WPS, MASCULINITIES, AND PEACEBUILDING

BACKGROUND

On October 19th and 20th, the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) hosted two roundtables to discuss the topic of Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Masculinities, and Peacebuilding. Attendees included academics and practitioners from the U.S. Government, international organizations, think tanks, and NGOs. The aim was to discuss significant institutional challenges to engaging men in WPS efforts and the pressing need to integrate a masculinities perspective into policy and practice. The following key takeaways emerged from the conversations.

WHAT DO PRACTITIONERS NEED TO DO?

- **Avoid Importing Western Masculinities:** Participants from Southeast Asia stressed the importance of avoiding 'copying and pasting' Western masculinities into local contexts. WPS interventions should use participatory approaches to create locally meaningful solutions.
- **Engage Diverse Stakeholders:** When including men in WPS work, it is important to identify which stakeholders are relevant in specific contexts, work with local partners to understand context, and ensure the representation of diverse voices and perspectives. Participants noted that religious leaders were a particularly under-engaged group in many non-Western contexts.
- **Do Not Implement New Gender Hierarchies:** When adopting a 'masculinities lens,' organizations must ensure that they are not simply swapping one iteration of patriarchy for a more palatable one. New, more benign gender essentialisms will not meaningfully challenge a gender order.

WHAT DO RESEARCHERS NEED TO DO?

- **Find Common Ground:** Some researchers working on masculinities advocate for a radical dismantling of patriarchy broadly, including many of the institutions that uphold it. Meanwhile, practitioners are often looking for practical ways to improve circumstances on the ground from within these institutions. Concerted efforts should be made to bridge this divide by addressing short-term goals and working to enact long-term, structural change.
- **Facilitate Knowledge Exchange:** Small discussions where researchers and practitioners are able to speak directly with each other create greater opportunities for research to be translated in ways that have a meaningful impact on policy and for academics to learn from experiences on the ground.
- **Produce Accessible Materials:** One-page briefs that highlight relevance, impact, and practical applications will improve practitioners' ability to implement and use findings from research.
- **Leverage External Pressure:** Participants from government institutions noted that external pressure and calls for accountability from the public and academics can be an effective tool for spurring policy change.

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