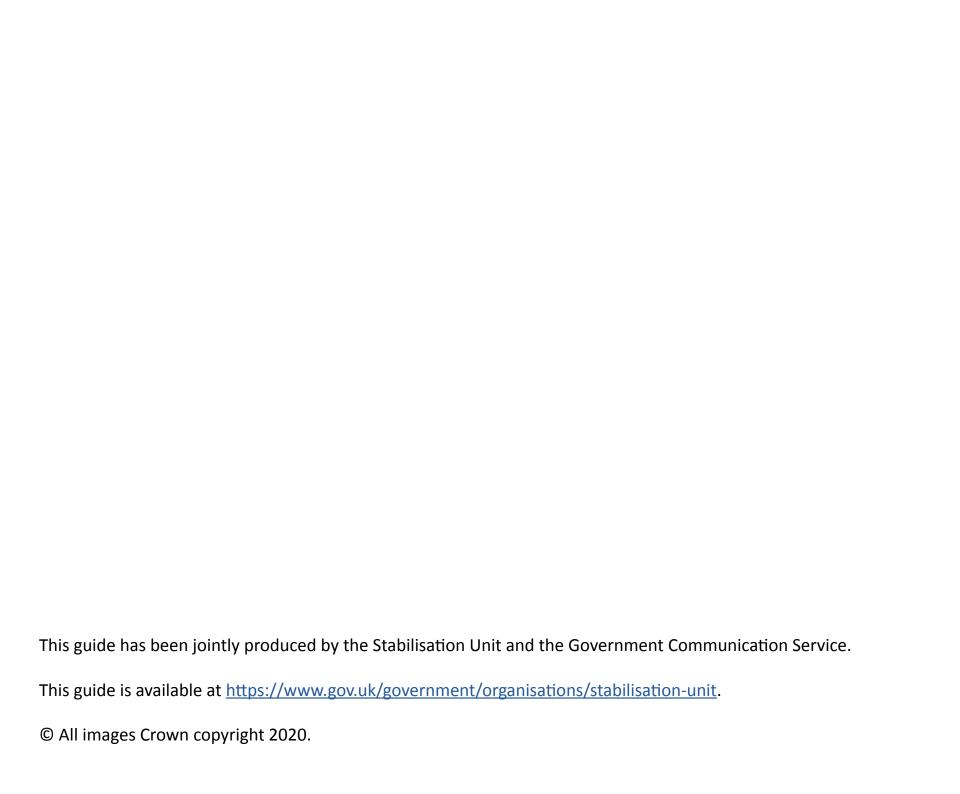HM Government

HOW TO GUIDE

Gender and Strategic Communications in Conflict and Stabilisation Contexts

January 2020

Executive summary

Part 1

Why address gender equality?

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Tools for gender mainstreaming

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Quick-read guides on:
- countering disinformation
- countering violent extremism
- changing harmful social norms
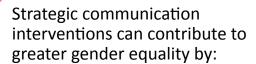- communications content development

Click on the headings and subheadings to jump to the relevant parts of the guidance

Executive summary: Gender and strategic communications in conflict and stabilisation settings

Why does gender equality matter?

It's the right thing to do

Strategic communication interventions can contribute to greater gender equality by:

- challenging discriminatory atttitudes against women and girls;
- promoting positive behaviour change (e.g. encouraging more women to join the police);
- amplifying the voices of women and marginalised groups (e.g. in reform processses where their voices may not be heard).

It's the smart thing to do

Strategic communication interventions that are gender-sensitive are more likely to be effective and meet their objectives. For instance, understanding which channels and platforms women use compared to men, and what their intentions and motivations are, will result in better audience reach.

It's our responsibility

Strategic communication interventions have to comply with the UK Government's policy and legal commitments on gender equality at the international and national level, including the International Development (Gender Equality) Act (2014).

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Well-designed communications strategies that are gender-sensitive recognise that:

Target audiences are not homogenous. Women, men, girls and boys consume and engage with information in different ways and face different barriers in accessing information (e.g. women may not have control over radio programme choices at home).

Ignoring gender inequalities can cause harm. Strategic communications interventions that are not based on an understanding of the gender inequalities in a given context can reinforce gender stereotypes and harmful norms and may result in unintended, negative behaviour change.

Digital technologies do not benefit women and men equally. There is a 'digital gender gap' with women/girls having worse access to the internet and other digital technologies.

Digital technologies facilitate new forms of online harassment and digital violence (e.g. altering images on social media platforms to make them sexual in nature) that are being used to try and silence women and girls.

Disinformation campaigns and violent extremist propaganda by state and non-state actors use narratives on gender identity, gender equality and sexual orientation to polarise public debates, undermine social cohesion and/or spread fear or to recruit people to their cause.

How to promote gender equality in strategic communications

To promote gender quality, a twin-track approach is needed:

Strategic communications programming where the **primary purpose** is **to promote gender equality**.

Example: A multi-channel communications campaign in Nigeria to promote alternative livelihoods for young women vulnerable to human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Strategic communications programming where **gender equality is not the primary purpose, but gender dimensions are mainstreamed** into every aspect so that it is gender-sensitive.

Example: A strategic communications programme that aims to improve the capabilities of an overseas government to explain reform processes to its citizens does not have gender equality as its main objective. However, its communications approach still needs to be designed in a gender-sensitive way (e.g. its target audience analysis needs to identify the different reform topics that women are interested in compared to men, and the best channels to use to reach women, men, girls and boys).

Gender-sensitive strategic communications using OASIS

To be effective, strategic communications interventions need to take gender differences into account throughout the programming cycle. Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS provides an overview of how to design gender-sensitive strategic communications interventions. Tool 2 is based on the OASIS framework, used for campaign planning by the UK Government. Key points from Tool 2 are included on page 8.

Want to know more?

External resources:

- **BBC Media Action.** Editorial Team Checklist for developing gender sensitive and gender transformative programmes
- **IOM (2015).** Gender and Communications Toolkit
- **UNESCO (2012).** Gender-sensitive indicators for media: framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content

UK Government gender resources:

- **UK Government (Autumn 2019)** 'How To' Guidance Note on Gender Equality: A Practical Guide to Integrating Gender Equality into DFID and HMG Policy and Programming. DFID.

O - Objectives   **Set out what the communications intervention intends to achieve**

- When setting communications objectives, ask: 'Is the primary purpose of the intervention to promote gender equality?
  - If yes, then draft gender-specific communications objectives. **Example**: 'Increase the intention to set up a business by 10% for young women aged 15-25.'
  - If no, then draft communications objectives that are nonetheless gender-sensitive and take into account relevant gender differences such as varying levels of knowledge, needs or interests between women/girls and men/boys.
- Be specific when describing the target audience in terms of gender, age and other aspects of identity.

A - Audience insight   **Used to understand who the audience are and how they will reach a desired outcome**

- What messages do women, men, girls, boys and sexual and gender minorities (SGM) respond to and engage with, given their different interests, needs and priorities?
- What are the differences in how women and men consume and engage with media content and access information?
- What are the barriers and risks in reaching different women and men? Are specific groups of women or men harder to reach?

S - Strategy   **Uses the audience insight to set out the communications approach**

- What are the best channels/platforms to reach women/girls compared to men/boys?
- Do messages avoid sexist language and reinforcing gender stereotypes or harmful social norms?
- Do activities need to be added to mitigate gender-related risks? (e.g. moderation of online content to filter out harassment of women/girls)

I - Implementation   **The plan describing how you will deliver your communications and what tactics you will use**

- Are gender issues integrated into procurement documents and scoring criteria for bids?
- Does the implementing partner (IP) selected have the capacity to address gender issues in its strategic communications work?
- Does the IP have safeguarding policies and measures in place to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH)?

S - Scoring/Evaluation   **How you will monitor and evaluate the strategic communications intervention and capture learning**

- Is all data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant dimensions in order to measure differences between women/girls and men/boys and track gender-related trends? Are there indicators to measure the quantity and quality of women's participation?

Why does gender equality matter?

It's the right thing to do
Strategic communication interventions can contribute to greater gender equality by:
- challenging discriminatory atttitudes against women and girls;
- promoting positive behaviour change (e.g. encouraging more women to join the police;
- amplifying the voices of women and marginalised groups (e.g. in reform processses where voices might not be heard)

It's the smart thing to do
Strategic communication interventions that are gender-sensitive are more likely to be effective and meet their objectives. For instance, understanding which channels and platforms women use compared to men, and what their intentions and motivations are, will result in better audience reach.

It's our responsibility
Strategic communication interventions have to comply with the UK Government's policy and legal commitments on gender equality at the international and national level, including the International Development (Gender Equality) Act (2014).

Well-designed communications strategies that are gender-sensitive recognise that:

- **Target audiences are not homogenous.** Women, men, girls and boys consume and engage with information in different ways and face different barriers in accessing information (e.g. women may not have control over radio programme choices at home).
- **Ignoring gender inequalities can cause harm.** Strategic communications interventions that are not based on an understanding of the gender inequalities in a given context can reinforce gender stereotypes and harmful norms and may result in unintended, negative behaviour change.
- **Digital technologies do not benefit women and men equally.** There is a 'digital gender gap' with women/girls having worse access to the internet and other digital technologies.
- **Digital technologies facilitate new forms of online harassment and digital violence** (e.g. altering images on social media platforms to make them sexual in nature) that are being used to try and silence women and girls.
- **Disinformation campaigns and violent extremist propaganda by state and non-state actor**s use narratives on gender identity, gender equality and sexual orientation to polarise public debates, undermine social cohesion and/or spread fear or to recruit people to their cause.

How to promote gender equality in strategic communications

To promote gender equality, a twin-track approach is needed:

Strategic communications programming where the primary purpose is to promote gender equality.	▶▶ **Example:** A multi-channel communications campaign in Nigeria to promote alternative livelihoods for young women vulnerable to human trafficking for sexual exploitation.
Strategic communications programming where gender equality is not the primary purpose, but gender dimensions are mainstreamed into every aspect so that it is gender-sensitive.	▶▶ **Example:** A strategic communications programme that aims to improve the capabilities of an overseas government to explain reform processes to its citizens does not have gender equality as its main objective. However, its communications approach still needs to be designed in a gender-sensitive way (e.g. its target audience analysis needs to identify the different reform topics that women are interested in compared to men, and the best channels to use to reach women, men, girls and boys).

Gender-sensitive strategic communications using OASIS

To be effective, strategic communications interventions need to take gender differences into account throughout the programming cycle. Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS (page 33) provides an overview of how to design gender-sensitive strategic communications interventions. Tool 2 is based on the OASIS framework, used for campaign planning by the UK Government. Key points from Tool 2 are below:

O - Objectives
Objectives set out what the communications intervention intends to achieve

- When setting communications objectives, ask: 'Is the primary purpose of the intervention to promote gender equality?
  - If yes, then draft gender-specific communications objectives. Example: 'Increase the intention to set up a business by 10% for young women aged 15-25.'
  - If no, then draft communications objectives that are nonetheless gender-sensitive and take into account relevant gender differences such as varying levels of knowledge, needs or interests between women/girls and men/boys.
- Be specific when describing the target audience in terms of gender, age and other aspects of identity.

A - Audience insight
Audience insight is used to understand who the audience are and how they will reach a desired outcome

- What messages do women, men, girls, boys and sexual and gender minorities (SGM) respond to and engage with, given their different interests, needs and priorities?
- What are the differences in how women and men consume and engage with media content and access information?
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Strategy uses the audience insight to set out the communications approach

- What are the best channels/platforms to reach women/girls compared to men/boys?
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I - Implementation
Implementation is the plan describing how you will deliver your communications and what tactics you will use

- Are gender issues integrated into procurement documents and scoring criteria for bids?
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S - Scoring/Evaluation
Scoring/Evaluation is how you will monitor and evaluate the strategic communications intervention and capture learning

- Is all data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant dimensions in order to measure differences between women/girls and men/boys and track gender-related trends?
- Are there indicators to measure the quantity and quality of women's participation?

This is the executive summary of the 'How to Guide on Gender and Strategic Communication in Conflict and Stabilisation Contexts' (Jan 2020) Stabilisation Unit, Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit.

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Part 1

Why address gender equality?

Part 1 explains the importance of addressing gender equality in strategic communication interventions in conflict and stabilisation contexts and the pitfalls of ignoring gender differences and gender inequalities.

Why address gender equality in strategic communications?

It's the right thing to do.

Strategic communications interventions can contribute to greater gender equality by:

- **challenging discriminatory attitudes** against women and girls;

- **encouraging women and men to take on non-traditional roles and to adopt positive behaviour change** (e.g. encouraging more women to join the police);

- **amplifying the voices of women and marginalised groups** (e.g. in reform processes where their voices may not be heard).

It's the smart thing to do.

Strategic communications interventions that are gender-sensitive are more **likely to be effective and meet their objectives.** For instance, understanding which channels and platforms women use compared to men, and what their interests and motivations are, will result in better audience reach. Similarly, if the aim is to increase citizens' engagement in politics and governance, then understanding the issues that women are interested in compared to men will enable the selection of topics that resonate with and are relevant to all.

It's our responsibility.

The UK is bound by a wide range of **international and domestic policy commitments and human rights laws on gender equality**, spanning the UK's security, foreign policy, trade and development work (Box 2). These are all relevant to strategic communications work.

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Why address gender equality? | How can we address gender equality? | Unpacking gender equality and strategic communications | What are the pitfalls of ignoring gender inequalities?

Box 2. The UK Government's Gender Equality Commitments

UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Goal 5.B aims to 'Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women'.[7]

UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security recognises the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls and their central role in building peace. The UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2018-22) is the UK's highest-level strategy for implementing commitments under UN resolution 1325, bringing together the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

The **UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act (2014)** makes consideration of gender equality a legal requirement before the provision of any UK development and humanitarian funding.

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How can we address gender equality in strategic communications?

Mainstreaming gender into strategic communications programming means recognising the different experiences of women, men, girls and boys and inequalities between them, and taking that into account when analysing, designing, implementing as well as monitoring and evaluating strategic communications interventions.

The aim of gender mainstreaming into strategic communications is to promote gender equality and to avoid doing harm (e.g. by reinforcing gender discrimination). Working towards gender equality often (but not always) means working to improve the situation of women and girls, because they are disproportionately affected by gender discrimination.

Tip

Changing entrenched discriminatory attitudes and harmful social norms is complex work and takes time. You should combine strategic communications interventions seeking this type of gender transformative change with non-communications activities, as part of a wider project/programme.

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How can we address gender equality in strategic communications?

To meet the UK Government's obligations on gender equality, a twin-track approach is required.

Both types of strategic communications interventions are needed:

Strategic communications programming where the **primary purpose** is **to promote gender equality**.

Example: The UK Government Communication Service International has supported the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition in Trafficking to develop a multi-channel communications campaign. This campaign promotes alternative livelihoods for young women vulnerable to human trafficking for sexual exploitation in the Edo and Delta states.[8] Addressing young women's vulnerabilities to harm was the primary purpose of this campaign.

Strategic communications programming where **gender equality is not the primary purpose, but gender dimensions are mainstreamed** into every aspect so that it is gender-sensitive.

Example: A strategic communications intervention that aims to improve the capabilities of an overseas government to explain reform processes to its citizens does not have gender equality as its main objective. However, its communications approach still needs to be designed in a gender-sensitive way e.g. its target audience analysis needs to identify the different reform topics that women are interested in compared to men, and the best channels to use to reach women, men, girls and boys.

Unpacking gender equality and strategic communications

1 Strategic communications need to understand and reflect how conflict impacts differently on women and men

2 Target audiences are not homogenous

3 Digital technologies do not benefit women and men equally and facilitate new forms of gender-based violence

4 Narratives on gender can be manipulated to undermine social cohesion and fuel conflict

Click on the headings above to find out more

Tip

Strategic communications is about people. Gender issues are always relevant because how we feel, think and act are shaped by social norms and our different experiences as men and women.

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Why address gender equality? | How can we address gender equality? | **Unpacking gender equality and strategic communications** | What are the pitfalls of ignoring gender inequalities?

1	Strategic communications need to understand and reflect how conflict impacts differently on women and men

2	Target audiences are not homogenous

3	Digital technologies do not benefit women and men equally and facilitate new forms of gender-based violence

4	Narratives on gender can be manipulated to undermine social cohesion and fuel conflict

Conflict and instability impact differently on women/girls, men/boys and sexual and gender minorities (SGM), which **results in different experiences, needs and priorities.**

For example, during conflict, men and boys are more likely to be victims of forced recruitment and to die in battle, whereas women and girls are more likely to be victims of other forms of violence such as gender-based violence (GBV) and to die from indirect causes of conflict (e.g. poor maternal health care and poor nutrition). To be effective, strategic communications interventions need to reflect these different experiences and priorities, and amplify women's voices when they are not heard (**Box 3**).[10]

Times of conflict and instability also **create opportunities to address past discrimination** against women and girls and **to engage men and boys** in creating a more equal society. For instance, during conflict, women may take on decision-making roles in the household and the community, while male relatives are away. This creates opportunities for programming that challenges discriminatory attitudes about women's roles in society and that supports women to retain decision-making roles once peace returns. Strategic communications interventions can be an important part of this.

> **Box 3. Reflecting women and men's different priorities in media programming**
>
> Research in Afghanistan and several other contexts has found that women are more likely than men to adopt a broad definition of peace, which focuses on the attainment of individual rights and freedoms, such as frem from violence. In contrast, men have a greater tendency to associate peace with the absence of formal conflict and the stability of formal structures.[11] This has implications for strategic communications content and messaging. For example, the Afghanistan radio and TV debate programme Open Jirga ensured that it covered topics that women stated were of relevance when discussing peacebuilding. Female audience members mentioned having found discussions around child rights, violence against women, and cultural issues particularly engaging.[12]

Why address gender equality? | How can we address gender equality? | **Unpacking gender equality and strategic communications** | What are the pitfalls of ignoring gender inequalities?

1	Strategic communications need to understand and reflect how conflict impacts differently on women and men

2	**Target audiences are not homogenous**

3	Digital technologies do not benefit women and men equally and facilitate new forms of gender-based violence

4	Narratives on gender can be manipulated to undermine social cohesion and fuel conflict

When designing a communications strategy, strategic communications interventions need to recognise that target audiences are not homogenous: **women, men, girls and boys consume and engage with information in different ways** and face **different barriers in accessing** information (e.g. women may not have control over radio programme choices at home[14]) (**Box 4**).

These gender differences also intersect with other aspects of identity such as age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability and whether a person lives in an urban or rural area.

Box 4. Reaching different target audiences

Viamo use low-cost technology to provide public service information via mobile. In trying to reach rural women in Africa where there are high levels of illiteracy, they found that using voice instead of SMS resulted in participation rates that were two times higher for women and four times higher for rural populations. This is because voice messages could be recorded in local languages and did not require people to know how to read.[15]

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Why address gender equality? | How can we address gender equality? | **Unpacking gender equality and strategic communications** | What are the pitfalls of ignoring gender inequalities?

1 Strategic communications need to understand and reflect how conflict impacts differently on women and men	**2** Target audiences are not homogenous
3 Digital technologies do not benefit women and men equally and facilitate new forms of gender-based violence	**4** Narratives on gender can be manipulated to undermine social cohesion and fuel conflict

Evidence shows that there is a **'digital gender gap'** in how women/girls access and use digital technology compared to men/boys (e.g. globally women have less access to the internet).[16] New forms of **online harassment and digital violence** (e.g. through altering images on social media platforms to make them sexual in nature, cyber stalking and cyber bullying) **disproportionately affect women and girls**[17] and are **being used to try and silence them**.[18] This online harassment and abuse is often worse for women of colour, women from ethnic or religious minorities, women with disabilities and SGMs.[19]

Box 5. Definitions of SGM and GBV

Sexual and gender minorities (SGM): term for people whose sexual orientation, gender identity and/or sexual practices fall outside the socially accepted norms in a given society.[20] It does not primarily refer to a minority status by numbers, but "denotes the power imbalance that renders sexual and gender minorities invisible or apparently less worthy of inclusion."[21] The term is used in this guidance note instead of the commonly used umbrella term of LGBTIQ+ (and variations thereof), because the latter is recognised as a concept with roots in the Global North that is not necessarily inclusive of local understandings and terms used to describe sexual and gender minorities.

Gender-based violence (GBV):[22] an umbrella term for any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will, based on socially ascribed gender differences between males and females. Violence against women and girls is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.[23]

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To develop alternative and counter-narratives to **disinformation campaigns and violent extremist propaganda by state and non-state actors**, strategic communication interventions need to understand how **they use narratives on gender issues, gender policies and sexual orientation to polarise public debates, undermine social cohesion and/or spread fear**.

These gender narratives are often combined with narratives on religion, race or immigration to maximise the desired impact.

For example, across Central and Eastern Europe, violent extremist organisations use Cold War narratives of corrupt European states to increasingly develop and mobilise individuals around an '**anti-gender**' discourse, **which argues that gender equality is an anti-family, pro-gay and anti-life ideology**.[24]

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What are the pitfalls of ignoring gender inequalities?

Gender-blind strategic communications that ignores gender inequalities and gender differences makes programming less effective and is a missed opportunity to create a more equal society. However, it can also **cause harm** in several ways.

Click on the headings below to find out more

Threaten safety and wellbeing   Reinforce negative gender stereotypes   Result in unintended, negative behaviour change

Gender-blind strategic communications can **jeopardise the safety and well-being of individuals and expose them to social sanctions, abuse and threats.**

In socially-conservative contexts, SGM individuals who are featured in stories, or women in TV audiences who publicly challenge senior figures, may be slandered, threatened or attacked afterwards. Women and girls who engage in social media campaigns may face online abuse and threats. These risks can be mitigated, for example, by protecting the identity of SGM individuals featured in stories or moderating online platforms to filter out harassment and abuse targeted at women and girls.

When challenging traditional social norms and gender roles, there is also a **risk of a backlash**, which exposes individuals to social sanctions, abuse or physical attacks. This can be mitigated, for example, by working with women and girls to identify potential risks, and getting key leaders, men and boys to act as champions, publicly supporting new attitudes and modelling new behaviours.

Why address gender equality? | How can we address gender equality? | Unpacking gender equality and strategic communications | What are the pitfalls of ignoring gender inequalities?

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Click on the headings below to find out more

Threaten safety and wellbeing

Reinforce negative gender stereotypes

Result in unintended, negative behaviour change

Gender-blind strategic communications can **reinforce negative gender stereotypes.** Portraying women only as victims or only in relation to men, as mothers, wives, daughters or sisters, reinforces harmful stereotypes and removes women's agency.

For example, messages which emphasise the need to protect women from violence can play into ideas about women as the 'weaker sex' and inadvertently shore up support for violence against women and girls who do not play the 'weaker' role.[25]

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What are the pitfalls of ignoring gender inequalities?

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Click on the headings below to find out more

| Threaten safety and wellbeing | Reinforce negative gender stereotypes | **Result in unintended, negative behaviour change** |

Gender-blind strategic communications can result in **unintended, negative behaviour change.** For example, in Zimbabwe, a strategic communications intervention achieved the overall behaviour change of an increase in the use of modern contraception amongst the target audience. However, by not considering existing gender roles in its design, the project led to an increase in men making family planning decisions without their partners, thus further entrenching gender inequalities.[26] Conducting a gender analysis of the context is a key step towards mitigating this type of risk. It helps to understand the different roles of women and men in family planning decisions and the power dynamics in that community.

Gender-blind programming may also **inadvertently normalise harmful social norms and behaviour** unless developed with appropriate expertise. For example, in Nigeria, learning from the DFID-funded Voices for Change programme revealed that the portrayal of scenes of violence against women and girls on TV/radio (with the aim of raising awareness of violence against women and girls (VAWG)) corresponds with higher rates of VAWG, as it reinforces the idea that violence is common and acceptable[27] (see Quick-read guide: changing harmful social norms).

Part 2

Tools for gender mainstreaming

Part 2 provides several checklists, examples and case studies on how to mainstream gender into the analysis, design, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of strategic communications work. The key checklist is **Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS**, which provides an overview of how to design gender-sensitive strategic communications programming.

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Overview | Step 1: Analysis - Tool 1 | Step 2: Design - Tool 2 | Step 3: Implementation | Step 4: Monitoring, evaluation and learning

To be effective, strategic communications interventions need to take gender differences into account throughout the programming cycle:

- from the initial **analysis** of the context;
- to the **design** of the strategic communications intervention;
- throughout its **implementation**; and
- when **monitoring, evaluating and learning** from its results.

What happens at each step of the programming cycle?

Step 1 - Analysis
Analysis of the context, including gender-sensitive conflict analysis.

Step 2 - Design
Design/planning, ensuring compliance with the Gender Equality Act, drafting programme/project documents (including results frameworks with indicators) and commissioning additional gender-sensitive research and analysis.

🔑 **Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS**

Step 3 - Implementation
Direct implementation by UK Government departments or procuring an implementing partner, the inception and delivery phases, and reporting.

Step 4 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
Monitoring results (using results frameworks with indicators), evaluating impact and capturing learning.

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Overview | **Step 1: Analysis - Tool 1** | Step 2: Design - Tool 2 | Step 3: Implementation | Step 4: Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Step 1: Analysis - Tool 1

The first step when conducting strategic communications programming is to analyse the context and understand the underlying causes and drivers of conflict and/or instability. This analysis needs to be gender-sensitive.

Tool 1. Gender analysis questions for strategic communications is a checklist of questions to ensure that the context or conflict analysis is gender-sensitive and to understand how the media and government communicators engage with gender equality issues. This is a generic checklist. Users should decide which questions are relevant to their context and programmes.

Key activities at the analysis phase typically include:

- conducting a desk-based review of documentation available on the context, gender-sensitive conflict analysis or gender analysis of a thematic area;

- consulting with experts, including gender experts and women's rights organisations; and

- identifying gaps in evidence on gender issues or knowledge about the target audience, which may require commissioning additional research or target audience analysis at the design stage.

Box 6 provides an example of how to conduct gender-sensitive research on violent extremism.

Click on the printer for a print-friendly version of Tool 1. To print, click CTRL + P and print only page 31.

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Overview | **Step 1: Analysis - Tool 1** | Step 2: Design - Tool 2 | Step 3: Implementation | Step 4: Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Box 6. Example of gender-sensitive research[30]

"[UK Government] partners have been undertaking ongoing research to better understand how women participate in, and are affected by violent extremist organisations (VEOs) in areas controlled or coerced by VEOs and to provide programmatic recommendations. Their research includes an analysis of: existing literature on armed groups and gender in their programming context; the VEO's social activities in their target areas; and the VEO's approach to gender issues.

At community level, the [implementing partner (IP)] has used trusted research partners with access to and connections within their target communities, who were able to gain access to groups of men and hard-to-reach women to gather their insights. At community level, male and female researchers (often husband and wife, or brother and sister teams), trained by the IP in interviewing and facilitation techniques, carried out in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions with men and women (in sex segregated groups) in their target communities.

Local researchers helped to frame interview questions to get the information needed in a way that was both achievable and culturally sensitive (for example, women and men were never asked directly about their relationships with family members, or directly about the VEO). Asking the same questions to both men and women in relevant communities enabled the IP to see how responses could be gender biased (e.g. women detailed the active participation of other women in their communities in political or VEO activities, whereas men often said they were not active) and to assess any gender differences in attitudes towards the VEO's treatment of women.

The IP also regularly reviews how women and men respond online to [violent extremist] (VE) and [prevent and counter violent extremism] (P/CVE) content, why they respond that way, and what makes them engage with or disengage from online content.

This gender-sensitive research has given the IP detailed and nuanced information about the social context where the VEO operates and where men and women within the target audience live. It has also allowed them to more effectively reach men and women with counter-narrative based on their beliefs and lived experiences…".

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Tool 1. Gender analysis questions for strategic communications[28]

Click on the headings below to find out more

| **General (1)** | General (2) | Media landscape |

- How do the **underlying causes and drivers of conflict or instability** affect women/girls differently to men/boys?

- What are the main forms of **discrimination** that women/girls face compared to men/boys?

- Which forms of **gender-based violence** are targeted at women/girls (e.g. conflict-related sexual violence, child marriage) compared to men/boys (e.g. rape in police detention, forced recruitment into armed groups)?

- What are the different **interests, needs and priorities** of women/girls, men/boys as well as sexual and gender minorities (SGMs)?

- Have **gender experts and women's organisations been consulted** to help understand the interests, needs and priorities of women/girls?[29]

- Which issues affecting women/girls are considered **sensitive** (e.g. female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)) and which issues affecting men/boys are considered sensitive (e.g. male rape in detention)?

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Tool 1. Gender analysis questions for strategic communications

Click on the headings below to find out more

General (1) | **General (2)** | Media landscape

- What are the **risks** involved in communicating on sensitive gender issues?

- What are the traditional **gender roles** for women, men, girls and boys? Have non-traditional gender roles opened up for women/girls as a result of the conflict/instability?

- How do **social norms** shape how women, men, girls and boys think, feel and behave? Are these changing as a result of conflict or instability?

- How do **extremist propaganda and disinformation campaigns exploit the different grievances** of women/girls and men/boys?

- How are traditional **gender roles and social norms used in** violent extremist **propaganda** to gain support for their cause or in **disinformation campaigns** to erode trust in governments or undermine social cohesion?

- What **factors attract men/boys to engage in conflict** (e.g. money, ideology, social beliefs that 'being a combatant is manly') or to promote peace? How do these factors differ for women/girls?

- Which **traditional leaders, men/boys can be engaged as champions** to promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

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Tool 1. Gender analysis questions for strategic communications

✦ **Click on the headings below to find out more**

General (1)	General (2)	**Media landscape**

- To what extent does existing **media content and government communications address the different needs, interests and priorities** of women, men, girls, boys and SGMs?

- To what extent does the **media and government communications challenge discrimination** against women and girls, **gender stereotypes** (e.g. that women are inherently weak and in need of male protection) **and harmful social norms** (e.g. the belief that it is acceptable for husbands to beat their wives to 'discipline' them) and **avoid sexist language**?

- To what extent are **women represented in media organisations**, including in editorial positions?

- To what extent are the **government, media organisations and civil society supportive of promoting gender equality** in their communications work, and have the **knowledge and skills** to do so?

General

- How do the **underlying causes and drivers of conflict or instability** affect women/girls differently to men/boys?
- What are the main forms of **discrimination** that women/girls face compared to men/boys?
- Which forms of **gender-based violence** are targeted at women/girls (e.g. conflict-related sexual violence, child marriage) compared to men/boys (e.g. rape in police detention, forced recruitment into armed groups)?
- What are the different **interests, needs and priorities** of women/girls, men/boys as well as sexual and gender minorities (SGMs)?
- Have **gender experts and women's organisations been consulted** to help understand the interests, needs and priorities of women/girls?[29]
- Which issues affecting women/girls are considered **sensitive** (e.g. female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)) and which issues affecting men/boys are considered sensitive (e.g. male rape in detention)?
- What are the **risks** involved in communicating on sensitive gender issues?
- What are the traditional **gender roles** for women, men, girls and boys? Have non-traditional gender roles opened up for women/girls as a result of the conflict/instability?
- How do **social norms** shape how women, men, girls and boys think, feel and behave? Are these changing as a result of conflict or instability?
- How do **extremist propaganda and disinformation campaigns exploit the different grievances** of women/girls and men/boys?
- How are traditional **gender roles and social norms used in** violent extremist **propaganda** to gain support for their cause or in **disinformation campaigns** to erode trust in governments or undermine social cohesion?
- What **factors attract men/boys to engage in conflict** (e.g. money, ideology, social beliefs that 'being a combatant is manly') or to promote peace? How do these factors differ for women/girls?
- Which **traditional leaders, men/boys can be engaged as champions** to promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Media landscape

- To what extent does existing **media content and government communications address the different needs, interests and priorities** of women, men, girls, boys and SGMs?
- To what extent does the **media and government communications challenge discrimination** against women and girls, **gender stereotypes** (e.g. that women are inherently weak and in need of male protection) **and harmful social norms** (e.g. the belief that it's acceptable for husbands to beat their wives to discipline them) and **avoid sexist language**?

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Step 2: Design - Tool 2

The second step is to design the strategic communications intervention.

Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS is a checklist of questions to design all aspects of strategic communications programming. It can be used to design either a stand-alone strategic communications campaign, or strategic communications activities within a broader programme that contains non-communications activities.

Tool 2 is based on the OASIS framework used for campaign planning by the UK Government.[31]

Key activities at the analysis phase typically include:

• design/planning, ensuring compliance with the International Gender Equality Act (2014);

• drafting programme/project documents including results frameworks with gender-sensitive indicators; and

• commissioning additional gender-sensitive research where there are gaps in evidence, or commissioning gender-sensitive target audience analysis to better understand how women/girls consume and engage with information compared to men/boys.

The Gender Equality Act makes it mandatory to include a clear statement in the programme/project document confirming that the design has taken a proportionate and meaningful view on how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality (see DFID's Smart Rules).

Click on the printer for a print-friendly version of Tool 2. To print, click CTRL + P and print pages 40 and 41.

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Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS

⚡ **Click on the headings below to find out more**

| **O - Objectives** | **A** - Audience insight | **S** - Strategy | **I** - Implementation | **S** - Scoring / Evaluation |

Objectives set out what the communications intervention intends to achieve

- When setting communications objectives, ask: 'Is the **primary purpose** of the intervention to promote gender equality?
  - ◦ **If yes, then draft gender-specific communications objectives**. *Example*: 'Increase the intention to set up a business by 10% for young women aged 15-25'.

  - ◦ **If no, then draft communications objectives that are nonetheless gender-sensitive** and take into account any relevant gender differences such as varying levels of knowledge, needs or interests. *Example*: 'Increase awareness of the Government's economic reform plan from 20% to 30% among young men and from 10% to 30% among young women, aged 18-34 years.'

- When drafting communications objectives, **be specific about the target audience in terms of gender**, age and other relevant variables. *Example*: 'Increase of 20% of ~~people~~ **young women, aged 15-25, at risk of being trafficked** who apply for… livelihood opportunities.'

- **When commissioning research** to understand how the problem/issue/conflict/instability affects women, men, girls and boys differently **or when commissioning a target audience analysis, check that the statement of works is gender-sensitive** (see Box 7 for guidance on how to do this).

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Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS

Click on the headings below to find out more

| **O** - Objectives | **A - Audience insight** | **S** - Strategy | **I** - Implementation | **S** - Scoring / Evaluation |

Audience insight is used to understand who the audience are and how they will reach a desired outcome
(see Tool 1. Gender analysis questions for strategic communications)

When implementers conduct audience insight, check for the following:

Who is the audience?

- What **messages do women, men, girls, boys and sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) respond to and engage with**, given their **different interests, needs and priorities**?

- Have **gender experts or women's organisations been consulted** during message development?

- Do **social norms** that shape how women, men, girls and boys think, feel and behave **need to be challenged** to achieve the communications objectives? Is there a **risk of a backlash**?

- **Influencers**: who do women, men, girls and boys listen to and respect on different issues (e.g. online, within their communities)? Who don't they respect?

Click to continue reading about 'Audience insight' >

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✳ **Click on the headings below to find out more**

| **O** - Objectives | **A - Audience insight** | **S** - Strategy | **I** - Implementation | **S** - Scoring / Evaluation |

How do they consume media?

- What are the differences in how women, men, girls and boys **consume, engage with** different types of media, react to, create and share content, **and access** information? To what extent do other variables such as age, social class, rural/urban divide, disability, ethnicity, race, geographic location affect these patterns?

What are the barriers and risks?

- What **barriers** prevent women/girls from achieving the communications objectives compared to men/boys?
  Example: Women/girls may have difficulty accessing information compared to men/boys due to restrictions on their mobility or lack of internet access.

- To what extent are women/girls the targets of **online harassment** compared to men/boys? What forms does this take? Do online threats turn into direct physical threats offline?

- Are specific groups of women, men, girls or boys **harder to reach** (e.g. illiterate, rural women, women with disabilities, SGMs)?

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👆 **Click on the headings below to find out more**

| **O** - Objectives | **A** - Audience insight | **S - Strategy** | **I** - Implementation | **S** - Scoring / Evaluation |

Strategy uses the audience insight to set out the communications approach

When developing the communications approach, check for the following:

- Is a different **communications approach** needed for female compared to male audiences? How do age and other variables affect the communications approach? (see Box 8 for a case study on segmenting audiences by gender)

- What are the **best channels/platforms** to reach women/girls compared to men/boys, **taking into account differences in interests, needs, priorities and access** to information?

- Will messages and other communications materials be **tested with both women/girls and men/boys** (even when the content relates to only one gender), in order to identify any differences in reactions and engagement?
(see Quick-read guide: communications content development)

Click to continue reading about 'Strategy' >

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➤ **Click on the headings below to find out more**

| **O** - Objectives | **A** - Audience insight | **S - Strategy** | **I** - Implementation | **S** - Scoring / Evaluation |

- Do **messages avoid** using **sexist language** and reinforcing **gender stereotype**s or **harmful social norms**?

- Do activities need to be added to **mitigate gender-related risks**? *Example*: Provide moderation of online platforms by editorially-trained individuals, to filter out online harassment targeted at women/girls.

- Can **men/boys** be engaged as **champions** to advocate for gender equality and to mitigate the risk of a backlash when addressing sensitive gender issues?

- When mapping the **audience's journey**, have any differences between women, men, boys and girls throughout the journey been identified?[33] *Example*: When they engage (touchpoints) and stop engaging (drop-off) with online content may differ.

- Have **assumptions** about gender roles and social norms been identified? (see Box 9 for a case study on assumptions).

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Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS

⚡ Click on the headings below to find out more

| **O** - Objectives | **A** - Audience insight | **S** - Strategy | **I - Implementation** | **S** - Scoring / Evaluation |

Implementation is the plan describing how you will deliver your communications and what tactics you will use

When implementing a strategic communications intervention, check for the following:

- Are gender issues integrated into **procurement documents** (e.g. into all sections of the statements of works/agency bids) and scoring criteria? (see Box 10 for guidance and Box 11 for an example).

- Does the **implementing partner (IP) selected have the capacity to address gender issues** in its strategic communications work?

- Does the IP have **safeguarding policies and measures** in place to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH)? (see Box 10 for guidance)

- Do **IP reports** provide information on gender issues? (see Box 12 for guidance).

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Tool 2. Gender-sensitive design using OASIS

Click on the headings below to find out more

| **O** - Objectives | **A** - Audience insight | **S** - Strategy | **I** - Implementation | **S - Scoring / Evaluation** |

Scoring is how you monitor and evaluate the strategic communications intervention and capture learning
(see Box 13 for an example of a gender-sensitive results framework and Box 14 for guidance on gender-sensitive MEL activities)

To measure the success of the strategic communications intervention, check for the following:

- Are there indicators to:
    - measure the **quantity** of women's participation? *Example*: (reach) 'Number of young women aged 18-35 years who visited the project's website';

    - measure the **quality** of women's participation and engagement? *Example*: '% of women surveyed demonstrated an increased awareness of the campaign's messages';

    - track **specific gender issues/dimensions**? *Example*: 'Change in the proportion of the surveyed population who support a woman's right to vote (disaggregated by sex and age).'

- Is all **data disaggregated by sex**, age and other relevant dimensions to measure differences between women/girls and men/boys and track gender-related trends (e.g. on audience analysis, beneficiary feedback, digital analytics, polling and survey data)?

O - Objectives   Set out what the communications intervention intends to achieve

- When setting communications objectives, ask: 'Is the **primary purpose** of the intervention to promote gender equality?
  - **If yes, then draft gender-specific communications objectives.** *Example:* 'Increase the intention to set up a business by 10% for young women aged 15-25'.
  - **If no, then draft communications objectives that are** nonetheless **gender-sensitive** and take into account any relevant gender differences such as varying levels of knowledge, needs or interests. *Example:* 'Increase awareness of the Government's economic reform plan from 20% to 30% among young men and from 10% to 30% among young women, aged 18-34 years.'
- When drafting communications objectives, **be specific about the target audience in terms of gender**, age and other relevant variables. *Example:* 'Increase of 20% of ~~people~~ **young women, aged 15-25, at risk of being trafficked** who apply for…livelihood opportunities.'
- **When commissioning research** to understand how the problem/issue/conflict/instability affects women, men, girls and boys differently **or when commissioning a target audience analysis, check that the statement of works is gender-sensitive** (see **Box 7** (page 42) for guidance on how to do this).

A - Audience insight   Used to understand who the audience are and how they will reach a desired outcome (see **Tool 1. Gender analysis questions for strategic communications** (page 31)).

When implementers conduct audience insight, check for the following:
Who is the audience?
- What **messages do women, men, girls, boys and sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) respond to and engage with**, given their **different interests, needs and priorities**?
- Have **gender experts or women's organisations been consulted** during message development?
- Do **social norms** that shape how women, men, girls and boys think, feel and behave **need to be challenged** to achieve the communications objectives? Is there a **risk of a backlash**?
- **Influencers**: who do women, men, girls and boys listen to and respect on different issues (e.g. online, within their communities)? Who don't they respect?

How do they consume media?
- What are the differences in how women, men, girls and boys **consume, engage with** different types of media, react to, create and share content, **and access** information? To what extent do other variables such as age, social class, rural/urban divide, disability, ethnicity, race, geographic location affect these patterns?

What are the barriers and risks?
- What **barriers** prevent women/girls from achieving the communications objectives compared to men/boys? *Example*: Women/girls may have difficulty accessing information compared to men/boys due to restrictions on their mobility or lack of internet access.
- To what extent are women/girls the targets of **online harassment** compared to men/boys? What forms does this take? Do online threats turn into direct physical threats offline?
- Are specific groups of women, men, girls or boys **harder to reach**? (e.g. illiterate, rural women, women with disabilities, SGMs)

[32] Based on: UK Government (2015) *CSSF Guidance Note 4: Integrating Gender Issues into Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) Programming*; BBC Media Action. Editorial Team checklist for developing Gender Sensitive and Gender Transformative programmes. Source: UK Government (Autumn 2019) *'How To' Guidance Note on Gender Equality: A Practical Guide to Integrating Gender Equality into DFID and HMG Policy and Programming.* DFID.

This tool is part of the 'How to Guide on Gender and Strategic Communication in Conflict and Stabilisation Contexts' (Jan 2020) Stabilisation Unit, Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit.

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S - Strategy Uses the audience insight to set out the communications approach

When developing the communications approach, check for the following:

- Is a different **communications approach** needed for female compared to male audiences? How do age and other variables affect the communications approach? (see **Box 8** (page 43) for a case study on segmenting audiences by gender)
- What are the **best channels/platforms** to reach women/girls compared to men/boys, **taking into account differences in interests, needs, priorities and access** to information?
- Will messages and other communications materials be **tested with both women/girls and men/boys** (even when the content relates to only one gender), in order to identify any differences in reactions and engagement? (see **Quick-read guide: communications content development**) (page 87)
- Do **messages avoid** using **sexist language** and reinforcing **gender stereotypes** or **harmful social norms?**
- Do activities need to be added to **mitigate gender-related risks?** *Example:* Provide moderation of online platforms by editorially-trained individuals, to filter out online harassment targeted at women/girls.
- Can **men/boys** be engaged as **champions** to advocate for gender equality **and to mitigate the risk of a backlash** when addressing sensitive gender issues?
- When mapping the **audience's journey**, have any differences between women, men, boys and girls throughout the journey been identified?[33] *Example:* When they engage (touchpoints) and stop engaging (drop-off) with online content may differ.
- Have **assumptions** about gender roles and social norms been identified? (see **Box 9** (page 44) for a case study on assumptions).

I - Implementation The plan describing how you will deliver your communications and what tactics you will use

When implementing a strategic communications intervention, check for the following:

- Are gender issues integrated into **procurement documents** (e.g. into all sections of the statements of works/agency bids) and scoring criteria? (see **Box 10** (page 46) for guidance and **Box 11** (page 50) for an example)
- Does the **implementing partner (IP) selected have the capacity to address gender issues** in its strategic communications work?
- Does the IP have **safeguarding policies and measures** in place to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH)? (see **Box 10** (page 46) for guidance)
- Do **IP reports** provide information on gender issues? (see **Box 12** (page 51) for guidance)

S - Scoring/Evaluation How you will monitor and evaluate the strategic communications intervention and capture learning (see **Box 13** (page 52) for an example of a gender-sensitive results framework and **Box 14** (page 56) for guidance on gender-sensitive MEL activities)

To measure the success of the strategic communications intervention, check for the following:

- Are there indicators to:
- measure the **quantity** of women's participation? *Example:* (reach) 'Number of young women aged 18-35 years who visited the project's website';
- measure the **quality** of women's participation and engagement? *Example:* '% of women surveyed demonstrated an increased awareness of the campaign's messages';
- track **specific gender issues/dimensions?** *Example:* 'Change in the proportion of the surveyed population who support a woman's right to vote (disaggregated by sex and age).'
- Is all **data disaggregated by sex**, age and other relevant dimensions in order to measure differences between women/girls and men/boys and track gender-related trends (e.g. on audience analysis, beneficiary feedback, digital analytics, polling and survey data)?

[33] A "customer journey map" helps tell the story of your audience's experience from initial contact, through the process of engagement to how and where they will take desired actions.

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Box 7. Commissioning gender-sensitive research or target audience analysis

When commissioning research or target audience analysis, ensure that the statement of works is gender-sensitive.

For example, it should stipulate that:

- **Gender analysis** of the context/conflict or research topic/issue is conducted (see Tool 1 for guidance).

- **Data is disaggregated by sex** and other relevant dimensions, including data on audience analysis and audience feedback, in order to identify differences between women/girls and men/boys and gender-related trends.

- **Samples** for data collection and interviews ensure that women and men of different ages, ethnicities, socio-economic status etc. are well represented.

- **Data collection methods** enable women/girls and men/boys to express their experiences and views, and avoid doing harm (e.g. when interviewing survivors of GBV or sexual and gender minorities).

- The research team has **gender expertise.** All members have been trained on how to conduct gender-sensitive research and know the organisational policies on gender equality and safeguarding.

- The research organisation has safeguarding policies and measures in place to protect staff and research participants from **sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment** and to enable them to report it (see Enhanced Safeguarding Due Diligence Assessment).

- The **report produced** on the research/target audience analysis **includes a section on gender issues** that highlights significant gender differences and gender-related trends. These are also outlined in the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

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Box 8. Case study on segmenting audiences by gender[34]

The UK's Government Communication Services has supported the Government of Tunisia's strategic communications capability since 2015. A rapid review of this support from 2019 found that in order to get a more nuanced picture the target audience should not only be segmented by age, but also by gender and by rural/urban divide.

This would help to develop more effective campaign messages. For example, some aspects of the programme were often premised on generalisations, such as 'young men only care about employment opportunities' or macro-level data that was insufficient to grasp local dynamics. Youth disenchantment, for instance, was considered homogenous, whereas in reality, it is highly likely to vary from region to region, and between women and men.

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Box 9. Case study on assumptions about women's digital access and gender roles[35]

Ipas and IDEO.org teamed up to improve sexual and reproductive health services and information in Cox Bazar in Bangladesh, home to an estimated 745,000[36] Rohingya refugees fleeing violence and persecution in Myanmar. Their initial concept was to share sexual and reproductive health information directly with women or community health workers, via an app on a phone or tablet. There was no plan to target the women's husbands with any information.

While testing the concept in the camps, it became evident that they had made several false assumptions about women's access to digital technology and misunderstood gender roles in decision-making about family planning.

Three key problems were identified:

• few households had mobile phones, sim card purchases were restricted in the camps, and phones were generally used by the men in the households, not the women;
• most refugees struggled to read messages on a phone in Rohingya as the dialects differ from region to region, and most refugees are illiterate;
• women were unlikely to start using contraceptive pills without the support of their husbands: leaving men out of the conversation was counterproductive.

As a result of the testing phase, the app was scrapped and replaced with a boardgame about contraception, used to kick-start face-to-face discussions about family planning in the community, and then privately between husbands and wives.

The communications approach was designed in a way that respected the Rohingya's cultural preference for women and men to meet separately when discussing sensitive issues of this kind. Husbands learned about the benefits of family planning through an all-male group, and women learned about it through an all-female group. Community leaders, religious leaders and medical personnel facilitated the discussions in the all-male groups, because men were more likely to accept the messages when delivered by these credible and trusted sources.

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Step 3: Implementation

The third step is to implement the strategic communications intervention.

Key activities at the implementation phase include:

- direct implementation by UK Government departments or procuring an implementing partner (which involves drafting statements of work/agency briefs, assessing bids and selecting an implementer);
- the inception and delivery phases; and
- reporting.

Gender dimensions need to be mainstreamed into all of these activities.

Gender-sensitive procurement

Box 10 contains guidance on how to mainstream gender into an agency brief or statement of works to procure a campaign. These same tips can be used as gender-sensitive criteria when scoring bids.

Tip

Train panel members involved in scoring bids on how gender issues are relevant to strategic communications programming (using Part 1 of this guide) and what a gender-sensitive bid looks like (see Box 10).

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Box 10. Mainstreaming gender into a statement of works to procure a campaign

Click on the tabs to find out more

| Background information Communications objectives | Campaign strategy Deliverables/creative content | Implementation plan | Monitoring and evaluation. Schedule and deadlines. Qualifications for the implementing partner[32] |

Background information

- Describe **how gender issues are relevant** to the campaign.

- Provide **documents containing gender analysis** on the campaign issue, including any relevant **UK Government gender guidance**, to help the implementer/agency draft a bid that aligns strongly with UK Government requirements on gender equality.

Communications objectives

- If promoting gender equality is a primary purpose of the campaign, **draft gender-specific communications objectives**. If not, then **then draft communications objectives that are** nonetheless **gender-sensitive** and take into account any relevant gender differences such as varying levels of knowledge, needs or interests (see Tool 2 for examples).

- When drafting communications objectives, **be specific about the target audience in terms of gender**, age and other relevant variables (see Tool 2 for an example).

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Box 10. Mainstreaming gender into a statement of works to procure a campaign

✲ **Click on the tabs to find out more**

| Background information & Communications objectives | **Campaign strategy & Deliverables/creative content** | Implementation plan | Monitoring and evaluation. Schedule and deadlines. Qualifications for the implementing partner[32] |

Campaign strategy

Include requirements for the implementer/agency to:

- Outline the **best channels/platforms to reach women/girls** compared to men/boys, **taking into account differences in interests, needs, priorities and access** to information.
- Explain how messages and other communications materials will be **tested with both women/girls and men/boys** (even when the content relates to only one gender) to identify any differences in reactions and engagement.

Deliverables/creative content

- In the statement of works, highlight any **differences in how you want women/girls to think, feel and act compared to men/boys**. This will help agencies develop words or visuals that are relevant and compelling for all target audiences.

Include requirements for the implementer/agency to:

- Demonstrate how they will **develop messages in consultation with gender experts** and/or women's rights experts to address the different needs, interests and experiences of women/girls and men/boys.
- Disaggregate **data (e.g. digital analytics or audience insight) by sex**, age and other relevant variables.
- Provide **analysis of gender differences and gender-related trends**.

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Box 10. Mainstreaming gender into a statement of works to procure a campaign

Click on the tabs to find out more

| Background information & Communications objectives | Campaign strategy & Deliverables/creative content | Implementation plan | Monitoring and evaluation. Schedule and deadlines. Qualifications for the implementing partner[32] |

Implementation plan

Include requirements for the implementer/agency regarding:

- **Team composition**: Demonstrate that women are well-represented in research teams, creative teams and project teams, and that relevant gender expertise is included in these teams.

- **Budget**: Include costs for hiring gender expertise into the team, to reach hard-to-access groups of women, men, girls and boys and sexual and gender minorities (SGMs), or to build the internal capabilities of the implementing partners on gender issues.

- **Governance**: Demonstrate how women participate in decision-making (e.g. on management boards, on editorial boards).

- **Risk management**: Identify gender-related risks and how they will mitigate those (see Tool 2 for an example).

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Box 10. Mainstreaming gender into a statement of works to procure a campaign

Click on the tabs to find out more

Background information & Communications objectives

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Implementation plan

Monitoring and evaluation. Schedule and deadlines. Qualifications for the implementing partner[32]

Monitoring and evaluation
Include a requirement for the implementer/agency to propose **gender-sensitive indicators** to measure the effects of the campaign on women, men, boys and girls (see Tool 2 and Box 13 for guidance and examples).

Schedule and deadlines
Include a requirement for the implementer/agency to **allow for adequate time in the schedule to consult** on message development **with gender experts** and/or women's rights organisations, as well as **to engage hard-to-reach groups** such as illiterate, rural women.

Qualifications for the implementing partner
Include requirements for the implementing partner/contractor to:
• Demonstrate **prior experience of gender-sensitive programming**.
• List **organisational policies**, procedures, guidelines or a systematic approach to **gender-sensitive programming**.
• List **organisational policies on safeguarding** and measures to protect staff and beneficiaries from **sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment** (SEAH) and to enable them to report it (see Enhanced Safeguarding Due Diligence Assessment).

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| **Gender-sensitive procurement** | **Box 11** shows an example of good practice in gender mainstreaming into a procurement process for a campaign. |

Box 11. Case study of mainstreaming gender into procurement[38]

"The Counter-Daesh Communications Cell (CDCC) takes several steps to ensure gender sensitivity when they deliver communication campaigns.

First, CDCC ensures that gender issues, such as Daesh's use of female specific messaging and the role of female recruiters and recruits, are highlighted in the background information within statements of requirements (SoR).

Second, CDCC is explicit in their SoRs that:
- research into their target audience should look at both females and males vulnerable to the Daesh narrative;
- women should play an important part in the campaign narratives;
- the role of female stakeholders in the radicalisation/ recruitment process should be recognised and incorporated into the project and products;
- communications output should consider the drivers and factors unique to men/boys and women/girls;

- gender equity will be sought within the creative and project teams (CDCC itself has a diverse, gender-balanced workforce); and
- M&E frameworks contain data disaggregated by age and gender.

Third, when choosing an [implementing partner (IP)], CDCC reviews potential IPs on whether they will be sensitive to the gender dimensions of the project's objectives and design the project accordingly. Scoring criteria for their moderation board includes an assessment on:
- whether the role of women in the radicalisation and recruitment process is recognised and incorporated into the project and products;
- whether the audience for wider messages will cover men, women, girls and boys;
- whether outputs take into account the drivers and factors unique to both; and
- how the data will be disaggregated, ideally by age and gender.

This approach ensures that IPs take a gender-sensitive approach throughout the project cycle."

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Gender-sensitive reporting

Box 12 provides guidance on how to ensure that reporting on strategic communications programming is gender-sensitive. This guidance should be reflected in reporting formats provided to implementers.

Box 12. Three ways to achieve gender-sensitive reporting[39]

1. Ensure that all **data**, including on audience analysis, audience feedback and digital analytics, **is disaggregated by sex**, age and other relevant dimensions. This helps to identify and track differences between women/girls and men/boys (e.g. differences in perceptions) and gender-related trends (e.g. increased acceptance for women's participation in elections).

2. Highlight any gender issues and differences between women/girls and men/boys **throughout all sections of the report** (e.g. context, progress in achieving results, risks/challenges, staffing and financial issues, etc.). Where relevant, bring out specific issues relating to sexual and gender minorities (SGMs).

3. In addition, **include a separate section on gender equality** describing how the strategic communications intervention promotes gender equality. Questions to answer in this section include:

- Are women and men getting a **fair share of the benefits** of the strategic communications intervention at the activity, output, outcome and impact levels?

- Are there **barriers** that prevent women/girls and men/boys from participating, or risks that undermine the intervention's efforts to promote gender equality? How have these been addressed?

- Have female, male audiences and other **beneficiaries of the intervention been consulted** on what is working well or less well, and how they are benefiting from the programming?

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Step 4: Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) activities are undertaken while the strategic communications intervention is being implemented.
Tool 2 provides guidance on how to ensure that MEL activities are gender-sensitive.

To conduct MEL activities, it is necessary to have a gender-sensitive results framework in place that articulates the expected results for women, men, girls and boys, and how progress towards those results will be measured using indicators. **Box 13** provides an example of a gender-sensitive results framework and indicators for a strategic communications intervention.

Box 13. Example of a gender-sensitive results framework
This is a fictitious example of a strategic communications project aimed at reducing support for illegal migration in a specific region. The project is part of a broader programme of work aimed at meeting the UK's National Security Council objective of reducing illegal migration from the country to the UK. The project has two strands: a communications component (shown below) and a non-communications component aimed at providing alternatives to illegal migration such as livelihood support, educational grants and support to migrate legally to work in construction in the Gulf states (not shown here).

The project has conducted gender analysis and found that:
- most potential illegal migrants and refugees from this region are young men (18-25 years);
- along the migration routes, men and women face different, gender-specific risks (e.g. men are more likely to face the risk of kidnap for ransom and women are more likely to face the risk of sexual assault and human trafficking for sexual exploitation).

The project has three main types of communications activities:
1. one-on-one consultations with potential migrants (who are primarily young men) to inform them of the risks of illegal migration and existing legal alternatives available;
2. townhall events with men and women from communities in parts of the region worst affected by some of the drivers of illegal migration;
3. media campaigns to counter illegal migration using traditional and social media.

Click to see the communications component of this results framework >

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Box 13. Example of a gender-sensitive results framework: communications component

Gender-sensitive results	Gender-sensitive indicators	Comment
Impact (long-term change): Reduced support for illegal migration in region X, particularly among young men	Change in the percentage of surveyed community members who support illegal migration (disaggregated by sex and age)	This is a quantitative indicator that **measures change in perception.** It is disaggregated by sex (and age) **to understand any differences in perceptions between women and men.**
Outcome (changes to attitudes, knowledge, behaviour etc.): Increased awareness of the risks of illegal migration and of existing legal alternatives in region X, particularly among young men	Change in the number of young men applying for employment overseas through legal channels from region X	**Since most illegal migrants are young men, a gender-specific indicator focusing on young men** is useful to measure changes in behaviour in this target group, as a result of the project.
Output (the result of the activity on the target audience): 3,000 potential migrants, primarily young men, and 10,000 male and female community members are informed about the risks of illegal migration and existing legal alternatives		

✶ **Click on the tabs in the left column to find out more**

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Box 13. Example of a gender-sensitive results framework: communications component

Gender-sensitive results	Gender-sensitive indicators	Comment
Impact (long-term change): Reduced support for illegal migration in region X, particularly among young men	Percentage of potential migrants targeted under the project who recalled key messages on gender-specific risks three months afterwards (disaggregated by sex and age)	A quantitative indicator to measure **change in knowledge on a specific gender issue (i.e. gender-specific risks along migration routes)**. It is also disaggregated by sex (and age) to **understand if there are any differences in retention of messages by women compared to men**.
Outcome (changes to attitudes, knowledge, behaviour etc.): Increased awareness of the risks of illegal migration and of existing legal alternatives in region X, particularly among young men	Extent to which the community members who participated in townhall events reported disseminating information on gender-related risks of illegal migration to others	A **qualitative indicator** to measure the extent to which community members disseminated information on gender-related risks of illegal migration to relatives and others after the townhall events. The information will be **collected through separate focus group discussions with women and men** who attended townhall events in the past six months. To be representative, the sample needs to include women and men of different ages and backgrounds.
Output (the result of the activity on the target audience): 3,000 potential migrants, primarily young men, and 10,000 male and female community members are informed about the risks of illegal migration and existing legal alternatives		

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Box 13. Example of a gender-sensitive results framework: communications component

Gender-sensitive results	Gender-sensitive indicators	Comment
Impact (long-term change): Reduced support for illegal migration in region X, particularly among young men	Number of potential migrants who received a one-on-one consultation on illegal migration and legal alternatives (disaggregated by sex and age)	Disaggregating the indicator by sex (and age) allows measurement of the **quantity of women** reached through on-on-one consultations **compared to men**. Since it is mostly young men who migrate illegally from this region, the aim will be to reach more men than women through one-on-one consultations.
Outcome (changes to attitudes, knowledge, behaviour etc.): Increased awareness of the risks of illegal migration and of existing legal alternatives in region X, particularly among young men		
Output (the result of the activity on the target audience): 3,000 potential migrants, primarily young men, and 10,000 male and female community members are informed about the risks of illegal migration and existing legal alternatives	Whether the key messages disseminated at townhall events during the previous quarter included information on gender-specific risks along migration routes	This indicator measures the **quality** of messaging at town hall events **from a gender perspective**, i.e. whether the key messages are gender-sensitive because they included information on gender-specific risks along migration routes.

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Box 14 provides guidance on how to integrate gender issues into MEL activities such as:

- monitoring visits (e.g. attending a campaign event);
- mid-point and final evaluations;
- learning activities (e.g. Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) annual reviews, after-action reviews).

Box 14. Gender-sensitive MEL activities	
M - Monitoring	• Check the extent to which **women are represented** in the event as participants, contributors, panelists and speakers. • Check the **quality of women's participation** in the event: 'Are women given the opportunity to speak? Are they listened to?' • Obtain **feedback on the event from women as well as men**, and note any differences in their views.
E - Evaluation	• If promoting gender equality was not the primary purpose of the intervention, does the scope of the evaluation nonetheless still examine how it **benefited** women/girls compared to men/boys? • Do the **evaluation questions** explore gender dimensions? *Example:* 'Is the communications approach effective in reaching women as well as men?' (evaluation criteria: effectiveness • Do the **data collection methods** enable women and men to express their experiences and views? Have measures been taken to protect respondents and their data and to ensure confidentiality? (see Box 7 for additional tips on gender-sensitive research and research teams).
L - Learning	• Have gender issues been included into the terms of reference for **annual reviews** and other learning exercises such as case studies or after-action reviews?

Part 3

Part 3 provides four quick-read guides with dos and don'ts, examples as well as case studies on how to mainstream gender into different types of strategic communications work, such as:

- **countering disinformation;**
- **countering violent extremism;**
- **changing harmful social norms;**
- **communications content development.**

Click on the bulleted list to jump to a specific quick-read guide

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | Changing harmful social norms | Communications content development

3.1. Quick-read guide: gender and countering disinformation

Disinformation is the deliberate creation and dissemination of false and/or manipulated information that is intended to deceive and mislead audiences, either for the purposes of causing harm, or for political, personal or financial gain.[40] (**Box 15**)

At the time of writing, there is little published research on the gender dimensions of disinformation and what could be done to counter it. However, this quick-read guide provides an initial analysis of what 'gendered disinformation' looks like and some guidance on how to counter it using strategic communications interventions.

There is evidence that women and girls suffer disproportionately from online violence, including online abuse and harassment.[42] Online violence takes many forms and uses many means. These include, for example, doxing (e.g. publishing a woman's home address on the Internet with the insinuation that she is soliciting sex), sextortion (e.g. threatening to release intimate pictures of a woman in order to extort sex), trolling (e.g. posting messages that incite violence against women), cyber stalking, threats of violence, and cyber bullying as well as certain forms of disinformation (see below) and malinformation (e.g. an article revealing a person's sexual orientation even though it is not in the public interest to do so).

Box 15. Simply put: what is mis-, dis- and mal-information?[41]

- Mis-information is when false information is shared, but no harm is meant.
- Dis-information is when false information is knowingly shared to cause harm.
- Mal-information is when genuine information is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere.

Click on the icon for a print-friendly version of this quick-read guide. To print, click Ctrl+P and print only pages 65-68.

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | Changing harmful social norms | Communications content development

What does gendered disinformation look like?

Disinformation campaigns have targeted high-profile women, particularly politicians, journalists and women's rights activists, in an effort to discredit, intimidate and/or silence them.[43]

These campaigns have used tactics such as:
- **posting fake sexualised information, images and videos** that violate what is considered socially-acceptable behaviour for women or men (see Examples 1 and 2 below);
- **posting doctored images, videos, memes to discredit or ridicule;**[44]
- **using automation to further amplify their attacks.**

Example 1: A sexualised disinformation campaign targeting a female politician in Ukraine in 2017 aimed to discredit and humiliate her by posting fake sexualised tweets and doctored images claiming to show her naked[45] (**Box 16**).

Example 2: In the run up to the Georgian parliamentary elections in 2016, fake sex videos were circulated of several female politicians and one male politician. One of the videos alleged that the male politician was gay. In a socially-conservative country, where extra-marital sex is not tolerated for women, and where homophobia is common, these allegations were designed to discredit and intimidate.

Research shows that online harassment and abuse, which include certain forms of disinformation, have a 'chilling effect' on women who either stop posting their views online[47] or pause their online activity.[48] They also have a broader effect on women more generally, discouraging them from becoming politically active and being vocal about their opinions.[49] In countries where there are high penalties for violating social norms, online slurs can translate into physical attacks.

> **Box 16. Case study of sexualised disinformation**[46]
>
> Ukrainian MP Svitlana Zalishchuk gave a speech to the United Nations on the effect of her country's war with Russia on women, stating that, because of the conflict, Ukrainian women had shifted their focus "from equality to survival." A screenshot began appearing on posts about her speech showing a faked tweet claiming that she had promised to run naked through the streets of Kyiv if the Ukrainian army lost a key battle. To underline the point, the message was accompanied by doctored images purporting to show her totally naked. "It was all intended to discredit me as a personality, to devalue me and what I'm saying," says Zalishchuk.

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Disinformation campaigns use narratives on gender roles, gender equality and sexual orientation to polarise public debates, undermine social cohesion; and/or spread fear. These gender narratives are often combined with narratives on religion, race or immigration to maximise the desired impact. Five disinformation tactics are provided below.

| Tactic 1 | Tactics 2 - 5 |

Click on the tabs to find out more

Tactic 1: Disinformation campaigns **manipulate traditional stereotypes about women and men**, often promoting stereotypes of women as victims in need of male protection, but also occasionally showing women as breaking from traditional gender norms to become violent aggressors.

Women as victims. According to 'EU vs Disinfo', a common disinformation narrative spread by pro-Kremlin outlets is the 'Islamisation of Europe'. In this narrative, **women are portrayed as victims of Islamisation** ("they are forced to prostitute themselves for migrants, to wear hijabs or even to undergo genital mutilation"[50]) **and as victims of moral and social decay.**[51] Within extremist right-wing (XRW) organisations, the **notion of the threat of minority races and immigrants** (e.g. as rapists and victimisers) **to innocent white women** has been a potent mobiliser to garner support for their cause. The term 'rapeugee', for example, has been coined by XRW groups to paint refugees as preying on (specifically white) girls in people's neighbourhoods and to further claims that Islam is misogynistic and supports paedophilia,[52] thus, justifying violent assaults on minority and immigrant communities.

Women as aggressors. Fake news about female snipers from Poland arriving in Ukraine has been used to suggest that European Union members states pose a threat to their neighbours. Although it is difficult to state with certainty why this imagery was used, arguably it gains attention by challenging traditional stereotypes of women as peaceful. Moreover, it gains appeal by tapping into long-standing urban myths of Russian military folklore that describe women who are blond, Amazon-like, nationalistic biathletes turned anti-Russian mercenaries.[53]

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | Changing harmful social norms | Communications content development

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Tactic 1	**Tactics 2 - 5**

Click on the tabs to find out more

Tactic 2: Disinformation campaigns **create myths and lies about gender equality.** For example, across Central and Eastern Europe, violent extremist organisations (VEOs) use Cold War narratives of corrupt European states to increasingly develop and mobilise individuals around an **'anti-gender'** discourse, **which argues that gender equality is an anti-family, pro-gay and anti-life ideology.**[54]

Tactic 3: Disinformation campaigns **fabricate information and statistics on contentious gender issues.** For example, XRW VEOs have also distributed **disinformation about the extent of sexual violence perpetrated by immigrants** to recruit men and women to their cause.[55]

Tactic 4: Disinformation campaigns by non-state actors **on emotive women's rights issues make false links between issues and manipulate true statistics by removing contextual information.** For example, during the 2018 referendum on abortion in Ireland, a false link was made by the No campaign between abortion, depression and cancer. Moreover, statistics about Down syndrome and abortion were presented without nuance and context to drive people to false conclusions.[56]

Tactic 5: There is emerging evidence that foreign influence operations don't support one particular viewpoint. Instead, they **bolster both sides** of discussions about contentious gender equality or SGM issues **to polarise debates, often using digital bots or algorithms to amplify both sides.**[57] For example, foreign state actors have spread messages that championed women's right to equal pay while at the same time calling these systemic gender inequalities "a leftist falsehood".[58]

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How to counter gendered disinformation

| **Tips 1 & 2** | **Tips 3 - 5** | **Tips 6 - 10** |

Click on the tabs to find out more

1. Commission **research on the gender dimensions of disinformation to better understand** how gender roles, social norms and contentious gender issues are used in disinformation. Provide research data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant variables to understand gender differences and gender-related trends (see Box 7 on commissioning gender-sensitive research or target audience analysis)

2. **Identify gendered disinformation by asking:**

- Are **gender stereotypes, gender roles, social norms on contentious and emotive gender issues being used** as part of the disinformation campaign?

- What is the **purpose of this type of gendered disinformation** campaign? Is it meant to have a different effect on women compared to men (e.g. to silence female parliamentarians in particular)?

- What are the **different communications techniques being targeted at women compared to men? Which communications techniques are used** to polarise the debate on a specific gender issue (e.g. fabricated sexualised images of female politicians or bots used to bolster both sides on contentious gender issues)?

- How are the intention and the techniques combined to achieve an impact? **How does this impact differ for women and men** (e.g. to erode support for democratic institutions and to discourage women from participating in political life)?

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How to counter gendered disinformation

| Tips 1 & 2 | **Tips 3 - 5** | Tips 6 - 10 |

Click on the tabs to find out more

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3. When **countering gendered disinformation:**

- **Provide an alternative narrative on gender issues** in line with the UK Government's gender equality commitments.

- **Expose myths about UK policies on gender equality and correct false or misleading statistics on gender issues** (e.g. on sexual attacks on women by immigrants).

- **Highlight disparities and hypocrisies** between disinformation narratives on gender issues and reality.

- **Amplify credible women's voices** that counter disinformation and promote social cohesion.

4. **Discuss with implementers** whether they need **gender training** to better identify gender dimensions of disinformation and understand how to counter it. If so, **include the costs in budgets.**

5. Check that implementers have measures in place to **mitigate risks related to gendered disinformation. These can include:**

- offering **psychological support** to journalists and researchers who may suffer trauma after conducting investigations into disinformation on sexual violence;

- putting in place **additional security measures** to protect journalists and contributors involved in debunking disinformation on contentious gender issues;

- **protecting personal data** of female journalists, female contributors and SGM contributors.

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How to counter gendered disinformation

| **Tips 1 & 2** | **Tips 3 & 4** | **Tips 6 - 10** |

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6. Ensure that **programmes** which raise awareness on disinformation, build critical thinking skills, or build skills in digital literacy all **include content on gender dimensions of disinformation** and how to recognise it.

7. Support **broader programming aimed at reducing specific gender inequalities and grievances** that are exploited in gendered disinformation campaigns.

8. Support **broader programming aimed at stopping online harassment of women and girls** since disinformation is one form of online harassment (e.g. programming that urges young men to stop and question the potential consequences of re-posting content that harasses women and girls).

9. Support **civil society organisations** in conflict and stabilisation contexts involved in fighting gendered disinformation by providing psychological and other support to victims of gendered disinformation and online harassment and abuse, and by tackling the underlying gender inequalities and grievances that are exploited in gendered disinformation campaigns.

10. In conflict and stabilisation contexts, **facilitate attempts** by government actors, women's rights organisations, other civil society actors and high-profile women **to report gendered disinformation to social media platforms** so that they can remove it.

Further reading: Find examples of countering gendered disinformation on the websites of CODA Story, StopFake and EU vs Disinfo.

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This quick-read guide is part of the 'How to Guide on Gender and Strategic Communication in Conflict and Stabilisation Contexts' (Jan 2020) Stabilisation Unit, Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit.

Example 2: In the run up to the Georgian parliamentary elections in 2016, fake sex videos were circulated of several female politicians and one male politician. One of the videos alleged that the male politician was gay. In a socially-conservative country, where extra-marital sex is not tolerated for women, and where homophobia is common, these allegations were designed to discredit and intimidate.

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Disinformation campaigns use narratives on gender roles, gender equality and sexual orientation to:
- **polarise public debates;**
- **undermine social cohesion; and/or**
- **spread fear.**

These gender narratives are often combined with narratives on religion, race or immigration to maximise the desired impact. Five disinformation tactics are provided below.

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Women as victims. According to 'EU vs Disinfo', a common disinformation narrative spread by pro-Kremlin outlets is the 'Islamisation of Europe'. In this narrative, **women are portrayed as victims of Islamisation** ("they are forced to prostitute themselves for migrants, to wear hijabs or even to undergo genital mutilation"[50]) **and as victims of moral and social decay.**[51] Within extremist right-wing (XRW) organisations, the **notion of the threat of minority races and immigrants** (e.g. as rapists and victimisers) to **innocent white women** has been a potent mobiliser to garner support for their cause. The term 'rapeugee', for example, has been coined by XRW groups to paint refugees as preying on (specifically white) girls in people's neighbourhoods and to further claims that Islam is misogynistic and supports paedophilia[52], thus, justifying violent assaults on minority and immigrant communities.

Women as aggressors. Fake news about female snipers from Poland arriving in Ukraine has been used to suggest that European Union members states pose a threat to their neighbours. Although it is difficult to state with certainty why this imagery was used, arguably it gains attention by challenging traditional stereotypes of women as peaceful. Moreover, it gains appeal by tapping into long-standing urban myths of Russian military folklore that describe women who are blond, Amazon-like, nationalistic biathletes turned anti-Russian mercenaries.[53]

Tactic 2: Disinformation campaigns **create myths and lies about gender equality.** For example, across Central and Eastern Europe, violent extremist organisations (VEOs) use Cold War narratives of corrupt European states to increasingly develop and mobilise individuals around an **'anti-gender'** discourse, **which argues that gender equality is an anti-family, pro-gay and anti-life ideology.**[54]

Tactic 3: Disinformation campaigns **fabricate information and statistics on contentious gender issues.** For example, XRW VEOs have also distributed **disinformation about the extent of sexual violence perpetrated by immigrants** to recruit men and women to their cause.[55]

Tactic 4: Disinformation campaigns by non-state actors **on emotive women's rights issues make false links between issues and manipulate true statistics by removing contextual information.** For example, during the 2018 referendum on abortion in Ireland, a false link was made by the No campaign between abortion, depression and cancer. Moreover, statistics about Down syndrome and abortion were presented without nuance and context to drive people to false conclusions.[56]

Tactic 5: There is emerging evidence that foreign influence operations don't support one particular viewpoint. Instead, they **bolster both sides** of discussions about contentious gender equality or SGM issues **to polarise debates, often using digital bots or algorithms to amplify both sides.**[57] For example, foreign state actors have spread messages that championed women's right to equal pay while at the same time calling these systemic gender inequalities "a leftist falsehood".[58]

How to counter gendered disinformation

1. **Commission research on the gender dimensions of disinformation to better understand** how gender roles, social norms and contentious gender issues are used in disinformation. Provide research data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant variables to understand gender differences and gender-related trends (see **Box 7** (page 42) on commissioning gender-sensitive research or target audience analysis)

2. **Identify gendered disinformation by asking:**
   - Are **gender stereotypes, gender roles, social norms on contentious and emotive gender issues being used** as part of the disinformation campaign?
   - What is the **purpose of this type of gendered disinformation** campaign? Is it meant to have a different effect on women compared to men (e.g. to silence female parliamentarians in particular)?
   - What are the **different communications techniques being targeted at women compared to men? Which communications techniques are used** to polarise the debate **on a specific gender issue** (e.g. fabricated sexualised images of female politicians or bots used to bolster both sides on contentious gender issues)?
   - How are the intention and the techniques combined to achieve an impact? **How does this impact differ for women and men** (e.g. to erode support for democratic institutions and to discourage women from participating in political life)?

3. **When countering gendered disinformation:**
   - **Provide an alternative narrative on gender issues** in line with the UK Government's gender equality commitments.
   - **Expose myths about UK policies on gender equality and correct false or misleading statistics on gender issues** (e.g. on sexual attacks on women by immigrants).
   - **Highlight disparities and hypocrisies** between disinformation narratives on gender issues and reality.
   - **Amplify credible women's voices** that counter disinformation and promote social cohesion.

4. **Discuss with implementers** whether they need **gender training** to better identify gender dimensions of disinformation and understand how to counter it. If so, **include the costs in budgets.**

5. **Check** that implementers have measures in place to **mitigate risks related to gendered disinformation. These can include:**
   - offering psychological support to journalists and researchers who may suffer trauma after conducting investigations into disinformation on sexual violence;
   - putting in place additional security measures to protect journalists and contributors involved in debunking disinformation on contentious gender issues;
   - protecting personal data of female journalists, female contributors and SGM contributors.

6. Ensure that **programmes** which raise awareness on disinformation, build critical thinking skills, or build skills in digital literacy all **include content on gender dimensions of disinformation** and how to recognise it.

7. Support **broader programming aimed at reducing specific gender inequalities and grievances** that are exploited in gendered disinformation campaigns.

8. Support **broader programming aimed at stopping online harassment of women and girls** since disinformation is one form of online harassment (e.g. programming that urges young men to stop and question the potential consequences of re-posting content that harasses women and girls).

9. Support **civil society organisations** in conflict and stabilisation contexts involved in fighting gendered disinformation by providing psychological and other support to victims of gendered disinformation and online harassment and abuse, and by tackling the underlying gender inequalities and grievances that are exploited in gendered disinformation campaigns.

10. In conflict and stabilisation contexts, **facilitate attempts** by government actors, women's rights organisations, other civil society actors and high-profile women **to report gendered disinformation to social media platforms** so that they can remove it.

Further reading

Find examples of countering gendered disinformation on the websites of CODA Story, StopFake and EU vs Disinfo.

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[40] Source: UK Government Communication Service (2019) *RESIST: Counter-Disinformation Toolkit.* https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/resist-counter-disinformation-toolkit/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019].

[41] Source: Wardle, C. and Derakhshan, H. (September 2017). *Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking.* Council of Europe, October, 2017.

[42] See: Amnesty International (2019) *Twitter: a toxic place for women.* https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/03/online-violence-against-women-chapter-1/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019]

[43] Source: Bradshaw, S. (2018). *The Gender Dimensions of Foreign Influence Operations.* Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford.

[44] Example: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2019/may/24/real-v-fake-debunking-the-drunk-nancy-pelosi-footage-video

[45, 46] Source: Jankowicz, N. (2017, December 11). 'How Disinformation Became a New Threat to Women'. Coda Story. https://codastory.com/disinformation/how-disinformation-became-a-new-threat-to-women/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019].

[47] Amnesty International's online poll showed that across the 8 countries polled, 32% of women who experienced abuse or harassment online said they had stopped posting content that expressed their opinion on certain issues, including 31% of women in the UK and 35% of women in the USA.

[48] "In Indonesia (32%) and Kenya (40%), the most common response to online VAW-P [violence against women in politics] was to ignore the online violence. However, 20% of survey respondents in Kenya paused their social media activity in response." Source: NDI (2019) *Tweets That Chill: Analyzing Online Violence Against Women in Politics.* https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Tweets%20That%20Chill%20Report.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2019]

[49] Amnesty International (2019) *Twitter: a toxic place for women.* https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/03/online-violence-against-women-chapter-1/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019]; NDI, 2019. Tweets That Chill: Analyzing Online Violence Against Women in Politics.

[50, 51] EU vs Disinfo, Faces of Western Women (March 2019 https://euvsdisinfo.eu/faces-of-western-women/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019]

[52] RICU (2016) 'Far right narratives on UK Social Media'. RICUAR16/031, UK, cited in UK Government (2019). UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022 – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

[53] The presence of female snipers from the Baltic states has been something of an urban legend in Russian military folklore for several years, beginning as early as during the Russian occupation of Afghanistan in the early 1980s. Source: https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/a-unit-of-women-snipers-from-the-baltic-states-arrived-in-donbas/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019]; See also: Hodge, N. (25 September 2008) *'The Return of 'White Tights': Mythical Female Snipers Stalk Russians.* Wired. https://www.wired.com/2008/11/return-of-white/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019]; See also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Tights [Accessed on 25/10/2019]

[54, 55] Based on: UK Government (2019). *UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022 – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.*

[56] Redmond, B. (23 May 2018) *This is the deliberate disinformation being spread by Ireland's No campaign – and why it shouldn't be believed.* The Independent. https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/repeal-the-eighth-ireland-abortion-referendum-misinformation-yes-no-campaigns-a8363916.html [Accessed on 07/01/2020].

[57, 58] Source: Bradshaw, S. (2018) *The Gender Dimensions of Foreign Influence Operations.* Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford University.

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3.2. Quick-read guide: gender-sensitive counter-narratives on violent extremism

This quick-read guide provides an explanation of how gender issues can prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE), guidance on how to design gender-sensitive counter-narratives, and a case study of gender-sensitive P/CVE programming in Box 17. This guidance consists of excerpts from UK Government guidance on gender and P/CVE.[59]

Why does gender matter?

Violent extremism organisations (VEOs) have long recognised the importance of gender in: their communications and propaganda activities; their recruitment methods; how they manage their organisations and any territory they hold; andin how they plan and undertake operations.

VEOs also strategically target men, women, boys, girls and SGMs for gender-based violence (GBV) to aid their causes. They also use GBV perpetrated by government security forces and other relevant actors to mobilise support.

For example, in contexts where young men struggle to achieve manhood through traditional means (e.g. through a job or marriage), VEOs appeal to their sense of emasculation and offer men a way to reclaim their manhood through fighting. Similarly, VEOs have recruited women by appealing to notions of 'hyper-femininity'[60] (e.g. to mobilise them to protect their children and themselves) or by appealing to their aspirations of living a society where Muslim ideals, including those of feminine behaviour, can be realised.[61]

Click on the icon for a print-friendly version of this quick-read guide. To print, click Ctrl+P and print only pages 74-76.

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Why does gender matter?

To prevent and counter violent extremism effectively, it is therefore crucial that we also:

- recognise and respond to the ways that gender impacts on individuals' identities and agency;

- understand how this relates to their grievances, opportunities, resilience and vulnerabilities in contexts where VEOs operate; and

- become aware of the multitude of roles that women and men play in both violent extremism and P/CVE.

This will make our P/CVE work more effective and equitable, help us avoid harm and allows us to build long-term peace and security by promoting gender equality and women's human rights.

> *"CVE programming is implicitly gendered, but overtly gender blind."[62]*

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Box 17. Case study of gender-sensitive counter-narratives[63]

UK Government partners have taken several steps to ensure that their P/CVE counter-narratives work is gender-sensitive and that it addresses the concerns and vulnerabilities of different types of men and women in their target communities and audiences.

Following formative research…the implementing partner (IP) found that some of the women in their target audiences were not using their social media platforms due to: a lack of electricity and internet coverage, not having access to smartphones, and/or not feeling safe online to discuss pertinent issues without receiving online harassment and abuse (with the potential for this to become offline violence).

Reacting to these findings, the IP refined the way they covered gender issues online that some may consider taboo (e.g. women's empowerment, sexual violence by VEOs). They set up **a closed conversation for women on their social media platform**, making it a highly curated, women-only, online safe-space. Through snowball targeting (where participants are encouraged to invite other women from their peer group or family) over 3,500 women now use this online space to regularly and openly discuss the issues they find most relevant. These include: women in Islam, GBV, domestic violence and the gender agenda of VEOs. The platform also enables women to go through learning modules and facilitated discussions on P/CVE issues.

To ensure the project reaches the most vulnerable women and men, the IP has also established women and men's groups, trainings, 'social cafes' and workshops in hard-to-reach locations. In these settings, expert facilitators hold community conversations around relevant issues such as men's roles/masculinities in their post-war context and psychological trauma. They also hold conversations on how vulnerable women can get involved in small scale early recovery projects in their community to increase their feelings of inclusion, belonging and, ultimately, their resilience to VE.

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Six ways to design gender-sensitive messaging on P/CVE

Ways 1 - 3   **Ways 4 - 6**   ✳ **Click on the tabs to find out more**

1. **Recognise the gendered narratives of VEOs and respond with an alternative or counter narrative about gender.** Seek to understand how VEOs tap into women and men's gender identities and roles as part of their propaganda and recruitment strategies (see Part 1:Why address gender inequality for examples).

2. **Challenge myths about gender** as part of your alternative and counter-narratives work to **help promote universal values and gender equality. VEOs often promote myths and disinformation about GBV, what gender equality means and the negative effects of gender equality programming**, with far-reaching implications. For example, across Central and Eastern Europe, XRW VEOs use Cold War ideologies of corrupt European states to increasingly develop and mobilise individuals around an 'anti-gender' discourse, which argues that gender equality is an anti-family, pro-gay and anti-life ideology.

3. **Highlight disparities and hypocrisies between VEOs narratives and reality** to help reduce the credibility of and debunk VEO narratives **on gender.** Different men and women within VEOs sometimes share their societal and social norms, but may also deviate from them. VEOs often fail to fulfil the promises they make to communities around gender issues (e.g. protecting women from GBV, women making a significant contribution to their communities, or men gaining honour and glory due to their VE activities) leaving male and female recruits feeling disillusioned. Women who produce and disseminate VEO propaganda about the need for rigid, traditional gender roles and women's confinement to the private sphere also don't always uphold these roles themselves.

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Six ways to design gender-sensitive messaging on P/CVE

| Ways 1 - 3 | **Ways 4 - 6** | ☼ **Click on the tabs to find out more** |

4. **Recognise the importance of women in disseminating VEO propaganda and ideology.** This includes recruiting other women and encouraging men to join VEOs. Strategic communications programming can **respond to this by tapping into peer networks to promote and support men and women who spread messages of peace and tolerance.** Young men and women in particular may have specialist knowledge of the communications/media/social media environment and be best placed to engage effectively with P/CVE initiatives operating in this space.

5. **Give a voice to women** in alternative and counter-narrative work. This includes identifying potential risks as well as the opportunity to design key messages and assess their likely effectiveness. Strategic communications interventions can also help **amplify credible women's voices** that promote peace, tolerance and non-violent community activism.

6. **Avoid messaging that promotes or strengthens harmful gender norms and stereotypes**
(see Quick-read guide: changing harmful social norms and Quick-read guide: communications content development).

For further recommendations on gender-sensitive P/CVE programme design, including guidance on how to promote the participation and leadership of women in developing P/CVE strategies, see the UK Government's guidance on gender and P/CVE.[64]

This quick-read guide provides an explanation of how gender issues can prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE), guidance on how to design gender-sensitive counter-narratives, and a case study of gender-sensitive P/CVE programming in **Box 17.**

This guidance consists of excerpts from UK Government guidance on gender and P/CVE.[59]

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Violent extremism organisations (VEOs) have long recognised the importance of gender in:

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- how they manage their organisations and any territory they hold; and
- in how they plan and undertake operations.

VEOs also strategically target men, women, boys, girls and SGMs for gender-based violence (GBV) to aid their causes. They also use GBV perpetrated by government security forces and other relevant actors to mobilise support.

For example, in contexts where young men struggle to achieve manhood through traditional means (e.g. through a job or marriage), VEOs appeal to their sense of emasculation and offer men a way to reclaim their manhood through fighting.

Similarly, VEOs have recruited women by appealing to notions of 'hyper-femininity'[60] (e.g. to mobilise them to protect their children and themselves) or by appealing to their aspirations of living a society where Muslim ideals, including those of feminine behaviour, can be realised.

To prevent and counter violent extremism effectively, it is therefore crucial that we also:

- recognise and respond to the ways that gender impacts on individuals' identities and agency;
- understand how this relates to their grievances, opportunities, resilience and vulnerabilities in contexts where VEOs operate; and
- become aware of the multitude of roles that women and men play in both violent extremism and P/CVE.

This will make our P/CVE work more effective and equitable, help us avoid harm and allows us to build long-term peace and security by promoting gender equality and women's human rights.

"CVE programming is implicitly gendered, but overtly gender blind."[62]

This quick-read guide is part of the 'How to Guide on Gender and Strategic Communication In Conflict and Stabilisation Contexts' (Jan 2020) Stabilisation Unit, Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit.

Box 17. Case study of gender-sensitive counter-narratives[63]

UK Government partners have taken a number of steps to ensure that their P/CVE counter-narratives work is gender-sensitive; and that it addresses the specific concerns and vulnerabilities of different types of men and women in their target communities and audiences. Following formative research… the implementing partner (IP) found that some of the women in their target audiences were not using their social media platforms due to a lack of electricity and internet coverage; not having access to smartphones; and/or not feeling safe online to discuss pertinent issues without receiving online harassment and abuse (with the potential for this to become offline violence).

Reacting to these findings, the IP refined the way they covered gender issues online that some may consider taboo (e.g. women's empowerment, sexual violence by VEOs). They set up a closed conversation for women on their social media platform, making it a women-only, online safe-space that was highly curated. Through using snowball targeting (where participants are encouraged to invite other women from their peer group or family), over 3,500 women now use this online space to regularly and openly discuss the issues they find most relevant, such as women in Islam, GBV, domestic violence and the gender agenda of VEOs. The platform also enables women to go through learning modules and facilitated discussions on P/CVE issues.

To ensure the project reaches the most vulnerable women and men, the IP has also established women and men's groups, trainings, social 'cafes'; and workshops offline in hard-to-reach locations. In these settings, expert facilitators hold community conversations around relevant issues such as men's roles/masculinities in their post-war context; psychological trauma; and how vulnerable women can get involved in small scale early recovery projects in their community that increase their feelings of inclusion and belonging; and ultimately resilience to VE.

Six ways to design gender-sensitive messaging on P/CVE

1. **Recognise the gendered narratives of VEOs and respond with an alternative or counter narrative about gender.** Seek to understand how VEOs tap into women and men's gender identities and roles as part of their propaganda and recruitment strategies (see **Part I**, section 1.1. for examples).

2. **Challenge myths about gender** as part of your alternative and counter-narratives work **to help promote universal values and gender equality. VEOs often promote myths and disinformation about GBV, what gender equality means and the negative effects of gender equality programming**, with far-reaching implications. For example, across Central and Eastern Europe, XRW VEOs use Cold War ideologies of corrupt European states to increasingly develop and mobilise individuals around an 'anti-gender' discourse, which argues that gender equality is an anti-family, pro-gay and anti-life ideology.

3. **Highlight disparities and hypocrisies between VEOs narratives and reality** to help reduce the credibility of and debunk VEO narratives **on gender.** Different men and women within VEOs sometimes share their societal and social norms, but may also deviate from them. VEOs often fail to fulfil the promises they make to communities around gender issues (e.g. protecting women from GBV, women making a significant contribution to their communities, or men gaining honour and glory due to their VE activities) leaving male and female recruits feeling disillusioned. Women who produce and disseminate VEO propaganda about the need for rigid, traditional gender roles and women's confinement to the private sphere also don't always uphold these roles themselves.

Six ways to design gender-sensitive messaging on P/CVE

4.   **Recognise the importance of women in disseminating VEO propaganda and ideology.** This includes recruiting other women and encouraging men to join VEOs. Strategic communications programming can **respond to this by tapping into peer networks to promote and support men and women who spread messages of peace and tolerance.** Young men and women in particular may have specialist knowledge of the communications/media/social media environment and be best placed to engage effectively with P/CVE initiatives operating in this space.

5.   **Give a voice to women** in alternative and counter-narrative work. This includes identifying potential risks as well as the opportunity to design key messages and assess their likely effectiveness. Strategic communications interventions can also help **amplify credible women's voices** that promote peace, tolerance and non-violent community activism.

6.   Avoid messaging that promotes or strengthens harmful gender norms and stereotypes (see **Quick-read guide: changing harmful social norms** (page 77) and **Quick-read guide: communications content development** (page 87)).

See the UK Government's guidance on gender and P/CVE for further recommendations on gender-sensitive P/CVE programme design, including guidance on how to promote the participation and leadership of women in developing P/CVE strategies.[64]

[59] Edited text taken from: UK Government (2019). *UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022 – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.*
[60] United States Institute for Peace (2015), op.cit
[61] For more analysis on gender roles and violent extremist groups, see Ladbury, S. (2015) *Women and Extremism: the Association of Women and Girls with Jihadi Groups and Implications for Programming.* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0897fed915d622c000245/61578_Women-Extremism-Full-Report.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2019]
[62] Satterthwaite, M (2014), 'Missing indicators, disappearing gender: Measuring USAID's programming to counter violent extremism'; in Satterthwaite and Huckerby (Eds), (2014), op.cit, p.82.
[63] Based on: UK Government (2019). *UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022 – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.*
[64] UK Government (2019). *UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022 – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.*

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3.3. Quick-read guide: strategic communications to change harmful social norms

This quick-read guide provides guidance on designing strategic communications programming in conflict and stabilisation contexts aimed at changing harmful social norms such as attitudes and behaviours that condone gender-based violence (GBV), restrict women's participation in political life, discriminate against sexual and gender minorities (SGMs), or sanction men who depart from traditional gender roles. This type of work is highly sensitive and requires specialist support from experts who have an in-depth understanding of social norms programming and of the country context.

Box 18. What is a social norm?[65]

A social norm is a rule of behaviour that people in a group conform to because they believe it is:

a) typical behaviour (i.e. most other people in the group conform to it) and
b) appropriate behaviour (i.e. most other people in the group believe they ought to conform to it).

Click on the icon for a print-friendly version of this quick-read guide. To print, click Ctrl+P and print only pages 84-86.

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Dos and don'ts on using strategic communications to change harmful social norms

Click on the tabs to find out more

Dos: Getting started | **Dos: Designing the approach** | **Dos: Mitigating risks** | **Don'ts**

1. **Do recognise that changing harmful social norms takes time.** When funding cycles are short (e.g. 1-2 years), **be realistic about what type of change can be achieved** and **decide whether programming on social norms is appropriate** in that context.

2. **Do conduct gender analysis** to understand how social norms affect women and men differently in that specific conflict or stabilisation context and how to change them (see **Tool 1** for guidance).

3. **When changing social norms about GBV, do** design an integrated, multi-sectoral programme that **combines communications with non-communications activities**[66] (e.g. support for GBV survivors, support to community activists, training police on handling GBV complaints). Since the causes of GBV are multi-faceted, an integrated and multi-sectoral programme is likely to be more effective in achieving long-term change.

4. **Do ensure that services for GBV survivors are available before undertaking any work to change social norms about GBV.** For instance, series 4 of the radio-drama 'Soul City' in South Africa focused on GBV and promoted a hotline that referred callers directly to service providers to encourage help-seeking behaviour. In many locations, services for GBV survivors are likely to be limited or dysfunctional. Assess availability before undertaking this type of social norms work.

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5. **Do combine media and other communications interventions with face-to-face engagement.** For example, the 'Change Starts at Home' programme, aimed at tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Nepal, consisted of a 9-month weekly radio drama. The programme combined online listener engagement (using IVR/SMS) with face-to-face engagement (e.g. listening and discussion groups), awareness-raising, street theatre and training with religious and community leaders.[67]

6. **Do combine activities that empower women with** activities that **engage the whole community** in changing social norms, including leaders, men and boys. This increases buy-in to changing social norms and reduces the risk of a backlash against women and men who chose to reject harmful social norms.

7. **Do promote public debate and deliberation around harmful social norms.** This can be done through community workshops, group discussions, 'edutainment' (educational entertainment), radio call-in shows, social media and mobile technologies.

8. **Do promote a positive alternative gender norm** (e.g. non-violent conflict resolution, consensual sex, community intervention in domestic violence rather than silence). In fact, it may be easier to start a new norm than tackle an existing one.

Read more dos on designing the approach >

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Dos and don'ts on using strategic communications to change harmful social norms

Click on the tabs to find out more

| Dos: Getting started | **Dos: Designing the approach** | Dos: Mitigating risks | Don'ts |

9. **Do weaken support for existing harmful social norms** by:

a. Addressing incorrect factual beliefs (e.g. sex with a young girl can cure HIV).

b. Providing examples of the harm it causes (e.g. the harm caused by early marriage or pregnancy on the mother and child's health).

c. Raising awareness of contradictions with other norms (e.g. religious teachings regarding mutual respect and love between couples).

d. Reframing an issue so participants see it in a new way (e.g. framing gender inequality in terms of how power is distributed).

e. Highlighting how prevalent rejection of the harmful norm is within the target audience (e.g. 'Most Wolof men are against domestic abuse under any circumstances').

f. Highlighting the direction of change within the target audience (e.g. 'More and more Afghan men are encouraging their wives to vote – are you?').

10. **Do provide opportunities for public and collective change** (e.g. public pledges such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) abandonment ceremonies). But don't do this too soon! This works best when there is already private support to prevent VAWG and where sanctions to do so are not too high.

Read more dos on designing the approach >

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Dos and don'ts on using strategic communications to change harmful social norms

Click on the tabs to find out more

Dos: Getting started   **Dos: Designing the approach**   Dos: Mitigating risks   Don'ts

11. **Do publicise role models and the benefits of the new behaviour.** Role models may be community leaders, religious figures or celebrities such as music or sports stars, but they may also be other boys, girls or adults who challenge particular norms, or who have done so in the past and can be seen as living proof that new norms can lead to positive outcomes.

12. **Do provide opportunities for women and men to put new norms and behaviours into practice.** In countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is common for the male head of the household to select the candidate that the entire family will vote for, thus denying women the chance to express their own preferences (this is known as 'family voting'). In such contexts, civil society and other organisations often conduct voter education campaigns targeting men about women's rights to vote. These campaigns are timed to take place in the lead up to the elections, thereby giving men the opportunity to put new behaviours into practice straight after the campaign.

13. **Do create new rewards and social sanctions to sustain the change.** For instance, rewards could take the form of self-esteem and a sense of belonging to a group of early adopters of the new gender norm, endorsed by inspirational role models and influencers.

Executive summary | Part 1: Why address gender equality? | Part 2: Tools | **Part 3: Quick-read guides**

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | **Changing harmful social norms** | Communications content development

Dos and don'ts on using strategic communications to change harmful social norms

Click on the tabs to find out more

Dos: Getting started   **Dos: Designing the approach**   **Dos: Mitigating risks**   **Don'ts**

14. **Do protect the physical safety and emotional and psychological well-being of** programme participants, the audience and your team **when covering highly emotive or sensitive content on harmful social norms.** For example, protect the anonymity of participants in the programme, issue a warning to the audience before the start of the programme that it contains upsetting content, and keep information and data about the programme secure.

Executive summary | Part 1: Why address gender equality? | Part 2: Tools | **Part 3: Quick-read guides**

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | **Changing harmful social norms** | Communications content development

Dos and don'ts on using strategic communications to change harmful social norms

Click on the tabs to find out more

| Dos: Getting started | Dos: Designing the approach | Dos: Mitigating risks | **Don'ts** |

1. **Don't reinforce harmful social norms by highlighting or publicising the negative behaviour** (e.g. billboards with the message "Rape is a problem in Kinshasa" can perpetuate the notion that it is normal).

2. **When challenging harmful social norms, don't inadvertently reinforce other harmful norms or reinforce sexist stereotypes** (e.g. messages which emphasise the need to protect women from violence can play into ideas about women as the 'weaker sex' and inadvertently shore up support for violence against women and girls who do not play the 'weaker' role).

Sources used for this quick-read guide and suggested further reading:

- Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). London: VAWG Helpdesk
- BBC Media Action (December 2016). BBC Media Action Approach: preventing violence against women and girls
- Dr Erika Fraser and Caroline Enye (31 January 2019). VAWG Helpdesk Report 224: Effectiveness of Digital Platforms to Reduce VAW

This quick-read guide provides guidance on designing strategic communications programming in conflict and stabilisation contexts aimed at changing harmful social norms such as attitudes and behaviours that condone gender-based violence (GBV), restrict women's participation in political life, discriminate against sexual and gender minorities (SGMs), or sanction men who depart from traditional gender roles. This type of work is highly sensitive and requires specialist support from experts who have an in-depth understanding of social norms programming and of the country context.

Box 18. What is a social norm?[65]

A social norm is a rule of behaviour that people in a group conform to because they believe it is:
a) typical behaviour (i.e. most other people in the group conform to it) and
b) appropriate behaviour (i.e. most other people in the group believe they ought to conform to it).

Dos and don'ts on using strategic communications to change harmful social norms

Dos
Getting started

1. **Do recognise that changing harmful social norms takes time.** When funding cycles are short (e.g. 1-2 years), **be realistic about what type of change can be achieved** and **decide whether programming on social norms is appropriate** in that context.

2. **Do conduct gender analysis** to understand how social norms affect women and men differently in that specific conflict or stabilisation context and how to change them (see **Tool 1** (page 31) for guidance).

3. **When changing social norms about GBV, do** design an integrated, multi-sectoral programme that **combines communications with non-communications activities**[66] (e.g. support for GBV survivors, support to community activists, training police on handling GBV complaints). Since the causes of GBV are multi-faceted, an integrated and multi-sectoral programme is likely to be more effective in achieving long-term change.

4. **Do ensure that services for GBV survivors are available before undertaking any work to change social norms about GBV.** For instance, series 4 of the radio-drama 'Soul City' in South Africa focused on GBV and promoted a hotline that referred callers directly to service providers to encourage help-seeking behaviour. In many locations, services for GBV survivors are likely to be limited or dysfunctional. Assess availability before undertaking this type of social norms work.

Designing the approach

5. **Do combine media and other communications interventions with face-to-face engagement.**
For example, the 'Change Starts at Home' programme, aimed at tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Nepal, consisted of a 9-month weekly radio drama. The programme combined online listener engagement (using IVR/SMS) with face-to-face engagement (e.g. listening and discussion groups), awareness-raising, street theatre and training with religious and community leaders.[67]

6. **Do combine activities that empower women** with activities that **engage the whole community** in changing social norms, including leaders, men and boys. This increases buy-in to changing social norms and reduces the risk of a backlash against women and men who chose to reject harmful social norms.

This quick-read guide is part of the 'How to Guide on Gender and Strategic Communication in Conflict and Stabilisation Contexts' (Jan 2020) Stabilisation Unit, Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit.

7. **Do weaken support for existing harmful social norms** by:
   a. Addressing incorrect factual beliefs (e.g. sex with a young girl can cure HIV).
   b. Providing examples of the harm it causes (e.g. the harm caused by early marriage or pregnancy on the mother and child's health).
   c. Raising awareness of contradictions with other norms (e.g. religious teachings regarding mutual respect and love between couples).
   d. Reframing an issue so participants see it in a new way (e.g. framing gender inequality in terms of how power is distributed).
   e. Highlighting how prevalent rejection of the harmful norm is within the target audience (e.g. 'Most Wolof men are against domestic abuse under any circumstances').
   f. Highlighting the direction of change within the target audience (e.g. 'More and more Afghan men are encouraging their wives to vote – are you?').

8. **Do promote public debate and deliberation around harmful social norms.** This can be done through community workshops, group discussions, 'edutainment' (educational entertainment), radio call-in shows, social media and mobile technologies.

9. **Do promote a positive alternative gender norm** (e.g. non-violent conflict resolution, consensual sex, community intervention in domestic violence rather than silence). In fact, it may be easier to start a new norm than tackle an existing one.

10. **Do provide opportunities for public and collective change** (e.g. public pledges such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) abandonment ceremonies). But don't do this too soon! This works best when there is already private support to prevent VAWG and where sanctions to do so are not too high.

11. **Do publicise role models and the benefits of the new behaviour.** Role models may be community leaders, religious figures or celebrities such as music or sports stars, but they may also be other boys, girls or adults who challenge particular norms, or who have done so in the past and can be seen as living proof that new norms can lead to positive outcomes.

12. **Do provide opportunities for women and men to put new norms and behaviours into practice.** In countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is common for the male head of the household to select the candidate that the entire family will vote for, thus denying women the chance to express their own preferences (this is known as 'family voting'). In such contexts, civil society and other organisations often conduct voter education campaigns targeting men about women's rights to vote. These campaigns are timed to take place in the lead up to the elections, thereby giving men the opportunity to put new behaviours into practice straight after the campaign.

13. **Do create new rewards and social sanctions to sustain the change.** For instance, rewards could take the form of self-esteem and a sense of belonging to a group of early adopters of the new gender norm, endorsed by inspirational role models and influencers.

Mitigating risks

14. **Do protect the physical safety and emotional and psychological well-being of** programme participants, the audience and your team **when covering highly emotive or sensitive content on harmful social norms.** For example, protect the anonymity of participants in the programme, issue a warning to the audience before the start of the programme that it contains upsetting content, and keep information and data about the programme secure.

Don'ts

1. **Don't reinforce harmful social norms by highlighting or publicising the negative behaviour** (e.g. billboards with the message "Rape is a problem in Kinshasa" can perpetuate the notion that it is normal).

2. **When challenging harmful social norms, don't inadvertently reinforce other harmful norms or reinforce sexist stereotypes** (e.g. messages which emphasise the need to protect women from violence can play into ideas about women as the 'weaker sex' and inadvertently shore up support for violence against women and girls who do not play the 'weaker' role).

Sources used for this quick read guide and suggested further reading:

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- BBC Media Action (December 2016). BBC Media Action Approach: preventing violence against women and girls
- Dr Erika Fraser and Caroline Enye (31 January 2019). VAWG Helpdesk Report 224: Effectiveness of Digital Platforms to Reduce VAW.

[65] Based on: Adapted from Bicchieri (2006) and Heise (2013), cited in Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) *DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)*. London: VAWG Helpdesk https://prevention-collaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Shifting-Social-Norms-tackle-Violence-against-Women-Girls3.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2019]

[66] Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) *DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)*. London: VAWG Helpdesk https://prevention-collaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Shifting-Social-Norms-tackle-Violence-against-Women-Girls3.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2019]

[67] Cited in: Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) *DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)*. London: VAWG Helpdesk https://prevention-collaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Shifting-Social-Norms-tackle-Violence-against-Women-Girls3.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2019

Executive summary | Part 1: Why address gender equality? | Part 2: Tools | **Part 3: Quick-read guides**

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | Changing harmful social norms | **Communications content development**

3.4. Quick-read guide: gender and communications content development

This quick-read guide provides practical suggestions on how to mainstream gender issues into the development of print and digital content in conflict and stabilisation contexts. This guidance applies to: content where the primary objective is to promote gender equality; and content where promoting gender equality is not the main purpose.

Dos and don'ts on mainstreaming gender into communications content development[68] ☀ **Click on the tabs to find out more**

| Strategy and approach | Issues covered | Message delivery | Monitoring and evaluation and team skills |

1. **Do challenge gender discrimination, negative gender stereotypes and harmful social norms.** For example, show women as experts on non-traditional topics (e.g. economics, security), decision-makers, role models and community leaders and show them as overcoming challenges (Box 19). Show men being concerned about women's and children's health, sharing household tasks and speaking up against violence against women.

2. **Do** design disinformation messages that **expose and debunk gendered disinformation** (e.g. false statistics about sexual violence by immigrants, myths about Western policies on gender equality, fake online images of high-profile women aimed at undermining their credibility) and provide alternative narratives on gender issues in line with the UK Government's gender equality commitments (see Quick-read guide: countering disinformation).

3. **Do** counter **violent extremist narratives** by highlighting **disparities and hypocrisies between their narratives and the reality on gender issues** (e.g. female Daesh recruiters offered women the prospect of a comfortable life by posting on Facebook of how rent is not paid and monthly allowances are provided,[69] which are in stark contrast to the daily realities of a war-zone in Syria) (see Quick-read guide: countering violent extremism).

4. When addressing **sensitive gender issues** (e.g. abortion, gender-based violence), **do** seek advice from experts to understand the issues and the context and to avoid doing harm; **do** provide information about relevant helplines and support; **do** protect the safety and well-being of contributors to your programme.

🖶 **Click on the icon for a print-friendly version of this quick-read guide. To print, click Ctrl+P and print only pages 92-94.**

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Executive summary | Part 1: Why address gender equality? | Part 2: Tools | **Part 3: Quick-read guides**

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | Changing harmful social norms | **Communications content development**

Dos and don'ts on mainstreaming gender into communications content development Click on the tabs to find out more

Strategy and approach | **Issues covered** | **Message delivery** | **Monitoring and evaluation and team skills**

5. **Do make positive stories about women's empowerment** that show how things can change (see **Box 19** for a case study)

6. **Do show men/boys engaged in promoting gender** equality and women's empowerment.

7. **Do involve** people with **gender expertise or women's rights organisations** to advise on content. Build enough time for this into your production timelines.

8. **Do consider including stories on sexual and gender minorities (SMGs)**, tailored to the local context. In doing so, consult SGM advocates and ensure that strategic communications approaches and messaging are based on their advice. In addition, take steps to avoid an anti-SGM backlash and ensure the security of SGM people at all times[72] (see Box 20).

Read more issues covered >

Box 19. Portraying strong female characters and raising sensitive gender issues

Between 2015 and 2017 BBC Media Action broadcast 150 episodes of the radio drama *Hay el Matar* (Airport District). Following the lives of a range of residents in a fictional Damascus suburb, it is part of a broader project aiming to **build an open and inclusive society in Syria.**[70] The drama included **strong female characters who reflect changing social norms** as their country experiences conflict. For example, Nour overcomes opposition to launch her own business, and Wajid finds herself pregnant and struggles to decide whether to have the baby.

An evaluation found that listeners felt that the drama's **strong female characters** mirrored those in everyday conflict-ridden Syrian life. Listeners saw them as **empowering role models** and were prompted to reflect on changes in women's roles in Syrian societies as a result of the conflict. The drama also **provided a channel to raise sensitive issues** such as child-marriage and sexual violence, which resonated with listeners' experiences.[71]

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | Changing harmful social norms | **Communications content development**

Dos and don'ts on mainstreaming gender into communications content development ⌖ **Click on the tabs to find out more**

Strategy and approach | **Issues covered** | **Message delivery** | **Monitoring and evaluation and team skills**

Box 20. Stories on SGM experiences

In 2015, the British Council launched its annual 'Five Films 4 Freedom' campaign, in collaboration with the British Film Institute's LGBT+ film festival, BFI Flare.

To champion diversity, SGMs and human rights, they shared five short films about SGM experiences around the world.

This included countries that criminalise same-sex relationships, or that have the death penalty. Local staff choose the approach that best suited their country.

The films were unbranded so they could be promoted independently of the British Council, thus avoiding the perception that SGM rights are a 'Western-led' agenda.[73]

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Dos and don'ts on mainstreaming gender into communications content development
Click on the tabs to find out more

Strategy and approach | **Issues covered** | **Message delivery** | **Monitoring and evaluation and team skills**

9. **Do amplify credible women's voices** that counter disinformation and promote social cohesion.

10. **Do use both women and men as interviewers**, interviewees, experts or speakers at events, panels.

11. **Do ensure good representation of women in audience-led debates.** For example, in Afghanistan, as of March 2017, just under half (47%) of the *Open Jirga's*[74] TV studio audience members were women. Midline qualitative research conducted in 2015 found that most of Open Jirga's listeners and viewers reported that such female participation was unique and a salient characteristic of the programme.

12. **Do** ensure that the **time allocated** to women compared to men is fair in interviews, on panels etc.

13. **Do** ensure that the **voiceover** is delivered by women as well as men.

14. **Do translate/interpret** everyone's contribution regardless of gender.

15. **Don't** reinforce **gender stereotypes** through language chosen (e.g. 'woman' instead of 'lady').

HM Government

Countering disinformation | Countering violent extremism | Changing harmful social norms | **Communications content development**

Dos and don'ts on mainstreaming gender into communications content development **Click on the tabs to find out more**

Strategy and approach	Issues covered	Message delivery	**Monitoring and evaluation and team skills**

16. **Do disaggregate data by sex**, age and other relevant dimensions in order to measure differences between women/girls and men/boys and track gender-related trends (e.g. on audience analysis, beneficiary feedback, digital analytics, polling and survey data).

17. **Do** discuss with the production and editorial team whether they need **training** to better identify gender issues and understand how to promote gender equality and/or women's empowerment. **If so, do include the costs in budgets.**

This quick-read guide provides practical suggestions on how to mainstream gender issues into the development of print and digital content in conflict and stabilisation contexts.

This guidance applies to:
• content where the primary objective is to promote gender equality; and
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Dos and don'ts on mainstreaming gender into communications content development[68]

Strategy and approach

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3. **Do** counter **violent extremist narratives** by highlighting **disparities and hypocrisies between their narratives and the reality on gender issues** (e.g. female Daesh recruiters offered women the prospect of a comfortable life by posting on Facebook of how rent is not paid and monthly allowances are provided, which are in stark contrast to the daily realities of a war-zone in Syria) (see **Quick read guide: countering violent extremism**) (page 74).

4. When addressing **sensitive gender issues** (e.g. gender-based violence, abortion), **do:**
   • seek advice from experts to understand the issues and the context and to avoid doing harm;
   • provide information about relevant helplines and support;
   • protect the safety and well-being of contributors to your programme.

5. **Do make positive stories about women's empowerment** that show how things can change (see **Box 19** for a case study)

6. **Do show men/boys engaged in promoting gender** equality and women's empowerment.

7. **Do involve** people with **gender expertise or women's rights organisations** to advise on content. Build enough time for this into your production timelines.

8. **Do consider including stories on sexual and gender minorities (SMGs)**, tailored to the local context. In doing so, consult SGM advocates and ensure that strategic communications approaches and messaging are based on their advice. In addition, take steps to avoid an anti-SGM backlash and ensure the security of SGM people at all times[72] (see **Box 20**).

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Monitoring and evaluation

16. **Do disaggregate data by sex**, age and other relevant dimensions in order to measure differences between women/girls and men/boys and track gender-related trends (e.g. on audience analysis, beneficiary feedback, digital analytics, polling and survey data).

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[68] Based on: IOM (2015) *Gender and Communications Toolkit.* https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/gender/IOM-Gender-and-Communications-Toolkit-2015.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2019]; UK Government (2015) *CSSF Guidance Note 4: Integrating Gender Issues into Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) Programming; BBC Media Action (December 2016). BBC Media Action. Approach: preventing violence against women and girls.* http://genderandmedia.bbcmediaaction.org/resources/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019]; and BBC Media Action. *Editorial Team Checklist for developing gender sensitive and gender transformative programmes.* http://genderandmedia.bbcmediaaction.org/resources/ [Accessed on 25/10/2019].
[69] https://www.buzzfeed.com/ellievhall/inside-the-online-world-of-the-women-of-isis
[70, 71] BBC Media Action (2018). *What role can drama play in conflict? A radio drama for Syria – qualitative findings.* BBC Media Action. http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/research/syria-drama.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2019]
[72] For further guidance, see: Stonewall (2018). Engaging with LGBT+ Advocates: A Guide for UK Officials Working Abroad.
[73] This multimedia audience-led debate programme aimed to provide a platform for the Afghan public and decision makers to interact and discuss issues of national importance, and for citizens to directly question their leaders. See: Godfrey A., Page, G. and Sharifzai, T. (2017). *Strengthening accountability through media in Afghanistan: Final evaluation.* BBC Media Action.
[74] Source: Stonewall (2018). Engaging with LGBT+ Advocates: A Guide for UK Officials Working Abroad

What is this guide about?

This guide provides practical guidance on how to promote gender equality through strategic communications interventions in conflict and stabilisation contexts. Strategic communications are communications with a purpose, conducted to achieve specified, agreed and measurable objectives and effects, such as mobilising support for a particular policy or promoting a desired behavioural change.[1] Strategic communications interventions can include work that covers one or more of the following: media relations, digital and social media, campaigns, communications coordination and strategy, stakeholder engagement, internal communications, audience insight and capability building. Capacity building for media institutions, known as 'media development', is not covered in this guide.

The guide can be used with specific strategic communications activities and campaigns as well as with broader strategic communication projects and programmes. Strategic communication 'intervention' is used in this guide to mean either a strategic communications programme, project, campaign or activities.

Box 1. Definition of gender and gender equality

Gender: term used to describe the roles, behaviours, attitudes and attributes that a given society, at a given time, considers appropriate for men and women.[2] Whilst sex differences are based on biology, gender differences are socially defined and differ between countries and cultures. This means that they are not fixed and can be changed.[3] Gender attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through the socialisation process.[4] There are variations in how people experience gender. Gender is increasingly understood as not being binary, but on a spectrum, and an individual may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.[5]

Gender equality: the state of being equal in status, rights and opportunities, and of being valued equally, regardless of sex or gender identity and/or expression.[6]

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Who is this guide for?

This guide is for UK Government officials who design, implement, commission and/or manage strategic communications interventions in conflict and stabilisation contexts. It can also be used as a reference guide by organisations contracted to implement strategic communications work on behalf of the UK Government.

How do I use this guide?

Format	The guidance is presented as a single document. Each section **flows from and connects to** those preceding and following. Hyperlinks or scrolling down allow you to **move through the parts.** This symbol (🖱) indicates interactive elements you can click on.
Navigation	The **headings of this document are hyperlinked** to the relevant parts. When you are inside a part, the heading is a more intense colour. You can use the ctrl+shift+N for the Go To Page function **to jump or return to a specific page**.
Terminology	Throughout this guidance, **key terminology is highlighted and defined**. **Text boxes provide examples** that illustrate the concepts discussed. **'Tips'** and links to **further reading** support you in implementing the guidance.
Printing	**Printable A4 versions** are available for the executive summary (p. 9-10), Tool 1 (p. 31), Tool 2 (p. 40-41) and the quick-read guides 3.1. (p. 65-68), 3.2. (p.74-76), 3.3. (p. 84-86) 3.4. (p.92-94)

What is this guide about? | **Who is this guide for? How do I use this guide?**

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CDCC	Counter-Daesh Communications Cell
CSSF	Conflict, Stability and Security Fund
DFID	Department for International Development
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation/cutting
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCSI	Government Communications Service International
HMG	Her Majesty's Government (UK Government)
IP	Implementing partner
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation

MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MOD	Ministry of Defence
P/CVE	Preventing and countering violent extremism
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
SGM	Sexual and gender minorities
SOR	Statements of requirement
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VE	Violent extremist
VEO	Violent extremist organisation
XRW	Extreme right-wing

External resources on gender and media

- *Checklist of questions for editors on gender-sensitive programming.* BBC Media Action. Editorial Team Checklist for developing
- gender sensitive and gender transformative programmes.
- *Practical tips and examples of how to develop gender-sensitive media content.* IOM (2015) Gender and Communications Toolkit.
- *A compendium of indicators to measure gender equality in media organisations and gender equality in media content, as well as case studies.* UNESCO (2012) Gender-sensitive indicators for media: framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content.
- *An overview of research available on gender and the media.* GSDRC (July 2015) Gender & Media Topic Guide.
- *UN gender-inclusive language guidelines* *and related training materials, available in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.*
- *A global movement to promote gender equality in and through media:* Global Alliance for Media and Gender (GAMAG).

UK Government resources

- Stabilisation Unit (2016) 'Strategic Communications in Conflict and Stabilisation Interventions'
- DFID's latest gender how to guide. UK Government (Autumn 2019) 'How To' Guidance Note on Gender Equality: A Practical Guide to Integrating Gender Equality into DFID and HMG Policy and Programming. DFID.
- CSSF guidance on gender mainstreaming. UK Government (2015) CSSF Guidance Note 4: Integrating Gender Issues into Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) Programming.
- DFID guidance on changing social norms on violence against women and girls (VAWG). Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). London: VAWG Helpdesk
- Guidance on how to address gender in P/CVE programming. UK Government (2019). UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022 – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

UK Government advisory support on gender

For advisory support, including access to help-desk support that conducts research on gender issues for the UK Government, contact:

- The Stabilisation Unit or attend its Gender, Conflict and Stability course
- DFID's Gender Equality Team, join the Gender Equality Hub mailing list or come along to one of the Hub monthly meetings
- The FCO's Gender Equality Unit or join the FCO Gender Equality Community of Practice (which also spans the Prosperity Fund and CSSF).

Acknowledgements

This guide was written by Anna Shotton, Director, PeacePlan Ltd (peace-plan.org) and Stabilisation Unit Deployable Civilian Expert (DCE).

The content is based primarily on: research conducted by Rebecca Emerson Keeler (SU DCE), DFID's how to guidance note on gender equality (2019), the UK Government guidance note on gender and P/CVE (2019), the CSSF guidance note on integrating gender issues into CSSF programming (2015), and external resources by BBC Media Action.

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14 Other examples of barriers to accessing information are: higher levels of illiteracy, cultural restrictions on mobility, poor knowledge of official languages, poorer access to a mobile phone/internet/TV/radio, weak authority within the home to decide on programme choice, poor availability at certain times of the day, and greater child and elder-care obligations.

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