

# GENDER MATTERS

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# WHAT IS GENDER?

- Gender refers to the characteristics / norms / roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy.
- Gender is **socially constructed** (not talking just binary biology, though this may form part of the story) – note that even biology is challenged re: intersex (1.7% population), Y chromosome changes etc – whilst some identify with the gender not associated with given biological properties or may identify as gender fluid.
- Generates ‘ideal’ types of femininity and masculinity:
  - In society women are generally rewarded for being feminine, men for being masculine.
  - Each society generates different ‘ideal types’ of these gender performances.
  - There is often a type of gender performance that is dominant or ‘hegemonic’.

# WHY DOES GENDER MATTER?

- Performed = enables and constrains actions within and without organisations.

“individual actions are judged and responded to in relation to the gendered expectations to which a person is subject – as a woman, or as a man” (Grey 2017)

- Makes some environments easier or harder to function in depending on displayed traits:
  - harder for highly masculine people to fit in when shopping at Pandora unless Valentines day.
  - studies suggest that women have to become one of the boys – ‘honorary men’ (King 2016) – in military contexts (and hate being spotlighted, sorry) or are typically placed into categories of sl\*ts, b\*tches or d\*kes.
  - raises awareness of other ‘intersecting’ identities (ie race, class, education, physical ability, sexuality).

# OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

- Operationally relevant: gender roles will impact upon expectations / behaviours / actions of populations engaged with:
  - ie disasters: women typically at much higher risk during major natural disasters (women up to 4x more likely to be killed during the Aceh tsunami is one commonly cited statistic) and men can be at higher risk afterwards
  - ie conflicts: gendered impacts re: forced soldiering, SGBV, indirect casualties, DDR processes, 'post conflict' often sees increases in domestic violence

# GENDER OFTEN DISCUSSED VIA WPS

- In 2000 UNSCR1325 created the women, peace and security agenda: “gender matters in and to the conflict, management and prevention of armed conflict” (Shepherd 2017: 142).
- Ron Mark Shangri La Dialogue 2018: alongside HADR and BPC, WPS is a “strength” that New Zealand “champions”.
- International obligation to support the WPS agenda but not just ‘box ticking’ – being aware of gender provides another dynamic / variable / dimension to understanding what is going on around you + gender equality valuable in and of itself.

## NZDF Commander’s guide to WPS (2016)

- Suggestion that distribution of food directly to women in camps helps to ensure that food is consumed by target groups, and that women should be consulted on the organisation and layout of refugee or IDP camps to help reduce risks of SGBV (NZDF 2016: 48).
- Another focuses on the need to recognise that women and girls may have been combatants and therefore require demobilisation too (NZDF 2016: 64).

# UNDERLYING AIM IS GENDER EQUALITY – WHY?

Improves the world:

- Ironclad evidence that gender equality central to success = peaceful, prosperous societies.
  - Peace “inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development” (Pillay 2006: 2).
  - Gender equality / diminishing of gender-based violence is vital for economic development (True 2012).
  - States with higher levels of gender equality less likely to resort to force (Coomaraswamy, 2015, p. 206).
  - Presence of women in peace process increases chance agreement will hold at least two years by 20% and make it 35% more likely that peace will hold at least 15 years (Paffenholz et al 2016).

Improves organisations:

- Problem solving increased: see different problems and solutions = adaptable/flexible/agile (sound familiar?)

Plus.. It is the right thing to do *intrinsically* as well as *instrumentally* to ensure equality of opportunity – for example, militaries are associated with myths of statehood = ultimate expression of citizenship/rights.