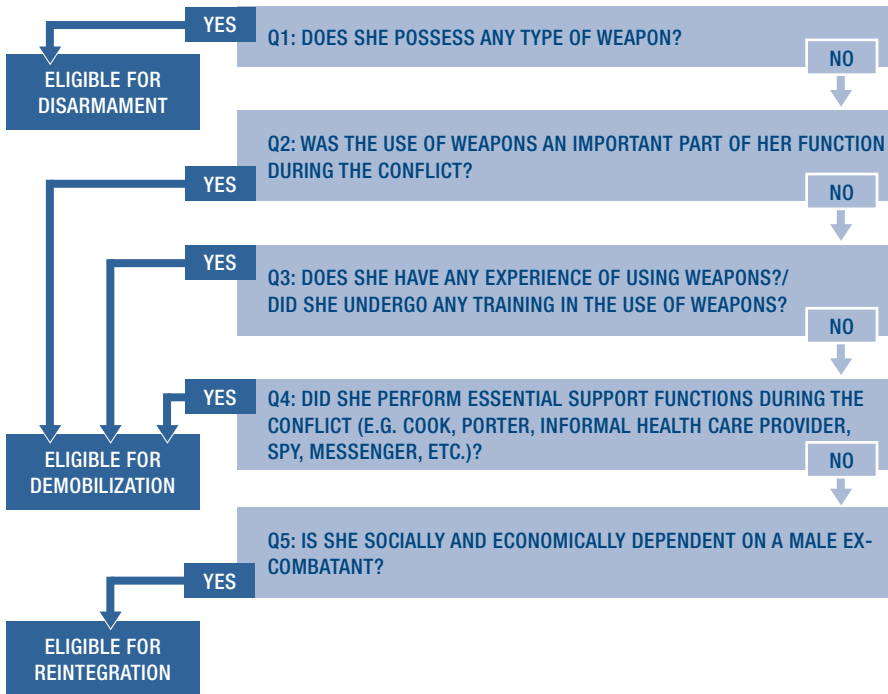
The following common obstacles can prevent female combatants and FAAFGs from participating in DDR:

- commanders of armed forces and groups deliberately holding female combatants back because they perceive them as being essential to the group, or hiding abducted women and girls for fear of legal and social consequences;
- the failure of DDR programmes to adequately assess the number of female combatants, supporters and dependants, making them neither expected nor catered for;
- the misperception that a weapon is required to enter a DDR programme;
- poor female access to communication sources (radios, newspapers, etc.) and lower literacy rates;
- females' fear of association with an armed force or group during peacetime, particularly when they were coerced to join; and
- females' security concerns or the fear of exposure or re-exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

3. Female eligibility criteria

Figure 5.10.1 shows the criteria for determining the eligibility of female combatants, supporters and dependants to participate in DDR programmes (Q = question):

Figure 5.10.2: Female eligibility criteria for DDR



4. Dealing with male concerns

Gender in DDR is not only about women and girls, although they have been excluded from previous DDR programmes because of insufficient awareness of gender issues. Gender-responsive DDR should also deal with male concerns and broader gender-related issues, as Box 5.10.3 illustrates:

Box 5.10.3: Gender is also for men and boys

- *Violent masculinity*: Notions of masculinity are often linked with possession of weapons. In order to transform a violent masculine identity into a non-violent one, it is important to consider men's gender identities, roles and relations, and how these link to the perpetration of SGBV.
- *Male victims of SGBV*: In order to prevent SGBV, support should be provided for the victims of SGBV. It is also essential to pay special attention to male victims of SGBV. Male victims are more unlikely to report incidents, as such issues are taboo in most societies.
- *Men's traditional roles*: Male ex-combatants who are unable to fulfil their traditional role (i.e. as breadwinner of the household) often face an identity crisis. This can lead to an increase in domestic violence and alcohol/drug abuse. DDR programmes should not reinforce stereotypical men's roles, but rather encourage proper counselling mechanisms and flexible socio-economic support. This is an important aspect of preventing further perpetration of SGBV.

5. Gender-responsive and female-specific DDR planning and programming

DDR programmes should include interventions that fall into the following two categories:

- *Gender-aware interventions:* These deal with both men’s and women’s issues in overall DDR-related activities, such as assessing the different life choices made by women and girls as opposed to men and boys, security concerns or a fear of exposure or re-exposure to SGBV;
- *Female-specific interventions:* These are designed to deal with the specific needs of women and girls so that they benefit from DDR programmes to the same extent as men, such as taking into account the different roles other than combatant that females may have fulfilled.

5.1. Gender responsiveness in peace negotiations

A gender-responsive approach to DDR begins during peace talks. Peace negotiators, mediators and facilitators should receive an explicit mandate to cater for the needs of male and female combatants, supporters and dependants. They should also consider the interventions mentioned in Table 5.10.1:

Table 5.10.1: Gender responsiveness in peace negotiations

Gender-aware interventions	Female-specific interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Deploy experts in gender and DDR to peace negotiations.■ Raise awareness and provide training among the parties on the different implications of a DDR process for male and female combatants, supporters and dependants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Facilitate participation of representatives of women’s groups at peace negotiations.■ Make the release of abducted women and girls from armed forces and groups a condition of the peace agreement, and ensure that provisions for their support are included in the agreement.■ Ensure female representation in structures established to manage DDR programmes.■ Enlist women in leadership positions at national and local levels as stakeholders and partners in DDR.


5.2. Gender responsiveness in assessment

An assessment of the different roles of men, women, boys and girls in armed forces and groups should be an integral part of the general assessment that takes place before DDR programmes start. The collection and analysis of information should be sex-disaggregated to explore gender differences and allow DDR pro-

grammes to meet the different needs of males and females. Moreover, assessment teams and planners should consider the interventions outlined in Table 5.10.2:

Table 5.10.2: Gender responsiveness in assessment	
Gender-aware interventions	Female-specific interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gain a good understanding of the legal, political, economic, social and security context of the DDR programme and how it affects women, men, girls and boys differently, both in armed forces and groups and in receiving communities. ■ Identify the different needs of women, men, girls and boys in accordance with the specific roles they played as combatants, supporters or/and dependants. ■ Include a labour market assessment that gives the various job options and market opportunities that will be available to men and women following demobilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ascertain the number and percentage of women and girls in armed forces and groups as far as possible. ■ Collect baseline information on patterns of weapons possession and ownership among women and girls. ■ Identify local capacities of women's organizations already working on security-related issues. ■ Identify community responses to giving female ex-combatants and supporters the option of returning to civilian life or joining peacetime armies and other security institutions in accordance with recruitment criteria. ■ Assess how awareness can be raised among military commanders about the need to include women and girls in DDR. ■ Facilitate the interviewing of women and girls by hiring and training female interpreters familiar with relevant DDR terminology and concepts.

 **OG 3.20 on DDR Programme Design. Section 5 of IDDRS 4.30 on Social and Economic Reintegration also contains information and tools on general assessment.**

 **Have you adequately assessed the needs of female ex-combatants, supporters and dependants? IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR contains the following assessment tools: Annex B contains a DDR gender checklist for assessment missions; and Annex D contains gender-responsive DDR programme management frameworks and indicators, including a matrix to assess capabilities and vulnerabilities.**

5.3. Gender responsiveness in planning and design

Planning and design teams should take into account recommendations regarding gender responsiveness in the DDR programme from assessment teams by ensuring such recommendations are reflected in all key planning documents (concept

of operations, projects and programmes, strategies and policies). Other key interventions that DDR planners should consider are listed in Table 5.10.3:

Table 5.10.3: Gender responsiveness in planning and design	
Gender-aware interventions	Female-specific interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocate sufficient funds for gender- and female-related activities in DDR programmes. ■ Include gender experts as part of DDR structures. ■ Encourage regional, bilateral and multi-lateral organizations to mainstream gender in their DDR work. ■ Include gender awareness-raising and training for DDR and peacekeeping mission civilian and military staff. ■ Develop accountability mechanisms to ensure that all staff are committed to gender equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage national commissions on DDR (NCDDRs) to work closely with government ministries in charge of women's affairs and women's peace-building networks. ■ Encourage NCDDRs to employ women in leadership positions. ■ Encourage NCDDRs to have gender focal points. ■ Consider as dependants – where relevant – multiple wives (both formal and informal) of a male ex-combatant and other persons living as part of the ex-combatant's household. ■ Encourage troop-contributing countries to fast-track women for deployment in peace-keeping operations.



OG 3.10 on Integrated DDR Planning: Processes and Structures and OG 3.20 on DDR Programme Design



Language in DDR strategies, policies, programmes, implementation plans and other documents should be gender sensitive, and should accurately reflect the different experiences and needs of men, women, girls and boys.


5.4. Gender responsiveness in disarmament


Weapons possession should not be a criterion for eligibility in DDR programmes, as this has often led to the exclusion of women and girls. The fact that traditionally men and boys have used and possessed weapons more than women and girls does not mean that women and girls are not armed and do not pose a threat to security. Planning and design teams should consider the interventions outlined in Table 5.10.4:

Table 5.10.4: Gender responsiveness in disarmament	
Gender-aware interventions	Female-specific interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure equal access of male and female combatants to disarmament sites to avoid stereotypes of weapons ownership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Draw on the experience of female ex-combatants, supporters or dependants who have 'self-reintegrated' on what could be incentives and/or obstacles to female disarmament.

- Assess the implications of how patterns of weapons ownership may be different for men and women in the country context, and take them into account when devising disarmament programmes.
- Discourage media images that encourage violent masculinity.
- Involve women's groups and female community leaders in awareness-raising activities and in monitoring weapons collection and destruction.

 **OG 4.10 on Disarmament**

 **Have you asked gender-sensitive questions during screening and registration? Annex C in IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR provides a list of gender-sensitive interview questions.**

 *Interviews should be carried out with men and women separately. Interviewees should be reassured that the information they have disclosed will remain confidential. Trained female staff and interpreters should be made available to interview female ex-combatants and supporters, if the latter would prefer this.*

5.5. Gender responsiveness in demobilization

A gender-responsive demobilization process should avoid reinforcing existing inequalities between men and women or making economic hardship worse for female combatants, supporters and dependants.

Gender-aware interventions and female-specific interventions should be planned for and implemented during cantonment/mobile demobilization, as well as when providing transitional support and resettlement assistance, as outlined in Table 5.10.5:

Table 5.10.5: Gender responsiveness in demobilization	
Gender-aware interventions	Female-specific interventions
Cantonment and mobile demobilization	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure registration forms and questionnaires are designed to supply sex-disaggregated data on groups. ■ Ensure a balance of men and women among staff. ■ Provide psychosocial support to men, women, boys and girls affected by SGBV during conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make provision for women's specific health needs, including reproductive needs (remember items such as re-usable sanitary napkins, both male and female condoms, etc.). ■ Consider assembling testimonies of SGBV during conflict and establishing links between the DDR process and the justice system to prosecute perpetrators of sexual abuse of women.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allow for privacy in accordance with culturally accepted norms when designing sanitary facilities. ■ Include separate facilities for women, men, girls and boys, as required. ■ Offer men, women, boys and girls equal (but, if necessary, separate) access to education about HIV/AIDS, including voluntary counselling and testing, and other health services and supplies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that reproductive health care services are available to female victims of SGBV. ■ Ensure that support is available to women and girls who are HIV-positive, as well as to women and girls heading households where HIV-positive ex-combatants may be living. ■ Ensure that mothers who are combatants and those associated with armed forces and groups will not be separated from their children during demobilization.
Transitional support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prepare transitional support carefully to avoid reinforcing negative gender stereotypes. ■ Ensure that transitional support deals with the different needs of male and female ex-combatants and supporters. ■ Ensure that male and female ex-combatants have equal access to individual benefits (HIV/AIDS services and support, land, tools, training and financial assistance). ■ Encourage the spouse or other female family members of a male ex-combatant to witness the signing of an agreement on how these benefits/resources will be used. ■ Anticipate opportunities for women's economic independence as well as potential drawbacks for women entering previously 'male' workplaces and professions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take into account female spending patterns and needs when designing cash assistance. ■ Take into account women's traditional forms of money management (e.g. rotational loan and credit schemes).
Resettlement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make sure male and female supporters and dependants are included in any travel assistance that is offered to male ex-combatants. ■ Ensure female and male ex-combatants, supporters and dependants are free to choose their areas of return. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cater for the needs of women and girls and their children on their journey back to the community. ■ Take measures to reunify mothers and children. ■ Take measures to minimize the exposure of women and girls to SGBV, re-recruitment and abduction into armed forces and groups, and human trafficking.



OG 4.20 on Demobilization



In many countries, women and girls have lower educational levels and are skilled in less-profitable occupational areas than their male peers. Training programmes should therefore include additional resources for literacy. Although skills should be culturally appropriate as far as possible, efforts should also be made not to ghettoize women into low-paid 'traditional female labour' activities.

5.6. Gender responsiveness in reintegration

Specific interventions are necessary to make easier the access of women and girls to social and economic reintegration opportunities on an equal basis with men and boys. Women and girls usually shoulder the burden of caring for family members and others, and are therefore less able than men to take advantage of training, employment and other income-generating opportunities. Table 5.10.6 outlines interventions that should inform and/or become an integral part of socio-economic reintegration programmes:

Table 5.10.6: Gender responsiveness in social and economic reintegration

Gender-aware interventions	Female-specific interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide physical and psychosocial rehabilitation to disabled and chronically ill ex-combatants so that they do not become a burden for women and girls. ■ Take into account specific gender dynamics related to access to land and housing, particularly when traditional practices and legal systems do not accommodate female-headed households or women's land ownership. ■ Assess the extent to which the production of crops and animal husbandry are divided among household members according to gender and age. ■ Prevent the marginalization of women ex-combatants, supporters and dependants, and war widows, and provide them with assistance. ■ Support the transformation of violent masculine identities into non-violent ones through information, sensitization and counselling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocate resources to train female ex-combatants, supporters, dependants and community members on how to care for and cope with children traumatized by conflict. ■ Ensure education and training are designed for the needs of women and girls. ■ View women's access to credit and capital as a positive investment in reconstruction, since they have an established record of high rates of return. ■ Support and build the capacity of women's organizations to participate in healing and reconciliation work. ■ Encourage community mental health practices (such as cleansing ceremonies) to deal with women's and girls' specific suffering or trauma. ■ Encourage the establishment of formal/informal self-help groups among female ex-combatants and supporters. ■ Allocate funding for child care, and make the necessary arrangements to allow women and girls to take part in training (e.g. organize training as close as possible to where they live).

- Give women and girls a voice in determining the types of marketable vocational skills they should acquire.
- Assist women to build their houses, considering that they usually work from home in self-employment activities.
- Take measures to ensure widows of ex-combatants and single women ex-combatants and supporters are recognized as heads of households, and are therefore permitted to own and rent existing housing and land.
- Support women to farm cash crops and raise livestock, as opposed to only engaging in subsistence agriculture.
- Support women in having equal access to communally owned farm implements and water-pumping equipment, and to own such equipment.



OG 4.30 on Social and Economic Reintegration



The social and economic reintegration of female ex-combatants, supporters and dependants should be linked as far as possible to broader recovery strategies aimed at supporting and assisting women in post-conflict situations. This requires coordination with development agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's groups to ensure that reintegration is sustainable and reaches all beneficiaries.

5.7. Gender responsiveness in information and sensitization

Male and female combatants, supporters and dependants should be equally informed about the DDR programme. Male and female members of the community should be equally prepared to receive the demobilized and their families.

Table 5.10.7 describes interventions that should be undertaken to ensure that women and men have equal access to information and sensitization processes during DDR:

Table 5.10.7: Gender responsiveness in information and sensitization processes

Gender-aware interventions	Female-specific interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that male and female combatants, supporters and dependants are equally and adequately informed about eligibility, rights and benefits in DDR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remember when carrying out awareness/information/ sensitization campaigns, that women and girls have restricted access to radio and newspapers.

- Sensitize male and female members of receiving families and communities about the difficulties involved in readjusting to civilian life.
- Ensure that DDR information and sensitization messages used in the media and arts are free from gender bias.
- Include female community leaders and women's organizations in awareness-raising meetings organized to prepare communities to receive ex-combatants, supporters and their dependants.
- Include women's voices and experiences in radio sensitization programmes, newspaper articles and other means used to raise DDR awareness.

OG 4.60 on Public Information and Strategic Communication in Support of DDR


5.8. Gender responsiveness in monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Gender should be mainstreamed into all M&E work by ensuring that:


- DDR programme staff and evaluators are familiar with gender-related and female-related interventions;
- adequate financial resources are available for training DDR programme staff on gender issues;
- terms of reference clearly state gender-related tasks and responsibilities; and
- evaluation reports make specific recommendations to improve the gender responsiveness of DDR programmes.

When carrying out M&E, programme staff and evaluators should determine if DDR programmes are:

- making provision for the needs of males and females without bias; and
- meeting the specific needs of female combatants, supporters and dependants.

 *Data used for M&E should be disaggregated not only by age, different roles during conflict, location (rural/urban) and ethnic background, but also by gender (e.g. male adult combatant, female adult combatant, male adult supporter, female adult supporter, male adult dependant, female adult dependant and so on for children and youth).*

OG 3.50 on Monitoring and Evaluation of DDR Programmes

 **Are you carrying out gender-responsive M&E? Annex D in IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR shows how to carry out gender-responsive M&E, and also includes a list of examples of gender-related indicators.**

6. Summary of key guidance on women, gender and DDR

- ✓ Improving the gender responsiveness of DDR programmes is not only a normative requirement, but also helps DDR become more sustainable.
- ✓ Gender should be mainstreamed in DDR as early as during peace talks, and throughout programming and implementation.
- ✓ Gender in DDR is about the different needs of male and female programme participants and stakeholders.
- ✓ DDR planners should see women and girls as part of their potential caseload – female supporters are also eligible for DDR and dependants may also require assistance.
- ✓ Gender training in DDR should be systematically provided to mission and programme staff, national counterparts, implementing partners and stakeholders at national and local levels.