

and one-half of all women are widows. Indeed, one year after the genocide, there were no comprehensive national programs of family support for the survivors.

The humanitarian efforts initiated in Rwanda in the aftermath of the war and genocide highlight two very important, and inevitably linked, questions that must be addressed in Peace building policy. First, how can women support reconstruction? And second, how can reconstruction support women? In Rwanda, for example, given that the majority of the adult population is now composed of women, women are necessarily going to be vital partners in peace building. In order for Rwandan women to be fully effective, however, it is vital that women are free to act as autonomous agents. Among other things this means supporting women in their efforts to change existing laws so that they may inherit property. Women may also have specific health, economic, and/or security needs in the aftermath of violent conflict. The Rwandan women who were raped, for example, may require certain kinds of assistance in rebuilding their own lives prior to and simultaneous to rebuilding the livelihood of their country.

Before discussing the interplay between gender and peace building and the questions posed above, however, it is necessary to explore what is meant by gender as well as the gendered implications of violence, peace, and war. Only when a clear understanding of how gender and violence can be constituted during times of "peace" and "war," and how women identify security in their own lives, can we see what women bring to as well as require from peace building efforts.

VIOLENCE AND GENDER

The Canadian International Development Agency defines gender as, "the socially