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Gender and Nuclear Weapons: Measuring the Impact

A Report on BASIC's Community of Practice

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The project

This report brings together the insights developed as part of BASIC's Community of Practice: Gender and Nuclear Weapons - Measuring the Impact. The report below is based on the findings of extended discussions from four workshops attended by experts in nuclear policy working on gender. Members of the Community of Practice (CoP) shared their experiences and collaboratively developed suggestions for next steps in evaluation and impact of gender work, to move beyond the current state of affairs in the field.

Work on gendering nuclear weapons politics has increased in recent years, yet we do not know what impact this work has, or how to measure impact beyond quantitative representation data. As such, this project seeks to assess the substantive impacts of gendering nuclear policy for those who highlight gender and intersectional work as leading to nuclear policy change. The CoP met online over the course of 2024 to explore how diverse actors in the nuclear policy community anticipated that gender work will deliver change. Policymakers, academics, and advocates brought their own expertise and experience in gender programming to take stock of what works, in what context, and through which mechanisms. This project stems from initial research showing that whilst several projects on gender and nuclear weapons exist, there is repetition in both the design of these projects and their currently undefined or unexplored impacts.[1] This highlights a need for stakeholders to explore the assumptions at the core of gender approaches and perspectives in nuclear politics. As such, this report proposes an evaluation framework that goes beyond existing gender and diversity frameworks, for organisations to use to understand the impact of gender work.

Why a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice seeks to establish a network of professionals that share a concern, and seek to learn how to engage with that concern or topic in new innovative ways. The purpose of this CoP is to ask whether and how we can measure the various impacts of work that claims to bring gender to nuclear policymaking. We selected members for the CoP through an open call, and invitations to individuals who have shown a demonstrable prior engagement with the gender and nuclear weapons space (understood in broad terms). The CoP includes a wide range of experts, all with experience and insights as to what gendering nuclear policy means and requires to date. The group includes members of NGOs, diplomats, academics and members of activist networks, who have all come together to investigate how impact can be deciphered when it comes to gendering nuclear policy.

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1.   Laura Rose Brown and Laura Considine, 'Examining 'gender-sensitive' approaches to nuclear weapons policy: a study of the Non-Proliferation Treaty' International Affairs 98:4, 2022.

The level of expertise and experience of CoP members spans from early career to senior experts in the field. Above all, the project focussed on creating the sense of community, to create a space of dialogue and collaboration for a group of experts who often work in isolation on the topic of gender at the margins of key debates on nuclear weapons.

Participation in these conversations entails a commitment to critically analyse our own assumptions when it comes to the work we do and the organisations we are a part of, in addition to a track record of engaging with the gender and nuclear weapons intersection, broadly understood. The reason for this was not to be exclusionary, but instead to respond to one of the catalysts that brought this project to light: many working on this topic will be familiar with the broad array of events and opportunities to start the discussion on gender and nuclear weapons. Differently, this project sought to move the conversation beyond an introduction to the role of gender perspectives on nuclear policy. Though these introductions are important base-line work, the intention with this CoP was to think about how we can move towards understanding what our work on 'gender and nuclear weapons' might do, and how we can collaborate to overcome barriers to creating impact in the future.

Note on collecting insights

This report does not represent a common opinion on what this work should look like, but rather a collective commitment to asking critical questions about the assumptions that drive work on gender and nuclear weapons. As such, the report features several viewpoints on the current state of gender programming.

Roadmap

This report, based on the discussions taking place within the CoP, begins by setting the landscape of gender and nuclear weapons. Specifically, it provides insights as to how those working in this space understand the key debates on gendering nuclear weapons, and the specific dynamics that nuclear weapons present in the case of gender work. In part two, the report outlines how impact has been understood in relation to gender and nuclear weapons thus far. Then, part two turns towards using methods from realist evaluation to explore the theories of change underpinning current gender work, to investigate further how impact could be evaluated within this work. In part three, all of these ideas are brought together to consider what meaningful engagement on gender in the nuclear space would require, with a focus on intersectionality. Specifically, this section highlights the unresolved issues discussed in the CoP on evaluating impact on gender work. Part four of the report puts forward an evaluation framework, presented as a set of open questions, for organisations and individuals alike to consider within their gender project both design and impact evaluation.

Core debates on gender and nuclear weapons

The CoP considered the key themes underpinning current work on gender and nuclear weapons, as a first step in seeking to measure the impact of gender work in nuclear policy. These discussions were framed around the core debates emerging from current gender and nuclear weapons work.

Gender balance and quantitative targets

Whilst equitable participation is important for the field and a necessary first step, the focus on representation creates challenges when it comes to making an impact. At present, much of the work on gender and nuclear weapons focuses on representation and achieving gender balance in nuclear policy spaces. Several initiatives which work on gender and nuclear weapons are underpinned by the assumption that increasing the representation of women and other marginalised groups will have a positive impact on nuclear policymaking, however the nature of the anticipated impact is sometimes unclear. These initiatives include mentorship opportunities and training schemes for young women to enter the field, ad-hoc events to showcase the work of women in the nuclear space, and reporting on gender balance within nuclear diplomacy.

First, despite the focus of current gender work on representation, for some organisations representation of women can be seen as 'nice to have' as opposed to essential. In these cases, representation is often seen as the be-all and end-all of gendering nuclear policy, which means that organisations might feel their work is done once gender balance is achieved. However, the focus on increased participation does not always take into account the constraints which limit the contributions of women once they have joined the field. For example, research has shown that organisational barriers often exist which curtail how individuals feel they can contribute to nuclear policy spaces, and what they feel able to say.[2] As such, there is a need to consider what 'meaningful representation' entails, and to explore institutional dynamics at play even within spaces where gender balance has been achieved. In addition, once marginalised groups gain more representation, often it falls on the shoulders of those groups to navigate challenges stemming from under-representation. The CoP discussed this in relation to who is made responsible for improving participation, and discussed how early career professionals, women (particularly women of colour) and gender-diverse individuals are often given the responsibility to bring gender into the space from the bottom up. This dynamic undermines attempts to innovate the nuclear field through improving gender representation, as it fails to engage with the hierarchical power dynamics often at play in organisational settings.

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2. Heather Hurlburt, Elena Souris, Alexandra Star and Elizabeth Weingarten, 'The "consensual straitjacket": four decades of women in nuclear security', New America, 2019.

Nuclear 'Spaces'

Work on gender and nuclear weapons requires consideration of not only who is represented, but also who is listened to in specific contexts. Linked to improving representation, it is important to consider not only who is represented in a given space, but the dynamics and nature of the space itself.[3] This is important in acknowledging hierarchies at work in these spaces, which goes beyond uniquely gendered hierarchies. Presence in a specific policy space does not imply that one's participation will not be hindered by other more tacit hierarchical dynamics at play.

Organisational, procedural, and political constraints

Often CoP members expressed the tension between personal convictions (for example, as linked to feminist goals or nuclear disarmament) and the organisational constraints they experience. Whilst these tensions are not unique to working on gender and nuclear weapons, in this context the tensions between personal convictions and organisational constraints relate to specific institutional positions as they relate to nuclear weapons politics, the origins of programme funding, as well as the extent to which gender work is deemed a priority at the senior levels of an organisation. These challenges also emerge as a result of political and procedural constraints. For instance, the inclusion of language on gender in multilateral fora takes a long time, and goes through its own process of political contestation amongst groups of states.[4] In some instances, this has slowed down work on gender, and also contributed to its dilution.

Squaring domestic and international gender politics

Related to the tensions stemming from institutional positions and priorities, tensions emerge for states working on gender work, between their domestic politics and their international politics. For instance, whilst some states have been vocal in their efforts to gender nuclear weapons policy, domestically they also face significant challenges in promoting and sustaining gender equality. This can also be the case in terms of domestic political representation and gender balance in governments. All of these tensions can lead to critiques of incumbent work as 'tokenistic', or a sentiment that states might 'talk the talk' but not always 'walk the walk' across the breadth of their political activity.

Disarmament and Feminism(s)

The place of nuclear disarmament, and specific feminist visions (for instance anti-militarist feminist perspectives as contrasted with more liberal approaches) emerged in conversations across the CoP. Specifically, members considered whether the conversation should be focused on gendering nuclear disarmament, as opposed to gendering nuclear weapons, in order to avoid diluting the discussion.

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3. The nuclear space is used throughout this report to acknowledge the specific settings and contexts in which work on gendering nuclear policy takes place. These spaces are often considered as more or less legitimate, employing embedded hierarchies which often lean on gendered ideas.

4. Louis Reitmann, Gender Language in Multilateral Diplomacy: Analyzing Recent Pushback in Vienna (Washington DC: Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy, 2024)

Further, there was a frequent tendency for members to acknowledge their personal feminist agenda, as something separate to the organisations they represent or programmes they are working on.

Does work on nuclear weapons require something specific when it comes to gender?

Harms and perceptions

Unlike other fields, such as conventional weapons, where gender approaches have been applied, the nuclear space often focuses on hypothetical future harms. We nuanced this to consider that there are examples of gendered impacts, particularly within affected communities of nuclear use and testing. Members brought together their experience of other spaces, for instance within multilateral negotiations relating to conventional weapons where discussions have been more tangible, in terms of remediations for gendered harms. A key factor contributing to the less tangible impacts of gender programming on nuclear issues is that the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons have been less visible and less discussed within the current status quo of nuclear weapons politics.

Size of the field

CoP discussions highlighted that the nuclear policy field feels small, owing to a number of factors. First, there are entrenched ideas about who constructs the nuclear status quo, which operates to obstruct the experience of outsiders to that status quo, in gendered terms. For instance, ideas about masculinity and femininity underpin ideas about the status quo and accepted orthodoxy of nuclear policy, particularly when it comes to the separation between deterrence and disarmament specialists. This leads to a nuclear policy environment which prioritises certain perspectives over others, all the while sidelining issues of gender. Second, the small size of the field contributes to a blurring of professional and personal interactions in the online and offline space. These dynamics show up at international meetings, networking events, and on social media. We considered how an evaluation of impact on gendering nuclear policy could engage with the gendered dynamics at work in the constitution of the field itself.

A fragmented and polarised field of work

Related to the feeling that the nuclear policy field is small, is that the field is experienced as deeply polarised. This polarisation is two-fold. First, in nuclear policy spheres there is a lack of unanimity as to the role and legitimacy of nuclear weapons; for example, these debates are often expressed in terms of polarised positions on a belief in deterrence, as opposed to global disarmament.

Second, there is polarisation as to what the relationship between gender and nuclear weapons means and requires. Overlapping and conflicting ideas about gender thus exist against a backdrop of nuclear policy which is already characterised by polarised feelings about the purpose of nuclear weapons and their role in providing security.

Within the work taking place on gender and nuclear weapons to date, gender approaches have been presented as a means to instigate change in nuclear policy. The group discussed how this differs from other foreign policy spaces, where gender is often introduced with the goal of achieving gender equality. In the nuclear field, gender is often brought up to solve nuclear issues, as opposed to issues related to gender equality as the end goal.

Privileging technology and the technical

On the issue of nuclear weapons, there is a propensity to talk in technical terms about technological solutions to nuclear related issues. We considered how this is different to other fields where it might be easier to introduce language linked to the social world, and social issues through language on human rights and equality. In the nuclear field, the focus on technology and technno-strategic language constrains how ideas about gender can be incorporated.

Current understandings and approaches to impact

Current approaches to measurement

The CoP discussed the current focus on representation as a key indicator of impact and the limitations of this indicator, particularly when it comes to whether presence in a space actually translates into a sense of 'feeling seen and heard' in that space. Meanwhile, it is worth asking whether a focus on 'measurement' in broad terms was the appropriate direction, given the importance of considering the specific contexts of gendered approaches and programming. What works in one instance, might yield different outcomes in different circumstances.

Ideas for future measurement

A number of ideas were discussed for measuring impact on gender work in the future. These included considering metrics such as the reduction of harms, tracking state defence budgets, and tracking discourse changes in specific fora to evaluate the consistency of states between their language and actions. Other aspects for exploration could also relate to increasing knowledge bases and education on nuclear issues. Members also discussed the idea of 'complicating representation' by asking whether changing the makeup of specific rooms leads to different conversations. The CoP also discussed the need to go beyond gender and incorporate intersectional approaches, explored later in this report.

From quantitative to qualitative approaches to understanding impact

Some members of the group were sceptical about quantitative approaches to measuring the impact of gendering nuclear weapons, and instead called for qualitative approaches. There are some quantitative data points which can show an increase in interest in the issue of gender, for instance, attendance numbers at events. However, the nature of gender programming requires an iterative approach which can interpret the work taking place as a continuous process, as opposed to the snapshot view presented in some quantitative analyses. The group discussed how qualitative research methods from social science disciplines could be useful tools.

Absent theories of change

Across the CoP, there was a consensus that formal theories of change are absent in current approaches to gendering the space. In other words, the link between a specific activity that takes place and its impact on changing the space or instigating outcomes for

nuclear policy is often unclear. Instead, impact can often be an afterthought within this work, as a result of other obligations, for example, reporting on funding. In some instances this leads members of the group to see impact (for instance, improving representation) in this work as a 'tick-box' exercise.

Level of ambition and practicing humility

The group discussed the idea of humility, and understanding that impact when it comes to gender and nuclear weapons can be fragmented, dynamic, and in oscillation. The variable impacts of gendering nuclear policy and the broad approach needed to evaluate the impact of this work should be considered by funders, in acknowledgement of the non-linearity of reshaping ideas and norms in the nuclear weapons space. With this in mind, we discussed how we communicate the intentions underpinning our interventions in order to set clear parameters for what this work can achieve. Relatedly, we discussed how some of the work we do might have quantitatively small impacts (for instance, impacting one individual), however the personal impact of these interventions and their capacity for progress in the field should not be underestimated.

Problems with measuring in terms of empowerment

Linked to scepticism towards quantitative methods, the group discussed the challenges that arise when trying to measure impact in terms of 'empowerment'. Indeed, empowerment itself is a term entangled in a host of debates within feminist research, particularly with regards to the agency of those who would be 'empowered', and the problematic narrative associated with suggesting specific actors are capable and responsible for empowering other groups. Instead, the group considered how a broader approach which focuses directly on how actors in the field experience gender programming (both in multiple and overlapping ways) would be a necessary first step to deciphering impact.

Responding to events in the field

The group also reflected on how events taking place, particularly harmful behaviour in the field, should feed into how we understand the impact of gendering nuclear weapons. We considered how this has been navigated so far in the nuclear policy space, and reflected on what would be an appropriate response to harmful behaviour particularly, for example, in the online space. Ultimately, we considered how this comes down to power and hierarchical power dynamics. The group reflected on how approaches to impact could contend directly with these displays of power. This is also worth considering as we consider impacts that extend beyond the desired outcomes of gender programmes.

Feeling seen in nuclear policy

To resolve issues with measuring impact in quantitative terms and to avoid the inclusion of gender perspectives as a 'tick-box' exercise, the idea of 'feeling seen' and 'feeling heard' in nuclear policy could be useful for the field. An evaluation tool that provides the means

for those working on gender approaches to consider how they feel their work is received, would be a useful means by which to measure or consider the notion of impact.

Identifying the theories of change underpinning gender approaches in nuclear policy

Having considered the challenges in evaluating the impact of gender work, the group discussed different gender policy interventions and how exactly these interventions might work. We spent time thinking about whether the assumptions underpinning our work are realistic, and whether there are barriers to achieving impact across the life cycle of the theories of change that we uncover.

Realist policy evaluation provides a pertinent framing to help us to articulate clear theories of change. The realist evaluation framework was developed by Ray Pawson and Nick Tilley in 1997, in the context of complex public health interventions. The key question of realist evaluation is: 'What works, for whom, under what circumstances, and why?' In other words, within a given programme, which mechanisms will work in different contexts and what outcomes might we observe if they do? The goal of realist evaluation is to understand how and why different outcomes occur in specific contexts. In small groups we discussed theories of change (and the challenges in articulating them), and then moved towards unpicking the assumptions underpinning these theories.

We considered:
- What do our theories of change assume about the contexts we work in?
- Who do our interventions depend upon?
- Who does the intervention have outcomes for?
- Do we think the intervention works and by which metrics?

Across the CoP, the application of questions used in realist evaluation exposed the assumptions and mechanisms at work within current interventions on gender and nuclear weapons. The assumptions on which these interventions rely are outlined across four themes below.

Diversifying the field

The group identified a number of mentorship schemes and events which seek to bring women into the field. These activities often assume that a focus on workplace structure and the extension of new opportunities to those traditionally excluded from the field would lead to change. However, the group collectively questioned whether these changes connect to outcomes for nuclear weapons policy.

5.   Ray Pawson and Nick Tilley, Realistic Evaluation (London: Sage, 1997).

A key tension identified was the reliance on essentialist assumptions that this theory of change might promote, for example, the notion that adding women will lead to peaceful outcomes. Thus, there is a need to critically engage with the question of why and how inclusion relates to nuclear weapons policy. With this in mind, initiatives that seek to include and support a more equitable nuclear policy community can also be seen to rely on assumptions rooted in exclusionary practices, for instance, invite-only networks and events. In the same way, the group reflected upon how in-person events and professional etiquette therein should also be considered when developing ideas about how events on gender make an impact. This has been explored in previous work on gender and international affairs within the Gender, Think-Tanks and International Affairs toolkit.[6]

Responsibility and time commitments

We discussed the efforts made in the field to make the mid-career pipeline of the nuclear policy community more diverse. The group considered the mechanisms underpinning this work, notably that for favorable outcomes to occur, this requires a time commitment from more senior (most often women) members of the policy community, which does not always go acknowledged. Linked to this, individual conviction on the importance of gender perspectives and what this entails plays a crucial role in pushing the needle on gender work. For instance, there is a sentiment that if individuals personally committed to gender approaches did not do the work, then no one else would do it. As such, gender programming and approaches is highly dependent on specific members of the community, as opposed to a shared collective responsibility. This raises questions about how sustainable the impact of gender work can be, given the movement of individuals across different policy spaces and organisations in a small field. Indeed, this requires organisations to consider how gender approaches can be implemented and maintained across their organisations in the long-term, as opposed to relying on one individual.

Shifting focus

Another area where the group reflected upon theories of change and impact, was in shifting the focus of gender work. For instance, we discussed work that has focused on reshaping and reinforcing norms in terms of humanitarianism, as opposed to a gender lens or feminism. The group discussed how this shift works to ensure that all stakeholders can be equitably included in changes across the nuclear policy community. However, the group also questioned the sustainability of this approach, and discussed the need for a longer term vision of the meaningful inclusion of gender perspectives.

Power

All of these aspects considered, there is a desire to start thinking about how the interventions on gendering nuclear policy are also embedded into systems of power that extend beyond gender work specifically. Members of the group raised the importance of asking whether the interventions developed to address gender issues in nuclear policy, might in

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6. Laura Dunkley, Marissa Conway and Marion Messmer, Gender, think-tanks and international affairs: a toolkit (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy and BASIC, 2021).

fact perpetuate or reinforce inequalities, for instance by ignoring other aspects such as race. Essential to engaging with power in broad terms, is a consideration of what success would mean in gendering nuclear policy for the field in broad terms.

Impact and the individual

Discussions within the CoP, often highlighted personal experience and feelings toward work on gender and nuclear weapons. As discussed previously in this report, the crucial role of a personal commitment to the value of gender perspectives, as well as the gendered power dynamics that condition engagement with the nuclear policy field more broadly, are closely linked with how impact can be understood.

Overall, working on gender and nuclear weapons has tangible impacts on how professionals in the field experience both their work and the nuclear policy space. Engaging in this work can open individuals up to harmful backlash and a sense of precarity. The work is often separated, siloed, and marginalised as compared to other issue areas in nuclear policy, which impacts on how professionals feel their own work is received. These themes are discussed below.

Issue prioritisation

There is a strong sentiment that work on gender and nuclear weapons is not a prioritised workstream, and instead viewed by organisations as an 'add-on' to existing programme work. This presents challenges, as whilst we considered that gender might not be at the core focus or mission of an organisation, without a deep-rooted commitment to engaging with gender, it can be difficult to see impact in promoting gendered approaches. Related to this, some members felt that gender was seen as a 'nice' thing for organisations to engage with, but that this was not seen as the 'real' and 'grown-up' work to focus on.

Gender as tick-box exercise

Linked to the theme of issue prioritisation, some members spoke of how introducing gender into their work, and the work of the organisation often felt like a tick-box exercise, for example in focussing on quantitative approaches to measuring progress. This entails the feeling that organisations introduced gender work purely because it had been mandated from above. In this way, gender is engaged with in order to abide by rules and conventions that might be reported on, as opposed to a more in-depth engagement that extends gender work to engage with specific issues and purposes.

Individual's experiences

Some members of the CoP shared that by virtue of working on gender and nuclear weapons, they felt that they were 'put into a box', which contributes to their own sidelining and the marginalisation of gender work. There was a sentiment that gender work was often neatly contained, and falling in the remit of a small few who would be willing to work on gender in addition to other duties.

Responsibility for gender work

Members of the CoP considered who was responsible for the work on gender, and shared that for the most part it seems to be early-career, gender-diverse individuals, people of colour and sometimes mid-career professionals who are expected to work on gender. This was interesting to consider, as we discussed that often those in more junior positions are less well positioned to drive a specific agenda. Early-career colleagues are often less free to decide what they will work on, and as such, doing gender work is seen as a choice to add on if they had extra-time. This has implications for their own working conditions, and the sustainability of gender work writ large if it doesn't receive sustained attention and allocated time in an organisation. Often, gender work is taken on by women in organisations. We also discussed that when gender work falls to the responsibility of one individual, this can disrupt the longevity of gender work when that individual moves to a new role (inside or outside their organisation). Relatedly, the issue of responsibility is further complicated as members shared that the start and end of gender-work is hard to imagine; rather, members discussed the introduction of gender to nuclear weapons policy as an ever-expanding workload that requires increasing engagement.

Backlash

Another theme that came up was the backlash that individuals face as a result of their engagement with gender and nuclear weapons. This has been visible in the nuclear policy community. Further, often the backlash that gender work has spurred has targeted women of colour specifically, adding another factor to consider in who is often tasked with gender, and the challenges associated with taking on this work. The group also discussed that broader resentment to gender approaches in the nuclear weapons field could in fact result in a lack of understanding as to what gender work can catalyse.

Risk

Tying together many of the above themes, the group shared the idea that working to bring gender to nuclear weapons entails risk. This relates not only to the professional development of individuals, but also to the status of organisations committing to this work. The precarious funding landscape also contributes to the sense of risk, in which other programme areas might be prioritised as 'safer options'.

What is required for impact evaluation when gendering nuclear weapons?

Insights raised within the CoP suggest that close engagement with key pillars of intersectional approaches would allow the field to navigate and mitigate the current challenges to creating and measuring impact in gender work.[7] These pillars include social identity, power relationships, marginalisation, people's lives and experiences, and the overlapping of multiple systems of oppression. The CoP thus focused on what an intersectional approach would mean and require for organisations bringing gender into their nuclear work.

Members discussed the following questions:
- What would an intersectional approach mean and require of our organisations?
- Are there things that are done, or not done which highlight where an intersectional approach is useful?
- What could be done to bring intersectionality into our work?
- How would these adaptations contribute to creating or understanding the impact of work gendering nuclear weapons policy?

Implementing Intersectionality

Complexity: An intersectional approach should engage directly with complexity and go beyond the single issue of gender. We shared ideas about how intersectionality can often be alluded to by organisations, without linking this to tangible ideas, engagement, and impact stemming from the work. With this in mind, 'intersectionality' has been diluted, often becomes a 'buzzword', and can appear vague as a term when it is dropped into texts. We also considered the commitment to an intersectional approach as often amorphous; this brings challenges in ensuring that intersectional work meaningfully contends with the power dynamics and systems of injustice that it is designed for. However, there are also opportunities for those working on this agenda to provide clear explanations of what intersectionality could look like across the nuclear sphere, and the benefits of adopting this approach across the field.

Project cycle: Related to the vague adoption of intersectionality, we discussed the importance of introducing intersectional frameworks from the start of projects, rather than adding it on later in project cycles. These insights were linked to the ideas discussed about gender being 'added-on' as a nice bonus, as opposed to being seen as crucial for a project's successful delivery.

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7.   Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color" Stanford Law Review 43:6, 1991.

As such, consideration of social identity, power relationships, marginalisation, and individual experience should underpin approaches to gender and nuclear weapons.

Intersecting global challenges: Another way to engage with the concepts creating an intersectional framework is to link the nuclear issue to other existential global issues. These include the climate crisis, and the defence of human rights. At the core of these global issues is the preservation of individuals, which lends itself to an approach which engages with social identity and the related imbalances of power that can occur through hierarchy. As such, intersectional approaches to nuclear weapons could engage more extensively with other policy areas to collaborate in their approaches.

Introspection: A meaningful intersectional approach would require introspection and an examination of organisational processes, in order to ensure an intersectional approach that is bottom-up and internally rooted. A bottom-up approach would include acknowledging and challenging the hierarchies which underpin organisational structures. This includes asking who does gender work, and why they are selected to do so. It also includes examining whether those individuals are given the appropriate tools to engage in their work, including time and funding. We shared as a group that the process of introspection could be quite uncomfortable for organisations with longstanding processes in place, however engaging with this in-depth would show spaces where inequalities and power dynamics can be grappled with.

Funding: The group discussed the benefit of a top-down and bottom-up approach to intersectionality. Organisations can look inwardly to implement intersectional frameworks within their own work through introspection, with a view to extending this outward. However, funders have the ability to apply top-down pressure on organisations to meaningfully engage in intersectional approaches. With this in mind, funders should consider how gender and nuclear weapons work is intersectional in its approach, and make explicit what they require from organisations to evidence an approach that goes beyond gender work as a 'tick-box exercise' and instead as a means towards untangling the intersectional challenges underpinning the nuclear field.

A framework to evaluate work on gender and nuclear weapons

In this final section, the report presents a set of guiding questions for organisations and individuals to consider when reflecting on the impact of work on gender and nuclear weapons. The questions seek to provide a tool for introspection, with a view to ensuring that gender work meaningfully engages with power dynamics at work in organisations and in the field, as well as providing a means to consider how impact can be deciphered. For this reason, the questions are not exhaustive but instead seek to provide initial discussion points that teams can use to hone in on their current work on gender and nuclear weapons.

Evaluating the impact of specific interventions

• **What is the theory of change underpinning this project? (i.e how does your proposed activity relate to the intended outcomes of the project?)**

This question requires specificity in showing the relationship between the project activity, and the outcome of the project in order to show how the project will work in context. For instance, if the project seeks to promote women's inclusion with a view to bolstering efforts towards closer international cooperation, what is the link between these two aspects? How can you extend your project to make the pathway to your intended outcomes more tangible and transparent?

• **What assumptions does your theory of change rely upon?**

An assumption is something that you take as certain, or accept as true within your work.

• **What are the intended outcomes of this project or approach?**

• **Are there other outcomes which might result from this project?**

• **Who does the project have outcomes for?**

  • What are the outcomes for your organisation?
  • What are the outcomes for nuclear weapons policy more broadly?
  • What are the potential outcomes for individuals working on this project?

• **What indicators will you use to evaluate these outcomes?**

Discussions within the CoP have revealed the extent to which work on gender and

nuclear weapons elicits feelings about the nuclear field, the professional development of individuals and the relationship between personal convictions and organisational commitments. Personal testimony of how individuals experience the project and its outcomes can be a useful indicator to understand these impacts of your work, and also to expose any tacit challenges to providing the intended outcomes. If your indicators are quantitative (for example, number of attendees at an event), it is useful to engage with what these indicators allow you to show in specific terms.

Collaborative work

• Who does the project depend upon for the intended outcomes to be achieved?

Often, individuals who experience marginalisation in the field are made responsible for work on gender and nuclear weapons; how can your organisation support those who are side-lined in the field and take on collective responsibility for the project

• What challenges might you face in delivering this project?

- Do those working on this project have the opportunity to reflect on how they feel the project is progressing?
- Is there a feedback mechanism for individuals to raise challenges they are facing?

• Are there potential risks associated with this project?

- What are the outcomes for your organisation?
- What are the outcomes for nuclear weapons policy more broadly?
- What are the potential outcomes for individuals working on this project?

• What resources and support do the team require in order to deliver the project?

- Is a sufficient amount of time allocated to the project?
- How will the project be funded and is this a sustainable source of funding?

• How does your organisation account for or respond to harmful behaviour in the field?

Work on gender and nuclear weapons has been the subject of backlash in the field; how will you navigate this as an organisation if this occurs?

• How does this work relate to other work taking place in your organisation?

It is useful to consider where this work sits, and whether work on gender is siloed. Those working on gender and nuclear weapons expressed the isolation of this work in comparison to other project areas.

How do you intend to link this work to other workstreams in your organisation?

- **How does this work relate to other work on gender and nuclear weapons taking place in the field?**

There is repetition and duplication in terms of the programme work taking place on gender and nuclear weapons in the nuclear field. Does your project present something new, or how does it complement existing initiatives?

- **How does this work strengthen or challenge your relationship with other stakeholders in the field?**

- **Are there opportunities for collaboration with other actors in the field on this line of work?**

- **What plans have you made to engage with gender beyond the delivery of this project?**

Discussions within the CoP revealed the need for gender work to be understood as a continuous process. What is your project contingent upon, and how can you mitigate these contingencies to ensure longevity of the outcomes?

Individual experience

- **What are the professional and personal impacts of participating in this work?**

- **What does doing this work mean for what is professionally possible for you?**

- **What does it mean for how you and your work is received in the field?**

- **Where do you feel responsibility for this work lies at the moment?**

- **How does this compare to how you experience other lines of project work?**