

Reversing trends on gender equality

5 STEPS ON HOW TO
MAINSTREAM GENDER IN
SALW CONTROL POLICIES

gender blind

SALW control policies

In 2016, UNDP SEESAC conducted a study to map the main gender concerns related to SALW control and to assess to what extent do safety and security policies address the needs of both women and men in South East Europe.

The study revealed the intimate connection between SALW and gender and that the policy response is scarce to non-existent. One result of this gender-blind approach to SALW control is witnessing repeating scenarios of steady numbers of women being killed by their intimate partner, or young men being the main victims of armed violence.

UNDP SEESAC has been including the gender perspective in its disarmament efforts in South East Europe since 2002. Now, mainstreaming gender is part of UNDP SEESAC's signature solution to arms control.

trends

Based on our work and research, these are the trends that we identified as hindering women's active participation in SALW control:

low awareness

among decision-makers of the importance of gender equality at large.

one size fits all

assumption that security concerns are common for all citizens and can be addressed in the same manner irrespective of gender or age.

data gap

lack of sex-disaggregated data, making gender invisible, and leading to the underprioritization of gender in SALW control policies.

traditional structures

policies developed in traditionally men-dominated structures hindering gender-responsive SALW control measures.

How we reverse trends on gender equality?

Increasing knowledge and expertise on gender equality

Mainstreaming gender in the police and the military

- Our work on mainstreaming gender in the police and the military in the Western Balkans has been critical to empowering women officers to actively get involved in advancing gender-responsive policies in their units and ministries.

Groundbreaking research

- Our Gender and SALW study highlighted the gendered nature of SALW control. The study includes a practical toolkit supporting governments to advocate for better gender responsive SALW policies.

Awareness raising

Communications campaigns

- We systematically run communications campaigns specifically addressing the gendered nature of SALW control. In this way, we raise awareness not only of the importance of gender equality at large, but also the impact of gender-blind SALW control policies on all citizens.

Gender-sensitive online presence

- We maintain a gender-sensitive online presence, especially on social media platforms. We wish to challenge perceptions about usual stakeholders present in SALW control, and make women's contributions more visible.

Building a culture of evidence-based policies

Evidence-based policy-making

- Together with all governments in South East Europe, we are leading the region's first large-scale data collection and analysis exercise on the distribution and impact of SALW. Thus, we contribute to an extensive and up-to-date understanding of arms control.

Addressing the root causes of armed violence

- SEESAC conducted an online perceptions survey aiming at understanding public perception on safety and security, use and possession of firearms, and exposure to gun violence in the region.

Visualizing armed violence

- To further enhance data availability and raise awareness of the dangers of firearms illegal possession and misuse, we developed South East Europe's first digital platform monitoring daily firearms incidents.

Enabling women to thrive in SALW control policy-making

- We promote women's participation in all our events and training.
- We work with women active in the security sector to map the gaps in the policy-making cycle of their institutions and together develop solutions to fill in these gaps.

Supporting institutions to integrate gender in their daily work

Innovation

- Our Gender Coach Programme provides one-on-one sessions on gender equality for high-ranking officials in the region. We aim at boosting the gender-responsiveness of institutions by developing skills and fostering commitment among the senior management.

Regional cooperation

- We make sure that gender equality is placed on the agenda of the SALW Commissions meetings - the region's only platform that brings together decision-makers from all locations to find common solutions to common arms control related challenges.

South-south cooperation

- We have included gender mainstreaming as a priority area for RSSRP - a regional platform that leverages the existing expertise in South East Europe to address specific needs, develop partnerships, and enable dialogue with partners around the world.

Roadmap for arms control

- Mainstreaming gender in SALW control is also part of Western Balkans' most complex SALW Control exercise led by SEESAC and all governments in the region and supported by Germany - a roadmap aimed at combating illicit possession and misuse of firearms.

On demand support

- We also provide on-demand support on gender mainstreaming to different partners, from NGOs to forensics labs.