

GUIDANCE NOTE

GENDER-RESPONSIVE CONFLICT ANALYSIS



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WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY SECTION

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INTRODUCTION

In advance of the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) instructed the United Nations (UN) to include “gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda, as both stand-alone and integrated goals...in United Nations strategic planning and prioritization policies, processes, frameworks, initiatives and guidance tools at the global, regional and country levels...”¹ Heads of entities were also instructed to ensure that all country-specific and thematic reports to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), briefings provided by senior staff and all country-specific and regional UN strategies and plans consistently integrate gender-responsive conflict analysis and engagement with diverse women’s civil society organizations.²

Prior to this, in 2018, the UNSG’s Executive Committee directed the UN system in Afghanistan to develop a gender-responsive conflict analysis (GRCA) to inform each aspect of its transition planning. This directive was followed by specific guidance developed in 2019.³ More recently, UNSCR 2594 (2021) has insisted on comprehensive gender analysis in transition processes.⁴

Purpose of this document

This Guidance Note was developed concurrently to an extensive GRCA process conducted by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), on behalf of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). The analysis process started in March 2021 and concluded in September 2021. Several methods were used to inform the process. See Annex 1 for further information. Whilst initially developed for the UNCT in Afghanistan, the Guidance Note has global applicability. It provides recommendations on how to apply a gender lens in political and conflict analysis in a way that allows the integration of gender as a variable of power across social, political, economic analysis of conflict as opposed to addressing issues specific to women and girls in siloed analysis. This approach reveals the critical links between gender dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding.

What is gender-responsive conflict analysis?

A GRCA analysis explores – with a gender lens – systems of power, institutions and stakeholders, and root causes, triggers and drivers of conflict and peace. This type of analysis recognizes that gender power relations and the enforcement of patriarchal power over women, men and children, and sexual and gender minorities is political.⁵ Gender-responsive conflict analysis was pioneered to counter the pervasive trend of political and conflict analysis that ignores patriarchy as a power variable and the influence of gender norms and values. Most conflict and political analyses exclude the specific status, needs and experiences of women, men, girls, boys, and sexual and gender minorities.

Gender analysis examines the unequal social, political, and economic power dynamics between women, men, and non-binary people within society. The analysis unpacks gender norms, looking at the social construction of the masculine and feminine in a specific context and how these norms shape, are

¹S/2019/800, para. 120 (c).

²S/2019/800, para. 120 (d).

³UNSG (United Nations Secretary-General). 2019. Secretary General’s Planning directive for the development of consistent coherent UN Transition processes in line with Executive Committee decision 2018/38. 25 February 2019.

⁴UNSC (United Nations Security Council). 2021. S/RES/2594 (2021). 9 September 2021. Paragraph 6: Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that comprehensive gender analysis and technical gender expertise are included throughout all stages of mission planning, mandate implementation and review and throughout the transition process, as well as mainstreaming of a gender perspective, and to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women, and the inclusion of youth, as well as measures to safeguard the interests of persons with disabilities, and further requests the Secretary-General to ensure that their needs are fully integrated in all prioritised and sequenced stages of a mission mandate and mission transitions.

⁵Koester, D. 2015. Gender and Power. Developmental Leadership Program. Concept Brief 4. May 2015.

shaped by, and drive violent conflict and influence peacebuilding. These norms and power dynamics permeate formal and informal structures and institutions governing both the public and private spheres. Gender analysis includes other power variables (e.g. ethnicity, age, social class, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, indigeneity), and recognizes the cumulative and reinforcing effect brought to bear by these different systems of power. Combining analysis of these constituent parts reveals a greater diversity of agents for political change and shifts problems from passively framing the status quo as problematic to identifying solutions.⁶

Why undertake a gender-responsive conflict analysis?

Conflict analysis is conducted by diverse peace and development actors, using various analytical frameworks and tools. However, these analyses do not always integrate gender dynamics of conflict. Additionally, peace and development actors do not always conduct the analyses jointly, to facilitate joint planning and programming, UN mission mandate renewal, and national planning, among other elements. Integrating gender into conflict and political analysis not only enhances the inclusiveness and effectiveness of peacebuilding and political interventions, but also deepens the understanding of the underlying gender power relations, including how they influence and are affected by conflict and peacebuilding.

The UNSCRs on sustaining peace (S/RES/2282 and A/RES/70/262) offer a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding that prioritizes supporting capacities for peace across the conflict cycle. These resolutions also recognize the importance of joint analysis and effective strategic planning across the United Nations system in its long-term engagement in conflict-affected countries, while underscoring the critical importance of inclusivity of women, youth and CSOs in all conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. The ongoing reforms of the UN Development System and the UN Peace and Security Architecture call for shared analysis, collective outcomes, and common strategic planning. These reforms open strategic opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, as the quality of these processes directly depends on the

inclusivity and engagement of various stakeholders – with integration of the gender component into the analysis thus increasing the quality, credibility, and sustainability of the initiative.

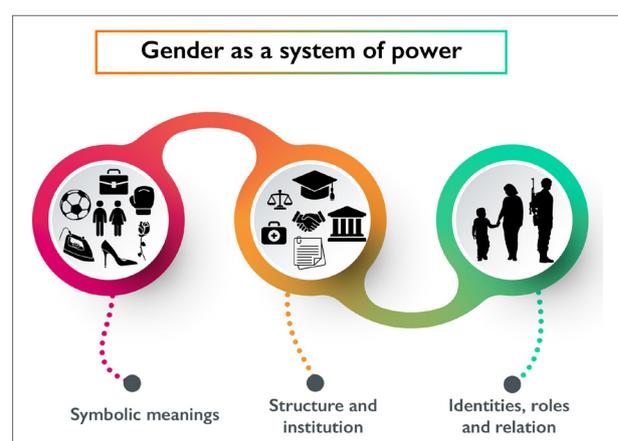
What is the impact of gender-blind conflict analysis?

When analysis is conducted in a way that is blind to gender, subsequent policies, planning, and interventions risk reinforcing harmful gender inequalities, power structures and norms. In other words: gender-blind analysis sets up a pathway for exclusion that is harder to counter since analysis is the starting point for policymaking and programming.

Applying a gender lens – what does this mean?

Applying a gender lens in political and conflict analysis allows the integration of gender as a variable of power across social, political, economic analysis of conflict. As opposed to addressing issues specific to women and girls in siloed analysis, it works to untangle and reveal the critical links between gender and the causes and impacts of conflict and peacebuilding. A gender lens also allows analysts to pierce gender biases which otherwise work to obscure structural gender inequality and patriarchal power.⁷ Box 1 below provides an overview of key terms and concepts of relevance to developing gender-responsive analysis.

FIGURE 1:
Gender as a system of power



Source: Conciliation Resources. 2015. Gender & conflict analysis toolkit. London: CR.

⁶As per Cynthia Cockburn, much text on women, peace and security contains language treating women's vulnerabilities without ever identifying the main source of their danger, or women's underrepresentation without mentioning the issue of men's overrepresentation. Cockburn, C. 2013. "War and security, women and gender: an overview of the issues." *Gender & Development* 21(3), pp. 433-452.

⁷Lyttikäinen, M. et al. 2020. "Unruly Wives in the Household: Towards Feminist Genealogy for Peace Research." *Cooperation and Conflict* 56(1), pp. 3-25. See also: Griffin, P. 2007. "Refashioning IPE: what and how gender analysis teaches international (global) political economy." *Review of International Political Economy* 14(4), pp. 719-736.

BOX 1: Key terms and concepts⁸

Gender mainstreaming: Integrating gender perspectives across sectors, law, and policies to promote gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is a continuous process with a focus on internal and external systems and processes.⁹

Gender-sensitive: Considering gender power dynamics and gender (in)equalities and the differences between men, women, girls and boys, sexual and gender minorities while developing policy or analysis, designing processes, drafting laws, allocating resources, or evaluating the impact of decisions taken by actors in this area.

Gender-responsive: Turning consideration of gender perspectives into actions that can be monitored, evaluated, and refined over time. Some gender-responsive techniques include establishing gender quotas and undertaking gender reviews to pinpoint blockages and opportunities.

Gender-inclusive: The combination of gender-sensitive ‘ideas’ and gender-responsive ‘actions’. A gender-inclusive peace agreement, for example, might be one which is written in gender-sensitive language, with specific provisions to advance women’s political inclusion and the integration of gender perspectives into decision-making processes and outcomes.

Intersectionality: Consideration of how identities intersect and influence each other, and how this may lead to multiple forms of oppression and discrimination, as well as strengths and capacities.¹⁰ For mediation actors, this requires analysing power variables and aspects of identity (such as sexuality, gender, ethnicity, class, age, disability, location), and ways in which these can collide, clash, and combine.

Representation: Considering the presence of people from underrepresented groups and communities – for example, persons from religious minorities in parliament, or advancing the interests of a particular group – for example, a group of women representing ‘women’ more widely.

Critical mass: Understanding the conditions in which underrepresented groups (such as women in male-dominated parliaments) can gain momentum and exert influence more effectively.¹¹ It is generally understood to be achieved at around the 30% mark which is why women’s claims for representation are often framed by citing this benchmark.

Meaningful participation: Patchy implementation of the WPS agenda has led practitioners and advocates to emphasize *the quality of participation*.¹² Over the past two decades, the qualifier of ‘meaningful’ has been increasingly associated with the participation of women in peace processes. This label refers to great deal more than simply the numbers of women involved in an initiative. Key elements include being present to seize opportunities; drawing on knowledge, networks and confidence; deploying political agency and being a part of the agenda-setting that occurs; and conveying gender perspectives and women’s rights concerns as defined by broader social and political movements.

⁸Drawn from: Buchanan, C. 2021. Gender-inclusive peacemaking: strategies for mediation practitioners. Mediation Practice Series. Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

⁹See Caglar, G, Prugl, E. and S. Zwingel (Eds.). 2012. *Feminist Strategies in International Governance*. London: Routledge, including True, J. and L. Parisi. 2013. “Gender Mainstreaming in Global Governance.” See also True, J. 2003. “Mainstreaming Gender in Global Public Policy.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 5(3), pp. 368-396.

¹⁰See Perlman, M. 2018. “The origin of the term intersectionality.” *Colombia Journalism Review*. Language Corner. 23 October 2018.

¹¹There is a considerable body of feminist analysis, debate and theorizing addressing elements of representation. See: Pitkin, H. 1972. *The Concept of Representation*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press; Celis, K. and S. Childs. 2008. “The Descriptive and Substantive Representation of Women.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 61, March 2008, pp. 419-425; Celis, K. et al. 2008. “Rethinking women’s substantive representation.” *Representation* 44(2), pp. 99-110; Childs, S. and J. Lovenduski. 2012. “Political Representation.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*. Waylen, G. et al (Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 489-513; Escobar-Lemmon, M. and M. Taylor-Robinson. 2014. *Representation: The Case of Women*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹²O’Rourke, C. 2014. “Walk[ing] the Halls of Power? Understanding Women’s Participation in International Peace and Security.” *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 15(1), 128 (2014); Ellerby, K. 2016. “A seat at the table is not enough: Understanding women’s substantive representation in peace processes.” *Peacebuilding* 4(2), pp.136-50; Close, S. 2018. *Gendered political settlements: examining peace transitions in Bougainville, Nepal and Colombia*. London: Conciliation Resources; Dayal, A. 2018. *Connecting Informal and Formal Peace Talks: From Movements to Mediators*. Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. Policy Brief. Washington D.C.: GIWPS.

What are the main trends in gender-responsive conflict analysis?

Over the past decades, growing attention has been directed toward the quality of conflict analysis. Some of the most prominent trends in this regard are catalogued below.

- **GRCA is a required minimum standard for UN reporting, strategic planning, and scenario setting:** It is increasingly integrated into the responsibility of heads of entities, including meaningful engagement of women's civil society to inform such analysis. The UN Secretary-General has mandated the mainstreaming of gender-responsive conflict and political analysis across all reporting, planning, and programming of the United Nations.¹³ More effort is directed toward ensuring that women's rights defenders, civil society, and other stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in such analysis. Several UN agencies and secretariat entities have developed dedicated action plans, tools, and entity-specific guidance to integrate such gender-sensitive analysis into their work.¹⁴ As a result of this, the concept of a 'gender lens' is becoming better understood and applied more frequently and astutely. This is seen as a valuable tool for uncovering different perspectives, data, and policy and programming pathways.
- **UNSC directives:** Members of the UNSC increasingly request that evidence-informed, gender-response analysis is provided on threats and risks in contexts affected by conflict, insecurity, and violence, to enable the Council to adopt more effective decisions on the direction of UN missions (composition, mandates) and prioritization of policy concerns.
- **A focus on inclusion beyond armed actors:** Inclusion is not a foreign concept in peace and security processes. Inclusion beyond armed groups and those with monopolies on violence at the peace table and security sector reform is a broadly accepted concept. More emphasis on analysis and evidence about the value of inclusion and the rights of civilians and citizens to inform the negotiated settlement of armed conflict is seen as adding value to peacemaking efforts. The opera-

tional value of inclusion is increasingly well documented – studies clearly show that inclusion makes for more effective and sustainable peacebuilding.¹⁵

- **Donor expectations:** Gender-blind analysis is increasingly rejected by donors. Donors are requesting – often a non-negotiable condition for funding – and/or requiring gender-responsive conflict analysis at various stages of project management, from planning, and implementation to monitoring/evaluation.
- **Thinking beyond silos:** There is a move away from the siloed 'gender paragraph' (akin to the 'add women and stir' approach, which is now widely discredited) toward integrated analysis. Gender and patriarchal power are now recognized as influencing all elements of society – public and private, individual, and institutional.
- **More guidance:** There is more guidance available than ever before on how to conduct gender-responsive conflict analysis (see Resources section).

¹³S/2019/800, para. 120 (d)-(e).

¹⁴For example, the Women, Peace and Security Policy of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs or the Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Resource Package of the Department of Peace Operations.

¹⁵Paffenholz, T. et al. 2016. Making Women Count - Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations. Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, UN Women. Geneva: IHEID; O'Reilly, M., Ó Súilleabháin, A. and T. Paffenholz. 2015. Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes. International Peace Institute, pp. 12-13; Ivry-Holt, O., Muehlenbeck, A. and M. Barsa. 2017. Inclusive Ceasefires; Women, Gender, and a Sustainable End to Violence. Issue Brief, Inclusive Security, p. 4.

BOX 2:

10 critical questions to ask in a gender-responsive conflict analysis¹⁶

1. What are described as the underlying causes and drivers of the conflict? According to whom? Are the perspectives of specific groups absent from discussion and analysis on drivers?
2. What are women's and men's views and experiences of the conflict? How does this differ across groups, from combatant to peacemakers, and in intersection with other identity markers (e.g. ethnicity, religion, age, urban/rural, etc.)?
3. What types of violence are there, and at what levels? Are there forms of violence that are overlooked, invisible or normalized? Who are the perpetrators and victims? Is there sex-disaggregated data available?
4. What are the impacts of violence and insecurity on different identities and groups? Which other identity markers expose women, men or children, and sexual and gender minorities to forms of risk and victimization? (Sometimes referred to as 'double victimization'.)
5. Who are the key actors in the conflict? Who contributes to violence or to peaceful and human security responses? What identity markers characterize them?
6. Are there links between restrictive gender norms and violent conflict? Have certain notions of masculinity and femininity been normalized and instrumentalized by parties to support the violence?
7. How has the conflict disrupted or changed gender roles? How has conflict changed the everyday roles of men and women in the domestic and public sphere? Who make up the displaced, and what are the specific challenges faced by different displaced men, women, and non-binary people?
8. Who is involved in the political processes, such as peace talks, and how are they involved? Are gendered power relations (re)produced by these political processes? Are women represented, and are gender issues addressed?
9. Are there specific dynamics of the conflict that empower or disempower women and men based on their gender? Could these be used for sustainable peacebuilding efforts? Are there potential roles for men or women in promoting peace or addressing specific conflict factors?
10. How do my own biases and assumptions shape my perspective and analysis? Have I recognized those gendered values and habits, and systems of power, of which I am a product? How does this affect the work I am doing?

¹⁶See Castillejo, C. et al. 2020. Politically informed approaches to gender in fragile and conflict-affected settings Insights from an expert meeting. Overseas Development Institute. Working paper 57812. March 2020. London: ODI; Derbyshire, H. et al. 2018. Politically Informed Gender Aware Programming: Five Lessons from Practice. Briefing Note. DLP: Gender and Politics in Practice. Birmingham: Developmental Leadership Program; Conciliation Resources. 2015. Gender & conflict analysis toolkit. London: CR.

Conflict dynamics drivers and peace catalysts

Conflict drivers are typically analyzed in conflict analysis. Attention is rarely directed toward peace catalysts. Applying a ‘gender lens’ brings to light additional perspectives and concerns, and pathways for peace promotion. The two tables that follow summarize key conflict dynamics and peace catalysts in Afghanistan and examples of gender perspectives on these themes.

TABLE 1
Conflict drivers

Conflict driver	Core questions and concerns to consider
1. Ethnic intolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is ethnic identity subject to gender norms and codes? How does ethnicity intersect with other identity markers such as religion, class, social status, age, and sexuality? <p>Ethnicity is often intertwined with patriarchy and religious dominance. Understanding the intersections and push-pull dynamic between gender norms and expectations of men and women, ethnic, tribal and religious identity, and beliefs about women’s capabilities opens a range of analysis pathways.</p> <p>In many societies, women are socialized in a way that socialises them to shape and subordinate their individual gender identity (including their needs and interests) in the name of larger ethnic group cohesion and solidarity. Male members of society place pressure on women to uphold ethnic identity and subordinate gender identity (i.e. accept gender inequality in the name of ethnic or tribal allegiance) to show unity within ethnic movements. Gender identity can also be shaped by these power dynamics. The ‘protection of our honour and women’ narrative fuels the restrictive gender norms of a male protector and female proxy for the nation, relying on gendered stereotypes about ‘other’ men and patriarchal metaphors equating women’s bodies to the nation.¹⁷ Women are often tasked with upholding sociocultural traditions and practices, even if they restrict the rights of women and girls, and with maternal reproduction of ethnicity.¹⁸</p> <p>In Afghanistan, women from minority groups face different challenges, informed by their ethnic and religious identities. For example, many Hazara women (and those from other minority groups) deal with dual (or triple) anxieties about their rights being violated based on sex, religion, and/or ethnicity.</p>
2. Competition and mismanagement of natural resources, illicit economies, and urbanization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do gender power dynamics affect men and women’s access to and control over land and natural resources? Is this compounded where other power variables intersect? <p>Illicit economies have many gendered implications. Women are less likely to benefit economically from mismanaged extractive industries and more likely to face negative consequences of such mismanagement. Men are more likely to gain employment opportunities and be in decision-making roles.¹⁹ Women are more likely to experience landlessness, be more exposed to health impacts from contaminants, and are particularly impacted as primary caregivers by loss of food, medicine, and land.²⁰</p>

¹⁷The concept of militarized masculinities, honour politics, and women’s status as a proxy for the idealised nation in the study of armed conflict, the laws of war, and international humanitarian law are well documented: see, for example Ni Aoláin, F.D., Haynes, D.F. and N. Cahn. 2011. *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁸Dupree, N. H. 2006. “Afghanistan: Gender dynamics in war and exile.” *New Routes*, 11(4), pp. 4-7.

¹⁹ECLAC (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). 2021. “Implications of gender roles in natural resource governance in Latin America and the Caribbean.” *Insights*. 18 January 2021.

²⁰UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), PBSO (United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office), UNDP (United Nations Development Program). 2013. *Women and Natural Resources Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential*. New York: UNEP, p. 15.

	<p>In Afghanistan, the impact of opium poppy cultivation and the production and distribution of opium has distinct, frequently disproportionate, and negative effects on women's health, livelihoods, and rights. Opium poppy is not only cultivated in areas with stronger cultures of gender inequality but is also more likely to occur in areas where girls have no access to schools. There are further specific dynamics around women's engagement in the cultivation of opium poppy, the impact of addiction rates and personal addiction, and the negative individual, social and communal impacts. Heightened gender-based violence (GBV) due to increased presence of armed actors and security providers is commonplace in and around legal and illegal extractive industries.</p> <p>The urban-rural divide has been identified as a source of alienation and resentment due to differential access to opportunities, modernising tendencies, and forms of employment in cities. However, growing urbanization around Afghanistan is also putting more pressure on employment opportunities (particularly for young men), livelihoods, resources, and community cohesion.</p>
<p>3. Patronage politics and corruption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does corruption affect women, men, girls, and boys differently? • Who benefits from a patronage network and who is excluded? • Do women who gain access to elite power networks disrupt or align with patronage politics? <p>Patronage networks – also benignly characterized as ‘boy’s clubs’ – are typically closed, male-dominated networks influenced by ethnic and/or religious affiliations and exerting control over (access to) the public and private sectors, as well as the political sphere.²¹ Where women (or other excluded groups, like ethnic or religious minorities) can penetrate these networks, they often hold other markers of power related to status, age, ethnicity and class. Women are often criticized by others – men and women – for accessing power through such affiliations; a criticism which men do not often confront.</p> <p>Patronage networks affect all aspects of women's rights and human rights in Afghanistan, particularly for those who experience marginalization from political participation, to dealing with corruption and lack of access to basic rights, as well as social mobility, economic empowerment, and the expression of agency. Decision-making and governance are characterized by male-dominated patronage systems, often linked to familial and ethnic allegiances and business interests. These networks hinder inclusive governance and reinforce the existing power structures.</p>
<p>4. Patriarchal entitlement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does patriarchal entitlement manifest? How does this intersect with other variables of power and dominance? • How are men expected to be ‘men’ – what types of masculinities are accepted and rewarded? • How are women expected to behave and act? <p>There are clear links between levels of gender inequality and GBV and the likelihood of inter- and intra-state conflict.²² Patriarchy and gender inequality reinforce and normalize male sexual entitlement, which makes it difficult to address GBV, as it is not seen or named as a form of violence.²³</p>

²¹UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). 2020. The Time is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption. Vienna: UNODC, p. 35.

²²Hudson, V.M. et al. 2012. Sex & World Peace. New York: Columbia University Press.

²³The impact of this phenomenon is compounded among women who suffer under other systems of oppression, like trans women and indigenous women. In such instances, the violence is often collectively ignored, and sometimes considered appropriately punitive for transgressing gendered social norms. For more on patriarchal entitlement, including sexual entitlement. see: Manne, K. 2020. Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women. London: Allen Lane.

	<p>In Afghanistan, governance, authority, and decision-making are entirely dominated and conditioned by rigid notions of militarized masculinity. This entails strong ‘honour and revenge logic’ and politics, with men groomed to uphold clan and family honour at all costs. This dynamic defines wider political and cultural codes predicated on the maintenance of honour, seeking revenge for any breach of masculinity, and a cultivated rigidity and unwillingness to compromise.</p>
<p>5. Violence normalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does violence and militarization interconnect with societal understandings and expectations of gender norms? • How does gender-based violence manifest? • How do men and women experience, enforce or subvert violence? • How do sexual and gender minorities navigate forms of violence, enforce or subvert victimization? <p>Violence is often normalized by glorifying militarized masculinity, often at the birth of a nation state, linking national pride with military service and violence. In many contexts, being a war veteran is valorized and provides a pipeline into high political office. The concept of the ‘militarized masculine’ is only possible with the concomitant creation of a subordinate feminine.²⁴</p> <p>High levels of acceptance of violence are observable in every domain – both public and private – in Afghanistan. Over generations, this acceptance has become the status quo, normalising gender-based violence in all its forms; and fostering cultures of religious intolerance and demanding ethnic- and religion-specific allegiance. Many women and girls experience violence and control in all aspects of their lives – public and private – and are subject to gross restrictions on their freedom of movement and association, access to education and sexual and reproductive health. Debt cycles and household pressures are an acute point of vulnerability that the Taliban capitalizes on to recruit young men, often resulting in female-headed households exhibiting a disproportionately high levels of debt and poverty.</p>

²⁴Eichler, M. 2014. “Militarized Masculinities in International Relations.” *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21(1), pp. 81-93.

TABLE 2:
Peace catalysts

Peace catalysts	Core questions and concerns to consider
<p>1. Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does education play in community and social cohesion or the facilitation of spaces for dialogue? • What evidence is there to indicate that education contributes to peaceful resolution of conflict? • What community actors are empowered (and by whom) to engage in education activities and promote and facilitate dialogue on non-violent dispute resolution? <p>Studies continue to document the close relationship between access to education and conflict and sustainable peace.²⁵ Education is key to the realization of each of the SDGs, providing individuals with the ability to realize the full scope of their rights. Lack of access to education may not only exacerbate grievances among groups,²⁶ but prolonged disruption in education also compounds life cycle impacts on multiple generations, limiting economic, social, and political opportunities and placing countries at higher risk of conflict.²⁷ Curricula and teaching practices can promote dialogue, inclusion, peacebuilding, and non-violent dispute resolution. When carefully designed and supported, these changes can contribute to redefining societal values and constructively offer more space for cooperation, recognition of difference and diversity.</p> <p>Peace education theory and practice has been adopted in Afghanistan, including by the former Ministry of Education; alongside programmatic tools and practices aimed at building community-level skills for non-violent conflict resolution, including identifying conflict drivers, non-violent communication tools, and the skills and attitudes for approaching disputes in a non-violent way. Engagement with key findings and lessons learned in peace education is critical to understanding the existing limits of practice and where positive next steps could be taken.</p>
<p>2. Cultural affinities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does an intersectional analysis of ethnic and other cultural affinities inform efforts to build social cohesion and sustained peace? • How do individuals and communities identify with and reflect on their multiple identities? • What spaces exist for collective discussion of positive experiences, past harms, and social cohesion? <p>Focusing on traditional cultural values as a unifying force can be a powerful tool in producing cross-group connections. However, it can also have unintended consequences, including the invoking of exclusionary gender norms and limiting space for women’s participation.²⁸ The concept of gender equality, although compatible with sharia law, can be seen as a Western threat to traditions and create an inter-generational divide.²⁹ When astutely harnessed, cultural affinities can work to address the past and root causes of conflict, such as lingering effects of colonialism or occupation.</p>

²⁵Omoeva, C., and E. Buckner. 2015. Does Horizontal Education Inequality Lead to Violent Conflict? A Global Analysis. New York: UNICEF; Nygård, H. M., et al. 2017. Inequality and Armed Conflict: Evidence and Data. Peace Research Institute Oslo.; Bob-Milliar, G. 2017. Sustaining Peace: Making Development Work for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts: Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire Compared. World Bank Flagship Study, Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict, World Bank, Washington, DC.

²⁶United Nations, World Bank. 2018. Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, pp. 32, 62.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Bolton, N. and L. Amaral. 2013. Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice. Catholic Relief Services Timor-Leste. Laletek Project Manual. Baltimore: CRS, 29p. 24.

²⁹El-Bushra, J., Myrntinen, H. and J. Naujoks. 2013. Renegotiating the 'Ideal' Society: Gender in peacebuilding in Uganda. London: International Alert, p. 36.

	<p>In Afghanistan, cultural affinities, including ethnic identities, are intertwined with gender norms, alongside other identity factors. This can present both challenges and opportunities. Strong cultural identities in Afghanistan could drive investment in more inclusive representational approaches to shared heritage. Although women from various ethnic groups face varied and intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender and ethnicity, the shared experiences of women in Afghanistan have also produced women's rights with a healthy range of perspectives.</p>
<p>3. Social protection support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What barriers inhibit gender-responsive social protection? • In what ways do families, communities and identity groups ensure social protection? • How are these gendered and what responsibilities and expectations fall unequally upon women and girls? <p>Social protection policies are typically developed at the national level, with resources allocated through a mix of formal and informal institutions. These policies may require time to take effect at the local and community level. Women often have stronger links to community governance mechanisms and local government, while also facing gender bias, harmful practices and discrimination.³⁰ Elements of decentralization (e.g. the principle of subsidiarity) can be important to ensure effective and accountable gender-responsive social support at local and subnational levels, where the experience of social protection – or lack thereof – is most acutely felt in everyday life.</p> <p>The delivery of essential services and creation of 'safety nets' remains one of the most pressing challenges to effective governance in Afghanistan. Even where services are available, women face barriers in accessing particularly essential services because of various biases, discrimination, and risks. Importantly, in a context where centralized social protection excludes most of the rural population, decentralization is only successful when it also protects the integrity, required context-specific adaptations, and needs of specific groups of people. Carefully supported social protection can contribute to the realization of fundamental human rights, including economic, social, and cultural rights.</p>
<p>4. Environmental protection and management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the benefits of economic investment reaching different Afghans? • How do gender norms (positively or negatively) impact women's ability to access economic opportunities and benefits? • What gendered impacts of climate change can be observed and how are gender norms driving these impacts? <p>Natural resource governance and management interventions can be promising entry points for women in development, social protection, and political participation. This is linked to the legitimacy of women in traditional local resource management roles.³¹</p> <p>In a context such as Afghanistan, where large-scale investment prioritizes extractive industries, the creation of jobs predominantly benefits men; with women often relegated to small-scale, local economic recovery initiatives. Ensuring that women are integral to and beneficiaries of post-war investment and environmentally sensitive large-scale investment in Afghanistan will be critical to effective natural resources management and issues of related inequalities, such as land ownership, basic service delivery, and agricultural system strengthening.</p> <p>Integrating women's traditional knowledge of water infrastructure, restoration of natural resources, land preparation, agro-processing, storage and post-harvest technologies are integral to climate change mitigation and environmental protection.</p>

³⁰Holmes, R., Jones, H. and P. Domingo. 2019. The politics of gender-responsive social protection. Overseas Development Institute. Working paper 568. November 2019. London: ODI, p. 7.

³¹UNEP, UN Women, UNDP. 2019. Promoting Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace in North Kordofan, Sudan. New York: UN, p. 13.

<p>5. New generations with inclusive values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What inclusion practices and norms are present in different communities? • What risks (political, security, reputational, operational) are relevant to consider when promoting inclusion? • How would these risks (re)shape design of any approaches or programming to ensure observation of Do-No-Harm principles? <p>Improved inclusiveness within a given socio-political environment can break entrenched ‘networks’ to reduce exclusionary practices such as patronage networks and corruption. This also challenges economic and political elitism, traditional gender norms and power dynamics. Intersectional analysis is critical to ensure do-no-harm principles are observed. This means understanding the cumulative and compounding challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and groups based on gender, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, class, educational level, social origin and other factors.</p> <p>Displacement and sustained conflict have affected generations of young Afghans, leading to feelings of hopelessness. Perceived and actual grievances related to social and economic mobility, political exclusion and corruption, discrimination or humiliation has resulted in significant demoralization and disengagement. Armed actors have exploited this for recruitment. In recent decades, however, greater connectedness via social media, education, a growing emphasis on inclusive politics, accountability, rapid urbanization, and disenchantment with the old order have all influenced the mobilization of a new generation of young Afghans to step into public life.</p>
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BOX 3:
Examples of gender-responsive conflict analysis

Conflict analysis is not often available publicly. More efforts are needed to make analysis public and available in all relevant local languages in a specific conflict. The list below therefore precludes compilation of a substantial list of examples of gender-responsive conflict analysis that are not available publicly. Three examples are offered here:

- Feminist conflict analysis undertaken in Myanmar in 2016 provides a gendered assessment of the security concerns, core conflict drivers, the peace process and unpacked factors inhibiting, and strategies to enhance, women’s participation.³² It outlines extensive, practical recommendations for key actors.
- Collective feminist analysis of the conflict in Cameroon spearheaded by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) NGO in 2019.³³ The analysis of gender dynamics provides a reference base for the analysis of power dynamics more broadly, to develop strategies for sustainable peace in the country.
- Inter-agency gender-sensitive conflict analysis in Yemen in 2016³⁴ aimed to guide humanitarian programming, building from qualitative and quantitative (partially sex-disaggregated) data. It analysed the situation of women, men, girls and boys in terms of gender roles, gendered resources and vulnerabilities, participation in decision-making and access to services.

³²Buchanan, C. and C. Willisroft. 2016. The Women are Ready: An opportunity to transform peace in Myanmar. Peace Support Fund. Yangon: PSF.

³³WILPF Cameroon. 2019. Gender Conflict Analysis in Cameroon. Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/WILPFCameroon/posts/2800324603583218>.

³⁴Gressmann, W. 2016. From the Ground Up: Gender and Conflict Analysis in Yemen. Oxfam, CARE, GenCap. Research Report. October 2016. London: Oxfam.

Ways to undertake gender-responsive conflict analysis³⁵

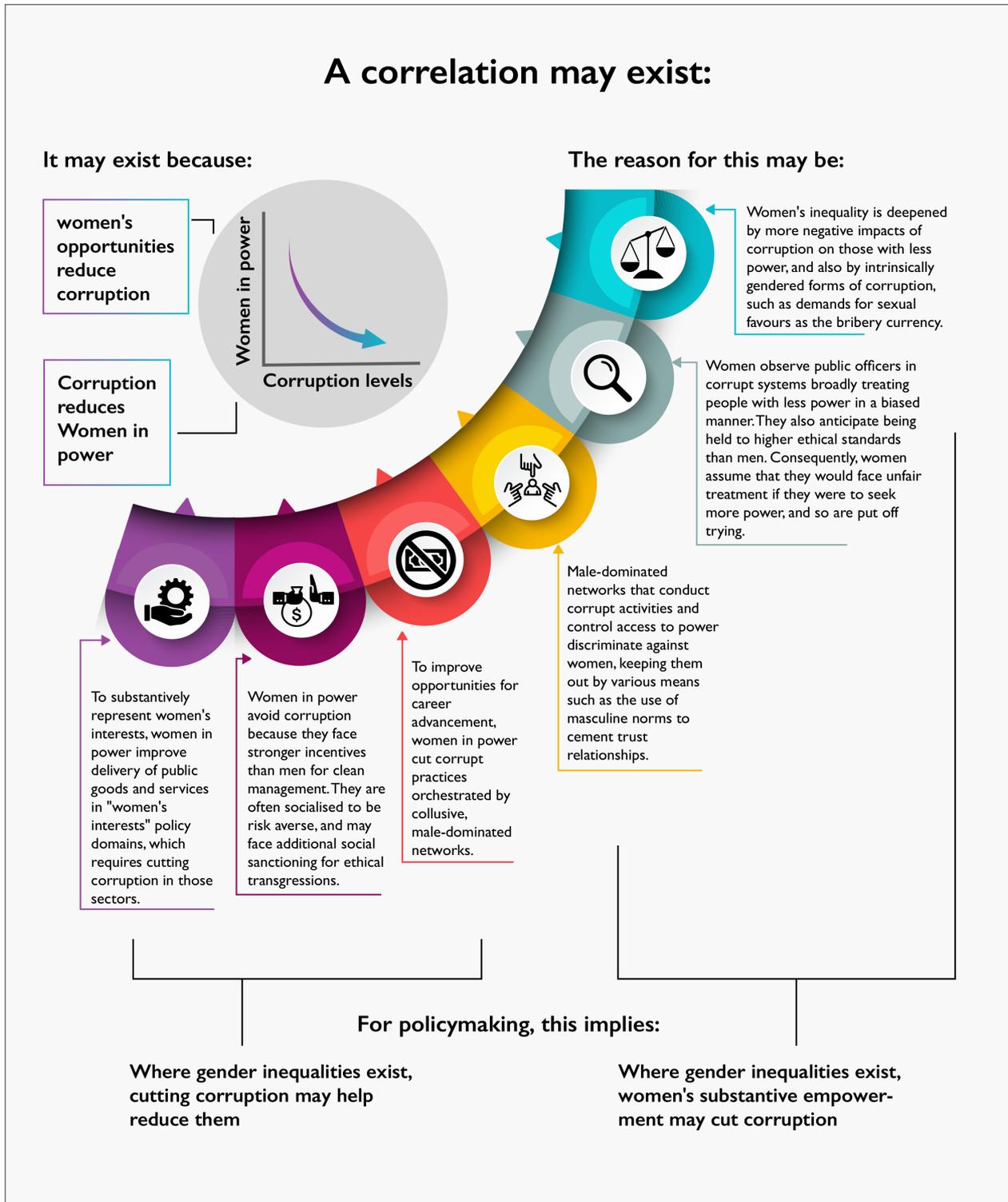
It is important to note that gender-responsive conflict analysis is not an ‘event’ or an ‘output,’ rather it comprises a continuous process for assessing and better understanding conflict-affected contexts, whether at the country, subnational, or local community level. Some methods for ensuring astute inclusive conflict analysis are to include:

- Bolster diverse expertise by regularly assessing and reflecting on whose perspectives and unconscious biases are being reflected in analysis. Seek out feminist researchers and inclusion experts, particularly from the Global South, to support an exchange of skills and knowledge, or pair existing (often male) consultants with a feminist analyst.
- Commission parallel feminist political analyses, gendered perspectives, and policy options on relevant issues. Commission topics in advance, so that they cannot be excluded amid citations of more urgent matters.
- Include methods that enable the inclusion of more diverse perspectives. Ensure analysis that is not simply professional- or elite-driven but rather includes broader perspectives from violence-affected communities, obtained through perception studies, polling, and consultations.
- Undertake collective analysis with conflicting parties and communities to unpack conflict dynamics, including gender dynamics, and identify opportunities to address them.
- Share analysis. Where possible, put analysis in the public domain – so that it can be shared and used widely. Ensure that all analysis is translated into relevant local languages.
- Visualize conflict dynamics. For example, specific drivers and catalysts can be unpacked to explore gender perspectives as illustrated in Figure 2.

³⁵Buchanan, C. 2021. Gender-inclusive peacemaking.

FIGURE 2:
Example of a way to visualise gender dimensions

Figure 2 Summary diagram of causal processes that can contribute to a correlation between women in power and corruption levels.



Source: Adapted graphic drawing on UN Office on Drugs and Crime. 2020. The Time is Now: addressing the gender dimensions of corruption. Vienna: UNODC.

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ANNEX 1: METHODS for the UN Country team 2021 gender-responsive conflict analysis

The following methods were used to develop the 2021 gender responsive conflict analysis and are included here as background for the types of elements and steps to consider in conducting similar analysis.

1. Interviews were conducted (remotely) from April to June 2021, with Afghan analysts, rights advocates, gender specialists, women's rights organizations, media workers, and members of the Afghan diaspora. These included individual interviews and joint or group interviews with women and men from Afghan business groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and networks, members of the international diplomatic corps and donors, staff from international organizations, think tanks and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held over the period March-April 2021 by UNAMA Field Offices, in eight provinces of Afghanistan.
3. A survey was distributed between late April to the end of June 2021 (in English, Dari and Pashto).
4. A detailed literature review of English-language analysis occurred. Due to the significant volume of material in English, the review placed priority on perspectives and data from the previous five years (2016-2021). The literature review covered the thematic concerns of security, violence reduction and violence against women; governance, political participation and electoral politics; natural resource management, climate change, and illegal extractive industries; human rights and women's rights; livelihoods, development, licit and illicit economies; peacemaking efforts between the former Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban and broader peacebuilding efforts and promote social cohesion; and humanitarian concerns and actions.
5. Peer review within and across the UN Country Team to strengthen the analysis, fact check and ensure contextual coherence.

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