

'Filling the Gaps: A Virtual Discussion of Gender, Peace and Security Research'

Summary of Dialogue¹

October 13 - 31 2008

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 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ This summary has been prepared by Ciara Daniels for UN-INSTRAW

I. Introduction

In order to understand and promote human security, gender equality and sustainable peace, reliable information and comprehensive research are needed in the area of gender, peace and security. Knowledge sharing, ongoing dialogue and complementary working efforts between researchers and practitioners are vital tools in developing and promoting gender, peace and security work. In order to assess current research, scholars, and institutes UN-INSTRAW developed the **Global Gender, Peace and Security Research Directory** which was launched in June 2006. The directory currently includes over 130 different research institutions from around the world that are addressing and actively engaging in gender, peace and security issues.

UN-INSTRAW brought the members of this directory as well as other researchers and academics together in a virtual dialogue in October 2008. The dialogue was an opportunity for academics and researchers to share knowledge, gain information and build a platform for further participatory and dynamic research.

During the three week dialogue over 90 academics and research professionals from universities, research institutes, NGOs and international organizations from all over the world were able to exchange information and stimulate discussion on gender, peace and security research with the goal of identifying gaps in current research and tools and methods to fill them.

The dialogue was divided into three modules:

- 1. A general overview of current gender, peace and security research;
- 2. Identification of gaps in current research, including thematic, data, geographic representation or perspective;
- 3. Identification of tools and methods for filling the gaps.

While the dialogue participants were from various research institutions, universities and international organizations and different geographic regions, they all engage in scholarship on gender, peace and security related issues. The research interests and backgrounds of the participants included international relations, women studies, human rights, security studies, international law, gender training, humanitarian affairs, and post-conflict studies, among many topics. The dialogue participants came from a wide range of geographical backgrounds and regional research focuses including North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia.

The dialogue touched on many points of concern regarding the current state of gender, peace and security research. The general theme of most comments was collaboration and elaboration. Participants called for more collaborative and participatory forms of peace building and greater elaboration of the theoretical understandings associated with security research, especially more expansive gender analysis within peace and security studies and data collection processes. One of the purposes of the dialogue was to build a platform for further research collaboration and information sharing. Participants discussed doing this in several ways including developing a Community of Practice, creating more interdisciplinary PhD programs, and meeting at in person at academic conferences.

The dialogue was conducted in English and administered from a listserv so that participants could contribute to the discussion as their own time zones permitted rather than in real time. Because the dialogue was conducted in English it is likely that some professionals were not able to fully participate, however, the dialogue summaries are planned to be made available in Spanish and French. Additionally, UN-INSTRAW is exploring the possibility of holding this virtual dialogue in Spanish and French in order to engage a wider audience.

This summary highlights some of the main issues that were addressed by the participants in the three week dialogue. It is divided into three parts which correspond with the three modules of the dialogue. Each part covers the main argumentation strings of the module, though it should be noted that some comments did not adhere to the theme of the module in which they were posted. In these cases, the comments will be included in the module summary of which they are related. A list of the participants, documents and websites that were referred to or exchanged during the dialogue is provided at the end of the summary, as well as a list of the training institutions and organizations that were represented or referred to during the dialogue.

II. Module One: A General Overview of Current Gender, Peace and Security Research

The aim of Module One was to get an overview of the key debates and current areas of focus of gender and security research, including:

- A broader understanding of security from state security to the multiple dimensions of human security;
- The continued dominance of masculine and non-gender sensitive viewpoints in many traditional academic disciplines.

Many participants wrote about the shift from national or state security to a focus, or at least an awareness, of **human security**.² It was noted that the idea of human security was more likely to be taken into consideration at an organizational level, such as at the UN or in NGOs, than within traditional academic disciplines such as international relations. At the same time, notions of what human security captures are still being explored, in particular whom is being kept 'secure'.

Dan Moshenberg³ asked an important question: **what is the** *human* **in human security**, and many participants responded with varying perspectives. Celia Cook-Huffman discussed an article in American Newsweek magazine imploring the return of the western cowboy ready to ride in and save the day, the 'individualistic, unattached male hero' that is not concerned with the role of women beyond the ones waiting to be rescued. From a different perspective, Gloria Caballero, a Cuban national, shared her own experience of being security

² Find the report of the commission on Human Security "Human Security Now" (2003) at: http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/.

³ Find full participants list and institutional affiliations in Annex 3 of this summary.

screened at an airport in Spain and the intersections of race, language and citizenship that influenced security measures there.

In a related issue, Kathleen Staudt and Elisabeth Porter, among other contributors, noted the continued **masculinist-dominated and non-gender sensitive approaches** to research and study in academic disciplines. Work being done to incorporate gender perspectives is still marginalized and a masculinist-dominated approach in many disciplines is standard procedure, particularly international relations, security studies and peace studies. Masculinist-dominated approaches favor traditional frameworks for research with little or no focus on human rights or feminist perspectives. The approach does not value holistic notions of security and can leave women completely out of research, as shown in Elisabeth Porter's anecdote of attending a government funded security conference in Australia where there was no mention of women or gender and minimal references to human security in two days of presentations. Further, gender analysis has not expanded to include racial and ethnic analysis which is vital to understanding different security needs.

While considering the human in human security and the need for a wider gender perspective, some participants pointed out that simply including women in decision making processes does not guarantee a prioritizing of gender equality or perspective. Erin Baines showed this in her article on Rwanda's parliament which has a female majority yet, 'female parliamentarians...by virtue of their sex [do not automatically] prioritize gender equality over the ruling party's political agenda.'

III. Module Two: Identifying Gaps in Gender, Peace and Security Research

The aim of module two was to identify gaps in research, whether in data, conceptualizations, regional focus or gender perspective. The issues identified can be broadly summarized as:

- A deficiency in monitoring, follow through, and ways to measure the impact of gender sensitive policies;
- Lack of research and recognition of marginalized populations, in particular Afrodescendent individuals and communities
- Lack of research that recognizes the intersections between gender and other forms of identity such as ethnicity, race and class;
- o A need for more comprehensive gender analysis within peace and security research;
- A disconnect between the work being done by local and grassroots activism and academic research, and a need for participatory approaches to security and peace building.

Steven Schoofs and Nicola Popovic both brought up questions of the impact of research and how evaluation and monitoring can be used in regards to difficult to quantify concepts used in gender mainstreaming efforts. Steven Schoofs outlined several areas of concern in this area. First, what needs to be measured, or what qualifies as being gender transformative peace building interventions? How to measure sensitive and complicated concepts such as

empowerment and equality? What are context specific and gender sensitive indicators and evaluation methods that can capture the impact of gender mainstreaming? Finally, he noted that developing participatory methods of assessing the impact of gender mainstreaming in local contexts may be a way to establish indicators that guide gender transformative interventions.

One of the most glaring gaps identified is the need for a more inclusive approach to security studies. To understand inclusion, participants highlighted what is currently excluded from research, namely, the voices of those being 'protected,' experiences of **marginalized populations and groups**, and a range of perspectives of all of those involved in security processes. It was also noted that there is a continued lack of comprehensive gender analysis or perspective in academic disciplines and research.

Marian Douglas-Ungaro and other participants discussed the lack of ethnic analysis accompanying gender analysis in specific contexts and noted that many groups are affected by multiple forms of discrimination which is not comprehensively discussed in security studies research. Marian Douglas-Ungaro highlighted a gap in research on the experiences of Afro-descendent women and communities. She proposed developing a community of Afro-descendent women and supporters to collaborate on research, information sharing and organizing in order to develop an international human rights-based framework to assess and promote the needs of Afro-descendent women and their communities. Farid Benavides noted the experiences of Afro-Colombian groups which, while making up a large percentage of the population of Colombia, have not been granted the same protections as indigenous groups in the country.

Niamh Reilly echoed Marian Douglas-Ungaro's concerns about marginalized populations by focusing on the issue of intersectionality in gender related research. Intersectional theory and approaches recognize that we experience multiple intersecting identities and thus there are possibilities for multiple forms of discrimination. Niamh Reilly wrote 'Many posts (Marian [Douglas-Ungaro], Gloria [Caballero] and others) have addressed issues of 'intersectionality' and exclusion - that is, gender is never experienced/constituted in isolation, always in tandem with other aspects of our identities/experiences - 'race', ethnicity, socio-economic background, religion, ability/disability, sexual orientation etc - the concept of intersectionality is now well developed in feminist thinking. There is a lot of scope for rethinking research projects and practice in GPS through an intersectional feminist lens.' Ximena Jimenez noted the importance of this method with an example from a women's conference in Ecuador where participants from indigenous and black descendents organizations' concerns were completely excluded and the participants were suffering 'two kinds of discrimination: ethnicity and gender'. These comments remind us that gender cannot be examined without also considering other aspects of identity, especially ones that contribute to further marginalization.

Many participants discussed the need for more **links between grassroots and local organizations and academia**. Melanie Hoewer, Obododimma Oha and Niamh Reilly, among others, discussed this gap. Niamh Reilly called for 'a participatory approach –

academic-based researchers working with CSO-based researchers and women's organizations locally' to identify obstacles to women's empowerment and develop strategies to address security concerns. Obododimma Oha noted a South African publication, $Agenda^4$, which attempts to bridge academic and non-academic discourse on gender equality issues.

III. Module Three: Tools and Methods to Fill the Gaps Identified

In the final week of the dialogue, participants were asked to conceive of tools and methods to improve gender and security research and possible methods for future collaboration.

The methods and tools suggested focus on two broad areas:

- Collaboration and participation from the various actors involved in peace processes;
- An expansion of data, theoretical outlooks and perspectives on gender and security including acknowledging the role that formal and informal power and discourse play in security.

Kathleen Staudt suggested sustaining and growing the network of dialogue participants. One suggestion for this was to develop a **community of practice** to continue information sharing among participants. UN-INSTRAW would like to encourage this process and assist where possible. Some participants also suggested meeting up at the International Studies Association (ISA) Conference in New York in February 2009.

B. Welling Hall noted that **collaboration with policymakers** is a vital part of building more gender-responsive security policies. She asked, 'Isn't part of the "gap" we need to fill that of growing and sustaining more gender sensitive parliamentarians and political leaders?' Njoki Wamai also pointed out the need for strong collaboration with policy-makers and the development of gender sensitive policies at both a global and national level.

Both Njoki Wamai and Niamh Reilly, among others, stressed the need for **participatory approaches**. A participatory approach is needed at all levels and with all involved in peace building, including researchers, community members and governments. Njoki Wamai discussed top-down versus bottom-up approaches with specific focus on Africa and noted that much research on the continent comes from top-down approach which fails to recognize specific security concerns of the continent and its people.

Niamh Reilly also noted that strengthening links between academia and practitioners could greatly improve gender and security work. This would help improve the perception that academic work is done in isolation to practice work. She suggested 'a transnational, multi-institutional 'applied' PhD programme in GPS studies that would specifically build bridges

⁴ Agenda, an online journal focusing on feminism and women's movements in Africa, can be accessed at: http://www.agenda.org.za/content/blogcategory/88888963/88888981/

between civil-society based researchers (as 'engaged/situated' doctoral researchers) and academics (mentors and action researchers) - with commitments built in to orient research outputs to target particular policy-makers/shapers, linked to advocacy initiatives etc.'

From the perspective of available data, Mariel Lucero noted that there is a **lack of sex-disaggregated data** available, in Mariel Lucero's case for assessing how many women were working in Armed Forces in South America.

Gloria Caballero and others commented that **language barriers** to information can limit participation and platform-building. Specifically, tools for collaboration (such as the virtual dialogue itself) which are conducted in English leave out many voices and contribute to further exclusion of already under-represented groups.

Another theme of comments was **formal versus informal power** both in security studies and community responses. This refers to Obododimma Oha called for making security studies less formal, 'Programmes on Peace Education need to move closer to informal and social settings, to engage everyday lives of individuals. In this case, Peace and Security Education does not need to be studied merely as a special subject even in the formal educational settings.'

Niamh Reilly discussed the ways power is organized in the peace building process and noted that women's voices are strong in local level organizing and in maintaining day to day survival during conflict but can be relegated to the sidelines during political peace building processes. Niamh Reilly called for 'radically rethinking the ways in which formal power is organised and held to account, and giving informal, civil society engagement real space and clout - so that women's leadership, presence, and impact...is promoted rather than stifled - is essential to creating conditions where 1325, CEDAW and other 'norms' can be meaningfully applied in transitions from conflict. There is a real limit to how far such change can be advanced via programmatic work in the absence of broad-based civil society engagement - although programmatic initiatives are essential too of course.'

Dan Moshenberg also touched on themes of power, naming and race. Echoing Marian Douglas-Ungaro's concerns regarding representations of African and Afro-descendent women in security discourse, Dan Moshenberg asked what 'real national security' is and more importantly what becomes unreal national security or real national insecurity. Dan Moshenberg wrote, 'But what if real national security begins by focusing on something other than security (or sovereignty), something other than (and less destructive than and less inimical to women's well being than) the national... Women are described as great at creating stakeholder constituencies and at keeping neighborhoods together. But what of those who fall outside, or under, the stakeholder rubric, what of those excluded from the neighborhood and, even more those criminalized within it?'

IV. Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn from this wide range of comments? Though the dialogue participants come from varying academic backgrounds and research focuses, there is much consensus about gaps in gender, peace and security research and ways to fill them. The assortment of suggestions all point, in different ways, to collaboration and elaboration as ways to improve gender and security research and strengthen peace building processes overall. Participants' suggestions included strengthening ties between academia, policy-makers and activists, encouraging more participatory approaches to peace building, incorporating more extensive gender analysis and perspective in all aspects of security work, and developing more extensive networks for collaboration between academics, researchers and practitioners.

Some key points of note from the dialogue:

- More collaboration between academia and practitioners is needed to make security work more inclusive and successful. There needs to be stronger connections between the work being done at a grassroots, local and national level and the work being done by researchers;
- There has been a theoretical shift of focus from state security to human security, however, as this new term is embraced researchers must carefully consider whom is being kept secure and what this means for women and gender roles;
- There continues to be a struggle to incorporate gender sensitive approaches in security research and practice. Simply including women in decision making processes is not sufficient and gender as a tool for research and analysis is still not sufficiently made use of in many traditional academic disciplines;
- While many researchers and groups support gender sensitive approaches it is difficult to monitor or develop standardized and comprehensive indicators to assess the impact of gender empowerment measures;
- The voices of marginalized groups and populations are not fully incorporated or recognized in existing research. Gender analysis in peace and security research should incorporate intersectionality theory which argues that gender identity intersects with and is constructed by other social divisions such as ethnicity, race and class and thus multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination are possible;
- Overall, it was agreed that participatory approaches to peace building are the best method to achieve success and need the involvement of all actors including researchers, policy-makers, community members and government. In a related point, bottom-up rather than top-down approaches seem more successful in addressing the needs of specific communities;

- Obstacles in obtaining and distributing information and data such as language and cultural barriers and lack of sex-disaggregated data make it difficult to include all voices and experiences in research. These issues of basic access for researchers must be addressed if gender and security research is to be made more inclusive;
- o The ways power is organized are important to gender, peace and security researchers, especially informal versus formal power. This refers not only to access to information but also in the way that decisions are made, i.e. bottom-up versus top-down approaches, and whom is included in formal decision-making processes;
- It is important to analyze and critique the discourse used in gender, peace and security research. Discourse refers to written and spoken communication about a topic which comes to normalize or define its acceptable reality or truth.

Many of the comments made during the dialogue belay a wider argument about the role of research in peace and security studies. There seems to be a consensus that there is an academic responsibility to acknowledge and promote diverse ways of thinking and to develop spaces for recognizing marginalized people and perspectives left out of traditional security concerns. Participants have discussed this through the expansion of the term 'security' from national security to human security; the need to include a gender analysis at all levels of security approaches which also takes into account race, ethnicity, citizenship and other means by which discrimination occurs; and a need for collaborative, participatory approaches to improve research, policy and ground-level results.

While the participants in this dialogue work primarily in academia and research institutions it is important to discuss the links between the work of academia and field work. Some dialogue participants wrote that academic research is sometimes produced in isolation to field work, however, it was also noted that, ostensibly, academic settings educate and produce security practitioners and these connections should be exploited to strengthen links between the two groups. This kind of 'grooming' and 'growing' of students should be of foremost concern to academics. Participants also expressed support for strengthening connections between academia and many other groups including policy-makers, civil society based researchers, and activists. Forums such as virtual dialogues, conferences, and collaborative projects are ways to reinforce connections between groups and share information and experiences.

The following action items developed from the dialogue:

- Develop a Community of Practice to continue information sharing and collaboration among the virtual dialogue participants and other interested individuals;
- Per Marian Douglas-Ungaro, develop a coalition in support of Afro-descendent women and communities; the group would further information sharing and collaboration with a goal of establishing an international human rights law framework to assess the needs of Afro-descendent women and communities;

- Create more academic programs, in particular PhD programs, on gender, peace and security issues which focus on bridging academia and civil society research;
- Develop more comprehensive gender sensitive indicators and data collection mechanisms;
- o For those participants planning to attend, meet at the International Studies Association (ISA) Convention in New York in February 2009.

Annex 1 – Materials and Documents Referenced by Participants

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von Kotze, Astrid, "'Pan-African Postcard. The world food crisis: a 'silent tsunami'?" Pambazuka News, 29 October 2008.

Will, George, "The Last Word: Shane, Come Back! The new movie 'Appaloosa' is welcome evidence that the Western genre is not wrapped in white linen and cold as the clay," Newsweek, 11 October 2008.

Annex 2 – Civil Society Organizations, Conferences, Groups and Related Websites

Agenda Feminist Media. Available at:

http://www.agenda.org.za/content/view/119/88888914/ or http://www.agenda.org.za/component/option,com frontpage/Itemid,1/

"Crafting Human Security in an Insecure World," Joan B Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice: University of San Diego, San Diego, CA. September 24-26, 2008. Available at: http://peace.sandiego.edu/events/womenpeace/info.php.

Gain. Contact: gain@apcafricawomen.org

Ilaria Alpi information. Available at:

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"Women's Regional Conference in the Latin America and the Caribbean," Ecuador. August 2007.

Annex 3 – List of Participants

Name Organization Country

Akosile, Ilemobola 'Bukola	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding- Nigeria	Nigeria
Alicia Ziffer	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Alinane Priscilla Kamlongera	UNDP	
Allison Adams-Alwine	Women's Research and Education Institute	USA/Global
Amie Callihane	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Ancil Adrian-Paul	UN-INSTRAW	Liberia
Andrea Friedman	Global Justice Center	USA/Global
Angie McCarthy	American University, Washington College of Law, Women and the Law Program	USA
Anne-Kristin Treiber	UNIFEM	
Annick T.R. Wibben, Ph.D.	University of San Francisco	USA
Arianna Espinosa Oliver	Universidad Externado de Colombia	Colombia
Ariel L Herrlich	The George Washington University, Women's Studies, Philosophy	USA
Ashley Harden	Emory University	USA/Palestine
Aya Fujimura-Fanselow	International Center for Transitional Justice	
B. Welling Hall, Ph.D	Earlham College	USA
Beth Woroniuk		Canada
Bridget Osakwe	Women in Peacebuilding, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)	Nigeria

Carlo Ungaro		Italy
Carmen Moreno		
Carol Cohn	Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights	USA
Carol Stauton	National University of Ireland, Galway	Ireland
Celia Cook-Huffman	Juniata College, Peace and Conflict Studies	USA
Charlotte Onslow	Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK)	UK
Chloe Diamond-Lenow	London School of Economics, Gender Institute	UK
Chris Green	White Ribbon Campaign	UK
Clare Hutchinson	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations/PBPS	USA/Global
Daniel Moshenberg	The George Washington University, Women's Studies Program	USA
Daniela Kraiem	American University, Washington College of Law, Women and the Law Program	USA
Dr. Debra L. Schultz	International Center for Transitional Justice	Global
Dr. Johanna Valenius	University of Helsinki, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	Finland
Erin Baines	Liu Institute for Global Issues	Canada/Global
Eva Dalak	UN ONUCI	Cote d'Ivoire
Farid Benavides	Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Políticas	Colombia

	y Sociales	
Faridah Nakayiza	Makerere University	Uganda
Francesco Bertolazzi	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Frédéric Cavé	United Nations MONUC HQ (BCDC)	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Genevere M. Dominguez	Plan Philippines, Research, Evaluation & Dissemination (RED) Unit	Philippines
Gloria Caballero	Earlham College Department of Languages and Literatures	USA
Helen Scanlon	International Center for Transitional Justice, Gender Program	South Africa
Henri Myrttinen	International Crisis Group	East Timor
Hilary Anderson	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Ina Curic	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Ingrid Quinn	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Sri Lanka
Irasema Coronado	University of Texas at El Paso	USA
Jacqueline Berman, PhD		USA/Global
Jasmine Blessing	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Jean Kemitare	Raising Voices	Uganda
Jessica Parish	York University	Canada
Jillian Smith	York University	Canada
Karen Barnes	International Alert, PeaceBuiding Issues Programme	UK
Kathleen Staudt	University of Texas at El Paso	USA

Kathryn Birch	Tufts University Fletcher School	USA
Kim Koettel	New York University, Global Affairs Program	USA
Laura María Camacho Montejo	Universidad Externado de Colombia	Colombia
Laura Sandu	PATRIR	Romania
Lynsey Bourke	African Gender Institute	South Africa
Marian Douglas-Ungaro	Independent Consultant	USA/Italy
Mariel R. Lucero	Universidad de Congreso (Mendoza)/Universidad Champagnat (Mendoza)	Argentina
Marleen Bosmans	International Centre for Reproductive Health - Ghent University	Belguim
Melanie Hoewer	University College Dublin	Ireland
Minna Lyytikäinen	International Alert, Peacebuilding Issues Programme	UK
Nahla Valji	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation	South Africa
Natalie Florea Hudson, Ph.D.	University of Dayton, Dept. of Political Science	USA
Niamh Reilly	National University of Ireland, Galway, Global Women's Studies Programme	Ireland
Nicola Popovic	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Njoki Wamai	Kings College	UK/Africa
Nuala Lawlor	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Ctr.	Ghana/Canada
Obododimma Oha	University of Ibadan, Centre	Nigeria

	for Peace & Conflict Studies	
Palin Dogg Helgadottir	University of Bradford, Department of Peace Studies	UK
Prof. Ximena Jimenez	United Nations	
Professor Elisabeth Porter	University of South Australia, School of International Studies	Australia/Northern Ireland/Asia-Pacific
Punam Kumari Yadav	Helvetas Nepal	Nepal
Rada Boric	Gender Equality Institute	Serbia
Rajae EL ALAMI	London School of Economics	UK
Rebecca Dean	UCLA Center for Study of Women	USA
Renee Black	University of Ottawa	Canada
Sandra Panopio	UN-INSTRAW	Dominican Republic/Global
Sarah Boyd	Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)	Australia
Sarah Masters	International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)	UK
Selma Scheewe	United Nations MONUC HQ (BCDC)	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Shaima Aly		Egypt
Steven Schoofs	Clingendael Institute	Netherlands
Susan Harris Rimmer	Centre for International Governance and Justice Regulatory Institutions Network College of Asia and the Pacific, RSPAS The Australian National University	Australia
Susan Nicolai	Save the Children	Switzerland

Tamar Feldman		South Africa/USA
Tatiana Moura	Centre for Social Studies, Observatory on Gender and Armed Violence	Portugal
Theresa Besic	Žene Ženama (Women to Women)	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Toiko Kleppe	FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development	Norway
Yaliwe Clark	African Gender Institute	South Africa
Zani Naude and other staff	ACCORD	South Africa