



GENDER-RESPONSIVE CONFLICT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORKS

Existing tools and methods

Civil Society Dialogue Network

A large, faint, stylized dove logo is positioned at the bottom of the page, centered horizontally. The dove is depicted in a light blue color, with its wings spread, symbolizing peace.

Civil Society Dialogue Network

Background Paper

Gender-Responsive Conflict Analysis Frameworks: Existing tools and methods

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September 2023

1. INTRODUCTION: GENDER EQUALITY AND CONFLICT ANALYSIS

About this paper

This paper explains what is gender-responsive conflict analysis and why it is important that conflict analysis has a systematic focus on gender equality.¹ It also provides an overview of existing gender analysis and gender-responsive conflict analysis frameworks (tools and methods) used by civil society and international organisations and governments.² This paper can be used to prepare recommendations focused on how the EU should enhance the way its conflict analysis processes (and the actions and programming they inform) are responsive to gender equality.

What is gender-responsive conflict analysis?

Gender analysis is a process of collecting and analysing sex- and gender-disaggregated information in order to understand gender differences in a particular context or sector. It provides the data to integrate a gender perspective into policy (actions) and programming to close gender inequality gaps and make sure women, men and LGBTIQ+ people equally benefit.³

Gender-*sensitive* conflict analysis (GSCA) is the systematic assessment of the gendered causes, structures, stakeholders and dynamics of conflict and peace. It is conflict analysis with a gender lens.⁴ It identifies the unique experiences, roles and needs of women, men, girls, boys, and LGBTIQ+ people during conflict and peace (*effects*); and explores how gender norms, roles and relations influence and shape conflict drivers and peacebuilding efforts (*causes*). GSCA provides tailored, evidence-based, context-specific recommendations to integrate a gender perspective into policy and programming in conflict-affected contexts. Completing a GSCA is in line with gender equality objectives within EU policy.⁵

Gender-*responsive* conflict analysis (GRCA) takes this process further. It uses the information from the GSCA to design practical responses to the drivers of gender inequalities and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This additional step is important, as all EU programmes, regardless of context, sector, programme type or objective should be both gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive.⁶

Gender-*transformative* policy and programming goes further and is the goal of the EU's approach to gender equality⁷. It uses GRCA to address the structural causes of gender inequality and gender-based discrimination, including by actively engaging men and boys.

¹ This paper aligns with the [EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2020–2025 \(GAP\) III](#) to refer to gender as context and time-specific characteristics, behaviours and expectations around what society considers appropriate for men, women and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. These ideas are socially constructed and learnt. Gender is different to sex, which refers to the biological (chromosomal and hormonal) differences between male, female and intersex people. In addition, gender is a system of power, where symbolic meanings; identities, roles and relations; and structures and institutions fuel gender inequality and cause violence. Gender is consistently a factor that determines who has access to power, authority and resources.

² Note that gender analysis is different from a gender audit which assesses gender equality in institutional / organisational systems, structures, policies, budgets and programmes. The ILO's [Participatory Gender Audit](#) Tool is probably the most comprehensive, although DCAF has a [Gender Self-Assessment Guide](#) which is useful if an organisation would like to do this work internally.

³ This paper uses the terms LGBTIQ+ (meaning lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, non-binary and queer persons) and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (SOGI). '+' indicates additional identities or terms not yet included. Both terms describe gender identities that experience disproportionate levels of discrimination and violence. These terms align with the EU's [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#).

⁴ See: [UN Practical Guidance for gender-sensitive conflict analysis](#) (2020).

⁵ In line with the EU [Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – 'Global Europe'](#) (NDICI-GE) (2021-2027).

⁶ In line with the EU [Guidance Note on the use of conflict analysis in support of EU external action](#) (2020).

⁷ In line with the EU [GAP III](#).

Why is it essential to address gender equality in any conflict analysis?

Evidence⁸ shows that high levels of unequal gender power relations and SGBV in a society are associated with increased vulnerability to civil and interstate war and the use of more severe forms of violence in conflict. In addition, because diverse groups of people experience violent conflict differently, a conflict analysis without an intersectional gender lens gives a partial and probably elite-centered view of the context. Understanding these gender power dynamics allows us to uncover critical information, target interventions and transform the root causes that fuel violence.

When analysis does not include a gender lens, peacebuilders risk reinforcing harmful gender inequalities, power structures and norms. This can contribute to exclusion and make it harder to effectively address the drivers of violence, since effective analysis is the starting point for policymaking and programming. Conflict analysis that are not gender-responsive may:

- do harm, e.g. by causing, fuelling and prolonging tensions, or aggravating gender inequalities and divisions between different groups of people;
- be ineffective and costlier, e.g. by adding expensive ad-hoc measures or projects later;
- put people's lives at risk by ignoring certain forms of violence;
- damage your organisation's reputation locally and globally if analysis excludes issues that result in future violence;
- increase social, political, security, environmental, economic inequality or SGBV.

When should you conduct gender-responsive conflict analysis?

A GRCA is a foundational and substantive part of a gender-responsive approach to policy and programming. It should inform strategic planning at all levels, particularly decision-making:

- at the initial design of an action/policy/programme;
- before the implementation of an action/policy/programme;
- during the monitoring and evaluation of an action/policy/programme.

What are the existing tools and methods used for gender-responsive conflict analysis?

There are many existing practical frameworks (step-by-step tools and specific methods)⁹ for gender analysis documented over the past 35 years.¹⁰ Yet, they are not systematically used in practice.

These frameworks have been developed to address different aspects of gender equality so some frameworks are more useful to address certain policy priorities or programmes. Choosing the most appropriate tool depends on the context; the commissioning organization(s) and actor(s); the purpose and focus of the analysis; and what resources are available (staff, funding and capacity).

There are gaps: many analysis frameworks do not systematically focus on both gender equality *and* conflict in any given context. While peacebuilders regularly undertake conflict analysis, it usually excludes a gender lens.

⁸ See: Caprioli, M., V. Hudson, R. McDermott, C. Emmett & B. Ballif-Spanvill, 'Putting Women in Their Place,' *Baker Journal of Applied Public Policy*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2007), p. 12-22; GIWPS (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security) and PRIO (Peace Research Institute Oslo), *Women, Peace, and Security Index 2017/18: Tracking Sustainable Peace through Inclusion, Justice, and Security for Women* (Washington, DC: GIWPS and PRIO, 2017); Kelly, J., 'Intimate Partner Violence and Conflict: Understanding the Links between Political Violence and Personal Violence.' Background paper for the United Nations – World Bank Flagship Study, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2017).

⁹ By methods we mean the different ways in which the data is collected (e.g. participatory methods); and by tools we mean how the data is analysed (e.g. conflict tree). A framework is a collection of tools and methods.

¹⁰ These include Nalia Kabeer's *Reversed Realities* (1994), Oxfam's [Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks](#) (1999) and Sanam Anderlini's [Mainstreaming Gender in Conflict Analysis](#) (2006).

If gender perspectives are incorporated, the focus is usually on the differentiated impacts of conflict for women and men to support a Do No Harm approach.

There is rarely (*responsive or transformative*) analysis of gendered root causes of violence. Nor is there a focus on how gender norms and gender power dynamics of societal institutions are shaped by and contribute to drive violence and influence peacebuilding.

Practitioners may also see analysis as a ‘simple’ or ‘apolitical’ way of mainstreaming gender equality. This can lead to analysis processes being a ‘tick-box exercise’ or being instrumentalised – where the inherently political nature of challenging unequal gender and patriarchal power relations, and understanding gender inequality as a root cause of conflict is ignored.

Common pitfalls in conflict and gender analysis frameworks

Process challenges:

- Failing to integrate a gender lens from the early stages of conflict analysis.
Instead: An assessment of gender equality should be built into the terms of reference, be part of key questions and thematic areas and be integrated into findings and recommendations. The process should be designed inclusively, engage gender experts and involve diverse participants.
- Conducting analysis without stakeholder involvement.
Instead: Conduct analysis jointly, ensuring ownership by local stakeholders to maximise sustainability. Participatory methods can make sure diverse groups of women, men and LGBTIQ+ people influence the analysis.
- Undertaking conflict analysis as a one-off activity and not a lens through which evolving conflict dynamics are regularly updated and addressed.
Instead: A GRCA should be regularly updated, and changes in gender norms should be assessed over time.
- Analysis frameworks are not nuanced for each different context.
Instead: Frameworks are grounded in particular (often global North) cultural realities. So even if frameworks are framed as universal, gender norms and relations are context-specific, so each framework must be adapted to each different context in focus.

Content challenges:

- Conflating ‘gender’ and ‘women’ and treating women or men as homogenous groups.
Instead: GRCA should be intersectional, taking account of additional identity factors that determine how women, men and LGBTIQ+ people differently experience conflict and access power and resources (such as age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability).
- Limiting gender analysis to a single section, usually under social issues.
Instead: Gender analysis should be mainstreamed; the causes of gender inequality and violence should be identified in security, political, rule of law, economic, social, environment/climate sectors.
- Assuming women are victims with narrow protection needs and not agents or actors in conflict.
Instead: Examine the diverse roles and experiences of women, men and LGBTIQ+ people in conflict and as peace actors.
- Ignoring patriarchal power dynamics.
Instead: To be gender-responsive analysis needs to examine systems of power, to better understand the security, political, rule of law, economic, social, environment/climate institutions and structures that maintain gender inequality.

What does an effective gender-responsive conflict analysis need to include?

Decision-makers need the right data to inform and adapt policy and programming to respond to gender inequality and SGBV. An effective GRCA should include:

1. *Gender disaggregation of key actors*: Use intersectional approaches to map diverse actors, stakeholders and the relations between and among them with a particular focus on access to power and their different experiences of violence and peacebuilding.
2. *Reveal gender root causes of violence*: Provide an analysis of gender norms and gendered root causes, evolving power dynamics, and types of conflict at all levels of society.
3. *Identify gender thematic drivers of violence and peace*: Highlight the gender dimensions of key thematic issue areas needed to achieve sustainable conflict resolution (e.g. gender and security sector reform or economic development).
4. *Develop concrete next steps and recommendations*: Use data to inform actions and programming so they are at a minimum Do No Harm and aim to be gender-transformative.

This paper will use these four points to assess how helpful different analysis frameworks can be.¹¹

¹¹ Many of these frameworks are based on the 'classic' gender / conflict analysis frameworks: Moser Framework (Strategic Needs); Harvard Gender Roles Framework; Social Relations Approach (Kabeer); and the 4 R Method. These are described in detail by the [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) and Oxfam's [A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks](#) (1999).

2. EXAMPLES OF FRAMEWORKS

Conflict and Gender Analysis frameworks used by civil society

CARE International – [Preparing a Rapid Gender Analysis](#) (2019) and [Gender Analysis Good Practices Framework](#) (2012)

Why is it helpful? The Framework is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of gendered power examining agency, structures and relations. It provides structured examples of tools and practical exercises and questions, and advice on how to structure the process. It focuses on different thematic sectors (e.g. household decision-making, public participation, restorative justice) to explore violence and power at all levels of society. Guidance is provided to develop clear recommendations for action. The Rapid Analysis tool is useful for making gender-responsive decisions during crisis. There are more resources in the [Gender Toolkit](#) (2019).

What are the gaps? It is targeted for development / humanitarian action sectors, but an experienced practitioner can adapt the guidance to peacebuilding analysis. It is less helpful for mediation practitioners, but would be useful to draw on for a broader context or political analysis.

Conciliation Resources / Saferworld: [Gender-sensitive Conflict Analysis: Facilitators Guide](#) (2020)

Why is it helpful? Building on Conciliation Resources [Gender and Conflict Analysis Toolkit](#) (2015) which frames gender as a system of power and gives questions and short exercises to help people conduct GSCA in any context. This Facilitators Guide (based on the [CDA Collaborative Learning Projects](#) (2016) systems conflict analysis methodology) provides step-by-step guidance on how to design and facilitate a participatory process to identify unequal gender norms and systematically analyse the gendered root causes of conflict for any context. It provides clear advice about how to plan an intersectional process and ensure content is gender disaggregated. It has a focus on mapping diverse actors and existing peacebuilding work to develop concrete recommendations.

What are the gaps? The step-by-step method can be seen as inflexible, preventing facilitators from developing a context-specific process. Some organisations have also found the participatory and systems mapping approach too complex and less rigorous in practice; some drivers of violence or existing actions may be ignored if those in the room do not have relevant information.

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) – [NAPRI Tool](#) (2019)

Why is it helpful? The NAPRI (needs, access, participation, resources and impact) Tool (p12) is a targeted tool that asks specific questions which can be used in any conflict context to (at a minimum) Do No Harm. It examines gender differentiated experiences of violence (including LGBTIQ+ people) and a basic analysis of gender norms and gender power dynamics. It also provides guidance on adding a gender lens into programme design and monitoring for the security and justice sector.

What are the gaps? The NAPRI Tool is not a comprehensive GRCA but can help to analyse a context, project idea, policy, legislation or any other action/intervention using no more than desk research or reflection. It does not reveal broader gender root causes of violence or thematic drivers which would require a more extensive and participatory framework.

Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), Norwegian Church Aid (Sudan) and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects – [Conflict Analysis Framework](#) (2016)

Why is it helpful? This is one of the most comprehensive analysis frameworks available. It recommends how to design the process, including team structure and data analysis processes. The framework provides step-by-step guidance on how key tools can be applied. These include:

- Actor-orientated analysis (useful to understand gendered power relations), which includes stakeholder analysis (positions, interests, issues and power) and stakeholder mapping.
- Issue-related and causal analysis (useful to understand gender root causes and thematic drivers), which includes the conflict tree; dividers and connectors analysis; immediate to long-term threat analysis; and levels of potential change.
- Integrative tools (useful to test analysis recommendations), which include scenarios (alternative future stories) and mapping of conflict using systems thinking.

What are the gaps? While the framework is not specifically focused on gender-responsivity each of the tools and methods has advice on how to integrate gender-sensitivity and with an additional focus on understanding gender root causes of violence that are helpful in drawing out relevant information. This framework does not provide focused questions on thematic drivers of gender violence, which can make it difficult to target recommendations for policy and programming.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – [Gender Analysis Guide](#) (2021)

Why is it helpful? This guide builds on IUCN's [Framework for Conducting Gender Responsive Analysis](#) (2013). This is comprehensive tool. It is strong on incorporating cultural and traditional / customary norms and how this intersects with gender relations and norms (this is not addressed as comprehensively in other frameworks). It also includes questions about gender equality and resource use, access and control and environment / climate change which are also not well addressed elsewhere. The updated guide has an explicit focus on understanding the links between gender inequality and SGBV.

What are the gaps? Although it does ask explicit questions about SGBV it is not targeted for conflict-affected contexts. Peace practitioners would need to add questions to comprehensively understand the institutional drivers of gender inequality and violence.

Saferworld / Uganda Land Alliance: [Gender Analysis of Conflict Toolkit](#) (2017)

Why is it helpful? It takes an intersectional approach to examine how the conflict impacts diverse groups of people and identifies gender discrimination in systems and institutions. It has specific sections on land and extractive industries and step by step practical exercises to understand the links between harmful gender norms, violence and conflict, and to integrate a gender lens into conflict analysis. It includes sexual and gender minorities and a focus on masculinities, exploring potential roles of men and boys in achieving gender equality. The multiple clearly written exercises provide flexibility to plan an analysis process that suits any conflict context.

What are the gaps? Clearer guidance on how to apply a gender lens to other sectors (security, political, rule of law, economic, social, environment/climate) that drive conflict would be helpful. Needs more guidance to translate the analysis to clear ways to adapt and design programmes.

Swisspeace and ETH Zurich – [Gender in Mediation: An Exercise Handbook for Trainers](#) (2015)

Why is it helpful? This is a training guide for practitioners to integrate gender-sensitivity into mediation practice. Section 5.1 provides step by step instructions for participatory group exercises to understand the scope and benefits of a GSCA, mapping actors, identifying the gender norms and gendered impacts of conflict and understanding power dynamics in conflict contexts.

What are the gaps? The guide is focused on mediation process design and practice which is less useful for practitioners doing broader peacebuilding work. It does not focus on developing practical recommendations from analysis, which may limit practitioners' ability to use the data.

Conflict and Gender Analysis frameworks used by international organisations and governments

The EU has four main analysis tools that include a gender perspective that are available to staff, specifically Conflict Analysis Screening (CAS), EU Conflict Early Warning System (EWS) Assessments, Gender Country Profiles (GCP) and Gender Sector Analysis (GSA). HQ Departments and Delegations have different roles in actioning these, but each tool is important for building knowledge to apply gender-responsiveness and conflict-sensitivity simultaneously to programming.¹²

European Union (EU) – [Conflict Analysis Screening](#) (2020)

Why is it helpful? The CAS is a structured but flexible methodology for conducting a comprehensive conflict analysis and is used to develop conflict-sensitive programming. The CAS has four analytical steps: 1) Overview of key stakeholders, structural conflict drivers and triggers of violence; 2) Scenarios on to the escalation or resolution of violent conflicts; 3) Identifying risks; and 4) Recommendations. It has specific questions on gender inequality and SGBV and requires consideration of gender-specific recommendations.

What are the gaps? Gender analysis and conflict analysis tend to be separate, although the [EU Guidance Note on Conflict Analysis](#) (2020) tries to address this challenge by requiring the integration of gender analysis into conflict analyses. The CAS exercise on conflict drivers and stakeholders highlights gender issues only under social drivers; the CAS needs to add questions in the political, security, economic, rule of law and environment / climate sectors to identify gender drivers of violence. The actor analysis could further emphasise the intersectional approach in GAP III and also consider how to engage with male powerholders on gender-transformative change.

EU [Conflict Early Warning System \(EWS\) Assessments](#) (2020)

Why is it helpful? The EU conflict EWS is a risk management tool that identifies, prioritises and assesses situations at risk of violent conflict in non-EU countries, focusing on structural risk factors and develops responses to prevent violence.

What are the gaps? The EWS does not include specific guidance on adding a gender lens, or to frame gender inequality as a conflict risk. So EWS assessments, resource prioritisation and monitoring of conflict risks may fail to identify or mitigate key gendered drivers of violence.

¹² The [mid-term evaluation of the EU GAP III](#) is helpful to understand the strengths and gaps in the current analysis processes.

EU Gender Country Profile (GCP)¹³

Why is it helpful? A gender country profile is a comprehensive gender analysis in a given country; they inform Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) and Country Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs). It should include: 1. The country's legal and political context on gender equality; 2. The current situation of women and men, in all their diversity; 3. Gender and sex disaggregated data; 4. Identify programming entry points; 5. An overview of specific conflict issues, their effects on gender equality, and how they can be addressed; 6. Map key actors; 7. recommendations.

What are the gaps? The quality of MIPs and CLIPs depends on the quality and ownership of the GCP that informs them. Despite guidance stating that they should be based on a participatory and consultative process GCPs do not always involve CSOs and EU Member States in joint analysis, which can minimise effectiveness. Many GCPs are drafted by external providers which can mean that the recommendations do not address EU and stakeholder needs and lack ownership.

EU Gender Sector Analysis (GSA)¹⁴

Why is it helpful? The GSA complements the gender country profile but is shorter. It identifies major gaps and constrains as well as opportunities in a specific sector. It should be developed for all sectors of EU engagement (e.g. trade, infrastructure, security sector reform), and completed at the start of any action. It should include: the differences in gender roles, activities, needs and interests of women and men in a given sector at national, regional and local levels; the challenges and opportunities for increased gender equality in the sector and propose recommendations.

What are the gaps? GSA's have been useful to EU staff and sector partners, but as they require significant technical knowledge, are often outsourced, which can reduce EU ownership.¹⁵

UK Government – [Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability \(JACS\) – Guidance Note](#) (2017)¹⁶

Why is it helpful? The JACS is a strategic assessment used to decide UK National Security Council Strategies in overseas contexts. This second version has an explicit focus on integrating a gender lens. It has specific guidance on how to identify gendered causes and drivers of conflict, gender differentiated experiences of conflict, recognise and mitigate gender violence in interventions. It provides guidance to add gender considerations in the ToR in terms of questions for analysis, literature review and research, workshops or discussion planning, and in output documents.

What are the gaps? This is a useful tool for integrating gender in conflict analysis but in practice, JACS are not always strong on gender analysis. Barriers including limited engagement of gender experts, or the inclusion of diverse groups with understanding of gender power dynamics in context have made it difficult to ensure gender is mainstreamed.

¹³ EU GAP III Briefing note n.1: Gender Country Profile and Gender Sector Analysis (February 2021)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ As discussed in the [Mid-Term Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III](#) (2023), p 22.

¹⁶ This builds on the initial JACS Guidance (2011) and Stabilisation Unit Issues Note on Conflict Gender and Security (2016) and Issues Note on Integrating Gender into Conflict Analysis (2016).

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) – [The Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit](#) (2017)

Why is it helpful? This Toolkit provides a useful alternative to global North analysis frameworks by grounding the approach in Pacific culture and traditions in understanding gender norms and gender power dynamics. It provides step-by-step guidance, using multiple tools on how to undertake analysis and integrate this information into programming. It takes an intersectional approach, highlighting gender differentiated experiences (particularly intergenerational). It shows that analysis must be highly contextual to be relevant in complex, conflict-affected contexts.

What are the gaps? It does not mention LGBTIQ+ people, although other studies have highlighted the climate activism and additional vulnerabilities of this diverse group of people. The focus is on climate change, and it would be great to have examples about how the SPC approach applies to other relevant sectors including rule of law and the economy.

Government of Canada – [Gender-based Analysis Plus](#) (GBA Plus) (1995)

Why is it helpful? Mandated analytical tool used to assess and plan gender-responsive and inclusive policy development and programming design and delivery across all sectors in the federal government. Since 2011, the Plus adds intersectional factors beyond sex and gender.

What are the gaps? The GBA+ does not specifically focus on conflict. Critics¹⁷ also say that it takes a very narrow definition of gender and interpretation of gender inequalities, prioritising participation in the formal economy and technical “solutions,” (e.g. focusing on sexual and reproductive health, not social justice), which limits opportunities for gender-transformation.

For further information, there are also two helpful toolkits on intersectional approaches:

- UN Women – [Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit](#) (2022): This is a practical framework with tools for reducing inequalities faced by people experiencing diverse and compounded forms of discrimination.
- Gender at Work – [Intersectionality Capacity Development Resource Kit](#) (2016): Introduces the concept of intersectionality and identifies opportunities, actions and areas to improve.

¹⁷ See: Julia Smith and others, [Integrating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into Policy Responses to COVID-19: Lived Experiences of Lockdown in British Columbia](#), Canada, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, Volume 29, Issue 4, Winter 2022, Pages 1168–1191.

3. FINAL NOTE

Even if a GRCA framework is clear, comprehensive, systematic and flexible, how it is used, and if there are the necessary institutional systems and structures in place to support change, determine whether analysis can be used to address the structural causes of gender inequality and gender-based discrimination.

The quality of analysis determines the relevance of the findings and recommendations. Then, the robustness of the institutions and their leaders determine whether the recommendations can be used to inform and adapt policy and programming. Gender-responsiveness requires strong political leadership and this must be developed, codified and enforced, which requires additional time and resources.

These issues are beyond the scope of this paper, but are worth discussing, particularly when considering how to socialise use of any GRCA framework.