# Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory

A Guide for Turning Theory into Practice

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE
Making Peace Possible

# Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory

A Guide for Turning Theory into Practice

# Introduction: Designing Gender Inclusive Projects

Violent conflict upends and often polarizes societies—it disrupts social structures, especially men's and women's roles and the relationships between them. In fragile and conflict-affected environments, peacebuilding practitioners must address the drivers and consequences of violent, fragmented societies. The increasing militarization of young men is one such driver, and widespread sexual violence effects all in a society, even well after violence has ceased. Yet gender analysis is neither considered nor integrated into much of the project design for conflict prevention and mitigation work. Gender inclusive project design is essential to forming the best approaches for preventing violent conflict and maintaining peace—it is not secondary and should not be an afterthought.[1] The Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory (GIFT) is a simple but thorough approach to begin integrating gender analysis into project design.

This upstream approach goes hand in hand with approaches to monitoring and evaluation—gender analysis should be built into the project. Conducting gender analysis during the design phase will better equip project managers to address the gendered consequences of conflict. It will also make projects more resilient to societal and institutional shocks during implementation because the work will already be aligned with and attuned to community dynamics.

## The GIFT Will

- Define gender;
- Describe the relationship between gender and conflict dynamics and its importance to peacebuilding;
- Explore a theory of change and an analysis framework for gender inclusion; and
- Provide specific guidance on integrating gender into project design.

## Who Is This Guide For?

This quick reference tool is for project managers who are looking to integrate gender analysis into their work—whether they are experts on gender issues or not. The guide provides project managers with straightforward questions to begin the process. Gender analysis can enhance any project's design—ranging from those focused on improving gender dynamics to those focused on reforming governance structures in general—because it pinpoints societal power imbalances and opportunities for structural transformation. The guidance will help 1) analyze assumptions about gender during the design phase, 2) question logistical points during implementation, and 3) ensure an inclusive set of voices are gathered during evaluation. While this guide is tailored to peacebuilding work, many of the concepts are highly relevant for the broader development field and other projects in fragile environments.

# How Does Violent Conflict Alter Gender Norms?

Conflict is a normal aspect of human society. But when conflict becomes violent, it can upend a community or a country. When this happens, violence rapidly changes the norms, behaviors, and expectations of members of that society and often alters the roles men and women play during violence and thereafter. Violent conflict can sometimes open new spaces for women in society[2]. When men leave the workforce or are wounded or killed, women may be thrust into more public, political, and economic roles. But violence can also constrict the roles and expectations of women and girls, and its normalization paves the way for others to assert greater control over them. For example, violent extremist groups like ISIS have adopted gender codes to further limit the movement of women and girls and severe punishments for breaches.

Men, women, girls, and boys experience conflict and violence differently, as witnesses, victims and perpetrators. When violence changes a society, so do beliefs about how women and men should behave. The beliefs, norms, and expectations of women, men, boys, girls, and sexual and gender minorities is a "gender mindset."[3]

## Defining Gender and Gender Mindsets

Gender is best described as a dynamic organizing principle in society. It is more than an individual's biological sex (male/female). Gender is a learned pattern of behavior that is embedded in everything we do at the individual, community, and institutional levels. Gender mindset is the socialization and internalization of the described roles and expectations that a society finds most appropriate and valuable for a person—men, women, girls, boys, and sexual and gender minorities. A person's gender mindset can alter during societal change based on new community values, norms, and expectations.

During the initial planning of any project, gender analysis can illuminate additional areas for intervention, sources of tension, and drivers of conflict. The gender analysis will illuminate the broader context of a project, no matter its objectives and goals. A gender analysis will at a minimum ensure adoption of a "do no harm" approach.

Gender inequalities and power imbalances can be key factors driving chronic poverty, food insecurity, poor health, violence against women, and violent conflict itself.[4] When approaches to peacebuilding take gender into account, they will help reduce gender-based violence, enhance gender equality, defuse conflict, and lead to more sustainable peace. A project may seek to strengthen the security sector in a given community, for example, but it should be designed with an understanding of the different relationships men, women, boys, and girls have with the police or security forces. Good project logic should align with gender dynamics.

## What Is Theory to Practice?

Each section includes guiding questions as well as a "theory to practice" section. These sections are meant to put the concept into concrete terms by exploring the types of questions you would ask when bringing inclusive gender analysis to a project on governance in Nigeria, for example. The sections provide brief context and then suggest additional avenues of exploration that a project might integrate into its design when gender dynamics are considered.

## Guiding Questions:

- How have the roles and behaviors of men and women, both young and old, changed in response to the conflict?
- What forms of violence are occurring? Do they affect men and women differently or similarly?
- Have livelihoods and access to education, employment, and income shifted? If so, what are the specific impacts on women and men?
- What kinds of insecurity exist? How do these insecurities affect the household, the community, and the state?
- Are men's and women's access to opportunities for political, economic, and social advancement more or less similar as a result of violence? If not, what are the different issues for men and women, girls and boys?
- How would you describe the gender mindset of the target group or society?

## Theory to Practice: Afghanistan

Afghanistan's history has been plagued by a struggling economy and a fragile security environment. Despite progress in strengthening the formal justice system, as much as 80 percent of disputes are resolved through informal mechanisms. When developing a project to strengthen Afghanistan's rule of law, it is critical to understand the varying accessibility and status of men and women within community-based dispute resolution practices. For example, who are the decision makers in these systems? Are women represented as advocates, chiefs, or judges to inform these processes? Delving into questions of men's and women's access to and delivery of justice—both current and historical contexts—may prompt a new stream of work specifically tailored to the needs of women and girls. Other work may include educating men on the importance of women's and girls' access to justice and their contributions toward informing justice systems and resolving disputes.

# What Happens When Projects Ignore Gender Dynamics?

Examining the relationship between conflict, power, and gender offers greater insight into sources of tension and opportunities for peacebuilding that otherwise might be missed. Conflicts or wars are more likely to increase inequalities, reduce women and girls' mobility, and put them at greater risk for sexual and gender-based violence.[5] Violent conflict can also narrow the roles for men in a society, leaving them with a limited, militarized sense of male adulthood, where violence becomes a primary problem-solving tool.

## Participatory Design

While this guide is meant to be used by project managers, the guiding questions provided can also be integrated into participatory design models or trainings themselves. Engaging stakeholders in discussions around these questions can illuminate gender dynamics and dispel false assumptions.

## Theory to Practice: Egypt

Following a violent conflict, elections can mark the peaceful transition of power from one government to another. However, studies show that female voters experience violence at four times the rate of their male counterparts, with attacks commonly taking place during voter registration, at polling places, or at other civic engagements.[6] Women are targeted as voters, candidates, election officials, activists, or political party leaders. During the 2011 election in Egypt, some women were threatened with divorce if they did not vote the way their husbands insisted.[7] Projects that fail to address the specific threats that women and girls face in the political system undermine the democratic process and systematically prevent women's active political participation. These types of threats signal insecurity in a society.

## Theory to Practice: South Sudan

Gender dynamics are not only altered by conflict but can also help instigate conflict. South Sudan's brutal civil war began in December 2013, and much of the analysis has focused on political factors. However, new research directly ties the issue of bride price—where net assets move from the groom's family to the bride's family—to violent conflict.[8] Inflated bride prices can obstruct the marriage market and thereby increase the likelihood of violent conflict. For example, joining militia groups or carrying out violent cattle raids can help men gain the wealth they need to pay for marriage. If a peacebuilding project in South Sudan only addresses political or governance factors and ignores gender dynamics, everyday violence like cattle raiding would be ignored and continue to plague communities.

## Why Is a Gender Analysis Important for Projects?

A conflict analysis typically examines the structures, actors, and dynamics of a conflict context to better understand sources of tension. A gender analysis of the conflict unpacks the power relationships between men, women, girls, boys, and other gender identities in a society experiencing violent conflict, including access to and control over resources and participation in decision making within various sectors.

# Three Approaches
# to Gender Analysis

A gender analysis should test whether a project's logic aligns with the gender dynamics in a given environment. This framework puts forth three approaches to gender analysis that examine institutional, sociocultural and transformational dynamics.



## Women, Peace, and Security

**An Institutional Approach**

Changing Institutions

## Peaceful Masculinities

**A Sociocultural Approach**

Shifting Mindsets

## Intersecting Identities

**A Transformational Approach**

Broadening Inclusion

# Women, Peace, and Security Approach

This institutional approach addresses how conflict and war differentially affect women and girls, and it recognizes the critical role that women can and already do play in peacebuilding. It acknowledges that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflict, the delivery of relief and recovery, and in forging lasting peace.

Evidence from the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 indicates that when women participate in peace processes, they are usually focused less on brokering for power and more on reconciliation, economic development, education, and transitional justice—all critical elements of a durable peace.[9] A study of 156 peace agreements showed that when women are included in peace processes, agreements are 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years.[10] The women, peace, and security approach seeks to amplify those voices.

Applications of this approach should incorporate a gender analytical lens to promote gender equality and improve programming and policy outcomes. This lens allows program planners to identify and address the distinctive experiences and roles of women and girls.

The Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 was signed into law in the United States on October 6, 2017 (Public Law No. 115-68). It promotes women's meaningful inclusion and participation in peace and security processes to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict. The law ensures congressional oversight of the US government's efforts to integrate gender perspectives across its diplomatic, development, and defense-related work in conflict-affected environments.

## Guiding Questions:

- To what extent are women involved in decision-making processes in the family, community, and/or national government?
- Do women participate equally with men in formal and informal leadership positions?
- What is the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence for women and for men?
- Do women have control over their individual and/or household income? Can women inherit or own land or property?
- What does freedom of movement look like? Can women and girls move freely beyond their daily routines?

## Theory to Practice: Nigeria

Nigeria has made progress in reforming its military and intensifying the fight against the extremist group Boko Haram, but amid this fighting, the country is confronting widespread displacement and humanitarian needs. Marked by the peaceful transfer of power, the 2015 presidential election was a major milestone, but more inclusive governance will require continued effort. Peacebuilders who seek to strengthen good governance in Nigeria must carefully consider how power breaks down by gender in formal and informal positions of leadership. For example, are women represented in parliament, judicial systems, or government ministries? At what level within these structures are women represented? An analysis of women's participation in decision-making forums across multiple levels, as well as their positions on key issues, could uncover potential barriers to inclusive governance projects. If women are not already represented in official leadership, project planners may want to set up a parallel process or network that feeds the perspectives of women into formal structures.

# Peaceful Masculinities Approach

This sociocultural approach examines how violence affects norms of masculinity and the consequent normalization of violence by men and boys for solving problems.[11] Masculinity is the behaviors, attitudes, and values that societies expect of men and boys. Most of the combatants in war are men, and they perpetrate most of the violence in times of peace. However, men are not inherently violent.[12] This approach acknowledges that violence and violent conflict—including sexual and gender-based violence[13]—have long-term harmful impacts on men and boys and therefore need to be addressed.

The peaceful masculinities approach shifts the narrative from the idea of men as inevitable perpetrators of violence to an understanding that masculinities are socially constructed and can be shaped around peace. Programs like the Young Men's Initiative in the Balkans aim to reshape social norms by working with young men through schools, summer youth camps, vocational training schools, and social media to promote nonviolent conceptions of manhood, including respect for individuals of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity. Peaceful masculinities questions men's acceptance of violence as part of their masculinity and seeks to disassociate violence from understandings of manhood or masculinity. This approach does not seek to shame men and boys but to illuminate alternative, peaceful ideas of what it means to be a man[14]. For example, this approach would ask why men and boys are not seeking support from family and friends when they deal with trauma. What are the implications of vulnerability on men and boys? Many stereotypes around manhood—like divisions of caregiving labor—fuel sexism and inequality. This approach bolsters the potential for men to champion peaceful masculinities and gender equality.

## Guiding Questions:

- What are the key expectations that a young man must meet to be considered "an adult male" in society? Is there a gap between expectations and reality?
- What are the gendered messages used to recruit men into rebel groups, militias, or violent extremist groups? Are these messages different from those for the recruitment of women?
- To what extent are notions of masculinity based on the use of violence? In what ways?
- What are the key priorities of men in negotiations? How do these differ from those of women?
- To what extent are men supportive of or resistant to women's leadership and gender equality?
- What strategies may work to encourage them to fully support women's empowerment in conflict-affected settings?

## Theory to Practice: Tunisia

Tunisia's democratic transition is often hailed as the only success from the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions, but the country is still dealing with vast unemployment, weakened institutions, and threats from violent extremists. The country must now work to prevent violent extremist groups from recruiting Tunisian youth. As unemployment spikes, younger generations are tending to adopt more conservative outlooks. Asking questions about traditional pathways to adulthood—or manhood—may help in understanding extremist groups' recruitment tactics and factors motivating youth to join. For example, how does a boy become a man? Does obtaining employment or showing power over others signal adulthood? Where do young men look for income if jobs are not available? A potential intervention might explore alternative pathways to manhood shaped around nonviolence.

# Intersecting
# Identities Approach

This transformational approach recognizes that gender identities are malleable and that each society's structures, norms, and rules create these identities. The approach takes a relational view of the dynamics in a community, knowing that problems cannot be solved within a silo but must be addressed from multiple perspectives.

All individuals have a gender identity. It is important to consider how such factors as a person's age, marital status, race, sexuality, class, caste, ethnicity, religion, and abilities affect their experiences in society. This approach draws from the analytical framework of intersectionality: the idea that a person's marginalized identities interact and cannot be understood in isolation.[15] With an understanding of the importance of these diverse experiences, this approach analyzes the broader relationships and power dynamics across a society and the implications for control over resources, movement, and other factors.

Social norms—specifically the roles and expectations of men and women that a society deems appropriate or desirable—are often most resistant to change.[16] This approach seeks to better understand how a person's multiple identities affect their influence and power in a given situation and thus to better understand how society may or may not be addressing their grievances. By seeking understanding of power dynamics, the intersecting identities approach can help challenge societal norms that cause or perpetuate inequalities, especially gendered inequalities.

## Guiding Questions:

- Do structures at the family, community, or national level reinforce or challenge norms that contribute to violence?
- How do media portray norms and attitudes about men, women, boys, and girls? Are sexual and gender minorities represented in the media?
- How do the informal roles that men and women hold contribute to conflict?

- What happens to women, men, and sexual and gender minorities who do not conform to gender norms? What aspects of nonconformity are most (un)acceptable?
- What existing laws and practices—formal and informal—codify gender discrimination or can be used to discriminate?

## Theory to Practice: Ukraine

Ukraine's young democracy faces continued turbulence and strife unless it can heal the divides between East and West, especially since the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea. The country has struggled to integrate large populations of internally displaced people who have had to flee their homes in recent years. While at first glance one might assume that men would have more economic and integration opportunities in their new communities, many have found it difficult to secure jobs since their displacement—or jobs of similar seniority to their past work. Under closer analysis, it is critical to understand how such factors as men's regional identities (eastern Ukrainian) or language abilities (Russian versus Ukrainian) affect opportunities to integrate into their new society. In contrast, more economic opportunities seem to be available to women, as well as additional community entry points in the schools or markets, for example.



Peacebuilding projects that work with these populations would benefit from an understanding of the many identities displaced persons possess and how those identities affect the informal and formal roles that men and women adopt. Projects might work with men specifically on understanding the additional external pressure and guilt for not fighting on the front lines of the conflict in the east. Working through these pressures could highlight new opportunities to engage with their communities.

# Moving Forward With Gender Analysis

A project's design—whether its goals and objectives specifically address gender issues or not—should always consider the gender dynamics of a given context. Three approaches have been suggested for analyzing gender in a conflict setting. The approaches vary in their focus—from a narrow view on issues specific to women or men to a broader analysis of the gender roles across a community and/or a society.

A project can integrate one or multiple approaches. Project staff may begin with the women, peace, and security approach but come to realize that the intersecting identities approach offers additional benefits. When deciding on an approach, it is important to consider the goals and objectives of a project, the sociocultural dynamics of a context, and the added value each approach can introduce to a project. It is likely that some approaches will be more relevant than others. Peacebuilding is always context dependent.

No single rule can determine which approach is best. But by beginning to ask questions and analyze gender dynamics using these approaches, project planners will strengthen their project's design and increase the likelihood that it will meet its goals.

# Notes

1.  Nora Dudwick and Kathleen Kuehnast, "Gender and Fragility: Ensuring a Golden Hour," Fragility Study Group Policy Brief no. 8 (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, November 2016), www.usip.org/publications/2016/11/gender-and-fragility-ensuring-golden-hour.

2.  Marie Berry, "Barrier to Women's Progress After Atrocity: Evidence from Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Gender & Society* 31, no. 6 (2017): 830–853, doi.org/10.1177/0891243217737060

3.  Gender mindset is a term USIP uses to describe this social phenomenon.

4.  Catholic Relief Services, "Peacebuilding, Governance, Gender, Protection and Youth Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners," 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2017), www.ics.crs.org/resource/peacebuilding-governance-and-gender-assessments-basic-guide-busy-practitioners.

5.  Kathleen Kuehnast, Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, and Helga Hernes, ed., *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, 2011).

6.  Gabrielle Bardall, "Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence," White Paper Series (Washington DC: IFES, December 2011), ifes.org/sites/default/files/gender_and_electoral_violence_2011.pdf.

7.  Sean Dunne et al., "Final Report of The Carter Center Mission to Witness the 2011–2012 Parliamentary Elections in Egypt" (Atlanta: Carter Center, 2012), www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/egypt-2011-2012-final-rpt.pdf.

8.  Valerie Hudson and Hilary Matfess, "In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage between Brideprice and Violent Conflict," *International Security* 42, no. 1 (2017): 7–40, doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00289.

9.  Marie O'Reilly, "Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies" (Washington DC: Inclusive Security, October 2015), www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Why-Women-Brief-10.12.15.pdf.

10. Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes" (New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015), www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking-rev.pdf.

11. Joseph Vess et al., "The Other Side of Gender: Men as Critical Agents of Change," Special Report 340 (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, December 2013), www.usip.org/publications/2013/12/other-side-gender.

12. Gary Barker et al., "Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)" (Washington, DC, and Rio de Janeiro: International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo, 2011), http://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Evolving-Men-Initial-Results-from-IMAGES.pdf.

13. Dara Kay Cohen, Amelia Hoover Green, and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Wartime Sexual Violence: Misconceptions, Implications and Ways Forward," Special Report 323 (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, February 2013).

14. Kimberly Theidon, "Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia" *Human Rights Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2009): 1–34, doi.org/10.1353/hrq.0.0053.

15. Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989, no. 1, article 8, http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8.

16. Charlotte Watson, Hannah Wright, and Hesta Groenewald, "Toolkit: Gender Analysis of Conflict" (Saferworld, 2016), www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1076-gender-analysis-of-conflict.

## Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory

The Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory (GIFT) guide is an approachable and thorough tool that facilitates the integration of gender analysis into project design. Because peacebuilding work is context dependent, the GIFT puts forth three approaches to gender analysis — the Women, Peace and Security Approach; the Peaceful Masculinities Approach; and the Intersecting Identities Approach — that each illuminate the gender dynamics in a given environment to better shape peacebuilding projects.

## About the Institute

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent national institute, founded by Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical, and essential for US and global security. USIP pursues this vision on the ground in conflict zones, working with local partners to prevent conflicts from turning to bloodshed and to end it when they do. The Institute provides training, analysis, and other resources to people, organizations, and governments working to build peace.