



GROOMING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FOREIGN POLICYMAKERS: Women, Peace and Security in Practice

IN BRIEF

The Problem

There is a need to groom the next generation of policymakers on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. This is due to a rising demand in international affairs-related careers that require gender and WPS expertise, and the passage of the 2017 Women, Peace and Security Act which mandates enhanced professional training and education on Women, Peace and Security.

However, trainings and educational programs on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) are created in silos such as academia, military, government, etc., and are often *ad hoc*.

The Solution

Strengthen the Women, Peace and Security community of educators and practitioners. Regular collaboration across sectors can help map the field, inventory strategies to professionalize the field, and encourage institutions to offer more training and educational programs on WPS on a regular basis.

Key Takeaway from the Experts

Policymakers, practitioners, and scholars identified a key first step: in order to professionalize the field, it is necessary to establish an agreed-upon set of "minimum core competencies" for Women, Peace and Security to groom the next generation of policymakers and leaders.

I. THE SITUATION

In August 2017, *Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference and Peace is Loud* convened the first Women, Peace and Security Curriculum Consortium, a gathering of 27 experts and thought leaders from across US civilian and military learning institutions, media experts, and policy practitioners at the US Naval War College. This policy-brief draws on and highlights the discussions.

[UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#) increased awareness and generated new opportunities among international actors for women's and gender issues to be integrated into decision-making on matters relating to international security and peace. As of January 2018, more than 70 countries have adopted National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. In addition, the United States adopted its first law on Women, Peace and Security ([Public Law No: 115-68](#)). It promotes women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict. The law ensures Congressional oversight in the US Government's efforts to integrate gender perspectives across its diplomatic, development, and defense-related work. The law requires both a government-wide strategy and mandates enhanced professional training and education on Women, Peace and Security. However, questions remain on how to move this agenda forward to ensure a Women, Peace and Security framework is included in policymaking, regardless of who is setting the agenda.

Most notably, it is clear that in order to effectively implement the goals of the Women, Peace and Security agenda broadly, and according to legal and policy commitments made by a number of governments, it is increasingly important to cultivate gender expertise skill-sets. Expanding training, building experience and networks, and committing resources will be important steps. However, the international community has not been consistent in creating standards for professional training and education on Women, Peace and Security. Instead, trainings and educational programs on WPS are created in silos and are often *ad hoc*. While many of these efforts employ the support and expertise of gender experts from local communities, national governments, international organizations and multidimensional peace support missions, there has been

What is United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325?

In 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously passed the landmark resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security. UNSCR 1325 is the first formal recognition of the critical role women play in the effective resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding. It mandates attention to gender in all aspects of international peace and security decision-making. UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent related family of resolutions are now known as the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The agenda champions the meaningful participation of women in decision-making in all matters of international security and peace, including prevention, mitigation and resolution of violent conflict, and in non-traditional security threats such as preventing and mitigating violent extremism and creating adequate responses to climate change disasters. In the words of Ambassador Anuwarul K. Chowdhury, gender equality between men and women is intrinsic to international security and peace.

little coordination or sharing of information about training methods and curriculum development. This is true across sectors between civilian and military institutions, and among policymakers and practitioners.

Coupled with the rising demand in international affairs-related careers that ask for gender and WPS expertise, and the increasing demand within university settings for more classes and information on the Women, Peace and Security agenda, there is a need for multi-stakeholder engagement efforts to discuss and identify minimum core competencies in the field of Women, Peace and Security. As one participant noted, "When it comes to teaching Women, Peace and Security in academia, there is often a lack of top level support. This often means individual professors are isolated and driven to incorporate WPS based on personal commitment and intersection with their

own research areas, but with no guidance available about the comprehensive and multi-faceted issues of the field.”

II. THE CHALLENGE IN PRACTICE: HOW DO WE DO “IT”

In February 2017, [New America](#) asked policy-makers in Washington, DC — do national security policymakers consider the ways policies and programs impact men and women differently?

After a series of in-depth interviews, focus groups and surveys, they found that policy-makers do not consider the gendered impacts of their own policy decision-making.

“Policy wonks told us that the promise of gender-inclusive policymaking intrigued them, but that they lacked the tools and knowledge to make the case to others within the broader national security community.”

This finding, combined with a survey of women peacebuilders that Our Secure Future and Peace is Loud conducted in July 2017, confirmed that policy makers might know that gender equality is important to attaining more effective policy outcomes—but they often don’t know how to do it: “It” refers to implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda and using a gender perspective in their daily work.

It was against this backdrop that the group of thought leaders explored the following questions: What is the current state of Women, Peace and Security education and training? How can we build a community of practice? How can Women, Peace and Security, and gender analysis, be incorporated into other fields?

Four basic challenges were identified by the group as hindering the development of the WPS community of practice and WPS curriculum development across sectors:

- **Lack of information sharing and transparency**

While everyone agreed that it would be a contribution to the field to be able to share the rich and diverse work happening at different institutions regarding WPS, there are many organizational and resource barriers to contend with. At the organizational level,

a perceived lack of transparency, competition, and lack of trust in third parties can create confusion and lead to a reluctance to share information. It is no surprise then, that the lack of information sharing and transparency has led to a lack of coordination, and a lack of opportunity to share resources and ideas about core standards for a Women, Peace and Security curriculum or professional training.

- **Lack of agreed upon WPS core competencies**
The second aspect that emerged during the discussions was the lack of agreement on, and establishment of standards for teaching WPS—which severely impacts the ability to effectively equip the next generation of policy decision-makers to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the world of foreign relations—whether in practice in the field or at the heart of a government institution.
- **Differing definitions and terminology – lens vs. discipline**
The third aspect that emerged during our discussion was the difficulty of creating standards when the lines are not clearly drawn between Women, Peace and Security as a stand-alone discipline, and as a gender lens that is applied to all fields, across sectors.
- **Lack of opportunities to collaborate as a WPS Community of Practice**
Collaboration within and across sectors was thought to be highly desired, and yet a significantly under-resourced area of opportunity. Collaboration was thought to be mutually beneficial to everyone in the group, regardless whether they were from a military background or a civilian background. In fact, the diversity of the group and the opportunity to share their different experiences was highly impactful. There was an immediacy of sharing strategies that worked and did not work within different institutions. In addition, the exploration of the questions and sharing of expertise within the group provided a platform for people to voice reservations about approaches and priorities in WPS, address resource competition among institutions, and discuss different power structures that reinforce lack of trust and unity among WPS and gender experts.

III. STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Several strategies were identified by the WPS Curriculum Consortium as being highly effective in moving the WPS agenda forward in academic and professional training settings. These strategies can be replicated in a variety of institutions, by trainers, academics or advocacy groups:

- **Buy-in from the top**
At Tufts University, the administration provided additional funding to hire Teaching Assistants specifically for the purpose of assisting professors to integrate a gender perspective into their existing courses. This addressed the problem of professors not having the background or resources to easily integrate WPS into their curricula.
- **Groundswell from the bottom**
At National Defense University, students used Peace is Loud's Women, War & Peace "screening series in a box" to help advocate and lobby their administrations for gender integration.
- **Professionalize the field**
In Australia, Monash University has formed a WPS network to build strong, collaborative relationships with scholars and practitioners.
- **Include women's voices from the field**
Including women's voices means to take into account their agency, expertise and activism. It means addressing their different needs, priorities and experiences. Inclusive Security uses the documentary film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* as a way to virtually bring women peacebuilders into their trainings with security personnel.
- **Continue to collaborate across sectors**
The US Naval War College's Annual Conference on Women, Peace and Security brings together actors from across civilian and military disciplines to share and network their work among peers. Regular meetings amongst the WPS Community of Practice are needed to continue to share best practices, challenges and opportunities among WPS actors.
- **Evaluate the competition**
Columbia University, Tufts University and Inclusive Security have each mapped academic programs in the

Women Peace and Security field. At Tufts University, students and faculty used this mapping to advocate their administration to scale up course offerings for students and to keep a competitive advantage over other programs.

IV. NEXT STEPS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- **Map the field collectively and produce an inventory of strategies that create a culture open to WPS and gender analysis**
The end product would be publicly and widely accessible by academic institutions. Focus should be as much on collaboration and dissemination as on production.
- **Create opportunities for the WPS community of practice to collaborate more regularly**
A first step could be that institutions collectively develop a competitive advantage in Women, Peace and Security by performing their own market analysis. A market analysis by universities and training institutions that provide WPS curricula is necessary for two reasons: the current political landscape is increasing interest in women's rights internationally, and the increasing number of jobs in policy that require gender analysis as a skill set. A thorough market analysis of the field will help to increase buy-in from other faculty members in related disciplines. This market analysis could be accompanied by resources that illuminate the "why" of the WPS lens.
- **Shift from advocating gender specific courses to integrating into other courses**
Promote Women, Peace and Security as a cross-disciplinary, cross-sector initiative. Terminology and language can be shaped and bridged. Additionally, the masculinity/femininity framework can be used to attract more male students. WPS has multiple narratives and entry points at its disposal, and many are under-utilized. Engaging male leaders, and a discussion of masculinities can engage more people in the field.

- **Recognize the opportunity to connect the WPS agenda to domestic realities**

As the demand from students to learn about WPS grows, and the requirements of the new law are implemented, academics and practitioners have the opportunity to relate international applications of WPS to the domestic sphere. A more sophisticated understanding of WPS would reflect security as something that affects every person, in every society.

- **Collectively set a minimum competency in WPS**

The WPS Curriculum Consortium identified four minimum core competencies. These core competencies can be further discussed and tested by a broader cohort of WPS actors. Setting minimum competencies for education and training will help trainers and educators more effectively teach “how to do” WPS in practice. This mapping exercise would contribute to standard setting and professionalizing the WPS field. Discussions about core competencies should include participation of a network of academics and practitioners that could bridge disciplines and schools.

- the integration of women peacebuilders’ expertise and the ability to recognize and incorporate women’s perspectives into policy decision-making.

The group discussion covered many other topics that could be included in this mix: International Relations theory, using a transnational lens, connecting WPS international work to US domestic movements, broadening the frame of security thinking, and listening to movements and movement builders that are not squarely in WPS.

These and other topics could be added to the basic four competencies in any course.

V. KEY TAKEAWAY

The expert working group agreed that it is necessary to establish a set of minimum core competencies for Women, Peace and Security in order to groom the next generation of policymakers and leaders. The group identified four core competencies that should be required of any credible WPS course. Any soldier, graduate student in university, or policy professional at the UN or elsewhere, should leave a WPS course or training with

- a clear understanding of what gender and having a gender perspective mean;
- the ability to conduct a gender analysis and provide actionable recommendations;
- a working knowledge of the WPS policy frameworks, including the history of the WPS movement (UN Security Council Resolution 1325) and current WPS policy frameworks; and

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all the participants who joined us for this discussion.

This convening was made possible by Peace is Loud, Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference, the U.S. Naval War College, and the Compton Foundation. Thanks especially to the U.S. Naval War College for hosting the convening in Rhode Island.



The [U.S. Naval War College](#) is the staff college and “Home of Thought” for the United States Navy, based in Newport, Rhode Island. Its primary mission is to educate and develop future leaders.



[Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference \(OSF\)](#) is a program of Colorado-based [One Earth Future](#). OSF works to strengthen the Women, Peace and Security movement to enable effective policy decision-making for a more peaceful world.



[Peace is Loud](#) is a non-profit that generates a groundswell of people committed to building a culture of peace. They inspire action through media and speaking events that spotlight women leaders on the frontlines of peacebuilding.

BACKGROUND ON THE INAUGURAL WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY CURRICULUM CONSORTIUM

On August 9, 2017, 27 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) experts representing a cross-section of academics, policy practitioners, civilian and military sectors, convened at the US Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island to explore the current and future challenges of the developing field of a WPS curriculum and training in the US and internationally. Specifically, the curriculum consortium addressed the grooming of future policy leaders who are in classrooms today—the individuals who will implement the WPS agenda in the years ahead.

Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference, US Naval War College, and Peace is Loud, were the conveners of the inaugural Women, Peace and Security Curriculum Consortium gathering. The idea for this convening came about after many consultations and discussions with academics, policy-practitioners, and women peacebuilders who all noted two major shifts in the Women, Peace and Security field.

First, there are an increasing number of educational and training resources available on Women, Peace and Security, produced by multiple institutions, but there is a lack of information sharing due to working in silos across sectors.

Second, and concurrently, there is an increasing demand by students at all levels, to study Women, Peace and Security, and to know how to implement it in their current or future work as policy-decision makers.

The conveners recognized the convergence of these two factors as a window of opportunity for strengthening the Women, Peace and Security network. The intention of bringing different stakeholders together from military, policy, and academic sectors, a primary objective of this convening was to strengthen the network of academics and practitioners working on Women, Peace and Security through exploration, dialogue, sharing of resources, and challenging our own expectations of the field.

The day-long consortium examined the state of the field of WPS education and professional training today—where we are, where we need to go, and how we will get there.



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