

# STRENGTHENING PREVENTION OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CRSV) WITH NON- STATE ARMED GROUPS (NSAGs)

A project spearheaded by UNICEF/OCHA on behalf  
of UN Action

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# Possible Perpetrators of Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations

## Armed Forces & other Security Forces

National Armed Forces

Other Security Forces  
(Police, Gendarmes)

Foreign Armed Forces

Private Security Forces

## Non-state Armed Groups

Ideologically Driven  
Civilian-based Groups

Government Militias

Foreign NSA Groups

## Civilians

Ex-combatants

Criminal Gangs

Others

Known to  
Victim

Unknown to  
Victim

# Project Overview: Background

- Increased attention to the Women, Peace and Security agenda over the past ten years
- Evolving set of humanitarian tools and approaches for responding to needs of survivors
- Limited primary prevention efforts, particularly in relation to sexual violence committed by armed groups

# Project Overview: Key Objectives

- Improve knowledge base about how to prevent armed actors from committing conflict-related sexual violence
- Develop prevention resources that can be used by international and field-based actors to mobilize prevention efforts with armed groups

# Project Overview: Three Phases

- Phase One:
  - Completed in 2011
  - Mapping and analyzing research and practice relevant to prevention of CRSV by **NSAGs**
  - Identification of key ‘influencers’--those at international, regional, national and local levels who might effect change in behavior of armed groups
  - Mission to DRC to solicit field recommendations on working with NSAGs

# Project Overview: Three Phases

- Phase Two:
  - ▣ Expand focus from NSAGs to state militaries
  - ▣ Develop and field-test draft tools and approaches to prevent perpetration of sexual violence by armed actors
  - ▣ Link with UNICEF work on social norms
  
- Phase Three:
  - ▣ Finalize practical ‘prevention toolkit’

# Phase One: Key Lesson Learned

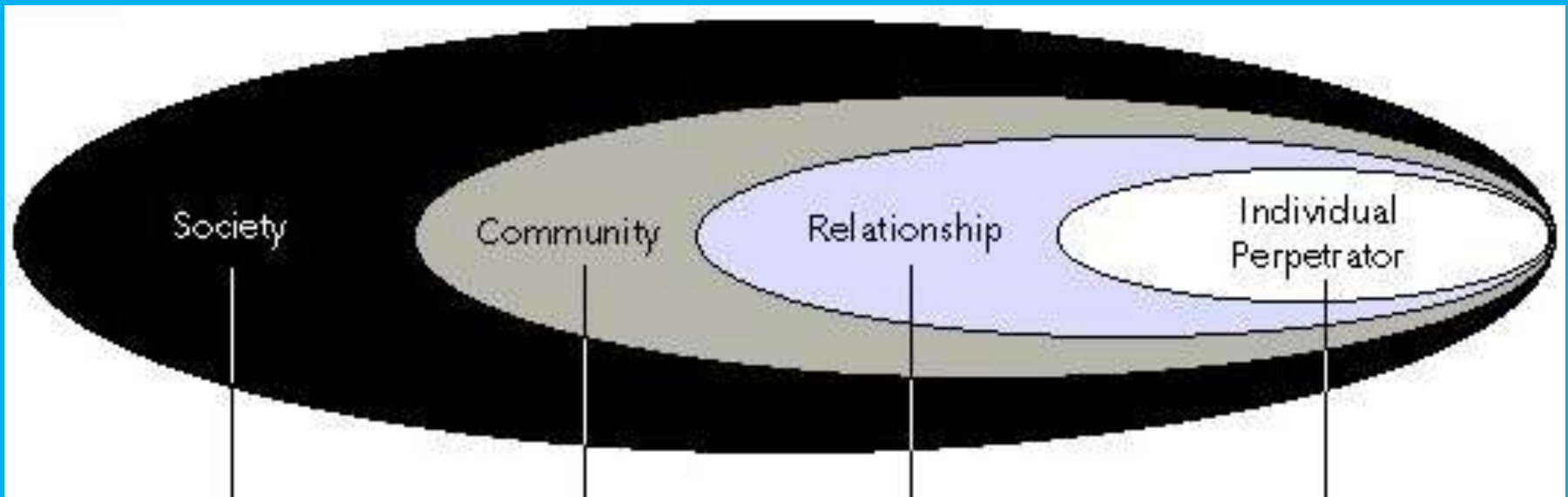
- Information extensive and difficult to organize
- Required development of an accessible and *preliminary* framework in order to
  - ▣ provide a basis for guiding future research and action
  - ▣ articulate a structure for tools development

# Preliminary Framework

- Public health approach
  - ▣ Sexual violence is a preventable problem
  - ▣ Focuses on maximum benefit for the largest number of people
  - ▣ Interdisciplinary
  - ▣ Builds on PRIMARY PREVENTION efforts as they are classified in the public health approach: interventions that take place **before** violence occurs
- Conflict-management approach
  - ▣ Understanding conflict dynamics to determine what brings on destructive behaviors and what processes can build productive options for change
- Ecological model

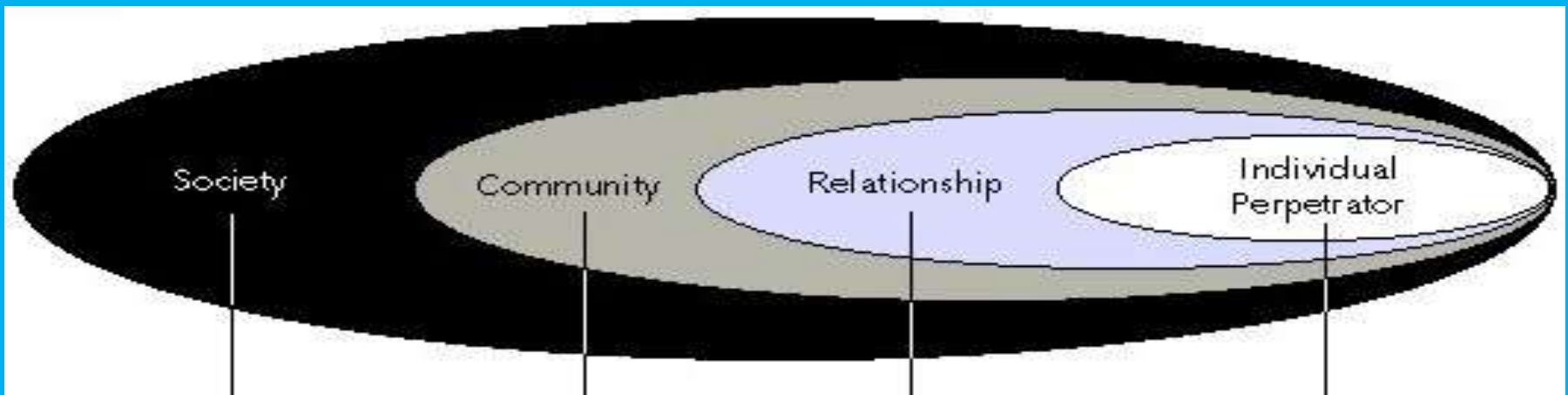


# Ecological Model of Prevention of Sexual Violence



Lori Heise, 1998

# Ecological Model of Prevention of Sexual Violence by NSAGs



Overall structures  
in the social  
order

Interactions  
between the  
NSAGs and  
communities/  
social networks  
in which they live

Group structures,  
norms, and practices  
that regulate  
standards, behavior  
and interactions of  
NSAGs

Biological and  
personal history  
factors of  
individual  
members of  
NSAGs

# Findings: Societal Level Risk Factors

- General breakdown in statutory and traditional law and order with an increase in all forms of violence
- Lack of active presence of peacekeeping troops (poorly trained/unclear mandate)
- Dissatisfaction or failure of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process (DDR)
- Lack of implementation and reinforcement of international laws and standards

# Findings: Societal Level Strategies to Address Risks

- ❑ Increase, reinforce and engage peacekeepers in CRSV prevention
- ❑ Increase support for security sector reform
- ❑ Generate commitments to change collective behavior (i.e. reinforce international laws and policies to end impunity)
- ❑ Support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs

# Findings: Community Level Risk

## Factors

- ❑ Vulnerability of the environment (economic stress and upheaval; social marginalization; absence of resources)
- ❑ Lack of access by community to media and information about SV (i.e not informed about perpetrators being brought to justice)
- ❑ Community norms that justify violence against women (rape as a weapon of war)
- ❑ Mutual reliance by local communities/NSAGs for food, labour, security, etc.
- ❑ Natural resource exploitation dimension to the conflict (mine, forestry, agriculture)

# Findings: Community Level Strategies to Address Risks

- ❑ Develop early warning and prevention advisory networks to target community vulnerabilities
- ❑ Generate new social rules through social norms work
- ❑ Engage religious and other groups that can interact and promote dialogue with armed groups
- ❑ Review experiences of different humanitarian actors who have historically interacted with NSAGs
- ❑ Support efforts to address natural resource exploitation

# Findings: Relationship Level Risk Factors

- ❑ Male dominance within the NSAG
- ❑ Peer pressure connected to military socialization- sexual violence used as a way to increase the bond and cohesion in the group
- ❑ Lack of or weak command structures and hierarchy
- ❑ Lack of codes of conduct and/or their implementation
- ❑ Presence (or absence) of religious/traditional authority within NSAG

# Findings: Relationship Level Strategies to Address Risks

- ❑ Increase accountability of command structures and enforcement of codes of conduct
- ❑ Review bystander interventions and leadership strategies
- ❑ Review direct negotiation initiatives with armed groups about their norms and behaviors
- ❑ Include prevention of sexual violence in early stages of mediation



# Findings: Individual Level Risk Factors

- ❑ Young age
- ❑ Individual cultural norms, ideas and attitudes toward SV and women and girls
- ❑ History of witnessing or experiencing violence
- ❑ Sees self as victim
- ❑ Forced recruitment into armed group
- ❑ Interruption of regular life (school, employment, agriculture, marriage, etc.)
- ❑ Heavy alcohol or drug use
- ❑ Perception that he will not be brought to justice

# Findings: Individual Level Strategies to Address Risk

- ❑ Develop psychosocial prevention programs targeting perpetrators
- ❑ Draw from existing programs that engage men and boys

# Phase I Summary

- There are examples of contact/relationship-building between humanitarian actors and armed groups
- However, few examples of engagement specifically to prevent SV against civilians
- Need a better understanding the motivations and behaviour of armed groups
- Need to learn about and draw upon existing efforts across development and humanitarian actors/sectors to consider strategies for working with armed groups

# Next Steps Phase II



- Research armed groups to better understand motivations
- Refine Ecological Model to identify risks and strategies on all levels
- Develop recommendations for priority areas of intervention

# Next Steps Phase III

- Toolkit for interacting with armed groups (1 non-state armed groups; 1 state armed groups) on the prevention of sexual violence
- Piloting of toolkit in a minimum of 2 countries.