INTEGRATING MASCULINITIES IN PEACEBUILDING: SHIFTING HARMFUL NORMS AND TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS

Practice paper
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SHIFTING HARMFUL NORMS AND TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS

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Methodology

This practice paper is based on a review of Conciliation Resources’ work on masculinities and peacebuilding over the last three years, with a focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kashmir, Nigeria and the Pacific Region. Reports and planning documents of all work on masculinities, gender and peacebuilding were reviewed, and 11 key informant interviews with Conciliation Resources’ staff and partners were held remotely. Primary and secondary data was coded, and findings were correlated and triangulated with a desk review of existing studies of masculinities and peacebuilding. Feedback with research participants allowed staff and partners to review, clarify, and expand on the report. A final workshop presented research findings to staff and other international NGOs working on gender and peacebuilding, gathered further feedback, and helped develop additional tools to examine masculinities and peacebuilding for Conciliation Resources’ gender-sensitive conflict analysis facilitation guide.1

About the Peace Research Partnership

Saferworld, Conciliation Resources and International Alert are collaborating on a four-year research programme, the Peace Research Partnership, which generates evidence and lessons for policymakers and practitioners on how to support peaceful, inclusive change in conflict-affected areas.

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CONTENTS

Introduction 4
Key findings for practice 5
Detailed findings 6
Conclusion 14
References 15
INTRODUCTION

The integration of gender into peacebuilding programmes is still mostly synonymous with the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. And while women’s meaningful inclusion and participation in peace processes is essential to building sustainable peace, women’s rights organisations and some peacebuilding organisations have long realised that the connection between masculinities, violence and militarism also needs to be addressed to reduce violence in all its forms. As a result of their practice and advocacy, a more widely recognised approach to masculinities and peacebuilding is emerging to complement the WPS agenda. Yet conceptual, political and programming challenges still prevent the full integration of masculinities into WPS and gender equality work in conflict-affected contexts.

This paper reflects on the challenges experienced when we integrated a focus on masculinities into Conciliation Resources’ gender, peace and security (GPS) programming and offers some practical lessons to address militarised and violent masculinities.

Over the last 25 years Conciliation Resources has worked with partners in conflict-affected contexts to support inclusive and sustainable peace. Our gender and peacebuilding work frames gender norms as socially constructed. These norms – the deeply held expectations of the roles and behaviours of women, men and other gender identities – develop in interaction with other identity factors such as age, class, ability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. In any context these norms produce a multitude of attitudes, behaviours and roles associated with being men or women, known as masculinities and femininities.

We have found that an intersectional approach to gender-sensitive conflict analysis – one that includes masculinities – can be helpful to better understand and address power imbalances among and between these identities, with the aim of transforming structural inequalities that drive or contribute to complex violence.
A note on masculinities, conflict and violence

In most societies, to varying degrees, men and boys are raised into combative and domineering behaviours. They are encouraged to play with weapons and engage in ritualised combat through contact sports. Militaries and armed groups construct, reproduce and deploy a specific version of a heterosexual warrior-like masculinity, or what has been termed ‘militarised masculinities’.¹

Militarised masculinities are central to the hegemonic masculinities that are present in all societies; they are grounded in and triggered by violent conflict.¹ In violent conflict, a wide array of societal institutions – militaries, armed groups, community elders and media – demand the performance of certain types of violent behaviours, usually from men and boys, and promise rewards for these behaviours.² Typically if men refuse to comply they are branded as ‘cowards’ or ‘useless’, and maybe most crucially, not men at all. Training conducted by militaries or armed groups actively teaches violence, so that men and boys – but also increasingly women and girls – are willing and able to kill as ‘protectors’ of their nations and communities.³

This idealised, violent masculinity justifies heterosexual male dominance over society and reinforces control of and discrimination against women, sexual and gender minorities (SGM), persons with disabilities, and other groups that do not generally conform to this narrow version of masculinity.⁴ Violent conflict can provide opportunities to shift gender roles and norms but, over time, patriarchal masculine hierarchies remain because these idealised versions of masculinity are seen to be stabilising for conflict-affected societies.⁵

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i. Hegemonic masculinity represents a culturally idealised form of manhood that varies across time and cultures but that is often associated with notions of dominance, sexual virility, and the capacity for violence. This idealised form of manhood, that men are socialised in and try to live up to, creates hierarchies between men and women, and among men. See Connell, R. Masculinities, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).

ii. The idea that masculinities and femininities are ‘performed’ implies that we learn to behave in certain ways to be seen as male or female. Men learn to dress, walk, talk and behave through socialisation and they then try to live up to this learned behaviour by ‘performing’ it outwardly. See: Butler, J. Gender Trouble (New York: Routledge, 1990).

iii. In this paper we have chosen to use the term ‘sexual and gender minorities (SGM)’ to refer to the wider group who may not be encompassed by the acronym ‘LGBTQI+’ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex).
DETAILED FINDINGS

1. A focus on masculinities can help advance existing work on gender in peacebuilding

Overall, we found that a masculinities approach to gender in peacebuilding can be a helpful way to restart or unstick what is usually very difficult work on gender sensitivity and inclusive peacebuilding or efforts toward gender equality. In many of the contexts where we work, the term ‘gender’ is problematic and often (mis)understood to be focused on women as opposed to gendered power norms and how these are reproduced across society. We therefore decided to focus on masculinities in more detail to see whether highlighting this perspective could uncover new opportunities for our work, particularly in contexts where few entry points for gender equality and inclusive peacebuilding exist.

Acknowledging the sensitivities associated with integrating gender into peacebuilding practice, Conciliation Resources’ staff and partners designed and conducted participatory research that sought to better understand masculinities, gender and power in each of the contexts in which we work. In community-based workshops we used exercises that deconstructed gender norms to explore the multiple roles of men and women, examine their inherent relationship to power, and demonstrate the fluidity of these norms during violent conflict.

However, we met with a number of conceptual, political and programming challenges. For example, the notion of gender as socially constructed was not always accepted by workshop participants. In the DRC some participants insisted that masculine and feminine traits are something people are born with. In other contexts, people found it difficult to understand that individuals, policies and institutions could all be shaped and influenced by masculine military cultures.

Masculinity is an extremely diverse and sometimes contradictory concept. During our workshops in the DRC, ‘masculinity’ was considered to be too abstract by workshop participants. So we began by facilitating discussions about the roles and behaviours associated with men and women by asking participants about the differences in how women and men ‘should’ ideally behave and how masculinities and femininities are performed in reality – and how this changes as a result of conflict (see Box 4). Workshop participants across all contexts consistently defined an `ideal man` as vastly different from their experience of men, especially during conflict – suggesting a deep contradiction in northern Nigeria, where masculinity can be claimed by men and boys who achieve economic success, are married, and who participate in the armed struggle. Yet women and girls who join armed groups were also considered to be masculine, having been involved in actions that ordinarily separate boys from men. This complexity means not only that there is no single definition of masculinity, but also that there is no universal way to start conversations about men, masculinities, violence and militarism.

As a useful starting point, we found that carefully adding questions about masculinities into a participatory gender-sensitive conflict analysis process reduced conceptual and programming challenges, especially for programming staff, and offered a process to investigate how gender norms interact with power across all aspects of society. For example, have certain ideas of masculinity been instrumentalised by parties to the conflict to support the fighting, including recruitment and training?

A systems approach to this analysis reveals that these norms are embedded in a wide array of institutions, including families, schools, and religious, security, economic, legal and political institutions. By looking at the interconnectedness of structures, behaviours and relationships in conflicts, a systems approach can help partners focus more strategically on the different levels on which gendered violence occurs. Mapping violent conflict can help participants visualise the possible entry points for work to support inclusive peace by different organisations with different mandates.

An intersectional approach to this analysis can also identify how norms and institutions that link men and violence are embedded in gender inequality, and how these norms and institutions interact with the root causes of a conflict to differently affect diverse identity groups. It can reveal that masculine hierarchies affect all men differently, explaining how men can be powerful in one context but vulnerable in another. Importantly, an intersectional approach should explore men, masculinities and violence as well as the different experiences, needs and interests of diverse groups of women.

Activities that seek to challenge militarised masculinities and male violence need to be strategically mainstreamed because of the high levels of resistance to change. We found that even where insights about men and violence during conflict were clearly understood and where the implications for practice could be explored, the sensitivity of the work meant that it was not always easy to integrate these insights into peacebuilding programmes. Facilitated discussions can help peacebuilders see that militarised masculinity impacts and perpetuates many conflicts; but often, as in our programme in Nigeria, entry points have to be carefully explored and driven by local communities (see Box 3). Across our programmes we did find a few important entry points, such as engagement with the justice and security sectors, and reintegration programmes for people associated with violent extremism. Working with ex-combatants, for example, offers a range of opportunities to discuss how values associated with masculinities have to shift as the conflict context changes.
2. A masculinities lens reveals that violence needs to be addressed across multiple, interconnected levels

By framing violence as a continuum we can see how violence lingers in minds, bodies, households and communities long after peace agreements have been signed. In contexts where Conciliation Resources has worked closely with women’s rights organisations, these partners have highlighted the ‘flow-on effects’ or the ‘continuum of gendered violence’ in public and private spaces. In the Pacific, our partners made links between militarisation and increases in domestic violence. In Kashmir, workshop participants noted that the “everyday normalisation of violence” in a highly militarised environment leads to greater violence among communities and in households.

By looking explicitly at masculinities in our gender-sensitive conflict analysis this continuum of GBV in multiple layers of societies becomes much more apparent. Violence emanating from the connection between masculinities and militarisation flows from battlefields into communities, where it resurfaces in high levels of interpersonal violence among young men. It cascades into households where it manifests as domestic violence.

This interconnection between multiple levels of gendered violence leaves peacebuilders with conceptual and operational questions about the identity and mandate of peacebuilding organisations. In particular, what does this multi-level understanding of violence mean for peacebuilding practice, and should the private sphere of the household become a site for peace initiatives? Staff and workshop participants highlighted additional questions including: how to conceptualise this continuum of violence? What drives it? How to connect these spheres programmatically when we traditionally address armed violence? And how to not divert attention and resources from existing GBV programmes? The answers to these questions are slowly emerging from practice.

To begin with, working on violence as a continuum needs engagement with a diverse set of practitioners and institutions that are spread across the gender, peace and security sectors, including police, military and feminist peacebuilding and human rights organisations.

**BOX 1: CONTINUUMS OF VIOLENCE**

It is useful to think of patriarchal violence as existing on a continuum. Violent patriarchal ideologies perpetuate harmful gender inequalities and gender-based violence (GBV) before, during and after violent conflict. Continuums of violence directly connect violent conflict at inter-communal, national and global levels with intimate partner violence at the household level, and with other forms of structural gender discrimination expressed and perpetuated in minds, bodies, households, communities, nations and globally. This means that violence needs to be addressed at these multiple interconnected levels.


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In northern Nigeria and DRC we have seen the importance of including local women’s rights organisations in participatory gender-sensitive conflict analysis processes. Drawing on the experiences of women’s rights organisations can helpfully build awareness of GBV occurring at different levels – mind, body, household and community – that are not usually visible to peacebuilding organisations focused on national or inter-communal violence. Ensuring diverse individuals participate in discussions can also surface that, while GBV primarily affects women and girls, it also affects men, boys and SGM, and that survivors of GBV require gender-sensitive models of care and trauma healing.

In the contexts in which Conciliation Resources works, local women’s rights organisations already engage across these different levels with a focus on preventing and transforming GBV. Despite sector-wide challenges associated with building alliances – such as competition for limited funding and resources, professional silos, different approaches to working, and different levels of programming focus – collaboration between peacebuilders and women’s rights organisations is crucial. Doing regular joint analysis can provide rich and nuanced understandings of a context and can identify important entry points for collaboration on militarisation, masculinities and violence. Working closely with local partners, particularly intergenerational groups of women and men, helps to co-design initiatives that play to the comparative advantage of different organisations and that reach diverse groups in society.

Addressing the continuum of violence can mean building new linkages, alliances and solidarities in which different organisations can operate according to their mandates and comparative advantages. For example, as local organisations deliver community workshops on engaging men to lead and facilitate change on GPV, international NGOs can help link these trainings to security sector reform at national levels. Both initiatives can then be linked to global advocacy campaigns that address the link between violence and masculinity; for example, the global campaign for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, or the Men Engage Network. The focus on a shift towards constructive masculinities also connects to global and local movements supporting anti-militarism and disarmament by questioning the role of militaries as central to domestic and foreign policy.

Building alliances that work across different levels can also address a common critique of the masculinities and peacebuilding approach: namely, that work with men for gender equality seeks to cause social and cultural change by changing the norms and values of individual men at the personal and interpersonal level without linking this work to broader societal change. We have seen that linking interpersonal work to policy reform or structural changes in sub-national or national institutions can help to more comprehensively address social and cultural drivers connecting men and violence. In other words, work on masculinities and peacebuilding offers an opportunity for institutional change and strategic movement-building for gender equality across different levels of society and between diverse groups of women, men and SGM.

BOX 2: THE PACIFIC REGION

Fijians have experienced four coups in less than 40 years, three of which were military coups. Fijian women’s rights activists have long questioned the presence of the Fiji military in politics to militarisation of everyday life. This in turn has been linked to higher levels of domestic violence in Fijian households. Women’s rights organisations hold that cycles of authoritarian rule have blurred the boundaries between civilian and military lives and heightened the social acceptance of violence to resolve conflict. Masculinities are also shaped by forms of leadership in Fijian society, including the male dominated chiefly system and Christian churches.

Conciliation Resources’ partner organisation, Transcend Oceania, operates on an understanding that gendered violence lies on a continuum that stretches from security institutions across customary institutions and into households. They work to counter militarised masculinity and domestic violence by engaging men and boys as allies against all forms of violence against women. Transcend Oceania works with a range of leaders, including chiefs, to address culturally entrenched gender stereotypes that function as barriers to women and young people’s meaningful participation in public life, and that can justify violence against women. By actively integrating a focus on both private and public forms of GBV into their programming they have broken down the traditional silos within peacebuilding that separate public organised violence and the interpersonal violence in households. Transcend Oceania also prioritises trauma healing and personal transformational work with men.
3. Prioritising participation, local ownership and concepts, and pacing change according to context helps to overcome resistance

Peacebuilding is an opportunity to renegotiate the social contract, but is often met with opposition – especially by elites, and particularly when it focuses on inclusion and gender equality. Similarly, masculinities, gender and peacebuilding work is not always welcomed by local communities, as it challenges patriarchal power relations that are central to how individuals relate to each other and how society is organised. Gender equality work can trigger fears, held by both women and men, about the loss of their power and identity, and that a patriarchal society may fall apart if gender relations change. For example, a partner in the Pacific explained: “Older men in power are afraid to question masculinities. They think that they will become weak, that they lose control, their identity, and that they become nothing at all”.

In some contexts, talking about masculinities and violent conflict provokes resistance as it is perceived as an attempt to blame individuals or groups of men (often non-Western men). Terms such as masculinities and gender are often regarded as external, Western, colonial concepts used by outsiders to try to change society; this was the risk in our programmes in Kashmir, DRC, northern Nigeria and the Pacific. To overcome resistance, work on masculinities and peacebuilding needs to be grounded in trusted relationships between international organisations, national partners and communities. Conciliation Resources’ long-term accompaniment approach to partnership has shown that peacebuilding work should proceed gradually and be anchored in local concepts and approaches; it needs to be owned and led by diverse men, women and SGM from the contexts in which we work.

Incremental and culturally sensitive approaches are therefore essential. Working closely with and through local partners we started with workshops that sometimes separated men and women first to talk about masculinities, and then brought participants together to discuss these insights in mixed groups. Using this phased approach, we found that gender roles can be explored and challenged in safe spaces. Working closely with our partners we discussed ‘gender,’ ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ through scenario building, storytelling and exploring life histories. We sought to use local language and religious or customary stories instead of unfamiliar international terminology and concepts.
Conciliation Resources has found that the identities of the individuals and organisations that lead this work is crucial to how local communities receive it. We work closely with our partners to create gender-balanced co-facilitation teams to lead conversations, training and dialogue workshops. For example, in Kashmir this work was led by two experienced women partners with support from male colleagues, creating gender-balanced teams from both sides of the Line of Control. This intersectional approach also allowed an ethnically, gender and age diverse team in northern Nigeria to carry the conversation about masculinities and peacebuilding to tribal elders, into the communal kitchens of older women, and eventually to our work with ex-combatants.

Our partnership approaches based on local agency and ownership opened doors in communities that were particularly resistant to discussions about men, gender and violence. For our partners working with chiefs in Fiji, questions about male identities seemed near impossible to broach — until men’s suffering from the patriarchal system was revealed. Faced with floods and cyclones exacerbated by human-induced climate change, male chiefs were overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness and were increasingly unable to fulfil their customary roles as providers and protectors. These points of crisis showed their vulnerability within the patriarchal system they also benefited from and were perpetuating. This recognition allowed our partners to explore the shared benefits of gender equality, emphasise allyship with women activists, and open up broader conversations about men, masculinities and violence.

When recognising male vulnerabilities and the shared benefits of gender equality it is also important to continue to critique patriarchal norms and the institutions that perpetuate them. This can be achieved by holding masculinities and peacebuilding programmes accountable to local women’s organisations. We did this by supporting female peacebuilding leads to plan and organise our activities in Kashmir. In the Pacific, partners invited women with feminist viewpoints to participate in the workshops with men; this challenged the male-centred nature of the discussions, and ensured women’s opinions were included.

Another entry point to discuss militarised masculinities is to exchange stories between diverse groups of men about how violent conflict has affected them negatively, resulting in, for example, high-risk behaviours and substance abuse. In Kashmir and the Pacific, these discussions helped participants explore the shared suffering that results from militarised masculinities (shared by most men, yet not equal to the effects experienced by women and SGM); and/or recognise and examine the shared benefits of gender equality. Building on this common understanding, we saw that carefully facilitated discussions can then expose the oppressive nature of the patriarchal system to men and help them understand its different effects on women, men and SGM.

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**BOX 3: NORTHERN NIGERIA**

In northern Nigeria, Conciliation Resources worked for four years with the same communities and partners before starting to work directly on masculinities. Masculinities was not introduced as a separate programme, but slowly integrated into community peacebuilding dialogues on reintegration of people formerly associated with Boko Haram. This meant asking new questions about the role of men and women during the conflict, which resulted in examining social norms around gender. Our colleague from the West Africa team noted: “Communities are advancing the issue and are driving the conversations. We did not use a quota system to force representation, but just started to integrate questions about the role of men and women into existing dialogues. People will go in the direction that you question them. We would have had pushback if at any point we were perceived as trying to change the culture”.

The trust between the communities and our team, and the participatory approach used, allowed us to gradually explore militarised masculinities in our work with ex-combatants without blaming particular groups or individuals. We celebrated positive aspects of local masculinity and femininity during cultural festivals, but also used these moments to question gender relations and emerging gendered issues. Our approach led to the integration of masculinities into discussions where we could critique male behaviour and the masculine culture within armed groups and work with leaders to highlight constructive male roles.
4. Working on security and justice and providing opportunities for constructive male roles can help to counter the link between masculinities and violent conflict

By understanding how and why male roles narrow during conflict, peacebuilding organisations can provide spaces to explore the diverse roles of men and highlight how men can perform constructive masculine roles, especially through peacebuilding activities. This may require tailoring existing peacebuilding activities towards inclusion of young men vulnerable to joining armed groups, and providing them with alternative skills and the opportunities to use these.

Militarised masculinities are emphasised and triggered by violent conflict, but the drivers are also present in relatively peaceful contexts. In northern Nigeria, for example, bride prices and dowries were unattainable for young men during the height of the conflict. Their inability to marry locked them into a perpetual adolescence, a state they could only escape from by joining armed groups.

In less violent contexts, militarised masculinity can be relatively contained, confined to arenas where violence is permissible or overlooked, like the military, police, criminal activity and organised sports. The relative absence of violence allows most men to perform their masculinity in more mundane and constructive ways, through professional, academic or sporting success, marriage and caregiving. But armed violence prevents many of these constructive versions of masculinity, particularly as jobs dwindle, schools close, sporting events are cancelled, and families are separated, displaced or killed. As opportunities for some male roles disappear, others are emphasised: vengeance, and ‘protecting’ the community through armed opposition, often dominates.

The triggering of militarised masculinity is particularly stark when violence is committed with impunity, where state and informal political structures are unrepresentative, and when nonviolent recourse for violence is unavailable. The absence of rule of law or legitimate community justice mechanisms can result in a spiral of militarised male violence. When militaries and armed groups rampage, steal or rape with impunity, male members of the community are expected to take matters into their own hands. Communities demand that men, and especially young men, engage in revenge killings and vigilantism. Oppression and dominance facilitated by violent masculinity creates resistance through more violent masculinity. This cycle has detrimental effects for women and girls primarily, but also for boys, men and SGM.

This causality – between inadequate and unjust formal and informal security and justice institutions, and the intensification of militarised masculinity – has important implications for gender-transformative peacebuilding. It highlights the links between governance programmes and masculinities programming in peacebuilding, and links initiatives for gender justice to other forms of justice. To address the complex connections between men and violence, it is important to shift destructive gender norms and embed this change in a broader effort for inclusive and sustainable peace.
BOX 4: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Conciliation Resources’ work in northeastern DRC revealed that families, communities and religious institutions see young men as protectors of land and community. Youth who did not participate in violence were seen as “useless” to the community. Rather than publicly challenging the role of men as protectors, we worked with our partners to look for alternative ways for young men to fulfil this role. Together we trained groups of young men, and subsequently young women, to mediate localised land conflicts and to protect their land and communities without reverting to violence.

At the beginning of our engagement these peacebuilding activities were not seen to be masculine, and therefore could not meet young men’s culturally proscribed obligations as community protectors. Yet over an 18-month timeframe, the young men who had been trained had successfully mediated conflicts and were recognised as providing a new form of protection for their communities. The mediation of land conflicts, rather than participation in the violent struggle over land, slowly served as an alternative way to be a man.

Our success in working with young men allowed us to further question how communities understood gender roles, as we knew that framing men as primary protectors of land, community, women and children might still enforce gender inequality. We asked communities to include women in the mediation training; this served as an entry point for women to participate in formerly male decision-making processes, challenging gender norms on a smaller scale.
BOX 5: MASCULINITIES, NATION AND RESISTANCE IN KASHMIR

Kashmir is one of the most militarised regions in the world. Conciliation Resources has worked for over a decade to support inclusion of Kashmiri voices into the processes of peacebuilding. The highly militarised context, and resistance to it, has reinforced militarised masculinities, with harmful effects on gender equality. Space for peacebuilding is limited, and gender is seen as a controversial topic by local communities – one that quickly closes down conversations. Yet our experience has shown that carefully planned and participatory research on masculinities and violence, led by our partners, can reopen challenging conversations on peace, security and the role of gender.

The everyday normalisation of violence in Kashmir primarily arises from the long conflict between India and Pakistan as well as from various forms of communal strife on either side of the Line of Control. Masculine identities are influenced by many factors, including a highly securitised environment and ongoing armed conflict. This shapes gendered identities in young Kashmiri men who, according to our workshop participants, feel powerless and emasculated. These feelings can trigger, and be a cause of, increased levels of domestic violence, as they sustain more belligerent behaviours. As a partner in Kashmir explained: "Using force becomes the dominant model. Taking up arms becomes the dominant model".

In workshops, male participants acknowledged that these militarised masculinities had harmful impacts on women, and also restrict equitable life choices for men and women alike. The masculinities conversations in the workshops created a sense of solidarity between male and female participants and provided a constructive entry point to discuss otherwise challenging subjects, such as women’s inclusion in peace processes.
CONCLUSION

Conciliation Resources’ work on masculinities has been very useful for progressing and deepening our work on gender equality and peacebuilding. In some places it has helped to restart or unstick the difficult conversations we have when integrating gender into peacebuilding. A focus on masculinities, violence and peacebuilding also offers us two related insights going forward.

First, incorporating masculinities into our broader approach on gender, peace and security offered a series of potential policy and programming entry points. Contemporary peacebuilding is based on the recognition that violence is complex and multifaceted. Violence occurs not only on the battlefield, but includes the invisible violence within households and the violence that results from unequal political, economic and justice systems. Taking an intersectional approach to gender-sensitive conflict analysis has helped us understand the norms and institutions associated with violent and militarised masculinity, identify the drivers of structural violence, and find multiple entry points, from individual to global levels, to address this violence. If done well, examining masculinities can shift tense relationships and open conversations on gender in the contexts in which we work, that in turn opens new possibilities to support more inclusive and sustained peace processes. Our role is to provide support and accompany this highly contextualised process with our partners.

Second, the idea that patriarchal violence lies on a continuum that stretches across multiple levels of society requires a review of our peacebuilding partnerships. Working in a more interconnected way does not mean that peacebuilding organisations need to fundamentally change their mandates. But it should mean strengthening alliances and networks with organisations that work on gender equality at individual and community levels, and amplifying and connecting their efforts to broader WPS policy and institutional reforms – in particular, efforts to change the military institutions and armed groups that drive violent norms associated with militarised masculinities. By lending their voice to global feminist foreign policy and anti-militarism movements, peacebuilding organisations can also promote local and national level change.
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Conciliation Resources is an international organisation committed to stopping violent conflict and creating more peaceful societies. We work with people impacted by war and violence, bringing diverse voices together to make change that lasts.

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