



## Improving Impact with Gender Analysis

Peacebuilding work is context-dependent, and projects and policies must adapt to meet each new context. The Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory guide examines both how violent conflict impacts—and is impacted by—gender dynamics. The guide illustrates three different approaches that better shape peacebuilding projects and policies.

## STATE OF THE FIELD

Violent conflict upends and polarizes societies, disrupting social structures and gender roles. Projects and policies intended to assist communities that are fragile or affected by violence are more successful when they consider the different effects conflict has on men, women, boys, and girls. Approaches to conflict resolution that account for gender issues and include a broader array of society reduce gender-based violence, enhance gender equality, defuse conflict, and lead to more sustainable peace.

## USIP'S WORK

The U.S. Institute of Peace's research, policy-shaping, and on-the-ground programs strengthen the ability of people and organizations in conflict zones to create sustainable solutions for peace and equality. Through more than 50 projects worldwide, the Institute works with governments, international organizations, practitioners, and academics to expand the understanding of gender dynamics in conflict. USIP has played a significant role in helping the peacebuilding community expand the concept of gender to be inclusive of women, men, and other gender identities. The Institute's research brings together field experience and policymaking in the U.S. and around the world. Recent work includes:

**Engaging Women and Men in Peace and Security.** USIP supports women peacebuilders in countries affected by conflict—including mediators in Colombia, advocates for gender equality in Pakistan, religious leaders across the Middle East who are advancing the rights of women and girls, and leaders of nonviolent movements around the globe.

To prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) in Horn of Africa, USIP is supporting women's skills, knowledge, and influence to effectively engage with policymakers on P/CVE

efforts. USIP's approach leverages women's unique position in communities to identify local drivers of violent extremism, break down barriers to participation, and facilitate connections built on trust with local and national policy and security actors to affect change.

Men, women, boys, and girls can all be perpetrators, victims, and witnesses to violent conflict. Men are usually seen as the primary perpetrators of violence in times of war. However, research shows that men are not inherently violent. USIP has helped shift this narrative. As part of the Institute's peaceful masculinities work, USIP collaborates with security actors to promote a more peaceful narrative of masculinity by challenging masculine identities that often associate problem-solving with violence.

**Pioneering Research.** USIP unpacks and examines some of the toughest research questions on gender and peacebuilding. By connecting research with practice, USIP amplifies scholarship on issues ranging from the prevention of sexual violence to women's roles in violent extremism.

Since 2013, USIP has convened the Missing Peace Scholars Network, which comprises researchers from a range of academic backgrounds who analyze and help prevent sexual violence in some of the world's most turbulent places. USIP brings these scholars together annually to glean insights and identify gaps in knowledge and policies.

USIP experts apply this knowledge by training peacekeeping missions to reduce sexual exploitation and abuse in countries across Africa. Such trainings help security forces better understand these abuses; including the complex patterns of power and limited notions of masculinity that contribute to a cycle of violence.

As the impacts of violent conflict and extremism become more apparent, it is critical to understand women's roles in the prevention, mediation, and resolution of violence. USIP conducts on-the-ground research to examine how women have utilized indigenous and traditional religious roles to negotiate and mediate for peace across the Middle East.

**Strengthening Policy.** USIP is the secretariat of the U.S. Civil Society Working Group, which harnesses the knowledge of over 40 NGOs with expertise on the impact of violent conflict on women and girls. This knowledge feeds into the implementation of the U.S. National Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security. The strategy stems from the U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, which was signed into law through bipartisan congressional efforts. The act recognizes the unique challenges and needs of women and girls in violent conflict and ensures women's participation in peace negotiations and post-war reconstruction.

## Defining Gender

Gender describes the roles and expectations that a society finds most appropriate and valuable for men, women, boys, girls, and sexual and gender minorities. Gender is more than an individual's biological sex—gender is a learned pattern of behavior. During violent conflict, gender norms can be radically altered. Conditions—including access to resources, mobility, and personal safety—can particularly worsen for many women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities. Transitions out of violent conflict, however, also mark an opportunity to improve the social status of women through education and legislation.