

Women at the Crossroads: Human Rights, Security, and Climate Change

Notes from the August 16 dinner conversations

Table	Facilitator	Host	Topic
1	Sahana (OEF)	Ann L.	Election/Policy
2	Kate K. (UAF)	Maureen Connelly	Hope
3	Cynda (OEF)	Dana Dallavalle	Amplifying women's voices
4	Ursula (GGF)	Caitlin (UAF)	Connecting Local to Global
5	Julie A.	Paulette (UAF)	Policy
6	Francoise Mbabazi	Justine Reed (GGF)	Connection local global
7	Denise Gibe	Jane Lewenthal	Amplifying women's voices
8	Kirsten Westby	Julie Shaw	Hope

MAIN POINTS SUMMARY:

Amplifying Women's Voices – *“Women always thought security and safety came from men because they built strong economies. Now we are realizing it actually comes from women who build strong families and raise respectful sons and powerful daughters.”*

- We need to map, country by country, the barriers to women's rights and security
- Solutions will be different in every country – each group of women will need to lead their own solutions that meet cultural/societal/political norms.
- Folk Media (creating videos/songs/media using traditional song/dance) are strongest strategies for implementing projects to amplify women's voices. Regardless of skill to read and write.
- We need more women on boards to make companies more successful – when there's more proof that gender equality on corporate boards makes companies more successful – companies will start to make change.
- Women need to know they're not alone. We need to understand that women in other countries have different gender-based fears than we do in the West. We also need men as allies in this.
- We need a cross-fertilization of ideas. We need to identify change leaders, set new norms. We need to bring security, rights, and women and climate into the same sentences.
- Donors make change! Donors are changemakers in that they make good work possible.
- When women come together = POWER.
- How can we get the people on top in power to hear and listen to the voices of those with less

Hope - *“We lose potential for progress without hope”*

- Grassroots & Policymakers- there is space in between, how do we connect the two?
 - Share stories – they are important for bridging high level policy spaces to grassroots
 - Photos and stories- need to be told, meet people, hear voices, moments of connection, bring the spirit of the people they are helping
 - In person: Films/movies
- Inspire young people to be the change for the future
- Missed opportunities in silos- need to think more collaboratively and creatively
- Community stories of reconciliation are powerful

- There's no choice- it's a spiritual journey and you have to use the whole tool chest
- Now is a sea change to where investors look for sustainability
- Investor demand, millennials want this- women want more socially responsible funds

Local to Global - *"All change begins at the grassroots. However, without subsequent legal/policy change, full impact cannot be realized."*

- You cannot make global and international decisions about poverty and local situations without local voices participating and women are catalysts for change in communities
- Factors that help catalyze locally-initiated efforts into national or international policy:
 - having an idea that resonates with others and the tools to communicate that idea/message broadly.
 - a sense that there is "an exhaustion of the alternatives" (activism is hard work and often comes about after feelings of frustration, anger, even desperation with the status quo).
 - opportunities exist for cross-fertilization of ideas (presences of networks and diversity within those networks.)
 - identification of individuals of influence who can be reached ("getting the ear of decision-makers.")
 - people see themselves as leaders (and can see examples of others like themselves in the leadership of the movement.)
- There is a focus on setting new standards/new norms (whether that is the "new norm" that women will always be 50% of those at the table in a peace negotiation, or the "new standard" or even the "new norm" created by having both women and men serve as President of the US).
- Craft a clearer message on why equality, security, and climate change/environment are related & share more stories of how grassroots action led to national/global change.
- Bring the "women, peace, and security" conversations into the schools (US high school students are barely getting any education in government at all, let alone learning about the UN, international conventions, National Action Plans, security processes, etc.)

Policy – *"The action is at the local/statewide level, where policy advancement is possible"*

Q) How can civil society and government work together to protect both women's rights and address climate change? What are the opportunities with a new administration to influence policy related to women's rights, climate change, and security?

- Include representation of women at all levels.
- Increase UN funding of peace programs led by women
- Inclusion of gender perspective in the policy; men and women are effected differently by policy.
- Suggestion that all US government employees receive training on gender analysis.
- Involve multi-disciplinary civil society organizations in monitoring the government for accountability (for example Global Gender Climate Alliance).
- Elevating visibility of activists

Q) Why focus on women?

- Women are often the frontline adaptors, providers
 - UN Resolution 1325 - Participation of women, protection of women, prevention of conflict, National Action Plan on Women, Peace, & Security
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COMPLETE COMPILATION OF NOTES:

Amplifying Women's Voices – *“Women always thought security and safety came from men because they built strong economies. Now we are realizing it actually comes from women who build strong families and raise respectful sons and powerful daughters.”*

- We need to map, country by country, the barriers to women's rights and security
- Solutions will be different in every country – each group of women will need to lead their own solutions that meet cultural/societal/political norms.
- Solutions are much more effective when government is working on your side. Great to get government buy-in.
- Folk Media (creating videos/songs/media using traditional song/dance) are strongest strategies for implementing projects to amplify women's voices. Regardless of skill to read and write. Women have soul, rhythm, inspiration and can start movements.
- Rwanda leading by example in Africa in terms of putting women into parliament and gaining tons of success in doing so. Government should lead by example. U.S. far behind.
- Women were meant to be the ones who told the men when we had enough of whatever we needed. We were meant to be connected to the earth, the divine and each other so that we could sense what was best for the collective good. We feel that we need to step back into this role more fully. We have been fragmented and separate from each other and the earth and by re-establishing these connections we can reclaim this role.
- Men's relationship with the Earth is unsustainable and it's time for women to play a more active role. Women always had to monitor when men had hunted and gathered enough – we're not doing that anymore.
- We need more women on boards to make companies more successful – when there's more proof that gender equality on corporate boards makes companies more successful – companies will start to make change.
- We need to protect the space for women to be active.
- Women need to know they're not alone. We need to understand that women in other countries have different gender-based fears than we do in the West. Listening and respecting differences is so important.
- Change comes locally but at some point must transfer to global change.
- We need a cross-fertilization of ideas. We need to identify people of change, leaders, set new norms. We need to bring security, rights, and women and climate into the same sentences.
- Donors make change! Donors are changemakers in that they make good work possible.
- Important to share stories, step up, take risks, connect with others.
- When women come together = POWER.

- How can we get the people on top in power to hear and listen to the voices of those with less power?
- How can we bring men into the solutions – become leaders of the solutions?

Hope - *“We lose potential for progress without hope”*

- Grassroots & Policymakers- there is space in between, how do we connect the two?
 - Share stories – they are important for bridging high level policy spaces to grassroots
 - Photos and stories- need to be told, meet people, hear voices, moments of connection, bring the spirit of the people they are helping
 - In person: Films/movies
- Inspire young people to be the change for the future
- Random events can lead to telling stories for social change- bring stories to others through films, books, talks, pictures
- Storytellers and documentaries are very powerful and give hope
- Seeing everyone who shows up to do activist work when showing up is for future
- Missed opportunities in silos- need to think more collaboratively and creatively
- Being an active listener and storytelling is powerful way to cultivate hope in our culture
- Share someone else’s story, not just receiving marketing information- not a real way to communicate the real stories from the ground
- Community stories of reconciliation are powerful
- Philanthropy and social change- putting for profit to understand social change around economics
- There’s no choice- it’s a spiritual journey and you have to use the whole tool chest
- Opportunity to bridge the investing with the social change – need to understand the root causes- business as usual is not the norm.
- Now is a sea change to where investors look for sustainability
- Re-thinking capital being deployed for community development
- Investor demand, millennials want this- women want more socially responsible funds
- How can we take these experiences of hope to our leadership as it impacts women, peace, security, and an environmentally aware change?

Local to Global - *“All change begins at the grassroots. However, without subsequent legal/policy change, full impact cannot be realized.”*

- You cannot make global and international decisions about poverty and local situations without local voices participating
- Women are catalysts for change in communities
- Not about telling rest of the world what they should be doing
- Making change: need to slow down to make sure you have taken time to digest and think about it, make sure you the resources and energy to make it happen
- Sometimes there are so many resources available however there is lack of knowledge, and disenfranchised don’t trust the system
- Finding shared core values

- When very few have some power, abuse of power becomes worse, they lose sight of what they don't have and not conscious of what they do have
- Sometimes there are so many resources available however there is lack of knowledge, distrust, poor in general don't trust the system
- Women have no real safety, anywhere
- Factors that help catalyze locally-initiated efforts into national or international policy:
 - having an idea that resonates with others and the tools to communicate that idea/message broadly.
 - a sense that there is "an exhaustion of the alternatives" (activism is hard work and often comes about after feelings of frustration, anger, even desperation with the status quo).
 - opportunities exist for cross-fertilization of ideas (presences of networks and diversity within those networks.)
 - identification of individuals of influence who can be reached ("getting the ear of decision-makers.")
 - people see themselves as leaders (and can see examples of others like themselves in the leadership of the movement.)
- There is a focus on setting new standards/new norms (whether that is the "new norm" that women will always be 50% of those at the table in a peace negotiation, or the "new standard" or even the "new norm" created by having both women and men serve as President of the US).
- Additionally, **other concrete ideas/recommendations shared were:**
- **For GGF/Secure Futures/UAF in particular: craft a clearer message on why equality, security, and climate change/environment are related & share more stories of how grassroots action led to national/global change.**
- Bring the "women, peace, and security" conversations into the schools (US high school students are barely getting any education in government at all, let alone learning about the UN, international conventions, National Action Plans, security processes, etc.)
- "Gamify" efforts on climate change (e.g. competitions between neighbors/towns to reduce waste, reduce energy use).

Policy – *“The action is at the local/statewide level, where policy advancement is possible”*

Q) How can civil society and government work together to protect both women's rights and address climate change?

Q) What are the opportunities with a new administration to influence policy related to women's rights, climate change, and security?

- US should sign COP21 Paris agreement and ensure that the goals are funded and upheld.
 - resolution needs to be specific so that goals can be evaluated and monitored.
 - need to define what “gender equality “ means. (make language inclusive: “genders”.)
- Include effects of policy on women at all levels.
- Increase of UN funding for peace towards women's programs.
- Inclusion of gender perspective in the policy; men and women are effected differently by policy.
- Increased representation of Women at ALL Levels.

- Suggestion that all US government employees receive training on gender analysis.
- Best Chance for immediate change is to focus on impacting Domestic Policy thru legislation with gender perspective, representation, and language that is linked to budget items and can be evaluated and monitored.
- Involve multi disciplinary Civil Society Organizations in monitoring the government for accountability. (for example Global Gender Climate Alliance).
- Elevating visibility of activists
- Economic incentives so that we stop profiting from the pain of poor communities

Q) What do we think of when we think about security?

- Meeting people's needs
- Not imperializing other cultures and expecting no backlash
- The acceptance of change and the wiliness to adapt to change before there is a direct impact on a family or individual

Q) Why focus on women?

- Women are often the frontline adaptors, providers
- UN Resolution 1325
 - Participation of women
 - Protection of women
 - Prevention of conflict
 - National Action Plan on Women, Peace, & Security
- The action is at the local/statewide level, where policy advancement is possible
- It is hopeless to pass things at the federal level
- Civic/community activism is critical
- America needs to wake-up to its privilege