PILOT STUDY REPORT

Peace, Gender & Care
in Cambodia

June 2025

WOMEN PEACE MAKERS

GPS — MONASH GLOBAL PEACE & SECURITY CENTRE

MONASH University

Pilot Study Report
Peace, Gender & Care
in Cambodia

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Overview

This Report presents the findings of a Pilot Study (2024-2025) on Peace, Gender and Care in Cambodia, co-led by Women Peace Makers (WPM), Cambodia, and the Monash Global Peace and Security centre (Monash GPS) of Monash University, Australia.

In December 2024, WPM and Monash GPS held several meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the National Peacekeeping Force, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC) and UN Women Cambodia as well as a full-day workshop with representatives of 14 non-governmental organisations, international organisations, including the UN, and other peacebuilding actors across Cambodia (see Annex 1). The aims of these consultations were to:

- Reflect on the impact of caring responsibilities on the meaningful participation of women in peace and security work, namely peace-building and peacekeeping.

- Discuss the interconnections between gender, care and peace-building, and discuss the utility of employing a care lens in peace-building and peacekeeping policy and practice.

- Provide input to key stakeholders discussing the development of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP) regarding the intersection of gender, care and peacebuilding, particularly the impact of unpaid care work on the participation of women and the effectiveness of security and peace programming, policy and practice.

This Report presents findings from these consultations. It first provides an overview of the WPS agenda and global efforts to advance the meaningful participation of women in peace and security work. It then considers the role of unpaid care work in driving women's underrepresentation in peace and security work, locating these discussions in the Cambodian context. The Report proposes aligning efforts to advance the WPS agenda and work to support carer-givers. It argues that this can help address barriers to women's participation and advance efforts to progress peace, security and development.

This is an opportune moment to embed an ethics of care into efforts to implement the WPS agenda and progress towards gender equality, given current discussions in Cambodia regarding the development of a WPS NAP and, simultaneously, efforts to develop a Care Economy Framework and Action Plan.

Cambodia's commitment to WPS is evidenced in the adoption of a Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace, and Security by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2022, under Cambodia's Chairmanship (ASEAN 2022). It's commitment to care and supporting those with caring responsibilities is further demonstrated in two recent awards received by MoWA, namely, the 2024 ASEAN Care Economy Recognition Award and the 2024 Asia Pacific Care Champion. These commitments are further underpinned by Cambodia's dedication to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS); of most relevance here are Goals 5 on Gender Equality and 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

It is hoped that this Pilot Study will assist in positioning Cambodia at the forefront of efforts to advance peacebuilding innovation and success, implement the WPS agenda, and progress towards the SDGs, including by responding to the call to recognise, value and support care work (SDG Target 5.4).

" ... when I was sent there [to the peacekeeping mission], a lot of people asked [me] why you left your daughter when she was so young? You should be [home] taking care of the baby. Why you must leave?"

— a participant

Women's Participation in Peace and Security Work

Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is comprised of 10 UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs). The first UNSCR (1325) was adopted in 2000. It is the first resolution to link women to the peace and security agenda and acknowledge that armed conflicts have unique impacts on women and girls. It also acknowledges the need for women's full, equal, active, effective and meaningful participation in all efforts to build and sustain peace, including conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction. UNSCR 1325 also

urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts, and calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV).

The WPS agenda is underpinned by 4 pillars, which include the prevention of violence against women and girls in conflict contexts, the participation of women in peace and security efforts, the protection of women and girls from GBSV, and relief and recovery efforts that address the needs of women, as shown in Figure 1.
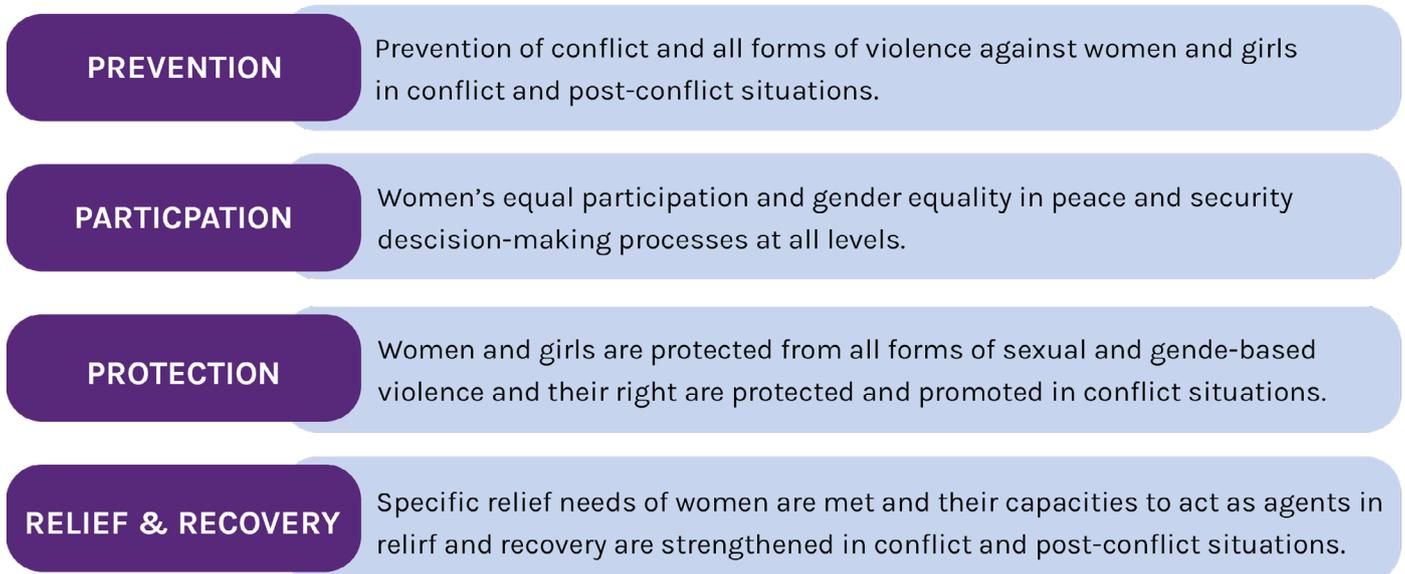
PREVENTION: Prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.

PARTICPATION: Women's equal participation and gender equality in peace and security descision-making processes at all levels.

PROTECTION: Women and girls are protected from all forms of sexual and gende-based violence and their right are protected and promoted in conflict situations.

RELIEF & RECOVERY: Specific relief needs of women are met and their capacities to act as agents in relirf and recovery are strengthened in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Figure 1: The 4 Pillars of the WPS Agenda

Women's Meaningful Participation

There are several UN resolutions on women's active and effective participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding, including:

UNSCR 1325 (2000), 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2493 (2019). UNSRC 1325 recognises that ensuring women's full participation in peace processes "can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security". It also emphasises the importance of women's

participation in decision-making roles in conflict resolution and peace processes. This is critical and underscores that participation must be "meaningful" and cannot be reduced to tokenism or side-lined to marginal or gender-normative roles. Nor can participation be reduced to a tick-box exercise or be ad-hoc in nature, but must be guaranteed by institutional arrangements, commitment and funding. For participation to be meaningful, women should be represented across all sectors, roles and ranks/levels of seniority and in significant number. Where only a few women are engaged in efforts to build and sustain peace and security, or where they are only represented at junior levels, their influence and ability to inform decision-making will be limited.

It must also be recognised that women are not a homogenous group, and so a diversity of women must participate, representing different and, especially, marginalised groups. In this regard, it is important that an intersectional approach is taken to ensuring participation, to enable women across ethnic, racial, class, residential and other identity groups to fully and actively participate. Finally, structural change is required to ensure that participation is meaningful, and women are able to have influence and inform decisions. This may require work to reform or amend legislation, policy, structures and practices involved in efforts to build and sustain peace and security (see Figure 2).
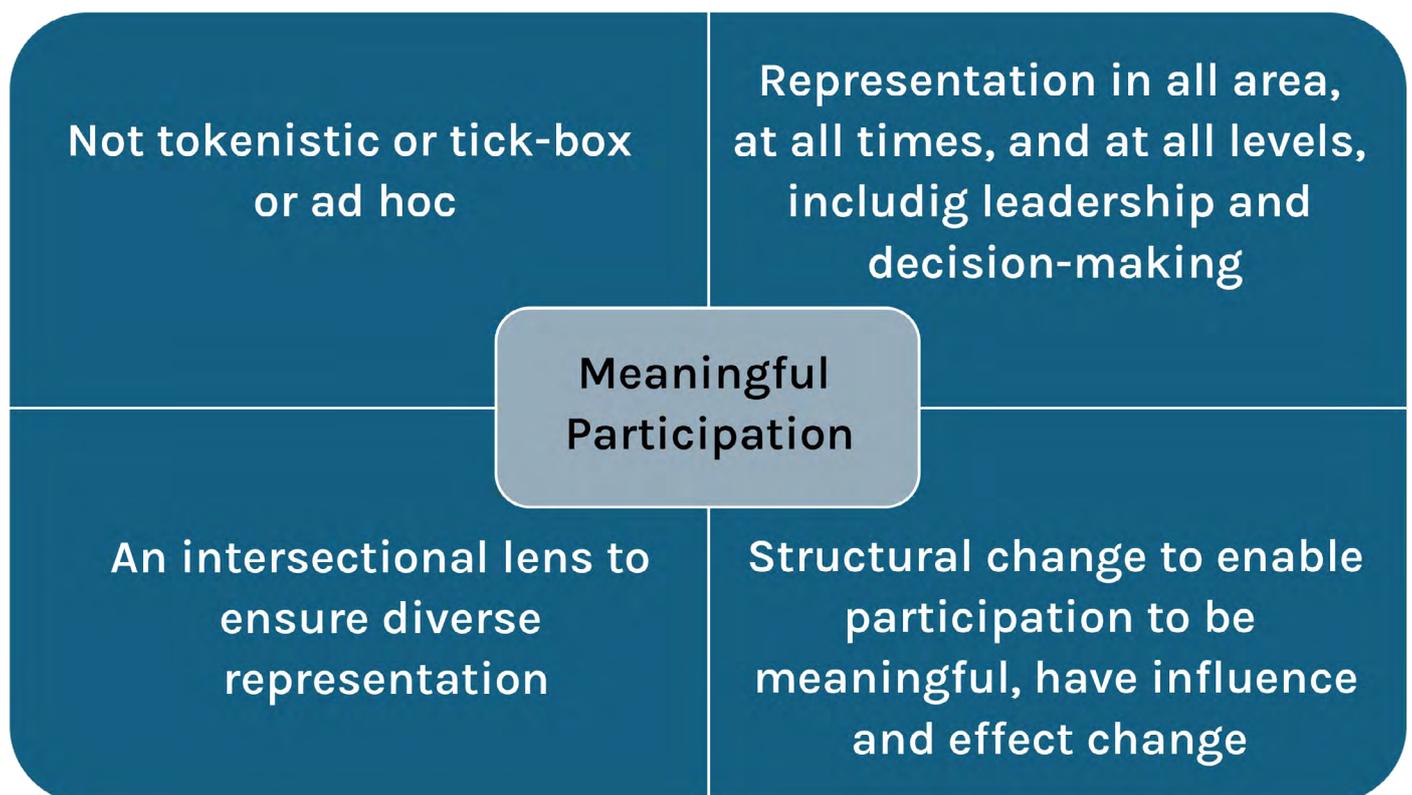
Not tokenistic or tick-box or ad hoc	Representation in all area, at all times, and at all levels, includig leadership and decision-making
Meaningful Participation	
An intersectional lens to ensure diverse representation	Structural change to enable participation to be meaningful, have influence and effect change

Figure 2: What Does Meaningful Participation Mean?

The Importance of Participation

Women's participation in efforts to build and sustain peace and security is important, not least, because it can increase the likelihood that such efforts will be effective, as recognised by UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda. UNSCR 2538 (2020), which is the first WPS resolution to focus exclusively on women peacekeepers, also recognises "the indispensable role of women in increasing the overall performance and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations". The critical importance of women's participation is also corroborated by empirical evidence and scholarship, which demonstrates that women's participation

in peace processes, for instance, is critical to building sustainable peace (Davies and True, 2018; Duncanson, 2016; Shepherd, 2017). Scholarship on gender inclusive and responsive peacebuilding highlights the adverse impact on responsiveness of a narrow demographic engaged in peace and security efforts, who are less likely to reach out to, understand and, thus, respond to the needs of those who do not share similar views and similar backgrounds (Gordon, McHugh and Townsley 2020).

The participation of women in peace and security work can better ensure the specific experiences and needs of women are known and responded to. It is widely known that women and girls have unique needs during and in the aftermath conflict and crisis: the participation of women increases the likelihood that these needs will be better known, understood and responded to. This is underscored by a wealth of scholarship that underscores the importance of inclusive and, thereby, responsive efforts to build and sustain peace and security (Gordon and Lee-Koo 2021; Shepherd 2017).

Women's participation also increases the effectiveness of efforts to build and sustain peace and security because when these efforts are representative of the communities they work in and for, they are more likely to enjoy public confidence and trust (Gordon 2014). The participation of women also helps diversify the skills, knowledge, networks, and capabilities that can be drawn from to better respond to increasingly complex peace and security challenges (Gordon and Jones 2021; Dharmapuri 2011).

Finally, women's participation can help advance gender equality. This is important for equity reasons. It is also crucial as strong evidence shows how gender equality and peace are mutually supportive, and highlights the links between gender inequality, violence against women, and armed conflict (Caprioli

2005; Cockburn 2004; Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Tickner 1995). Underrepresentation of women reflects and sustains gender inequalities and gender power imbalances, which can sustain both public and private forms of violence. Underrepresentation of women can also harm organisational or mission credibility when, for instance, peace operations seek to advance gender equality.

Policy Framework and Global Efforts

There is increasing awareness of the importance of women's meaningful participation in peace and security efforts in both civilian and uniformed capacities. In the UN system, for instance, a UN System-wide Gender Parity Strategy was adopted in 2017 (UN 2017). This Strategy sets targets for equal representation of women and men, with specific commitments in the areas of leadership and accountability; senior management; recruitment and retention; creating an enabling environment; and field operations. The aim of the Strategy is not simply to reach quantitative goals, but to foster an inclusive workplace and transform "the institutional culture so that the Organization can fully deliver on its mandate" (UN 2025a). As of January 2025, gender parity has been reached in the senior management group of the Secretary General and among Resident Coordinators, and all Secretariat units have developed their own implementation plans to achieve parity (UN 2025b).

In terms of uniformed women's participation in peace operations, this importance is underpinned by the WPS agenda and UNSCR 2538 (2020 para 2g), which:

Encourages Member States to develop strategies and measures to increase the deployment of uniformed women to peacekeeping operations, including by...

(a) Disseminating information about and providing access to deployment opportunities for women personnel, including for senior positions;
(b) Providing access to training for uniformed women personnel, and ensuring that trained uniformed women are deployed for peacekeeping operations;
(c) Developing a national database of trained women personnel interested in and available for nomination and deployment;
(d) Identifying and addressing barriers in the recruitment, deployment, and promotion of uniformed women peacekeepers;
(e) Considering ways, as appropriate, to increase the participation of women in national militaries and police;
(f) Supporting the capacities of regional organisations in training uniformed women;
(g) Taking measures to provide support and incentives including child care and other relevant needs.

WPS is also a core cross-cutting theme in the UN's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Declaration of Shared Commitments (UNDPO 2018a) and central to the A4P Implementation Strategy (A4P+ 2021-23, UNDPO 2021), which has prioritised the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peace operations and the greater understanding of barriers they face (A4P+ Deliverable 3.1.1.).

Recognising the importance of women's meaningful participation in peace operations, the UN also launched a Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018-2028), following its 2017 System-wide Gender Parity Strategy (UNDPO 2018b). The Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy aims to create an enabling environment for the meaningful participation of uniformed women personnel in peacekeeping, recognised as critical to peacekeeping success but still wanting. The UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy sets targets for women in peacekeeping and outlines how the UN plans to meet those goals. It aims to reach the following numbers by 2028:

- 15% female military peacekeepers in troop contingents
- 20% female police in formed police units (FPU)
- 25% female military observers (MEOM) and staff officers (SO)
- 30% individual police officers (IPO).

Current Status

However, despite the increasing awareness of the importance of women's meaningful participation, women are still significantly underrepresented in peace operations, particularly uniformed women where progress towards gender parity goals has been more challenging.

There have been some recent advancements with the proportion of women among troops doubling over the last six years (from 3.7 percent in February 2018 – UNDPO 2025). However, the numbers remain low and the pace of change slow. The latest statistics from United Nations Department of Peace Operations UNDPO (2025b) show that women comprise only 7.8% of uniformed personnel in UN peace operations.

As the end of 2024, 2024 targets were reached for military observers, staff officers and police, but did not reach the target of 11% for troops, which constitute by far the largest number of uniformed personnel in peace operations. According to latest data from the Elsie Initiative Fund and UNDPO, as of 31 January 2025, the number of women among troops was 4,251 constituting 8.1% - in December 2024 it was 4,296 constituting 8.2% and

requiring a further 1,461 women to reach the year's target of 11% (see Figure 3, which shows current statistics compared with targets set by the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy).
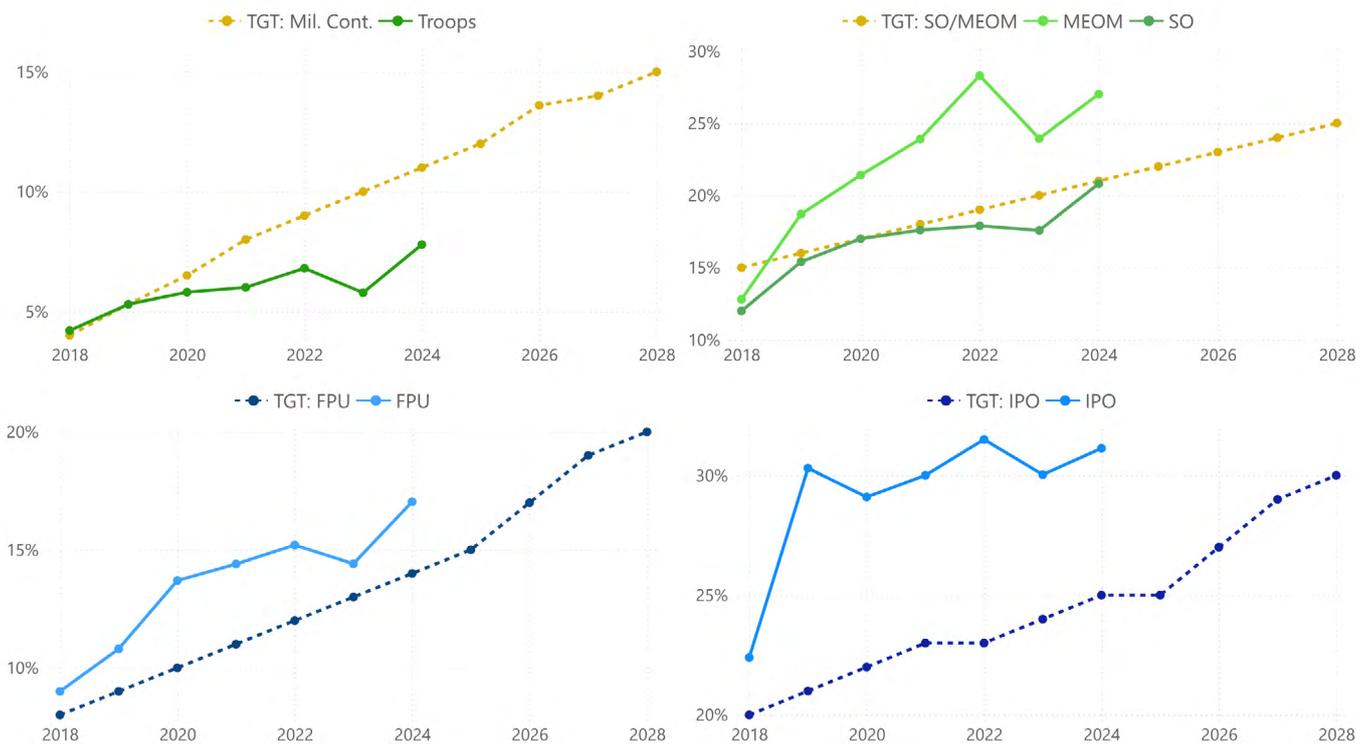

Figure 3: UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy: Targets & Results (Elsie Initiative Fund 2025; UNDPO 2025b)

Among civilians engaged in formal peace efforts, the representation of women is greater, with women comprising 46% of all international staff across the UN Secretariat as of January 2025, although the propo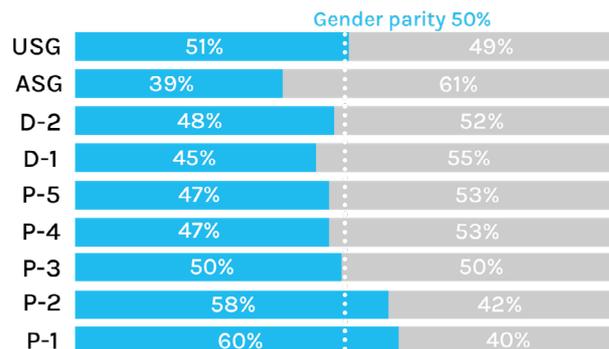rtion drops to 35% in field entities (UN 2025b, see Figure 4). Part of the discrepancy between the representation of women among civilian and uniformed personnel is due to the gender norms that operate within the security sector, particularly the male-dominated institutions of the armed forces and police.
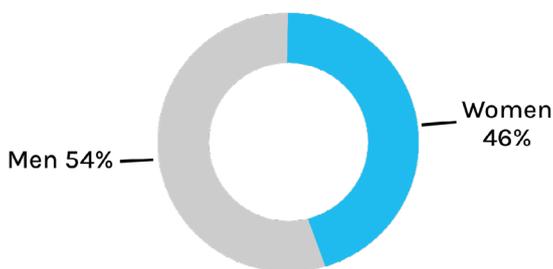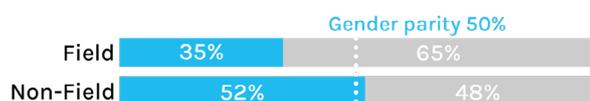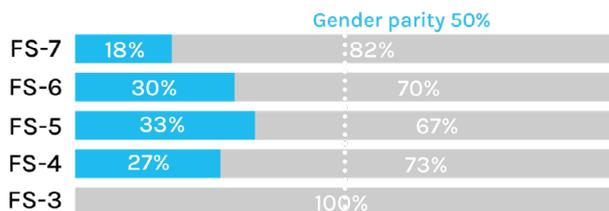

Figure 4: UN Secretariat Gender Parity Dashboard (UN 2025b)

Despite some progress, particularly among civilians engaged in peace and security work, there remain significant barriers to women's full and equal participation. Research led by Monash GPS has revealed that women peacebuilders often find it difficult to remain within or return to the sector when they become mothers, and often feel less valued by management and colleagues (Gordon and Lowe 2024). The research led by Monash GPS was conducted with senior representatives of organisations engaged in peacebuilding (United Nations (UN) Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), UNDPO, UN Women, International Peace Institute (IPI), Saferworld and Swisspeace), the Government of Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) and other universities (RMIT, Warwick, Sydney and Queensland). The research project was launched on the inaugural International Day of Care and Support (29 October 2023) and surveyed 146 peacebuilders working in 81 countries. The survey revealed that 61% of respondents (62% women, 60% men) consider it is difficult for people with caring responsibilities to work in the sector (Gordon and Lowe 2024). Roughly a third of respondents (32%) said that it depends, noting such factors as the type of caring responsibilities, location and type of work, support system, whether flexible work hours and working modalities are accessible, the individual carer and "the level of compromise one is comfortable with" (survey respondent) (Figure 5).
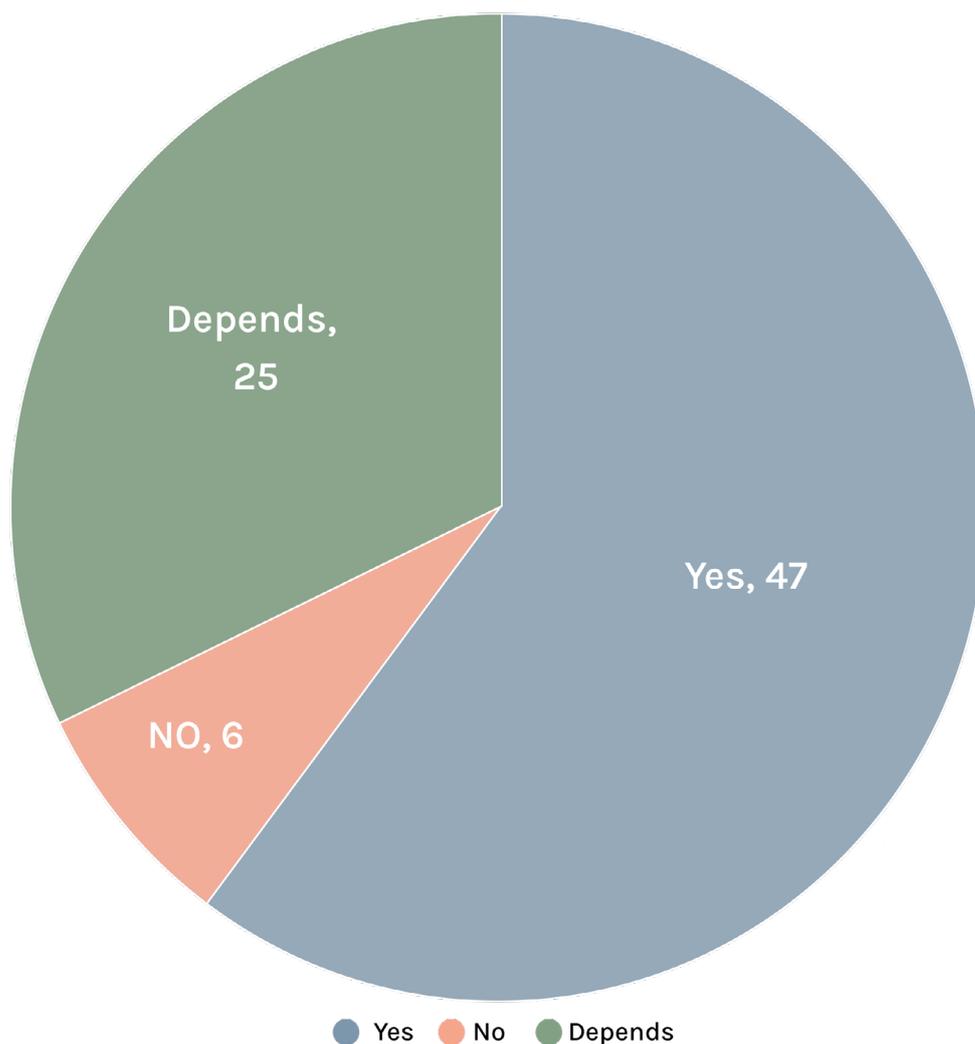

Figure 5: Do you think it is difficult for people with caring responsibilities to work in the peacebuilding sector? (n=77) (Gordon and Lowe 2024)

Most respondents also said all aspects of their work are impacted due to their caring

61% said it is difficult for people with caring resposibilities to work in the sector

78% had to leave or change their work in the peacebuilding sector (a further 9% said "no, but I have considered it")

89% said their career progression had beed impacted (27% said it had been "signitficantly" impacted)

70% said training opportunities had been impacted (17% said they had been "significantly" impacted

80% said networking opportunities had been impacted (14% said they had been "significantly" impacted)

88% said deployment opportunities or where they could work had been impacted (41% said they had been "significantly" impacted)

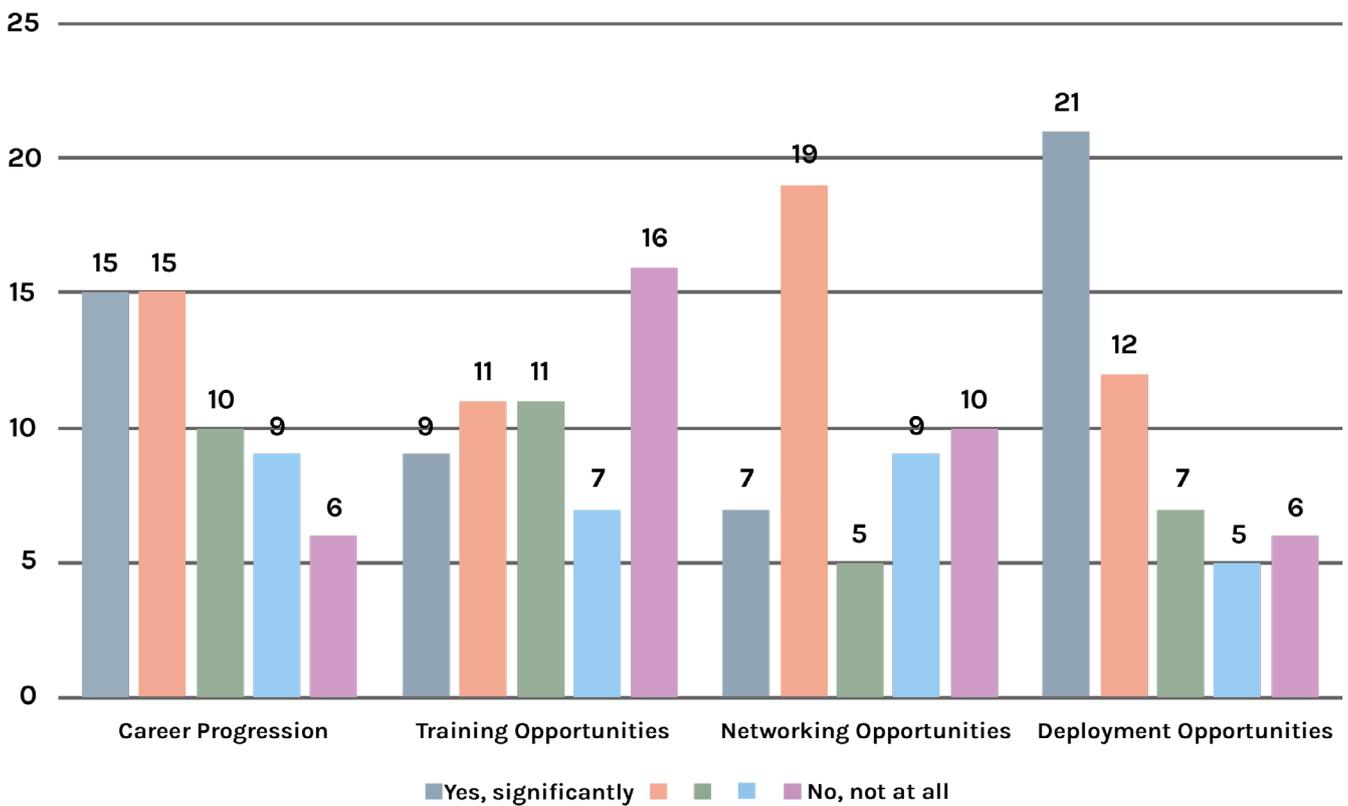Figure 6: The impact of caring responsibilities on peacebuilders (Gordon and Lowe 2024)

Figure 7: Have your caring responsibilities impacted your career progression (n=56), training opportunities (n=54), networking opportunities (n=50), deployment opportunities? (n=51, respondents could provide more than once response) (Gordon and Lowe 2024)

responsibilities (Figures 6 and 7):

Most survey respondents (78% - 84% women, 56% men) said that they had to leave or change their work in the peacebuilding sector because of their caring responsibili-ties. Many said they had to move locations (25%), or moved to home-based work (22%), a position that did not require much travel (25%) or part-time work (13%), while 6% left the sector entirely (see Figure 7).
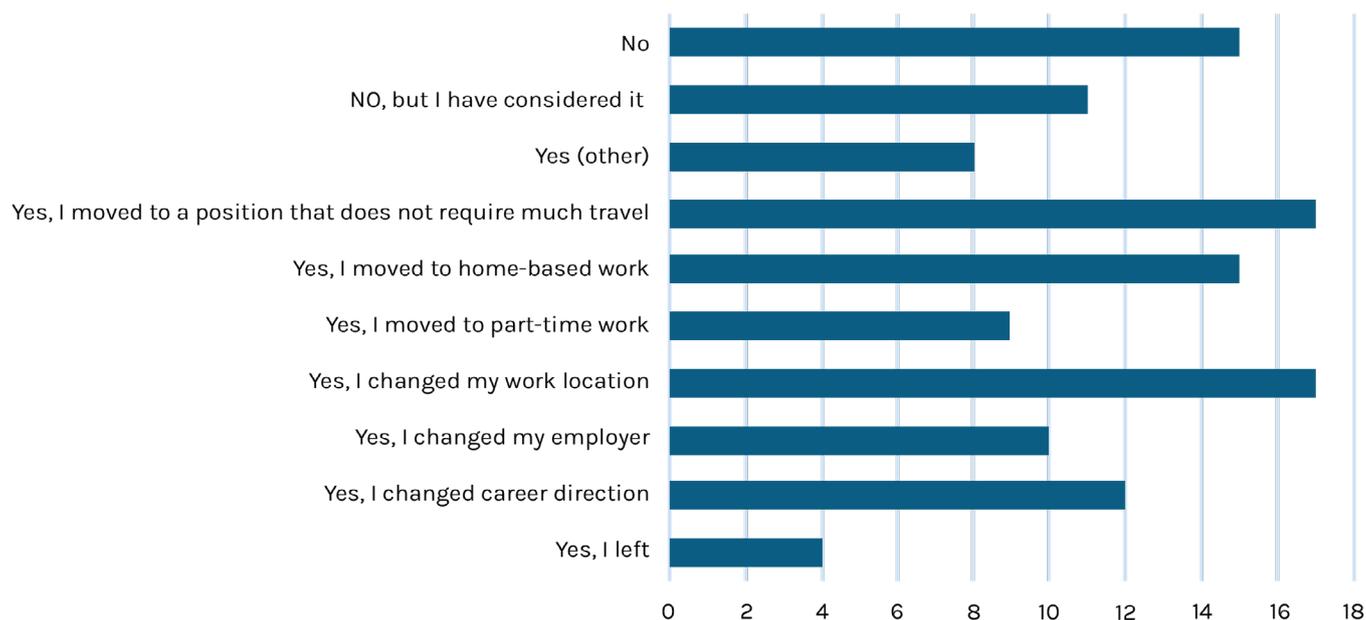

Figure 8: Have you had to leave or change your work in the peacebuilding sector because of your caring responsibilities (n=68, respondents could provide more than once response) (Gordon and Lowe 2024)

Previous research conducted by Monash GPS and the University of Warwick (Gordon and Jones 2021; Jones and Gordon 2020) has revealed similar findings. From a global survey of peacebuilding and development practitioners with caring responsibilities administered in 2020:

- 92% said that their caring responsi-bilities had impacted their work in the sector
- 80% said their caring responsibilities hindered career progression and curtailed promotion opportunities
- Only 3% said that they did not have to leave or change their career as a result of their caring responsibilities
- Only 1% said that it is not difficult for people with caring responsibilities to work in the sector

Women are more likely to be impacted because of gender expectations around unpaid care work, with women tending to take on the bulk of unpaid care work and more likely to be sole or primary carers (Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas, 2014), with some women facing more difficulties than others depending on such factors as type of employ-ment contract, socio-economic status, race, cultural identity and context.

This research also found that lack of organisational support for care-givers not only adversely impacts individual care-givers, but peacebuilding efforts were also harmed because it:

- **Limits organisational diversity, inclusion, and resilience,** which can compromise programmatic responsiveness and organisational effectiveness
- **Hinders the representation of women,** given the gendered nature of care work
- **Harms the well-being of all staff** - men, women, and people of diverse

gender identities – who may be torn between their caring and paid work responsibilities (for example, choosing not to have a family or being separated from their family for extended periods of time)

- **Sustains harmful workplace cultures,** which can lead to stress, burnout, and safeguarding concerns that may be linked to undervaluing care and disconnection from caring relationships

- **Communicates lack of commitment to care,** including self-care and care for others

- Consequently, and critically, **undermines the effectiveness of peacebuilding** (Monash GPS et al. 2023: 1)

Survey respondents also shared insights on the impacts that limited support for care-giv-

I think the impact is huge - not only internally in the sector itself (work culture that are not human-focused, designed on the assumption of staff being 100% flexible, making it very difficult for staff to juggle between familial and professional responsibilities) but also in the kind of work that is being performed. Many of the staff are not fulfilled in the private lives which has an impact on their work and their ability to feel empathy, whether for their colleagues or for people they work with.

Fewer people with caring responsibilities exacerbates the unspoken expextations of self sacrifice and long hours. There is less balance. Having a careers perspective also adds compassion and empathy to the plight of others.

… perpetuates gender inequality and limits diversitu in the peacebuilding sector, which means margunalisation or lack of consideration of certain under-represented groups or unique perspectives

… very different understanding of what is required to build peace or trusted personal relationships. It limits the important perspectives of women and carers in decisions and priorities, silencing a huge part of tje workforce with much experience to share.

How can we care for others if we ourselves are not cared for or protected?

… to perform weel at your job, in the long term, you need to be wll and exercise self-care.

… to be able to care for others, you need to be well and care for yourself first.

ers in the sector had (Gordon and Lowe 2024: Executive Summary):

Monash GPS is also currently leading a 3-year research project on the impact of caring responsibilities on uniformed women's participation in UN peace operations for the Government of Canada as part of the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations (2023-26). This research is investigating the barriers to the meaningful participation of women in UN peace

operations and in the security institutions of Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs).

Initial findings suggest that chief among these barriers is the lack of support, policies and structures to enable the recruitment, retention, promotion, training and deployment of personnel with primary or sole caring responsibilities, principally caring for children. Workplace cultures and gender normative assumptions about motherhood, care and security work compound these barriers. The research project hypothesises that the marginalization of women with caring responsibilities from security institutions and UN peace operations adversely impacts organizational and operational effectiveness, by narrowing the diversity of deployed military and police personnel, and reducing the skillset, knowledge and ways of thinking available to security institutions and peace operations. It can also compromise efforts to advance gender equality within and through peace operations, adversely impacting efforts to build sustainable peace that is representative of, and responsive to, the needs of diverse groups. Moreover, the marginalization of women with caring responsibilities also communicates that the skills associated with care, including care for others and self-care, are not valued in security institutions or in peace operations.

These impacts affect how security and peace are conceptualized, whose security is prioritized, and the type of peace that is built. Where security institutions and peace operations are less inclusive and less diverse, their operations are less likely to be responsive to a diversity of needs and less able to enjoy broad-based public confidence and trust. Where security institutions and peace operations cannot utilize a diversity of skillsets, knowledge and ways of thinking, they have less capacity to respond to a range of complex and dynamic challenges. Where security institutions and peace operations are not fully committed to gender equality, their credibility suffers when they advocate for the advancement of gender equality in peace operations. This can also compromise their efforts to advance security and build sustainable peace, given the positive correlation between gender equality and peaceful societies (Caprioli 2005; Cockburn 2004; Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Tickner 1995). Moreover, where security institutions and peace operations do not communicate a commitment to an ethics of care, including the care needs and caring responsibilities of its personnel, the well-being of all staff can suffer. This can lead to stress and burnout, and be a contributing factor in sexual exploitation and abuse and other safeguarding scandals that have blighted the work of militaries and police organizations engaged in peace operations (Gordon, 2022; Jones and Gordon 2020; Gordon and Lowe 2024)

The project's Early Outputs, however, reveal, many examples of good practice that can be shared and built upon globally (Gordon

2024b; Fosu et al. 2024; Fosu et al. 2024; Lowe and Gordon 2024).

Barriers to Meaningful Participation

While it is broadly recognised that women's meaningful participation in peace and security efforts is critical to effectiveness, women continue to be marginalised, especially in senior roles. This is because of organisational, practical, work culture, and gender normative barriers.

Among uniformed personnel, a key factor in the underrepresentation of women in UN peace operations is their underrepresentation in the security sector institutions of T/PCCs. Reasons vary between countries but are often related to cultural norms and gender normative assumptions around who has the requisite skills and knowledge to work in the security sector, particularly in combat roles in the military or frontline public order roles in the police. Gender bias in security sector institutions can also adversely impact women's participation, particularly if deployment opportunities or information about them are restricted to male personnel (UN 2018). Gender

bias as well as gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence can also lead to women choosing not to be deployed or self-de-mobilising from security sector institutions (Gordon 2022, 2024a)
.

Other barriers to participation in peace operations have been identified in the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Methodology, developed by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), Cornell University, and others, with the support of Global Affairs Canada and the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Oper-ations. These barriers include deployment criteria and selection, accommodation, and infrastructure on peace operations that may not be designed to meet women's needs, and potentially negative experiences – including sexual harassment and sexual violence – In peace operations that can influence women's decisions to deploy.

A significant but overlooked barrier to the underrepresentation of women in efforts to build and sustain peace and security is unpaid care work, which the following section discusses.

"... first of all, when they see military police car, they don't like you. They don't like you at all. They hate [military police] ... but when they saw me as a woman with a ponytail, they changed [their attitude]. They approached me, especially the local kids."

– a participant

Unpaid Care Work

Caring responsibilities refers to the essential – and usually unpaid – activities that care-givers undertake for others, and themselves, in response to a specific need. Such responsibilities typically include caring for children and other family members, and can include practical tasks such as cooking or housework, or providing physical and personal care for someone, such as helping someone bathe, eat or get dressed. While recognising the gendered nature of care work – with women more likely to shoulder most of the responsibility – it is acknowledged that men, women, and people of diverse gender identities have caring responsibilities, and are impacted when their caring responsibilities and care needs are overlooked or under-supported (Monash GPS et al. 2023).

The Importance of Unpaid Care Work to Societal Peace, Well-Being and Prosperity

Unpaid care work is critical to sustaining the well-being and survival of families, communities and societies. The importance of unpaid care work becomes more pronounced during times of conflict and crisis (Rai, True and Tanyag 2019). The critical importance of unpaid care work to societal peace and security was brought to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, the pandemic also marked a shift in the recognition of the weight and importance of unpaid care work. There has been increased awareness of the load that, typically, women carry in fulfilling caring responsibilities, and the impact it can have upon them, as well as a deeper appreciation of the critical importance of this work.

In turn, this has led to global conversations and policy initiatives endeavouring to better support care-givers. Nonetheless, unpaid care work remains undervalued and under-supported.

The Impact on Security when Unpaid Care Work is Undervalued

The highly gendered, undervalued and unsupported nature of unpaid care work – while critical to survival and well-being of families, communities and societies – invariably depletes the resources of those who carry out unpaid care work (typically women and girls), hinders their engagement in public and political life (including engagement in peace and security work), and often exposes them to other threats (including economic insecurity). It is a key barrier to women's participation and advancement in the paid labour force (Seewald 2022), contributing to their economic insecurity and thwarting education and career aspirations. It can also adversely impact their physical and mental health when the burden of unpaid care work takes its toll. It is, thus, a key driver of gender inequality, undermining physical and economic security, impacting access to paid employment and education, and marginalising from decision-making in public and political life.

It hinders efforts to increase the meaningful participation of women in peace and security work, including in conflict prevention, conflict response, peacebuilding, and recovery and relief efforts. Specifically, it limits the time and resources available to women to engage in efforts to build and

sustain peace and security. This is compounded by gender normative assumptions about peace and security work, being a predominantly masculine domain. It is further compounded by maternal bias, with research evidence pointing to assumptions that women with children (or who may have children) have less capability, commitment and skills than their male counterparts (Gordon and Lowe 2024).

To summarise and recap some of the key findings of recent research, the marginalisation of women with caring responsibilities hinders efforts to advance peace and security because it compromises efforts to achieve gender equality, recognising the correlation between gender equality and peaceful societies (Caprioli 2005; Cockburn 2004; Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Tickner 1995). It also constrains the diversity of organisations and processes engaged in efforts to build and sustain peace, which compromises the extent to which those efforts are responsive to a diversity of needs, enjoys broad-based public confidence and trust, and thereby the likelihood that such efforts will be successful. It further limits the diversity of knowledge, skills, capabilities and networks available to efforts to respond to challenges to peace and security. There is also emerging evidence to suggest that it also adversely impacts the workplace culture of organisations engaged in efforts to build and sustain peace, which can contribute to stress, burnout and safeguarding cases, which undermine the likely success of these efforts (Gordon, 2022; Jones and Gordon 2020; Gordon and Lowe 2024).

Unpaid Care Work as a Driver of Women's Under-representation in Peace & Security Work

A significant but overlooked barrier to the participation of women in efforts to build and sustain peace and security is unpaid care work. It is not simply the depletion of time and resources that marginalises women, but the lack of policies, structures, and processes to enable the recruitment, retention, promotion, training, and deployment of personnel with families or other caring responsibilities (Gordon 2022). As care work is typically regarded as a private matter (Piaget and Risler 2021), organisations engaged in peace and security work often do little to support the needs of people with caring responsibilities. Practical challenges associated with lack of organisational support include limited access to support networks and facilities to support carer-givers (such as child-care facilities and lactation rooms), as well as lack of flexitime or expectations of travel, long working hours and training out of office/school hours (such as in evenings, weekends or residential courses). In conflict and crisis contexts, for instance in peace operations, practical challenges can also include the difficulties of working in these environments, which are often insecure and lack basic amenities.

This marginalisation is compounded by workplace cultures that may not appeal to or be conducive to someone with caring responsibilities, as well as gender normative assumptions about the role and capabilities of mothers, with prevailing assumptions that mothers have less capacity and will not prioritise operational requirements (Jones and Gordon 2021; Gordon and Jones 2022).

Synergies Between Peace Work and Care Work

There are conceptual connections between care work and peace work, given both are highly gendered and critical to "survival and well-being" (Ibnouf 2020: 133; Held 2006; Neufeldt 2014; Ruddick 1990). Feminist International Relations scholarship has highlighted how care work is especially

vital during times of crisis and conflict and their immediate aftermath (Rai, True and Tanyag, 2019). Care work – beyond caring for children and other family members – has also been shown to "shape the political space in the midst of conflicts" through its capacity to be "a dynamic for processes of trust-building, community-building, and peaceful transformation" (Vaittinen et al. 2019: 270). Emerging scholarship on care praxis and peacebuilding has also shown how care work can help illuminate "different pathways for understanding the remaking of worlds in the wake of violence" including pathways that emphasise connectedness and relationality, and move away from individualistic and neo-liberal understandings of peace and conflict (Krystalli and Schulz, 2022). This emerging scholarship also highlights how opportunities to advance more meaningful, equitable and lasting peace and security are made available when care is taken seriously (Krystalli and Schulz, 2022; Gordon 2022).

The partial aim of this Pilot Study in Cambodia is to contribute to this emerging literature as well as test the utility of the concept of an ethics of care in peace work. This is intended to explore how to progress peacebuilding practice that is more inclusive and responsive, as well as cognisant of the interconnections between people and the importance of care, including self-care, care for others and duty of care.

"The purpose is about transformation! Transforming the negative gender norms [of care work as women's work] into something that is a shared responsibility among all genders… it's not about putting blame on anyone but it's about helping each other and making collective efforts where possible to make sure everyone can reach their full potential and thrive together. Not at the expense of or burden on anyone else."

- a participant

Peace, Gender and Care in Cambodia

The legacy of Cambodia's recent and violent past, including the Cambodian Civil War (1967–1975), genocidal Khmer Rouge regime (1975–1979), ongoing civil war, the peace process (1989-1993), and internal strife of Coup De Force (1997) (Chandler 2018), shapes Cambodia's socio-political landscape, including in terms of gender roles and women's participation in efforts to build and sustain peace and security. Cambodia has made significant strides to build peace, advance gender equality and other development goals, including by addressing the barriers that the gendered and undervalued nature of unpaid care work give rise to. However, there remain challenges, some of which can be addressed by bringing a care lens to peace and security.

Gender and Unpaid Care Work in Cambodia

Women undertake a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work globally. In Cambodia, this disproportionate load is especially acute. This disproportionate load increases among marginalised groups and during times of conflict and crisis, including during and in the aftermath of disasters and humanitarian crises.

According to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank (2024), Cambodian women shoulder, on average, 90% of unpaid care work. This is significantly higher than the global average of 76% (see also ILO 2018). Research undertaken by UN Women and the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver (2023) suggests that in Cambodia in 2023 women spent an average of 12.4% of their time engaged in unpaid care work, compared with men who spent 1.45% of their time. Globally, it is estimated that women spend 18% of their time doing unpaid care work, compared with men who spend an average 6.5% of their time (see Figure 9).
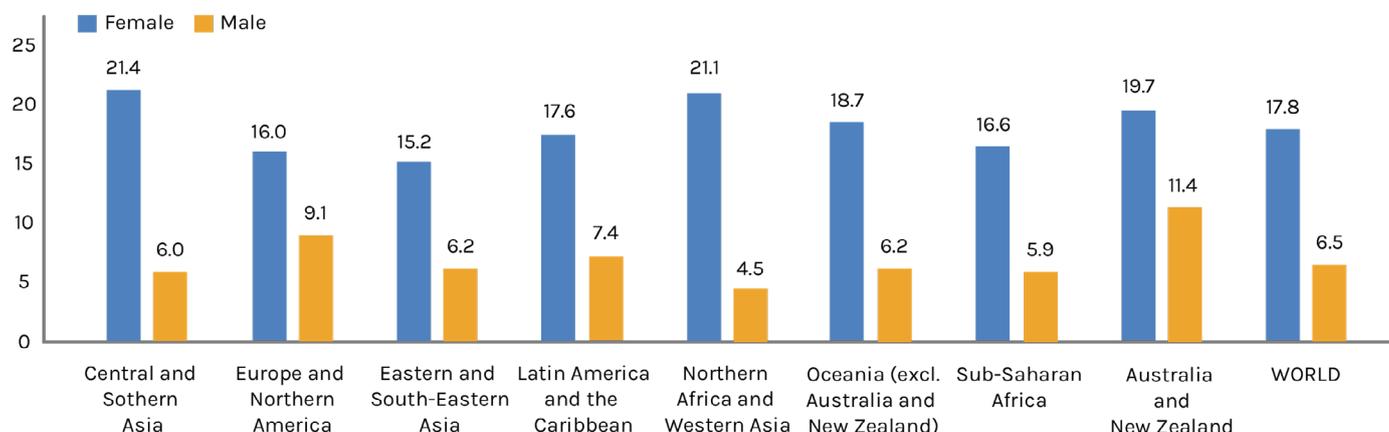

Figure 9: Average Time spent in unpaid care and domestic work, percent of a 24-hour day by region and sex, 2023 (UN Women and the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver 2023: 5)

In Cambodia, as elsewhere, unpaid care work is an essential yet virtually invisible component of the country's economy. In a recent survey investigating gender roles and unpaid care work in Cambodia, three-quarters of respondents (75%) said that unpaid care work is regarded by society as less important than paid work, although most agreed it should be shared equally by partners while recognising that it is not (Seewald 2022). Traditional gender norms and structural barriers resist efforts to distribute unpaid care work more fairly, while the unequal distribution is a key obstacle to advancing gender equality. This is important because of the positive correlation between peaceful societies and gender equality, and because of the huge financial and development benefits of gender equality to societies (ESCAP 2022).

The gender disparity in undertaking unpaid care work limits women's ability to participate in the formal economy, education, and political life, creating barriers to their empowerment and, by extension, to broader efforts to build and sustain peace and security. There are also financial implications for women, given they have less time to engage in paid work or education. In turn, this can impact their physical security, if they are less able to be financial independent or have the resources to access health care and medication, for instance. The depletion of resources (time, energy, finances) also impacts women's (and girls') mental and physical well-being. Scholarship on depletion through social reproduction (Rai, Hoskyns and Thomas 2014; Rai and Goldblatt 2020) highlights how these harms not only impact the carers, but also their families, communities and broader society, when they are less able to benefit from the engagement and resources of the carer. Scholarship has also highlighted how this depletion can also help sustain harmful gender biases (maternal bias) and stereotypes, including that mothers have less capacity, commitment or inclination to engage in professional work, including in the field of peace

and security (Burgess, 2013; Vermeij, 2020; Dunatchik and Özcan, 2021; Garcia-Lorenzo et al. 2023; Gordon, 2022, 2024; Jones and Gordon, 2021).

Paradoxically, while unpaid care work helps build and sustain peaceful societies, and is of especial importance during times of conflict and crisis (Rai, True and Tanyag 2019), the "care burden" placed upon women limits their ability to fully engage in formal peace processes. As a result, care-givers suffer, as do efforts to build and sustain peace and security. Moreover, formal efforts to build and sustain peace frequently overlook the importance of unpaid care work (and that it is a driver of gendered power inequalities and women's marginalisation in public and political life). Unpaid care work has been depoliticised (considered of little if any importance to peacebuilding work) even though its character and impacts have significant political dimensions. Moreover, the informal peacebuilding work that women often do - addressing local grievances or disputes, or providing emotional and psychological support to families and survivors of violence – are often regarded as "unpaid care work" and ignored or undervalued by those engaged in formal peacebuilding, which tend to focus on formal structures and processes.

Peace and Security Work and Gender in Cambodia

Globally, gender norms about who engages in peace and security work marginalise women. In Cambodia too, women have often been excluded from formal peace negotiations and peace processes, particularly in decision-making roles. Despite the fact that over 60% of genocide survivors were women who played a crucial role in the reconstruction of society following its total devastation, not a single woman was represented at the formal peace negotiation table in 1991 (McGrew et al. 2004). The mar-

ginalisation of women from efforts to build and sustain peace and security inhibits the effectiveness of these efforts. This is because these efforts are unable to benefit from a diversity of perspectives, knowledge, skills and networks these women can bring. Recognising the unique experiences and, therefore, needs of women in conflict and its aftermath, the marginalisation of women also decreases the likelihood that these needs will be known, understood and responded to. Efforts to build and sustain peace are further hindered when women are marginalised, given the known correlation between gender equality and peaceful societies (Caprioli 2005; Cockburn 2004; Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Tickner 1995).

Despite these barriers, civil society organizations, including women-led organizations, have played – and continue to play – a significant role in grassroots peacebuilding in Cambodia. Civil society's ongoing advocacy, lobbying, and engagement with key stakeholders since the early 1990s peace process, such as through the National Women's Summit in 1993 and the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995, significantly contributed to the government's decision to establish the Secretariat of State for Women's Affairs in 1993, later renamed the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1996. These organisations have since addressed pressing issues such as domestic violence, women's political participation, and economic empowerment by implementing community-driven programs, conducting capacity-building initiatives, and advocating for policy reform, particularly the adoption and effective implementation of the Law on Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (GADNet 2017). Additionally, their irreplaceable contribution to meaningful victim participation during the formal transitional justice process of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (Sperfeldt and Oeung 2019) and ongoing grassroots reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts (Dosch 2012) has been crucial. Their unwavering dedication, including fostering grassroots women's

agency to stand up for their rights, elevating their voices to policymakers, and influencing key policy development and implementation, has led to greater public awareness and legislative advancements on gender equality and women's rights, fostering a more equitable, inclusive, and peaceful post conflict Cambodian society.

Moreover, Cambodia has demonstrated its commitment to the WPS agenda and is a Regional leader in its advancements. For instance, under Cambodia's chairmanship in 2022, the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace, and Security was finally adopted by the ASEAN leaders after decades of political engagement on the WPS agenda (ASEAN 2022). In addition, such commitment is also reflected in its adoption and implementation of policies aimed at promoting gender mainstreaming and increasing the participation of women in all areas of peace and security work, including at decision-making levels. For example, since 2005, all line ministries have gender mainstreaming action groups and almost all state ministries and institutions (24 of 28) have developed their own Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (see the 2023 MOWIP Report, Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023).

The Government and NPMEC have also demonstrated commitment to increasing the participation of women in peace operations (see Figure 10 for 2023 statistics on peacekeepers). Between 2006 (when Cambodia first deployed troops to a UN peace operation) and February 2024, 9,197 Cambodian peacekeepers – of which 8% were women – have been deployed to 11 missions (Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023). Cambodia deploys a large proportion of uniformed personnel to UN peace operations (612 personnel as of 31 January 2025) and is ranked third among ASEAN member states and 28th (out of 123 countries) globally (as of 31 January 2025 – UNDPO 2025a).

Mission Rule	Men		Women		Total
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total
Transport and Maintenance	62	95%	3	5%	65
Frie Brigade	6	50%	6	50	12
Administration	1	13%	7	88%	8
Medical	32	76%	10	24%	42
Leadership	85	87%	13	13%	98
Mine clearance and EOD	137	87%	20	13%	157
Engineering	202	91%	20	9%	222
Military Police	40	55%	33	15%	73
Logistics and finance	70	67%	35	33%	105

Figure 10: Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) Peacekeeping Deployment (Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023: 15).

The 2023 Report on Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Assessment (Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023), highlighted many best practices including:

- The RCAF does not impose any restrictions on women serving in UN peacekeeping missions. Both men and women are subject to the same rules and regulations as well as codes of conduct of the RCAF and of the UN mission.
- Men and women in the RCAF serve equally in leadership roles, even after considering rank. 7% of the sample have served in one commanding position, both 7% of men and 7% of women.
- Men and women serve equally in combat and operational roles while on mission. 31% of all respondents (31% of women and 30% of men) engaged in operational activities every day while on mission.
- Personnel believe all-female units are equally capable of carrying out important tasks while on mission...
- The RCAF has a gender main-

streaming policy and senior leadership acknowledge gender mainstreaming. 46% of respondents, (42% of men and 50% of women), were aware of this policy.
- Men and women serve as Gender Focal Points (GFPs). Within the RCAF, 13% of respondents have served as GFPs, (5% of men and 24% of women) (Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023: 8).

Several barriers to women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations persist, however. These include:

- Female officers tend to face more stigma than men if they deploy...
- There are few women in the RCAF and very few in leadership positions. According to the FFF, battalions/formed police units are systematically composed of less than 20% women. Additionally, only 10% of operational units include women, which means that 90% are unanimously male. Few women personnel (10%) said that they have served in a leadership position (compared to 14% of men).

- Women were more likely to perceive mission facilities/ equipment as inadequate. Women were more likely than men to say that bathrooms, sleeping quarters, office space and uniforms were inadequate.
- Women perceive health facilities while on mission as more inadequate than men do. Women lacked access to adequate reproductive healthcare, birth control, mental health resources, and female physicians.
- Uniforms do not accommodate female peacekeepers... (Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023: 9).

The 2023 MOWIP Report also suggests that gender norms and practices around unpaid care work cause create barriers to women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations, although most personnel reported that they are willing to approach leadership to report on job and family-related matters (88% of respondents – 90% of men and 86% of women). In terms of barriers, participants reported that women must ask their husbands for permission to deploy on peace operations, who "tend to think that their wives should be close to home and take care of children" (Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023: 9). Indeed, on average, respondents said that women should only deploy when their child is 5, compared with 4 for men. Furthermore, there is no official leave policy for paternal, family or elderly care within the RCAF, although personnel can access unofficial leave on a case-by-case basis. Respondents also reported that breastfeeding is not acceptable at work, and most said women do not feel comfortable breastfeeding or pumping at work. Lack of affordable childcare facilities in Cambodia was also highlighted as a barrier to women's participation (Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023). Key recommendations contained within the MOWIP Report to overcome barriers to women's meaningful participation include:

- Ensure women have access to a private area for breastfeeding and/or pumping upon return from maternity leave.
- Provide paid family, sick, and elderly leave. Further, we recommend creating an official paternity leave policy with benefits.
- Provide on-site childcare facilities or subsidies for childcare in order to encourage more women and male officers with children to join.
- Although there is an age requirement for deployment, the RCAF should consider deployment opportunities for personnel across all ages and family situations ((Royal Cambodian Armed Forces 2023: 11-12).

National Policy and Action Plans

Upon the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace, and Security by the ASEAN leaders in 2022 under Cambodia's chairmanship (ASEAN 2022), Cambodia has started to look into the possibility of developing a WPS NAP. While the Regional Plan of Action addresses the needs of unpaid care workers as well as promotes support and recognition of unpaid care work as a shared responsibility of women and men (Priority Action 1.2.2. and 5.3.4), it does not directly address the impact of unpaid care work on women's participation in peace and security work. As Cambodia now embarks on the WPS NAP development process, a Situation Analysis on Women, Peace and Security in Cambodia (Ministry of Women's Affairs and UN Women 2024) has been conducted and highlights the impact of unpaid care work on women taking on leadership roles, especially in peace and security institutions

The Royal Government of Cambodia is also currently developing a Care Economy Framework and Action Plan, expected to be adopted in 2025. Its commitment to care and supporting those with caring responsibilities is further demonstrated in two recent awards received by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), namely, the 2024 ASEAN Care Economy Recognition Award and the 2024 Asia Pacific Care Champion. These current efforts underscore Cambodia's commitment to advancing towards the Sustainable Development Goals (notably Goals 5 on Gender Equality and 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Photo by Veng Sambo, at the Peacekeeping Forces Training Institute in Oudong District, Kampong Speu Province, September 2, 2020

WPM and Monash GPS Consultation Findings

In December 2024, WPM and Monash GPS launched a Pilot Study on Peace, Gender and Care in Cambodia. Several meetings were held with representatives of the Ministry of Women's Affairs of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the National Peacekeeping Force, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC) and UN Women (Cambodia) as well as a full-day workshop with representatives of 14 non-governmental organisations, international organisations, including the UN, and other peacebuilding actors across Cambodia (see Annex 1). The aims of these consultations were to:

- Reflect on the impact of caring responsibilities on the meaningful participation of women in peace and security work, namely peacebuilding and peacekeeping.
- Discuss the interconnections between gender, care and peacebuilding, and discuss the utility of employing a care lens in peacebuilding and peacekeeping policy and practice.
- Provide input to key stakeholders discussing the development of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP) regarding the intersection of

gender, care and peacebuilding, particularly the impact of unpaid care work on the participation of women and the effectiveness of security and peace programming, policy and practice.

This Pilot Study employed a framework that uniquely brought together the concepts of inclusive peace, feminist peace, and care. Inclusive and feminist peace recognises that sustainable peace rests upon peace processes that are inclusive, responsive and advance gender equality (Gordon

and Lee-Koo 2021; Shepherd 2017). The Pilot Study examined the conceptual connections between care work and peace work, given both are highly gendered and critical to "survival and well-being" (Ibnouf 2020: 133; Held 2006; Neufeldt 2014; Ruddick 1990). It further utilised the concept of an ethics of care in peace work to explore how to advance peacebuilding practice that is more inclusive and responsive, as well as cognisant of the interconnections between people and the importance of care, including self-care, care for others and duty of care.

Participants of Peace, Gender and Care in Cambodia Workshop: Representatives of non-governmental organisations, international organisations and other peacebuilding actors across Cambodia with WPM and Monash GPS

Unpaid Care Work as a Barrier to Engagement in Peace and Security Work

Discussions focussed on the disproportionate share of unpaid care work carried by women, and the subsequent impact on their engagement in peace and security work. Participants spoke of being the primary carer for

children as well as often having the primary responsibility for caring for aging parents, Overwhelmingly, they agreed that unpaid care work is a barrier to women's full and meaningful participation in peace and security work. Many participants said that unpaid care work limits the time, energy and other resources they have to be able to engage in peace and security work. Caring responsibilities are especially difficult to manage in the security sector, where there may

be expectations of deployment (for instance to peace operations), regular travel, or working away from home in field missions or military police stations. This work may also involve long hours or working and training outside normal office hours, which can be difficult with caring responsibilities.

Participants emphasised that it is particularly difficult for single parents to engage in peace and security work, especially in the security sector given the long hours and travel that are often required. Inability to deploy, travel or work outside normal office hours was also anticipated to impact promotion and career prospects. For instance, deployment to a peace operation for a year may carry with it the possibility of promotion, which would be more difficult to secure without that deployment.

Unless extended family networks are available to fulfil these caring responsibilities, the cost of childcare. in particular, is often prohibitive, leading to many women choosing not to engage in such work or deploy. Others spoke of needing to carefully consider family planning to enable their continued work and careers. Several participants who were engaged in peace and security work said they would have been unable to do it without the help of their own mothers, or other family members, particularly those employed in the security sector and/or deployed on peace operations:

So, no matter what, no matter the kids are 10 or 20 years old, they still need parents to guide them... and we still need people to take care of them as well. And so, without those who being kind enough to take care, then definitely we cannot go on mission.

So does that mean that a lot of women don't join the armed forces... if they don't have a kind mother who can help... [otherwise] that's going to be a barrier for women to travel, to go on mission, because no one taking care of the children.

Participants also referred to gender normative assumptions about unpaid care work and peace and security work as sometimes being incompatible. Specifically, participants referred to gender normative assumptions about unpaid care work as constraining their opportunities to engage in peace and security work. Several respondents referred to examples of women who were sidelined or disengaged from their employment in peace and security work when they had children. They also spoke about "maternal bias", including assumptions that mothers are likely to have less capacity or inclination to contribute to peace and security work, or may not – or should not – prioritise their peace and security work above their caring responsibilities for their children. Some participants referred to their own experiences where they felt they had to "hide" their caring responsibilities or deny having children during the selection process in order to secure or retain employment: "so you just have to lie. You will never go back to work. It's very hard." Several participants suggested that having caring responsibilities discourages employers from hiring you because of assumptions about your capacity, ability to travel or work extensive hours, and whether you will always put paid work first. Some spoke about working excessively hard to dispel these misconceptions and "prove themselves", further depleting their own resources and ability to self-care.

Participants said that shifting gender norms around care work – so it is seen as a shared responsibility – and creating a "culture of care" could mitigate some of these harms and help everyone. One person spoke about how she made a commitment, after hiding her caring responsibilities and feeling "shame" that was inflicted upon her by colleagues, to openly communicate about her caring responsibilities. She did this to dispel that shame, encourage other women to be open, and challenge assumptions that being a mother detracts from the capacity,

ability or commitment to be a peace or security practitioner. This type of role-modelling and pioneering strength can help shift gender normative assumptions around care that impact women's engagement in the sector.

Some cautioned, however, that removing barriers to the participation of women with caring responsibilities in peace and security work should not inadvertently increase the burden placed upon women or remove their agency. In this regard, participants emphasised that it should be a woman's choice whether they engage in this work, have a family, or "stay at home as a mother and a carer, because that's incredibly valuable work that society does value."

In terms of gender normative assumptions about who should engage in peace and security work, some military women referred to their own experiences of pressure or lack of understanding from family members when they sought to deploy on missions when they had young children. One military woman told us that she regularly reminded her family members that she was deploying not because she didn't care about her young child but, quite the opposite, wanted to secure a salary that would provide for her child and protect their future:

> *I'm not here for trying to avoid my responsibility or caring for you, and actually because I want to earn something for you, so then you can have a better future.*

Participants also spoke about the challenges they faced when they returned from mission, including for instance, children not speaking to them because they were upset or confused or because of the impact on their relationship after being away for a long time.

Representatives of the National Peacekeeping Force, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC) with WPM and Monash GPS

Some family members were also concerned about the security and well-being of women when they were deployed, particularly if they were alone or one of just a few women and deployed to places where there was conflict or disease and limited medical facilities. This also contributed to discouragement for women to deploy in some instances. However, participants also shared examples of very supportive families, with one person sharing how her mother was supportive because of the struggles she had faced with working hard, menial jobs because of family responsibilities when she had aspired to do other things. Nonetheless, support and approval from families is likely to less forthcoming for women with caring responsibilities (than women without caring responsibilities, or men) and likely to impact whether they can deploy, particularly if they need their families to fulfil their caring responsibilities while they are away.

Attitudes towards female peacekeepers from other military personnel and local communities affected by conflict were also raised as potential challenges. This was noted to be particularly the case in certain cultures in which women are regarded less favourably. One military woman shared her experience of working in a culture where women are typically regarded as "second class citizens":

> *… when I was sent there, then a lot of people was like saying things like that, like, why you have to leave your daughter when she was so young and should be taking care of the baby, and why you have to leave.*

Military women revealed that in many other contexts, women peacekeepers were regarded very highly: as "very courageous", doing important work and "a breadwinner, the only breadwinner for the family as well".

In terms of practical challenges women peacekeepers face when deployed, aside from negative attitudes from others, participants shared that living conditions can be very poor and they can also be deployed or be on patrols as the only woman, which can be difficult. However, military women also noted the important support they got from troops and leadership while on deployment.

In relation to peace and security work, more broadly, participants underscored the importance of women's meaningful participation i.e. women participating in different roles and ranks, especially decision-making roles, rather than their participation being reduced to a focus on numbers. This point also resonated with comments that structural change needs to occur to ensure women's participation is meaningful and makes a difference. It also resonated with comments that men can be great advocates of women's meaningful participation and gender equality, while women are not always such advocates. Similarly, participants commented that men can have their own caring responsibilities and needs overlooked. In other words, the heterogeneity of both women and men was emphasised (i.e. neither women nor men are homogenous groups with shared interests and experiences), moving away from essentialist arguments predicated upon a gender binary logic (i.e. arguments that attribute distinct, intrinsic qualities to women and men).

The Importance of Supporting Care-Givers

All participants agreed that women's role in peace and security work is critical, thus the impact on their engagement due to unpaid care work needs to be addressed. It was recognised that women's participation in peace and security work is especially important because of their unique experiences during conflict and its aftermath as well as their unique security needs. When women are engaged in peace and security work, it is more likely that these unique experiences and needs will be attended to, and so efforts to build and sustain meaningful and equitable peace

and security will be more effective.

It was also recognised that women broaden the diversity of skills and knowledge available to peace and security efforts, as well as positively impact work cultures and practices. For instance, in the security sector it was suggested that women can positively impact the work culture, averting anger or aggression in some instances, or discouraging drinking or smoking when on deployments. Military women who had been deployed on UN peace operations, for example, told us that their soft negotiation skills had been particularly well received by local communities and contributed well to building trusted relationships with local counterparts and, thereby, advancing the mission aims. They also pointed to the harm to the mission that can be caused by more aggressive behaviours, as well as participation in drinking or other risky behaviours that have blighted some missions. One military woman noted that all-male contingents can be "very harsh, the way they speak, they smoke, they even drink", but when women are present, they become "more gentle" which can positively impact the work they are doing as peacekeepers.

Military women also underscored the importance of having diversity in peace operations, given some members of the local community might only want to talk to women – or men – peacekeepers. They spoke about the value of engaging women in sensitive situations to defuse tensions. One woman spoke about her deployment as a military observer and how sometimes the woman peacekeeper would lead discussions at checkpoints, for instance, for this reason.

The importance of having women peacekeepers in conflict-affected environments was also highlighted, given how members of the community may have had traumatic experiences with uniformed men. One uniformed woman spoke of her prior deployment on peace operations and said that local communities were hostile towards peacekeepers because they were uniformed and reminded them of the aggression they suffered previously from men in uniforms, but this can change when women are deployed:

> *… first of all, when they see military police car, they don't like you. They don't like you at all. They hate us… but when they saw me as a woman with a ponytail, they changed. They came to approach me, especially the local kids*

This helped the mission build rapport with the local community, which led to positive interactions and a "positive change", with obvious implications for realisation of the mission's objectives.

Participants spoke of the recognition of importance of engaging women by Cambodian armed forces and had noted a change in the role of women serving in peace operations over recent years, including having more women in different roles and at higher ranks.

All participants also recognised that women's role in unpaid care work as well as informal peacebuilding are of critical importance – not least during times of conflict and crisis – yet tends to be overlooked and undervalued. It was discussed how supporting those with caring responsibilities can enable greater participation of women in peace and security work. it can also advance progress towards gender equality, which benefits all people not just women and girls – not least because of the correlation between gender equality and peaceful societies (Caprioli 2005; Cockburn 2004; Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Tickner 1995).

In this context, participants pointed to the concept of "positive peace" and how engaging women and adopting a "care lens" in peace and security work can help advance a peace that moves beyond the mere absence of war and violence to encompass the structures, cultures and practices that provide the bedrock

for long-term peace and development. Rather than simply focussing on addressing violence and immediate threat, the focus is on social justice, equity and human rights as critical to sustainable peace and conflict prevention. Other participants suggested that a culture of care – and the practice of caring – can help address the fear and instability that prevents countries emerging from conflict to move forward. Moreover, as another participant commented, the practice of care can help people move beyond "freedom from" threat towards "freedom to" participate in and contribute to society. This shifts the conceptual focus from "territorial security" to "human security" and thereby enables more long-term, meaningful peace:

Because at the end of the day, we want to see a better world. Is not just the world we are seeing right now. We want to have a better world for our next generation, and that needs all of us, and not just one half of the skies, full sky. It takes whole society approach to really address all these things... And I hope that what we are doing is really not just for only our experience so far, but we want to foster a better way for women today and also in the future. And not just women, but all of us, every one of us.

Support for Care-Givers

Cambodia has taken significant strides to better support women with caring responsibilities who wish to engage in peace and security work. For instance, governmental representatives referred to various strategies and initiatives underway that address barriers to women's engagement and support those engaged in unpaid care work. Additionally, MoWA referred to care facilities in several ministry offices, supporting women leaders and role models, and several media campaigns to shift harmful gender norms and address the security threats facing women (for example, the Good Men Campaign).

Many participants referred to the importance of supportive partners and families, and strong family networks as critical as they manage both paid and unpaid care work. It was suggested that stronger networks and greater social welfare support, as well as access to affordable childcare (or a larger salary that could cover childcare costs), would provide further support to enable women with caring responsibilities to engage in peace and security work. Military women, for example, noted that the increased pay on deployments could help cover the costs required for childcare support as well as pave the way for a better future for their families.

Recommendations included nurseries in large workplaces, where children could be cared for, which would help address the prohibitively high cost of childcare as well as allay security concerns about some childcare facilities. Other recommendations included an educational package for children, which could include financial and/or logistical support for bus transport to and from school or school meals, for instance. Healthcare support for women, increased maternity and paternity leave, and carer's leave to care for children or family members who are aging or unwell, were also recommended.

Participants underscored the importance of recognising that caring responsibilities includes caring for aging parents or other family members who may be unwell, and that these responsibilities also primarily fall to women. Participants noted that caring for aging parents tends to come at a time when women's careers are building. Additional support here could include healthcare or social worker support.

Other participants stressed the importance of more concerted efforts to communicate that care is a shared responsibility, as stated below by a participant:

The purpose is about transforma-

tion, transforming the negative gender norms [of care work as women's work] into something that is a shared responsibility among all genders… it's not about putting blame on anyone but it's about helping each other and making collective efforts where possible to make sure everyone can reach their full potential and thrive together. Not at the expense of or burden on anyone else.

Some participants also recognised that men and others who carry out unpaid care work tend to be overlooked in the workplace and public discourse. Similarly, participants underscored the need to employ an intersectional lens to investigate unpaid care work and its impact on engagement in peace and security work, noting that women and girls from marginalised communities (for example, poor communities, indigenous communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, ethnic minorities, stateless persons, persons with disability) are likely to be especially impacted. These and other recommendations are detailed in the Recommendations section that follows.

In terms of deployment on peace operations, which tend to be more challenging for those with primary or sole caring responsibilities, several participants spoke about measures that were in place to support them with their caring responsibilities. This included the availability of the internet, which allowed them to make video calls home. However, they also spoke of sporadic internet connection, or disruptions due to remote locations, or time zones that meant they had to wake in the middle of the night to speak with their children or other family members.

Regarding the duration of deployment, it was suggested that shortening the time that a woman peacekeeper was deployed would not necessarily be beneficial, because a woman may be deploying to financially support her family, which would be impacted if deployments were of shorter duration. For example, one participant said that peacekeepers from other countries said they wished they had 12-month rather than 6-month deployments because "we can have better, better income, and that income can help us and our children [and] families as well."

Synergies between Peace and Care

Participants agreed that the topic of care work is very important to discussions on peace and security. In the workshop with representatives of 14 non-governmental organisations, international organisations, including the UN, and other peacebuilding actors across Cambodia, participants highlighted the synergies between peace and care work. They drew attention to the care practices and thinking that is critical to building and sustaining peace, security and development. Participants spoke of the care that is needed to be exercised towards one another and to the natural environment for the benefit of all. As one participant said: "peace can only be experienced if everyone is a little more caring". It was highlighted how lack of care towards one another (collective care) and to the natural environment, such as violence or violation of people's rights and exploitation of natural resources, can trigger and escalate conflict. Participants also saw similarities between the unpaid care work of women – helping to protect and nourish families – and the type of work needed to help rebuild and sustain societies after conflict and crisis:

Without care, we will not be able to promote or to ensure peace, either inner or outside ourselves or to family members or to the community or to the society as a whole. So, there is a connection. But for me, the connection is – similar to what our colleagues raised earlier – love. If you don't have love, it's difficult to maintain peace. If we have love, we can [create what] you need to maintain peace.

I think there is an interconnection between care and peace. You cannot have peace without care and you cannot have care. All aspects of life are important – mind, body and planet, because you cannot have peace when the planet is destroyed, and you cannot have peace when the people don't have food to eat.

[Like care], heart works 24 hours for us without rest. So is peace. Peace starts from our heart every time and everywhere... As we practice peace and having peace heart starting from us, we can learn to live in harmony with others who are different from us and even adapting with the nature.

Discussions on the impact of unpaid care work on the meaningful participation of women in peace and security work therefore extended to consider how utilising a "care lens" in peace and security work can be beneficial, focussing that lens on how to better care for ourselves (including recovering from trauma and violence after conflict), each other and the natural environment. Participants commented that peacebuilding often focusses on tangible outcomes – physically rebuilding infrastructure and institutions, for instance – and tends to overlook the less tangible, psychosocial dimensions of building peace. Bringing a "care lens" into peace and security work can help address the trauma and psychological harm that people have suffered; recognising individuals need to heal if societies are to recover from armed conflict – recognising peace begins with the individual. Moreover, bringing a care lens to peace and security can aid conflict prevention because when we care for ourselves, others, and the environment we can help reduce the threats posed by violence, including gender-based violence and exploitation of natural resources, for instance. As one participant said:

Care is a conflict prevention tool that we can use [at] every step of prevention... because it can address the needs of everyone and also address inequality...

In other words, care can be regarded as the missing piece in conflict prevention. Moreover, care can be regarded as enabling access to basic needs and fundamental rights, and is about connectedness, protection and responsibility towards others – critical, yet sometimes overlooked, in formal efforts to build peace and security.

Participants also noted the links between care work and justice, highlighting how the disproportionate care work fulfilled by women often depletes their own resources and ability to exercise self-care for themselves, as well as constraining the amount of time and energy they are able to invest in broader peace and security work.

Building on these insights, workshop participants emphasised how critical care is to peacebuilding and the synergies between peace work and care work: how both are about responding to essential needs, about protection and helping to nourish and grow the next generation. One participant, for example, noted how providing for essential needs helps build dignity, which is essential for peace. Other participants commented that threats to peace, such as corruption or misuse of power or exploitation of the land and people, can be regarded as acts of "not caring" or the antithesis of care. These acts are often prevalent during times of conflict and its immediate aftermaths, while also undermining prospects for building and sustaining peace and security. These acts may be driven by fear, selfishness, or greed, in contrast to care, which is about connectedness – "about acknowledging your own needs and recognizing that other people share those needs",

Similarly, participants highlighted that when organisations or societies practice care, they are much more likely to lead to more functional, productive and safe environments. This is because care can breed a sense of

responsibility towards others. For instance, one person gave an analogy of installing surveillance cameras in offices to provide security, yet building "caring communities" can also help build security and avoid such costly and harmful practices that can instil fear and distrust. Participants also saw how forgiveness, empathy and recognition of people's connectedness (how people depend

cost implications (though not always), participants highlighted the cost implications of not attending to care and investing in supporting those who undertake unpaid care work. To give an indication of the cost implications, the World Bank estimates that gender inequality costs economies up to 20% of GDP (Pennings 2022). This equates to approximately USD 6 billion per year for Cambodia, on the basis of

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upon each other) are central to both care and – though often overlooked – to peacebuilding.

In this regard, participants highlighted strong linkages between caring for others, organisational duty of care, and self-care; recognising how one supports the other and acknowledging the similar principles and practices that are embedded in each. These principles and practices include fulfilling responsibility (towards others and oneself) and responding to essential needs (of others and oneself). It was discussed how processes and institutions that take care seriously, and look after people with care needs and responsibilities, can positively impact society and prospects for peace, security and development.

Recognising that increasing support for people with caring responsibilities can have

Cambodia's GDP being USD 30 billion in 2023. There are further significant cost implications associated with conflict and corruption, which are negatively correlated with gender equality (Caprioli 2005; Chan et al. 2021; Cockburn 2004; Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Tickner 1995; see also Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (Cambodia) 2022). When considering the economic costs of conflict, the need to ensure peacebuilding is as effective as it can be to avoid a recurrence or escalation of conflict is clear. To give an indication of the costs involved, he estimated global cost of armed violence in 2023 was USD 19.1 trillion, equivalent to 13.5% of GDP (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2024).

In financial and human terms, the cost is significant when women with caring respon-

sibilities are marginalised from contributing to building and sustaining peace and security: peacebuilding efforts miss opportunities to build peace by utilising the skills, knowledge and networks of these women, and are less able to utilise innovative, creative ways to address challenges to peace and security. As a driver of women's underrepresentation in peacebuilding, inattentiveness to unpaid care work also curtails diversity among groups engaged in peace and security work which, in turn, undermines prospects for efforts being responsive to the diversity of needs in society, or enjoy broad-based public support and confidence. In turn, this undermines the likely effectiveness of such efforts. Moreover, lack of support for women with caring responsibilities curtails their ability to contribute to the formal economy and promote sustainable development.

In summary, participants conceptualised care as more than unpaid care work and highlighted the synergy between care and peace, advocating for an ethics of care to be advanced in peace and security work to help foster long-term and equitable peace. They agreed that unpaid care work is predominantly undertaken by women and is critical to the well-being and survival of families, communities and societies, aside from its significant economic contribution, yet tends to be overlooked and undervalued. They also agreed that the disproportionate "care burden" harms women's economic insecurity (with ramifications for broader conceptualisations of peace and security) as well as marginalises women from public and political life, including peace and security work. In turn, this hampers peace and security work, and hinders efforts to advance gender equality and sustainable development.

Having identified the synergies between care and peace, and the barriers to women's engagement in peace and security work that arise through the "care burden", workshop participants outlined several recommendations based upon the challenges they identified. These are outlined in the Recommendations section that follows, and are focussed on:

- Improving the recognition and value placed upon unpaid care work – recognising it sustains families and communities as well as the economy, and is especially critical during times of conflict and crisis – to include raising public awareness of the importance of such work and its impacts when disproportionately shared.
- Extending support to those who provide unpaid care work, recognising the disproportionate load upon women and girls and especially marginalised groups and the subsequent depletion of their resources and ability to engage in peace and security work.
- Shifting gender norms and behaviour change around unpaid care work to underscore that care work is a shared responsibility.
- Raising awareness that building and sustaining peace and security is also a shared responsibility, and requires the engagement of all actors – including the Government, communities, individuals, civil society organisations, businesses – to work hard and work together to achieve success.
- Challenging maternal bias and gender normative assumptions that women – and especially mothers – don't "fit" in peace and security work.
- Supporting and recognising the importance of women's meaningful participation in peace and security work, especially in decision-making roles to improve the effectiveness of peace and security work as well as advance progress towards gender equality and sustainable development.
- Integrating a care lens to broaden the understanding of what peace is

and how it is built and sustained.

- Advancing an ethics of care into public and political life, recognising the links between caring for others, organisational duty of care and self-care, and how an ethics of care can acknowledge people's interconnect-edness and responsibility towards each other as well as advance peace and security.

Broadly, it was suggested that gender norms around unpaid care work need to shift alongside awareness raising of the critical importance of unpaid care work to society – in terms of its economic contribution and its contribution to sustaining the well-being of individuals and contributing to peace and security. It was recognised that these cultural and normative shifts can simultaneously increase the efficacy and confidence of women to engage in peace and security work as well as challenge prevailing maternal bias in the workplace. Simultaneously, it was proposed that these cultural and normative shifts need to be accompanied by more tangible forms of support for people with caring responsibilities, to include logistical and financial support, as detailed in the Recommendations. Other recommendations, with less significant cost implications, include informal support structures and information-sharing networks, including among women with caring responsibilities who engage – or aspire to engage – in peace and security work.

"Because at the end of the day, we want to see a better world. Not just the world we are seeing right now. We want to have a better world for our next generation, and that needs all of us, and not just one half of the skies, [but] full sky. It takes whole society approach to really address all these things… And I hope that what we are doing is not just for only our experience so far, but we want to foster a better way for women today and also in the future. And not just women, but all of us, every one of us."

- said a participant

Conclusion

Unpaid care work is a driver of women's underrepresentation in peace and security work, women's insecurity, and gender inequality. It is globally recognised that women's participation in peace and security work is critical to effectiveness, and that lack of support for and recognition of the gendered nature of unpaid care work hinders efforts to advance peace and security. Attentiveness to care benefits all, given men and people of diverse gender activities also have care responsibilities, which are often overlooked. Moreover, broader attentiveness to care can embed an ethics of care in peace and security work that advances policy and practice that is more inclusive and responsive as well as cognisant of the interconnections between people. It can also help underscore the importance of care, including self-care, care for others and duty of care, and recognise the critical importance of care work to societal security, peace and prosperity.

It is hoped that this Pilot Study advances the integration of a care lens in peace and security policy, programming and practice. This would increase the meaningful participation of women in efforts to build and sustain peace and security as well improve the effectiveness of these efforts. This is an opportune moment, given current discussions within Cambodia on the prospective development of a WPS NAP and Care Economy Framework and Action Plan, and given the overlooked but urgent need to attend to care in peace and security. Seizing this opportune moment would also help position Cambodia at the forefront of global efforts to advance peacebuilding innovation and success, implement the WPS agenda, and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably by responding to the call to recognise, value and support care work (SDG Target 5.4).

"Care is a conflict prevention tool that we can use [at] every step of prevention… because it can address the needs of everyone and also address inequality…"

– a participant

Recommendations

As an outcome of the workshop and consultations, several recommendations have been developed. These recommendations aim to address the barriers to women's meaningful participation in peace and security work, including through the provision of support for unpaid care work and awareness raising of the contribution that it makes to building and sustaining peaceful communities. While direct support requires financial commitment, many of the recommendations do not require substantial financial investment. Here, it is important to emphasise that the cost implications of not doing anything are significant, not least because of missed opportunities to utilise the skills, knowledge and networks of women with caring responsibilities to peace and security work, and because it hampers efforts to advance gender equality and sustainable development.

In terms of responsibility, it is important that these recommendations are recognised as a long-term shared responsibility of the Government and state institutions, civil society actors, members of Cambodia's diverse communities, as well as other actors and organisations active in Cambodia, including international donor, governmental and non-governmental organisations. These recommendations should be addressed in a holistic manner, and incorporate a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework, to track progress and impact.

Recognition

Recognise and value unpaid care work as critical to the Cambodian economy and society, as well as, more broadly, to societal peace and prosperity. This recognition can be reflected by integrating unpaid care work into national economic planning as well as gender-responsive budgeting.

Recognise the synergies between peace and care work, as sustaining life and building peaceful societies. Peacebuilding policies and practice should recognise the importance of unpaid care work to resilient communities as well as to formal peace and security work (acknowledging unpaid care work supports the work of paid employees in the sector).

Communication

Communicate a narrative that recognises and values unpaid care work. This narrative should acknowledge that unpaid care work is a shared responsibility and does not simply fall to women and girls. This narrative would help embed a culture and ethics of care into WPS and across efforts to build and sustain peace and security. Such an ethics of care would connect organisational duty of care, caring responsibilities for others, and self-care. This ethics of care embeds a responsibility to care for others, is attentive and responsive to the needs of others, and recognises people's interdependence. This ethics of care extends to the environment, recognising that caring for the environment protects societal peace, security and development. This could feed into a national dialogue on care and peace and could help

shift behaviour change and gender norms around care and structural barriers to women's engagement in peace and security work.

Broaden Conceptions of Peace and Security

Recognising the synergies between peace and care work, and that an ethics of care in peace and security work can lead to more sustainable and equitable outcomes, broaden conceptualisations of peace and security that underpin policy and practice. This would recognise that peace is not simply the absence of violence conflict but encompasses human security and can build the infrastructure for conflict prevention and build "positive peace".

This would also enable engagement with increasingly complex, intersecting threats to peace and security beyond physical threats, including development challenges, climate-induced disasters, and technological developments (such as the threats posed by AI). It also recognises the links between individual, community and national security as well as between self-care and responsibility towards others.

Awareness-Raising and Advocacy

Raise awareness of the impacts of the gendered, undervalued and unsupported nature of unpaid care work on efforts to advance peace and security, to include:

• Public information, outreach and advocacy campaigns, utilising mainstream and social media platforms, on the importance of care to communities and society, and the importance of care being a shared responsibility.
• Education in schools on the importance of care and care being a shared responsibility.

Training

Expand gender training in military, police and justice institutions, and embed an ethics of care, to include training on the barriers to women's engagement in peace and security work that arise through organisational, practical, work culture and gender normative assumptions about care work and peace and security work. Training should include awareness-raising of maternal bias and its impacts. Ensure all ranks and levels receive regular training, including entry level and senior officers/staff.

Informal Support Structures

Create and consolidate networks and structures of support for women engaged in peace and security efforts, including those who have caring responsibilities, and men and others with caring responsibilities, to include:

• Professional and women's networks within and across the security and peacebuilding sectors.
• Mentoring programmes, to provide informal support and advice for junior, marginalised and other women with caring responsibilities engaged in efforts to build and sustain peace and security.

• Information sharing forums and platforms, including online, ensuring methods and tools enable access for marginalised groups.

Engagement with Men

Efforts to address the needs and support those with caring responsibilities should engage men, recognising men also have caring responsibilities that are often overlooked or unsupported (e.g. with minimal paternal leave). This would benefit men and shift gender norms around care (i.e. that it is predominantly a woman's responsibility and women rather than men have natural caring abilities).

Engagement with LGBTIQ+ people

Efforts to address the needs and support those with caring responsibilities should engage LGBTIQ+ people and people of diverse gender identities, recognising their caring responsibilities are often overlooked and they may face additional barriers to accessing support, security, and participation in public and political life, including peace and security work.

Intersectionality

Develop policies and plans that are cognisant of the fact that women with caring responsibilities are not a homogenous group and that other identity markers can compound marginalisation (e.g. due to poverty, rural residence, ethnicity, disability etc). Ensure women who are most at risk of exclusion or marginalisation are engaged and their needs responded to.

Whole-of-Society Approach

Addressing the impacts of the gendered, under-supported and undervalued nature of unpaid care work, and advancing an ethics of care in peace and security work, requires a whole-of-society approach, involving all actors, all levels of society, and addressing structural, normative and practical dimensions.

Political Will and Capacity

Support efforts to increase capacity, coordination of efforts, and commitment to an ethics of care – across Government (to include ministries with portfolios in women's affairs, health, social security, education, employment, public safety and defence) and with civil society actors. This work could include an initial mapping of on-going governmental activities at the intersection of care, peace and security, to include ongoing Government-led work to discuss the development of a WPS NAP and Care Economy Framework and Action Plan. It could also include identification of capacity gaps and priorities for capacity building.

Recognising the critical importance of non-governmental and civil-society organisations, especially women-led organisations, in responding to the security needs of women and others and building peace, support these organisations in their vital work and build collaborations between governmental and non-governmental actors.

Inclusive Processes

Given unpaid care work is a driver of women's underrepresentation in formal peacebuilding, peacekeeping and other efforts to build and sustain peace and conflict – and given the critical importance of women's participation to operational effectiveness – develop and implement strategies to increase women's participation and remove barriers to the engagement of women with caring responsibilities. This should include efforts to increase women's participation across ranks and positions, including decision-making roles, and address obstacles to the advancement and deployment of women with caring responsibilities. This may include efforts to address maternal and gender bias or discrimination, reduce expectations of excessive travel or work outside traditional working hours, as well as other forms of support outlined elsewhere in these recommendations (training, awareness-raining, support networks, mentoring etc.).

Building upon the inclusive approach to developing a WPS NAP, engage women with caring responsibilities in the development and implementation of the NAP and in broader policies to build and sustain peace and security, in order that they are responsive to care-givers unique and diverse needs.

Financial investment in Gender-Sensitive Social Protection Systems

Invest in infrastructures of care that better support women's ability to manage both unpaid care work and paid work, as well as broader engagement in public and political life. This would include development and implementation of policies and investment in structures, to include investment in social protection for care-givers, including affordable childcare, eldercare, maternal healthcare and increased maternity and paternity (or shared parental and family) leave. This requires financial investment as well as the development and implementation of policies.

A broad legal framework already exists for the provision of nursing rooms and crèche in enterprises of over 100 women and girls, or the covering of crèche costs where such facilities cannot be provided. Implementation, investment and development of further policies to support carer-givers is needed. While this carries a significant cost implication, the economic costs – and costs to peace, security and development - of not investing outweigh the initial and on-going outlay required.

Support for Carers in Peace and Security: Investment in Gender-Responsive Policies and Budgeting

In addition to investing in infrastructures of care, identify and develop policies and structures that support people with caring responsibilities in peace and security work. This can include investment in gender-responsive policies and budgeting that provide practical support for women with caring responsibilities by, for instance, covering travel and care costs when women are deployed. The range of support required can be scoped by engaging in consultative dialogue with peacebuilders and security actors.

Note: other recommendations and good practices to support people with caring responsibilities working in peace and security can be found in the following resources:

• Fosu, R., Gordon, E., Chavan, A., Gayatri, I. H., Townsley, J., Osei-Tutu, J., Lowe, L. and Kennealy, L. J. (2024) "Policy Brief #2: Best Practices of Care in UN Peace Operations" (English, French, Bahasa Indonesian, Hindi). Melbourne: Monash GPS. https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/3798508/Policy-Brief-2-Elsie-Project-Monash-ENGLISH.pdf.

• Fosu, R., Gordon, E., Lowe, L., Gayatri, I. H., Chavan, A. and Kennealy, L. J. (2024) "Policy Brief #1: Global Practices of Care in Security Institutions" (English, French, Bahasa Indonesian, Hindi). Melbourne: Monash GPS. https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/3798466/Policy-Brief-1-Elsie-Project-Monash-ENGLISH.pdf.

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