![HM Government]

UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018 to 2022:

Guidance Note - Implementing Strategic Outcome 1: Decision-making

Contents

About this Guidance Note

This is one of a series of guidance notes being produced on each of the Strategic Outcomes of the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2018 – 2022) to support implementation of policy and programme interventions in each area:

1. Decision-making
2. Peacekeeping
3. Gender-based violence
4. Humanitarian response
5. Security and justice
6. Preventing and countering violent extremism
7. UK capabilities.

It is intended to support HMG staff and partners in meeting commitments under Strategic Outcomes 1 of the NAP: Decision-making.

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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Why it matters

Women have **a right to participate in the decisions** that affect their lives. Women's inclusion in decision-making also **improves immediate and long-term policy outcomes** before, during, and after conflict. Yet, women continue to remain **underrepresented** in formal, high-level processes related to peace, security and political decision-making. Those who face intersecting discrimination like young women, women with disabilities or women discriminated against because of their social status are even less likely to be represented. At the same time, **women from diverse constituencies are brokering peace or shoring up community resilience at the local level**. Many engage prominently in **civil society**. These roles need to be valued and linked to decision-making processes at all levels to make conflict prevention and resolution more effective, sustainable and help avoid harm. **Transitions** also present **critical windows of opportunity** to increase women's political participation in the longer term. For structural shifts to take root, **strong women's rights organisations** and **early and sustained opportunities for women to participate** in the decisions that inform and shape the post-conflict political settlement are key. Failure to invest in women's participation in decision-making in conflict contexts misses an important opportunity for long term positive change.

Strategic Outcome 1 commits HMG to:

- Influence and transform the political environment in fragile and conflict-affected states to enable and encourage the participation of women in decision-making.
- Support interventions that tackle the obstacles to women's leadership and meaningful political participation.

Types of interventions to directly support women's participation in decision-making	Types of interventions targeting the enabling environment
- Individual skills of women leaders. - Finance and logistics support for participation. - Support to women's collective action strategies. - Support to women mediators. - Support to women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations working on peacebuilding and gender equality. - Quotas and other affirmative action for women's political participation. - Targeted gender expertise. - Girls and young women's empowerment interventions.	- Institutional gender mainstreaming (e.g. family friendly policies, recruitment and career advancement policies, safeguarding and harassment policies). - Social norms interventions: Gender transformative interventions that challenge power relationships, including working with men as champions. - Women's economic empowerment programming with gender transformative components. - Girls' education.

Essential building blocks

- Promote **decision-making spaces that are inclusive**:
  - Conduct **gender and power analysis** and identify **barriers and enablers** for women's participation.
  - Influence and **design processes** that **actively facilitate** women's meaningful and representative participation (e.g. gender criteria for participation, mediators with gender expertise).
  - Provide **dedicated support** for women's participation to help overcome barriers.
- Support **women's influencing strategies**, for example through coalitions and spaces for women to develop joint positions and facilitating access to decision-makers.
- Promote an **enabling environment** for women's participation in decision-making, addressing social norms, safety and safeguarding, institutional bias and working with communities and gatekeepers.

Principles for supporting women's participation in decision-making	Key contextual considerations
- Always take the **context as the starting point and consult women** to design support interventions. **Start early**. - Apply a **conflict sensitive and intersectional approach**, recognising that women are not a homogenous group and that different groups of women face different barriers and represent different interests. - Value, support and invest in **diverse women's and women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations** as the key conduit for women's participation. - Combine multiple strategies to support **women's individual and collective agency** to participate. - Take a **multi-layered and cross-cutting perspective** to support women's participation at all levels. - Address **safety and safeguarding risks**, including access to psycho-social support for women leaders facing threats. - Apply **gender expertise** to support decision-makers and decision-making processes that are inclusive.	- Understand **gender norms and ideologies defining women's leadership** and decision-making roles: Negative stereotypes, stigma and attacks on their reputation, morality, or qualifications are a key barrier for women's participation in decision-making. - Understand how **types of politics affect women's political participation**: Informal and patronage politics generally tend to exclude women, democratic systems with proportionate representation are more favourable. Where gender inequality is high, quotas have been found to be effective in increasing women's political participation. **Women's rights organisation. Women peacebuilders and organisations** working on peacebuilding and gender equality are key: Understand the history and shape of women's movements to calibrate support to the needs in the context. - Operate under the assumption that **violence against publicly active women** is a risk in the context, and work with women to identify context-specific strategies to mitigate risks.

Entry points for an HMG approach to promote women's participation in decision-making

Diplomacy and influencing	Stand-alone programming	Mainstreaming women's participation in decision-making across HMG's interventions.
Strategic dialogue with bilateral partners. Influencing multilaterals. Engaging with WROs. In-country lobbying with host governments, conflict parties, and political parties. Defence engagement.	Funding for women's rights organisations. Stand-alone components of core peacebuilding and governance programming (including elections, political governance and civil society). Core gender equality programmes.	

Role modelling meaningful and representative participation

Key resources

- HMG Guidance:
  - Stabilisation Unit Guidance: Applying a gender perspective to the Joint Analysis of Conflict & Stability
  - Guidance Notes on the UK NAP WPS Strategic Objectives 2-6.

- External Guidance:
  - Beyond Consultations Tool
  - UN Women WPS resources
  - Gender Action for Peace and Security Resources
  - ICAN's Better Peace Tool
  - ICAN's "She Builds Peace" Framework for Action
  - UN Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies.
- Advisory support: CSSF Gender Advisers, WPS team in the OCSM, Social Development Advisers.

Common Acronyms

DFID	Department for International Development
DM	Decision-making
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GAPS	Gender Action for Peace and Security
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PCR	Project Completion Report
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
TCC and PCC	Troop Contributing Countries and Police Contributing Countries
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WHRD	Women Human Rights Defenders
WO	Women's organisations
WPB	Women peacebuilders
WPE	Women's political empowerment
WPP	Women's political participation
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WRO	Women's rights organisations

1. Introduction

Strategic Outcome 1: Decision-making (DM):

An increase in women's meaningful and representative participation in DM processes, including conflict prevention and peacebuilding at community and national levels.

UK policy has emphasised the importance of women's participation in DM in conflict and stability since the adoption of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women Peace and Security in 2000. The former Department for International Development's (DFID, now Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, FCDO), Building Stability Framework (2016) highlights the importance of women's leadership and meaningful participation in conflict resolution processes. Women's political participation is also key to the UK's broader strategy to promote gender equality globally as was reflected in DFID's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality (2018) and HMG's Integrated Review (2020).

The UK National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is the five-year strategy for how the UK Government will integrate a gender perspective into its work building security and stability overseas, protecting human rights of women and girls, and promoting their meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution. The NAP outlines seven strategic outcomes that set the vision for the UK's WPS implementation in conflict settings. Strategic Outcome 1 focuses on the UK's support for processes that directly aim to prevent or resolve conflict, including through early warning, mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation processes, and through support for legitimate and effective institutions of governance in places affected by conflict.

Strategic Outcome 1 commits the UK to:

- Pursue diplomatic policies at the bilateral and multilateral level to influence and transform the political environment in fragile and conflict-affected states to enable and encourage the participation of women in DM.
- Support programme interventions that tackle the obstacles to women's leadership and meaningful political participation.

This guidance note offers practical advice to HMG staff on how to promote women's meaningful and representative participation in DM in conflict settings in line with Strategic Outcome 1 commitments. It is divided into three main sections. The first section explores why this is such a crucial area of focus and investment for the UK Government. The second section identifies entry points for promoting their roles in conflict settings. The third section sets out practical advice for how to promote women's DM in programme, policy, defence and diplomacy work.

Box 1: International and UK frameworks on women's political participation in conflict settings[1]

Relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR)

- **UNSCR 1325 (2000)** asserts women's leadership and role in conflict resolution, peace talks and recovery. Commitments include increasing numbers of women in UN decision-making on peace and security and ensuring women participate in peace talks.
- **UNSCR 1820 (2008)** highlights the commitment to ensure women are represented in peacebuilding institutions.
- **UNSCR 1888 and 1889 (2009)** commits the UN Secretary General to appoint more women as mediators and asks for a strategy to increase numbers of women in conflict-resolution DM (including female peace making and peacekeeping decision-makers). States must promote women's participation in political and economic decision-making from the earliest stage of peacebuilding.
- **UNSCR 2122 (2013)** creates stronger measures to include women in peace-processes and calls for regular briefings and reports on WPS issues to various organisations and members of the United Nations. It sets out concrete methods for combating the lack of women's participation. Acknowledges critical roles of women's civil society.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- **5.5** commits countries to "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of DM in political, economic and public life".
- **16.7 commits countries to** "Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels".

The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Article 7 and 8 outlines women's rights in the public sphere with an emphasis on political life and representation at national and international levels. Article 4 establishes that temporary measures to accelerate gender equality will not be considered discrimination.

UK frameworks:

- The **UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2022)**.
- **DFID's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality (2018)** includes a commitment to support women's political empowerment, recognising that challenges faced by girls and women are interlinked, complex and deep seated and need to be addressed in a holistic way.
- **UK International Defence Engagement Strategy and Joint Services Publication 1325 (2019)** provides policy guidance on the application of WPS commitments in the context of implementing a human security approach in military operations.
- **The Governance for Growth, Stability and Inclusive Development, DFID Position Paper (2019)**, includes a commitment to increase meaningful and representative participation and leadership in informal and formal power and decision-making structures.
- **DFID's Stability Framework (2016)** highlights the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution.

Definitions[2]

Elites are those that hold a disproportionate amount of political power, who are able to influence decisions, mobilise popular support and implement policies at national, sub-national and transnational levels.

Elite bargains: a discrete deal or bargain, or series of bargains that explicitly re-negotiates the distribution of power and resources between elites. Elite bargains are fluid and evolve constantly.

Peacebuilding: is defined by the UN as "a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development".

Peace agreements: Formal or semi-formal agreements entered into by warring parties, often but not exclusively brokered by external actors.

Political settlements: the distribution of power on which a polity and society is based, which results from conflict and negotiation between contending elites. Political settlements are dynamic processes rather than static entities that are historically specific to each state.

State-building: action to develop the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state in relation to an effective political process for negotiating the mutual demands between state and societal groups.

Tracks of diplomacy refer to different types of peace-making activities and actors:

- Track I: Official and formal negotiation/mediation processes. Main actors are governments, multilateral organisations, and main parties to the conflict.
- Track II: Unofficial mediation efforts that bring together conflict parties and other actors to build progress towards peace. Main actors are civil society, influencers, think tanks, private sector and researchers.
- Track III: Unofficial peacebuilding activities at the grass-root level. It includes local mediation, peace deals and early warning, but also trauma and human rights work. Main actors are local communities and individuals within the broader population, but also humanitarian and development actors.

Transition out of conflict: the move away from crisis to situations that are likely to still be fragile not entirely violent or hostile, allowing for longer-term development activities to build further stability.

Women's organisations: diverse groups of organised women. Women groups can be informal and formal.

Women's rights organisation: civil society organisations with an overt women's or girls' rights, gender equality or feminist purpose. Women's rights organisations play a central role in spearheading change in support of gender equality.[3]

Women Peacebuilders: individuals and women-led organizations committed to non-violence; they are pro-peace talks and support human rights and women's rights. Some advocate for justice, others work to address the impacts of conflict and/or to promote peace with a gender perspective.[4]

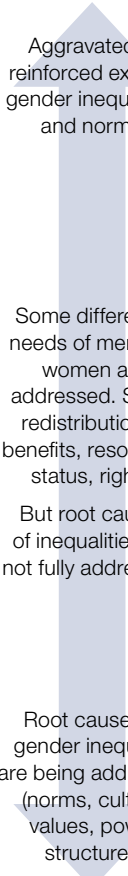# 2.   Conceptualising women's participation in decision-making (DM)

2.1.   What do we mean by women's meaningful and representative participation?

Meaningful participation means that women are not only present in DM spaces but are able to exert real influence, including (but not only) on the issues that particularly affect women and girls.[5] **"Representative"** means that a diversity of women's views and experiences are represented in DM processes. It does not mean women represented in DM fora are expected to speak on behalf of all other women.

Important distinctions:

- **Women's representation in DM is an important end in itself**, but women's numerical representation in DM does not automatically lead to greater influence or to greater gender equality in society.[6] Whilst women's participation has been shown to increase the likelihood of gender responsive provisions in process outcomes, it has broader benefits.

- **Women's influence** in DM processes depends on women's collective influencing strategies and the enabling environment for their influence, which are discussed in section 2.3 and 3.2.

- **Key factors for gender equality outcomes in DM processes** are sustained advocacy by feminist and pro-gender equality organisations that put pressure on decision makers to adopt and maintain provisions that promote gender equality. Gender expertise to DM processes is important to ensure provisions in agreements address differential needs of men and women.

Types and dimensions of women's participation[7]

Types	Looks like….	
Exclusion	• No representation. • No viable transmission mechanisms for influence decisions. **> No influence.**	Aggravated or reinforced existing gender inequalities and norms.
Tokenistic participation	• Some numerical representation in DM fora. • No dedicated strategies to support women to participate and limited transmission mechanisms for influencing. • No/limited partnerships with women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations to support women's influence. **> No/Limited influence.**	
Indirect participation	• No direct representation in DM fora, but mechanisms for external women and women's right organisations to influence discussions. • Varying degrees of support to women's indirect participation and influencing strategies, for example partnerships with women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations support women's influencing and champions amongst decision makers. • Varying degrees of gender expertise is to promote gender responsive provisions and meaningful consultations with women to feed into DM. **> Varying levels of influence depending on transmission mechanisms and influencing strategies. Can lead to increased participation and direct representation over time.**	Some differential needs of men and women are addressed. Some redistribution of benefits, resources, status, rights.
Substantive participation	• Women are represented in DM fora. • Partnerships and coalitions with women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations to support women's influencing. • Dedicated support for women's participation and gender expertise to DM processes: Women's practical needs like funding, transport, logistics and training are addressed. Processes are designed in a way which promotes women's contributions. • Strategies to support a diversity of women's perspectives to feed into DM are in place. • Champions amongst decision-makers actively advocate and support women's participation. **> Women influence DM.**	But root causes of inequalities are not fully addressed.
Transformative participation	• Women's representation and participation in DM is institutionalised. • Implicit norms and social values that underpin institutions change (e.g., men and women's perceptions and expectations about men and women's roles in DM). • Gender-equitable policies, budgets and laws are put in place and implemented to promote gender equality and protect against discrimination. • There are accountability mechanisms in place to maintain women's inclusion – for example, watchdog roles in institutions and civil society. **> Women influence DM and root causes of gender inequality are addressed.**	Root causes of gender inequality are being addressed (norms, cultural values, power structures)

Box 2: Benchmarking women's meaningful and representative participation

The **Beyond Consultations Tool** helps to assess the extent to which consultations conducted in the context of DM processes are supportive of women's meaningful and representative participation. The tool allows users to score consultative processes using a traffic light system. It helps donors, policy makers or practitioners identify additional steps to improve the effectiveness of engagement strategies. The tool can be adapted and applied to different types of processes.

Beyond Consultations Principles for women's meaningful participation

- All women have a right to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations should be engaged as equal partners in the planning, design and implementation of DM processes.
- Women should be supported to participate through a variety of appropriate, context-specific methodologies.
- Women should be supported, prepared and reimbursed for their participation.
- Women should be able to set and shape agendas.
- Women's participation should be representative of women in all their diversity.
- Participation should be accessible, ensuring women's access and resource needs are met.
- Participation should be safe, empowering, respectful and not extractive.
- Knowledge and learning generated by consultations should be shared with the communities from which it was informed on an ongoing basis.
- Meaningful participation is not an end in itself – women should experience tangible benefits through their engagement.

The Beyond Consultation Tool was developed by GAPS UK, Saferworld, Womankind Worldwide, Women for Women International and Amnesty international. Access tool: **www.beyondconsultations.org**

What do we mean by participation in "decision-making"?

SO1 focuses on women's participation **in DM processes** that directly aim to prevent or resolve conflict, including longer term support to inclusive, legitimate and effective institutions.

Preventing conflict: Women shore up community resilience, prevent conflict and are increasingly present in DM and ensure women's experiences and needs are understood and addressed.	**Containing and responding to violence:** Women participate in local, sub-national and national conflict resolution to help find agreement and solutions, broaden the range of issues discussed and build momentum for women's future representation.	**Transition out of conflict:** Women participate in political processes at all levels, and engage as active citizens with increasingly inclusive and legitimate state institutions.
- Regional, national and local early warning mechanisms that gather information on conflict drivers and link information with responses to triggers. - Informal and formal local mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms (e.g., local peace committees, traditional dispute resolution mechanisms). - International and regional DM architecture to prevent conflict. - Broadening DM structures at all levels to make them more inclusive (long-term conflict prevention).	- High level, formal track I peace processes. - Informal track II peace processes. - National and local peace dialogue processes. - Track III informal and formal local mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms (e.g., local peace committees, traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, local cease-fire negotiations). - Mechanisms that monitor implementation of provisions in peace agreements. - International and regional DM architecture to respond to conflict, including humanitarian responses.	- Constitution-making processes. - Transitional justice and reconciliation mechanisms. - Political governance mechanisms (elections, parliaments, transitional and permanent governments). - Institutional and administrative reforms, for example security sector reform processes. - Local governance mechanisms. - Community level DM processes (e.g., community development committees).

DM processes are non-linear and should not be seen as static categories. Different processes can overlap and happen at the same time. They are shaped by the social, political and cultural context within which they operate. New and emerging conflict management structures may co-exist with existing traditional dispute resolution mechanisms at the local level. Women's participation in DM processes is multi-layered and cuts across local, subnational, national and regional levels.

Women's ability to participate and influence DM processes is particularly restricted by informal DM structures.[8] These include informal networks within formal institutions and patriarchal, male dominated customary institutions. Understanding different formal and informal DM processes in each context - how they relate to each other, and how they include or exclude women - is critical. Where there is a mismatch between formal and informal rules and institutions, formal commitments to women's greater participation in DM face significant challenge and require engagement with informal institutions.

2.2. Why is women's participation in decision-making a priority for the UK in fragile and conflict affected settings?

The UK is committed to promote women's meaningful and representative participation in DM as a building block for lasting peace and open and inclusive societies. Women have **a right to participate in the decisions** that affect their lives.

When women participate in political life, policymaking is more inclusive, with the needs and concerns of women better represented. At the local level, women's representation and influence in public DM has been shown to improve the provision of services, including clean water, immunization, schooling, and infrastructure.[9] Women in politics are also shown to prioritise women's equal rights, reproductive and sexual health rights, childcare, and stopping violence against women. They tend to prioritise education, welfare, and healthcare more than men.[10]

Global evidence shows that women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution can improve outcomes before, during, and after conflict.[11] Women broaden the range of issues that are discussed in peace talks, which in turn may contribute to greater durability of the peace agreement.[12] Women's participation has also been found to increase the likelihood that parties to conflict find agreement.[13] Women's participation in peace processes leads to a greater inclusion of gender sensitive-provisions in final agreements.[14] **Addressing inequalities, exclusion and discriminatory gender norms and ensuring women's participation in DM are essential elements for structural conflict prevention** that addresses root causes of conflict and builds community resilience.[15]

Women remain **underrepresented in formal, high-level processes related to peace, security and political DM before, during and after conflict.** Globally, there has been a steady but slow increase in women's political representation in governments and legislatures, but progress has been much slower for peace and security related DM processes.[16]

Box 3: Key statistics

- Between 1992 and 2019, women constituted, on average[17]: 13 per cent of negotiators, 6 per cent of mediators, and 6 per cent of signatories in major peace processes worldwide. About seven out of every ten peace processes did not include women mediators or women signatories.

- Between 2015-2019, only 11 per cent of ceasefire agreements included gender provisions, compared to 26 per cent of other peace agreement types. Worldwide, the proportion of peace agreements with gender equality provisions increased from 14 to 22 per cent between 1995 and 2019.[18]

- Women's representation in national parliaments (lower chamber and unicameral parliaments) reached 24.9 per cent in 2020. At the local level, women hold a higher level of seats in local deliberative bodies: 36.3%.[19]

Even when women are at the forefront of movements demanding peace or change, that does not automatically translate into their equal representation in negotiations or in power arrangements during transitions. For example, in Sudan, women were visible at the forefront of protests which brought an end to Bashir's regime in 2019 but have remained underrepresented in Sudan's transitional arrangements and the peace talks held since.

Women's continued exclusion from conflict related DM is linked to gender bias inherent in these processes: If conflict is about bargaining for power, those that are seen as its protagonists – those with military, political and economic power - are likely to be men.[20] Giving women a greater say is not often seen as the most pressing issue and "can wait until later". As a result, women's participation is still often seen as an "add on" or a "nice to have" in peace or political transition processes.

The focus on women's absence from formal peace and transitional DM processes masks important
nuances and less visible roles women hold in civil society and at the local level. Many women are brokering
peace or shoring up community resilience[21] at the local level. They engage prominently in civil society to pressure
and encourage conflict parties to find agreement. Women have successfully mobilised and influenced processes
even when they did not have a direct seat at the table. They are often the first to become aware of rising tensions,
and work within their communities to resolve disputes or prevent recruitment, contributing to conflict prevention. At
the same time, women also have roles as combatants, recruiters in extremist networks or behind the scenes as
part of broader elite networks with a stake in conflicts.

**Transitions present critical windows of opportunity to increase women's participation in DM for the longer
term. During conflict and times of social change, women often take on new and different roles. Traditional
gender norms can become more fluid.** These change processes can open spaces for women's more visible
and active participation and representation in DM or enable conditions for them to make their voices heard across
a range of political, social and economic issues affecting the long-term transition away from conflict.[22]

**But the norms and structures that define unequal power relationships between men and women have also
been found to be resilient.[23] Gains – including women's increased participation - are susceptible to
reversals, particularly in societies in transition**. If new rules are significantly misaligned with how power is
organised and continues to be exercised, changes may not be implemented or take time to take root. Traditional
gender norms can also become more entrenched during conflict. Continued and sustained efforts to prevent
backsliding and embed shifts are required, including through support to women's rights organisations (WRO).

2.3.   Barriers and enablers for women's participation in decision-making

**Women's political empowerment is closely connected to women's social and economic empowerment and
shaped by the power dynamics and cultural and social norms that define the public and private roles of
men and women.** Women have to overcome multiple barriers to enter the public DM space, and this is
compounded where gender inequality is high, and gender norms restrict women's roles to the private space.
Women in public leadership roles can face negative stereotypes, stigma and attacks on their reputation, morality,
or qualifications.[24] Even when women manage to overcome barriers they are often faced with abusive and violent
backlash, serving as a further deterrent to other women and sometimes silencing those who have spoken out.

**In many fragile and conflict affected settings, the factors that constrain women's political empowerment
and participation in DM are often even more entrenched.** Autocratic and patronage-based politics pose
additional barriers for women to enter and advance in public leadership positions and influence decisions.
Patriarchal, customary institutions that traditionally exclude women often play important roles in shaping DM in
fragile and conflict settings. Informal DM can be more pronounced, and political organisations are even more likely
to be highly personalised around male leaders. High levels of insecurity and violence can make it difficult for
women to physically access DM spaces or create a permissive environment for violent backlash.

Even where DM processes provide spaces for women's representation, women can face a range of **practical
barriers** which limit their ability to participate and contribute. For example:

- Lack of access to finance to cover costs of participation.
- Lack of support with logistics (e.g. visas or travel, especially when DM processes happen abroad).
- Lack of provisions for child-care or chaperones, if required in the context.
- Insufficient time and spaces to prepare for meetings and contribute substantively.
- Lack of knowledge on specialist negotiation topics that puts them on uneven footing.
- Location/timing of DM processes that present security and reputational risks for women or that do not consider
  women's schedules and domestic responsibilities.
- Lack of digital access and rights.

Enabling factors:

- Women's rights groups and women's movements are essential for promoting women's participation in DM at all
  levels. Where there is a strong movement, there are greater opportunities for participation.
- Supportive international and regional actors – including mediators - can help facilitate women's participation in
  DM in conflict settings where they have influence over process design and can influence elite actors.
- Supportive elites and male champions play an important role in opening up DM spaces.

Barriers and enablers are context specific. Visual 1 shows main societal, institutional, immediate environment and
individual level features that influence women's participation. Barriers and enablers need to be assessed in each
context and in relation to each DM process to identify pathways to support women's increased leadership and
participation.

Visual 1: Barriers and enablers

Societal
Unequal gender dynamics
Patriarchal norms that discriminate against women
Levels of **poverty**
Gender norms (definition of masculinity, expected social role of men and women, norms defining women leaders, norms on mobility and sexuality)
Ideologies – e.g. attitudes towards liberal values and "Western States"

Institutional
Elite support or resistance to women's inclusion
Strength of **women's movement**
Space for **civil society**
Types of **politics** (patronage, democratic governance)
Role of women in political parties
Distriminatory or pro-gender equality laws and policies
Political systems (electoral systems, quotas, type of system, political party structures)
Design of peace process and transitional institutions (quotas, gender-sensitive provisions for participation, selection criteria etc)

Immediate
Attitudes and behaviours of **families and partners towards leadership roles**
Decision making in the household and **division of labour** between men and women
Attitudes and behaviours of **communities** (supportive or restrictive, e.g. harassment, rumours, threats
Attitudes and behaviours of **community leaders and infuencers** (traditional, religious leaders, local government, peer influencers)
Access to **organised (community) groups – women's rights organisation, womens groups,** churches, civil society
Immediate **safety environment –** ongoing conflict, insecurity and criminality, travel risks, location of meetings
Level of violence against women in the public space (threats, attacks, abuse)

Individual
Social capital: family connections, connection with other organised women, networks
Psychological capital: self confidence, role models, agency
Economic capital: access to resources, economic empowerment, access to finance/child care
Human capital: literacy/education, specialist peacebuilding traning, communication skills
Technological capital: access to technology, digital literacy
Mobility: ability to leave home, accompanied, unaccompanied
Identity: age, race, ethnicity, class, LGBTI, disability status, urban/rural, elite/non elite, combatant

Examples of mitigating actions to address barriers	
Institutional	• Design DM processes that are inclusive, e.g. introduce gender criteria in the selection of participants. Promote structural reforms of formal DM structures (e.g. through electoral reform processes, constitution-making processes, institutional reforms). • Change discriminatory rules that minimise women's contributions: for example, if literacy is a requirement for leadership roles in local DM mechanisms and therefore excludes the majority of women in that context, make processes accessible for non-literate women. • Support alternative networks for women to counter the power of informal networks which exclude women.
Society	• Integrate understanding of social norms into language that frames the positive contributions of women's participation. • Highlight and promote female role models. • Target elites and immediate communities, working with champions with interventions that seek to address social norms and behaviours.
Immediate environment	• Conduct outreach to community leaders and influencers to create a supportive environment for women's participation. • Target mothers and male guardians with activities to promote (young) women's participation. • Conduct assessments of risk of backlash jointly with women and develop mitigation strategies. • Link up women that participate in DM processes with organised women's groups to increase collective bargaining power.
Individual	• Understand women's calendars and daily routines to inform DM design. • Understand the implications of DM process location and timing for women's participation, e.g. whether meeting timing or location exposes women to negative rumours. If so, move meetings to a location where it is acceptable for women to be in the public space. • Provide practical support to alleviate barriers (logistics, funding, child-care, travel etc). • Identify and respond to women's training needs on specialist topics. Also, in some contexts, women may not be able to speak freely in mixed settings and may need separate spaces or assertiveness training to speak up.

New shocks and crisis can amplify existing barriers, create new ones, and impact enabling factors for women's participation.

Box 4: Case study - Impact of new shocks on barriers: COVID-19 crisis

In a survey of 30 countries, on average, women made up 24% of national-level committees established to respond to COVID-19.[25] Yet, women are the majority of those responding to the crisis at the frontline, as health care staff or as community responders. Women are affected disproportionately by the crisis: Increased domestic and child-care burdens tend to fall on women, squeezing time to engage in the workforce and in public leadership and advocacy. Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations have reported significant cuts in their WPS funding.[26] Women peacebuilders and women human right defenders have experienced increased violence and restrictions. When DM spaces move online due to the crisis, new barriers can emerge for women with limited access to digital technology, or those that face barriers using mainstream technology. At the same time, the COVID-19 response highlights many examples of women's rights organisation's advocacy to put pressure on responses to take account of women's needs. **Women are organising at the grassroots** to respond to community needs. Increased digitalisation can reduce some barriers for women – for example, overcoming the physical distances to the spaces where decisions happen, or - potentially - affecting the power of informal DM.

More reading: GAPS UK COVID-19 Resources

2.4. Intersectionality

Multiple facets of people's identities intersect to mean that different groups of women face different and overlapping barriers in accessing DM processes at different times in their lives. Age, race, religion, geographical location, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnicity, relationship status, (dis)ability, class, IDP status, and other social categories relevant to the specific operational context shape different groups of women's experiences, needs, access and influence over DM.

Women with different identities can have different preferences towards outcomes of DM processes. Conflict can divide groups along identity lines and women's identities may align them with different sides of a conflict. This creates specific challenges when women are expected to represent joint positions and speak with one voice. For example, a woman from a mobilized minority group in a conflict setting might prioritise different issues in relation to a peace process to a woman in the same region who identifies as a member of a majority group.

Intersecting group identities can also result in greater social exclusion, stigmatisation and lower realisation of rights for particular groups of women. For example, women with (dis)abilities can experience social stigma and practical barriers like physically inaccessible DM spaces or materials that are not adapted to their full participation. Poor rural women can be left out because DM takes place in capitals and urban centres. Women from lower castes and class can find it more difficult to be heard in local DM spaces that are dominated by local elites.[27] Elite dominance of political DM spaces tends to be exacerbated as women from elite backgrounds are more able to overcome barriers to participation than non-elite women.

Adolescent girls and young women face double discrimination due to their gender and age, and often fall between the majority of youth-focused peacebuilding interventions and women-targeted peacebuilding interventions.[28] Young people are significantly under-represented in current processes, as recognised by the **UNSCR 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security**.

Box 5: Young women's participation

FCDO DRC supported the Girls-led Research Unit (GLRU), a group of 15 adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) from a range of socio-economic backgrounds in Kinshasa. The GLRU received training and sustained mentoring support throughout the programme and led peer-research on the lives of AGYW in Kinshasa to help understand barriers and opportunities for their empowerment. The La Pépinière programme co-developed with adolescent girls the **Girl Participation Principles** to guide the programme. Throughout the programme, the GLRU played a vital role in shaping and designing the programme's implementation strategy. The researchers were ambassadors and advocates of the issues that their research uncovered, delivering key messages to donors, the government, local civil society, their communities and other young people. Young researchers engaged systematically with the programme's Gender Champions - established Congolese leaders in politics, civil society, the women's movement and the private sector - who engaged with the programme as an informal network to amplify research findings and take concrete actions to support young women in their areas of work. Summarised from the **Project Completion Report** (PCR) (2018) and the **Adolescent Girls Resource Pack** (2020).

Intersecting identities can lead to greater risks for some groups of women. For example, there are likely to be increased safety and safeguarding risks for adolescent girls and young women in conflict settings, and for young women with disabilities. Adequate policies and procedures to prevent violence and abuse – including by partners, staff, volunteers and others involved in implementing interventions - need to be in place.

3.   Women's participation in decision-making before, during and after conflict

This section provides an overview of different forms of women's participation in DM processes. Women's participation in immediate conflict prevention and response is explored. Strategies for women's participation in peace processes are discussed in more depth because of their centrality for WPS. Broadening women's participation in the context of state-building processes is critical for longer term conflict prevention and is explored as part of transitions away from conflicts.

3.1.   Women's participation in immediate conflict prevention and response

Early warning systems (EWS) involve the collection and analysis of information on actual or potential drivers and triggers of violent conflict to anticipate outbreaks of violence. This information is then fed back to actors who are able to respond, including governments and civil society.[29]

Key considerations include:

- **Ensuring women's participation at all stages of the early warning chain** can help to identify risks which may otherwise have been missed and support women to be involved in responses to conflict.
- **Participatory conflict analysis methods** are practical tools to involve both women and men in collecting and using information. Methods include interviews, participatory workshops or access to technology for participants to share information with international or national actors that can take action.
- **Participatory conflict analysis and mapping can be designed as transformative peacebuilding interventions in themselves,** addressing power dynamics between men and women, and between other social groups as part of the process, helping to bridge divides between different groups of people.
- Research and data collection processes **for early warning should be designed so that they are not extractive** but directly benefit women who participate and help them be involved in responses.
- **Women's participation does not automatically lead to the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators in EWS.** Practitioners need to ensure early warning systems include gender sensitive indicators, disaggregate data and make sure analysis is gendered.
- **National and regional monitoring and early warning mechanisms** can be encouraged to directly increase women's participation, for example, by deploying senior women as part of teams and ensuring systematic consultations with women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations in country. Local level early warning mechanisms that include or are led by women can also be used more systematically to inform higher level DM.

Women-led conflict prevention and early warning:

- **Women's Situation Rooms** (WSR) are an example of **women-led early warning systems**, originally implemented in the context of monitoring electoral violence. They have been replicated as a successful model for women's leadership in early warning in a range of African countries since 2011.
- **Women's leadership roles often tend to be more prominent at the sub national and local levels and in civil society.** These roles are less visible but are important for community resilience.[30] For example, research of communal violence and its prevention in central Nigeria found that neighbourhoods with stronger women's groups and monitoring of young and unemployed men at risk of being drawn into fighting were better able to establish effective conflict management and prevent killings.[31]

Resources on gender sensitive early warning

- Saferworld, Gender and Conflict Early Warning, Briefing, 2014.
- UN Women, Gender-Responsive Early Warning: Overview and How-to Guide, 2012.
- IFES is developing WPS indicators as part of *Enhancing Predictions of Political Violence: Developing and Piloting Women, Peace, and Security Indicators* project.

Mediation is a process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements.[32] Mediation takes place at local, sub-national, national and international levels, and can be formal or informal.

Women mediators are now more visible, owing to their global recognition as an important strategy for women's participation in conflict related DM processes.[33] Despite global commitments, however, women mediators still remain underrepresented as high-level peace process mediators. Women mediators are important role models that can help break stereotypes about women in peacebuilding. There is a distinction however between the role of women as participants in processes who advocate for women's rights, and the role of the women mediator, who acts as an impartial intermediary between parties.[34]

Over recent years, there has been an expansion of women's mediation networks as an important strategy to promote their participation. Networks of female mediators encourage linkages between women mediators operating at local, national and international levels, support individual members in their work and advocate collectively for a greater role of women mediators across DM spaces. Intergenerational approaches within women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations can promote young women's leadership.[35]

Examples of women mediator networks:
- **Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth**
- **Arab Women Mediators Network**
- **FemWise-Africa (AU network of women in conflict resolution and mediation)**
- **Mediterranean Women Mediators Network**
- **ASEAN Women for Peace Registry**
- **Nordic Women Mediators**
- **Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks**

Box 6: Case study - Women Mediators across the Commonwealth project

The CSSF Commonwealth 18-20 Fund Fairness programme supported women's leadership in conflict resolution through the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth project. The project enabled more women to lead, influence or be meaningfully involved in peace processes, from grassroots peacebuilding initiatives to international level. In Garissa County in Kenya, which has a long history of ethnic violence and conflict, related to resource allocation and extremism, the CSSF funded confidence building and skills training for mediation, conflict resolution and negotiation for 21 women who work in local peace committees. As a result, the women have used innovative approaches to foster collaboration and communication between warring communities and have prevented the escalation of disputes, for example, between farmers and pastoralists. The women who trained as mediators are keen to ensure a legacy remains. They have formed the Garissa Township Women Peace Movement, which supports women mediators from different sub-counties to work together, share ideas and mentor each other (CSSF Annual Report 19/20).

Resources on gender sensitive early warning
- **UN Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies.**
- **Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers in the Mediation Support Unit** within the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs: network of senior leading mediation experts that UN Envoys can draw upon to inform mediation processes.
- **UN Women Knowledge Resources:** includes a range of resources with gendered perspectives on mediation processes.

3.2. Women's participation in peace processes

Peace processes "attempt to bring political and/or military elites involved in a conflict to some sort of mutual agreement as to how to end the conflict".[36] They can aim to reduce immediate violence (for example ceasefires) and/or focus on agreeing the terms for lasting and sustainable peace (e.g. comprehensive power-sharing agreements that initiate long term reforms).

Women participate in peace processes in a range of ways. Directly - as part of political, conflict and civil society negotiating teams or women's delegations - or indirectly through consultations, as official observers and as advisory groups informing delegations and mediators.

Women are often excluded from directly participating at the formal negotiating table in Track I peace processes and elite bargains to end violence. Their presence may be highly contested or even 'a red line' for conflict parties. In these contexts, it is important to support women to influence DM and find ways for women's positions and inputs to reach decision makers,[37] whilst continuing to advocate for women's full inclusion.

Women engage substantively with local and informal peace processes. A recent systematic analysis of women's involvement in "informal peace processes", in track II, found clear evidence that identifiable women's groups were involved in 71% of negotiations in the case studies reviewed.[38] Making visible, supporting, and valuing women's participation in DM in track II and III, and connecting women engaged in these processes with formal track III processes is an important strategy to support women's participation in peace related DM.

Factors supporting women's participation and influence in peace processes[39]

Women's influencing strategies

- **Coalitions and networks** between women connected into informal and formal elite DM spaces and women outside those networks with a collective aim of advancing women's inclusion and peace are important. Spaces that allow diverse women to develop joint positions as part of coalitions are key. **Civil society coalitions between women groups and other civic groups** that promote rights of excluded groups ("Rainbow coalitions") have also been engaged to advocate and influence processes.[40]

- **Transmission mechanisms that support** women's positions and inputs to reach DM are needed, especially if women are not at the table. For example, strategic gender advice in key institutions can facilitate connections and supportive consultative processes. ICAN's Operational Guidelines for Participation of Women Peacebuilders[41] recommends that delegations of women peacebuilders regularly speak to official delegations about issues on the negotiating table. The guidance also recommends inviting women peacebuilders to negotiate solutions on all issues on the negotiating table which are then shared with negotiating teams.

- A combination of "**insider strategies**" and "**outsider strategies**" that mobilise public support have been found to be effective.[42] In this strategy, women directly submit proposals to mediators and negotiating parties (see transmission mechanisms) whilst at the same time promoting public statements and public campaigns that reinforce women's messages and put pressure on parties.

- **Mass campaigns** by diverse women have been used in a range of contexts to pressure negotiating parties to find agreement or increase women's inclusion. Women - more than any other group - have come together to stage mass action calling for an end to conflicts and for participation.[43] For example, in Liberia, the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement which started in 2003 conducted a number of protests which contributed to the end of the second civil war. Mass actions included street protests, blocking exits of meetings and threatening to strip naked when peace talks stalled.

- **Combining strategies** at the grassroot level (track III) and in civil society (track II and III) with the high-level track I process has also been highlighted as a successful influencing strategy. For example, in the Philippines, civil society organised on tracks II and III backed the official track I process, with women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations.[44]

- **Leveraging international norms:** International normative frameworks – e.g. the WPS framework, international human rights frameworks and international humanitarian law - are used by international actors, mediators, and conflict actors as reference points to inform peace processes. Normative frameworks promoting equal rights can be part of discourse used in power sharing agreements to protect minority rights. If different groups advocate for identity-based quotas in power sharing agreements, this can create openings for women to leverage WPS and advocate for special provisions supporting women's inclusion.[45]

DM process design

- **Early involvement** of women in the process is important, including at the pre-negotiation stage. When women are involved early in discussions, or when initial agreements like ceasefires mention women's participation, it is more likely that they are included substantively at later stages of processes.

- **Gender criteria** for participation, for example quotas for women to participate in negotiating party delegations, or provisions for separate women's delegations, are important. ICAN's Operational guidance on participation recommends separate delegations of women peacebuilders to be included at the negotiating table. Mechanisms for selection should be specified (e.g. criteria- based selection, elections).[46]

- **Addressing intersectionality and diversity:** For example, **young women's participation in DM processes** can be increased by integrating gender criteria with age disaggregated criteria to ensure greater diversity in representation.[47]

- **DM rules:** Research on group dynamics show that women influence more in group DM that is based on finding a consensus, rather than a majority vote. Rules that ensure women have equal access to the floor create a more equal playing field are important where women may be present but not encouraged to speak on equal terms.

- **Support structures** for women prior to and during negotiations as well as for the implementation process. Support can include technical advice to allow for women's preparedness on technical issues, or financial support and logistical support for their participation in consultations. ICAN Operational Participation Guidance recommends rapid response mechanisms that allow women peacebuilders to take up opportunities at short notice. Longer term, permanent institutional support structures throughout peace and transition processes have also been highlighted as important strategies.[48]

Supportive actors

- An active **women's movement (or movements) comprised of diverse women's** rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations that help build coalitions amongst different constituencies and build grassroot momentum and pressure for changes.

- Supportive **mediators with gender expertise**, and supportive champions within elites. ICAN's Operational Guidelines[49] recommend that all delegates have access to gender training and tools, including gendered analysis of all topics in delegates' briefings.

- Supportive international actors, including **role modelling of inclusive behaviours** in their own delegations and representation.

- **Pressure** from international actors on the negotiating parties, supporting women's influencing strategies and amplifying women's voices.

- **Funding to enable women's quality participation and address barriers.**

Resources

- **ICAN's Better Peace Tool** provides detailed guidance on how to support women's participation in peace negotiations and includes practical arguments and approaches on how to make the case for inclusion when there is resistance.

- **ICAN: She Builds Peace Frameworks for Action**. This includes detailed Operational Guidelines on Participation, Protection and Funding for women peacebuilders.

- **PeaceFem App** (linked to **PA X Peace Agreements Database**) to explore women's strategies that influenced different peace processes.

- **Inclusive Peace:** Research and resources on women's participation in peacebuilding.

- Council on Foreign Relations **Data on Women in Peace Processes** and case studies of women's engagement with peace processes.

- **Inclusive Security:** Research and training resources on women's participation in peacebuilding.

- **Learning brief** and case study on working with women and youth across different tracks in Yemen: SDDirect/CARE (2020) Overcoming the barriers to an interlinked three-track peace process in Yemen, SDDirect and CARE International, London, UK.

3.3.   Women's participation and transitions away from conflict

Transitions are important opportunities for embedding structural shifts that promote women's political participation in the long term. Peace and transition processes define how past grievances are dealt with, establish new rules and institutions and can initiate reform and transformation processes. The deals and agreements that are made throughout the conflict define how women participate in DM processes in the future. For example, references to women's future participation and representation in an early ceasefire agreement can increase women's participation in a larger peace process down the line. The resulting peace agreements and power sharing arrangements can make provisions for inclusive transitional and permanent post-conflict institutions which can guarantee greater participation in DM for women in post conflict political settlements.[50]

Constitution-making processes define the formal post-conflict political settlement and women's DM power within the new structures governing the distribution of power. Constitutions have the potential to shift – at least on paper - existing power dynamics and expand women's political rights. Women can engage in constitution-making through their direct inclusion in commissions and drafting committees, and through external influencing and advocacy to put pressure on processes.[51]

Women's participation in the design and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms is important to ensure women's distinct experiences of conflict are addressed. Transitional justice measures and mechanisms can reinforce gender stereotypes, deal inappropriately with issues such as sexual violence, or institutionalise new forms of hardship or unfairness for women.[52] They are seen as important places to shift gender power dynamics. Women's participation in transitional justice mechanisms can include:

- Influencing the design of mechanisms by influencing agreements that define them.
- Women's representation in commissions/committees that implement mechanisms, including consultative women groups to engage with implementation and feed in women's perspectives.
- Women's groups' support to women participating in processes (e.g., for transport, psychological support, security etc), or to document experiences of diverse women in different regions to feed into reporting.

A focus on increasing the role of women in politics is important for women's longer-term inclusion in high level public DM. Global evidence suggests that women's political representation generally increases in post-conflict settings.[53] There are "windows of opportunities" in transitions that support these structural shifts.

Formal measures that incentivise women's political participation in political institutions: Recent research shows the introduction of quotas in peace agreements predicted women's increased political representation in parliaments post-conflict by 9.2%.[54] In post-conflict contexts reviewed, women used each successive election to increase their share of parliamentary seats. Reserved seats were identified as the most effective at ensuring increases in women's political representation.[55] Electoral reforms that promote proportional representation and legislated quotas for women can increase women's participation. In conflict and post-conflict countries with legislated quotas, the share of women in parliament is more than twice that of those without such quotas.[56]

Women's political participation can also increase when transformations of political parties happen during transitions.[57] This finding is important because political parties tend to be barriers for women's political participation.[58] Factors affecting how far transitions lead to shifts in political parties include the length and depth of the transition, and women's role in influencing the processes that shape transitions. The strength of an autonomous women movement and whether party leadership, attitudes and ideologies are supportive of women's greater inclusion also matter.[59]

In addition to women as political leaders, other forms of women's participation in DM post-conflict include women as voters, women's engagement in civil society and their representation and participation in local governance, policy planning and implementation.

Participatory governance mechanisms that focus on promoting marginalised groups' inclusion are key for building more inclusive and legitimate institutions in the long term. Participatory approaches refer to a wide range of formal and informal mechanisms that encourage engagement between DM and citizens to build trust in institutions and help make institutions more effective in their responses to diverse citizens' needs. They are designed to increase the influence of marginalised groups of people over DMs in contexts where there are systemic failures in how marginalised groups can participate in DM. Examples include participatory planning and budgeting processes, and participatory approaches to local level service delivery, including citizen oversight through social audits and score cards processes (referred to as social accountability mechanisms). Analysis[60] found that social accountability initiatives that were successful in promoting women's empowerment addressed gender norms around participation and developed an effective coalition of actors at the local level to support women's voice and agency.

Further reading

Constitution making: Nanako Tamaru and Marie O'Reilly, "A Women's Guide to Constitution Making" and "How Women Influence Constitution Making After Conflict and Unrest", Inclusive Security, 2018

Transitional Justice:

- Christine Bell and Robert Forster, Women and the Renegotiation of Transitional Governance Arrangements, PA-X Spotlight Series, Political Settlements Research Programme and UN Women, 2019
- UN Women, A Window of Opportunity: Making Transitional Justice Work for Women, 2012
- ICAN, **10 Steps to Ensure Gender Responsive Transitional Justice Processes**

Women's political participation and state-building:

- Guidance paper: Pilar Domingo and Rebecca Holmes, **Gender Equality in Peacebuilding and State building**, ODI: Provides practical programming guidance to mainstream gender into international efforts in support of peacebuilding and state building processes.
- UN Women, Gender and Post-Conflict Governance: Understanding the Challenges, 2012
- Clare Castillejo, Gender, fragility and the politics of state building, NOREF Report, October 2012

3.4. Cross-cutting considerations for women's participation

3.4.1. Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations

When there is an active women's movement it is more likely that women will influence DM processes and that women will benefit from transitions.[61] Lasting gender equality gains require sustained feminist mobilisation through women's rights organisations' collective action to contest gender inequality and roll back on gains.[62] Even where there has been significant push back on women's rights,[63] and where space for civil society is closing, women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations continue to operate, often at high personal costs. Despite their recognised roles, **women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations and activists for gender equality often remain ignored and under-resourced** in conflict affected settings.[64]

How do women's movements support women's participation in DM?

- **Coalitions, collective action and mass mobilisation from the grassroots:** Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations and movements operate across local, national, regional and international levels, and across elite and non-elite, urban-rural, and other divides. They offer multiple avenues for locally led collective action.
- **Pathways to leadership in politics:** Women's rights organisation, women peacebuilders and organisations and movements are important places for women leaders to develop political skills and build influential networks. Where it is difficult for women to rise through the ranks of party politics, civil society can offer an alternative pathway to establish women as leaders and facilitate their entry into politics.
- **Investment into women's leadership roles:** Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations respond to rights and needs of different women in their contexts and take on leadership roles in their communities, building up momentum and role modelling women leadership from the grassroots.

Women's movements and women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations are shaped by historical and cultural legacies in each context. There can be tensions between women's groups with diverse identities and constituencies. The transition from immediate conflict to longer term transitions can sometimes weaken solidarity amongst women's groups where ending violent conflict was a unifying goal. Understanding the **context, history and politics of women's movements** and women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations and applying a **strong conflict sensitivity** lens is important. Considerations:

- Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations that **are visible** to international actors are not automatically representative of the diversity of women's lived experiences.
- Not all women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations have a **pro-gender equality agenda**.
- Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations may align with different sides of conflict divides. Some women-led groups may actively marginalise groups representing other excluded groups, such as sexual orientation and gender identity minorities.

Demystifying terminology

Women's rights organisation: civil society organisations with an overt women's or girls' rights, gender equality or feminist purpose. Women's rights organisations play a central role in spearheading change in support of gender equality.[65]

Women Peacebuilders: individuals and women-led organizations committed to non-violence; they are pro-peace talks and support human rights and women's rights. Some advocate for justice, others work to address the impacts of conflict and/or to promote peace with a gender perspective.[66]

Women's movement: movement of women and groups of women that advocate for equal rights for men and women. Also referred to as feminist movements.

Women Human Right Defenders: broadly defined as women who defend the human rights of all, or individuals of all genders who defend the rights of women.[67]

Women's organisations: diverse groups of organised women. Women groups can be informal and formal.

Resources

- Womankind resources on **supporting civil society in FCAS**.
- OECD 2014 study of **donor support to Southern women's rights organisations**. Provides recommendations on how donors can support women's rights organisations.

3.4.2.   Women's economic empowerment and their political participation

Women's economic empowerment is seen as a prerequisite for marginalised women to participate in public and political life and can be leveraged to support women's political participation. During conflict, women's economic roles change, and this may lead to their greater political empowerment. But overall, the links between women's economic empowerment and political empowerment in FCAS are not yet well understood.[68] There are documented case studies and research which highlight that combining economic empowerment approaches with women's collective action strategies over sustained periods can advance women's political empowerment especially in contexts with wide-spread poverty and high levels of gender inequality.[69]

Box 7: Case Study - Care's Matu Masa Dubara Initiative in Niger

The Matu Masa Dubara's (MMD's) are Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in Niger, based on voluntary participation of about 20 women who contribute to a saving fund and make joint decisions about the use of savings. These developed at scale over a 25-year period, with over 25,000 groups established since the 1990's. Formalised networks of MMDs started to be established from 2001 onwards to support individual MMD's to access larger financial credits. Over time networks also organised into federations operating at municipality level. Whilst the initial motivator was to promote women's financial inclusion in a context of wide-spread poverty, over time, networks and federations were seen to prioritise non-financial collective action to promote women's rights, including girls' education, combatting FGM, access to land and supporting women's entry into politics. Collective MMD structures engaged with broader civil society and local governance structures using their collective power to advance gender equality. Leadership within the MMD was identified as a fertile ground for women to extend their leadership roles in communities. Analysis of Niger's 2011 election results showed that 67% of women elected in rural areas were women who participated in MMDs. Federations joined gender platforms and other local structures to advocate for increasing quotas for women in elections (quotas were increased from 10% to 15% in 2014). Extracted and summarised from **Political Consciousness, Leadership and Collective Action in the Mata Masu Dubara Structures in Niger, December 2017, Care.**

3.4.3.   Violence against women in leadership roles

Women active in the public DM space are at increased risk of experiencing violence. Women political candidates and leaders, and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) can be targeted for their visibility, influence, or activism during and after conflicts, in an attempt to silence, undermine, and discredit them.[70] Senior female administrators, judges, or journalists also face threats and risks because of their visibility and symbolism. Violence can be perpetrated online or offline, directly or indirectly, by formal or informal actors, and by known or anonymous perpetrators.

Three characteristics[71] define violence against politically active women: (1) It targets women because of their gender; (2) In its very form it can be gendered, as exemplified by sexist threats and sexual violence; (3) Its impact is to discourage women – in particular from being or becoming active in politics.

Examples of violence against women leaders

- **Gendered violence:** Accusations of sexual promiscuity and tarnishing of reputation; public verbal attacks that use sexual slurs or sexual undertones; threats of assault and rape; online abuse and harassment with sexual undertones, gendered defamation via social media platforms.

- **Violence targeted at women leaders:** Threats to women's children and family; death threats and killings; (attempted) kidnappings; physical attacks; state sanctioned harassment and intimidation such as detention, interrogation and accusations of criminality leading to sanctions; online abuse.

High profile women politicians and women activists are disproportionately targeted by online abuse and disinformation attacks,[72] with examples across high income and low-income contexts. This pattern seems to be more pronounced for female political leaders from racial, ethnic, religious minority groups, those that are visible in the media, and those that are visible on feminist issues.[73] **Gendered disinformation campaigns** use tactics like sexualised information or images and videos intended to ridicule women. Automation is used to amplify attacks that aim to polarise debate around gender equality, create fear and break down social cohesion. The UK **Government Quick Guide on Gender and Countering Disinformation** gives an overview of gendered disinformation threats and provides entry points on how to counter gendered disinformation.

4. How to support women's participation in decision-making

4.1. Evidence base on interventions supporting women's participation in decision-making

The tables below provide an overview of different types of interventions to directly support women's participation in DM (table 1) and to support an enabling environment for participation (table 2). It is largely based on analysis and non-systematic reviews of external interventions. Overall, the evidence base for donor interventions is still patchy and scarce, and even more so in fragile and conflict affected settings. Systematic studies that compare the effect of different types of interventions are lacking. The effectiveness of most types of interventions depends on enabling factors in the context, contextually informed design, and the quality of implementation.

Table 1: Interventions to directly support women's participation in DM

	Intervention types	Considerations and examples
Individual skills of women leaders	Training for women leaders (tailored to the need in the given context – ranging from technical expertise for negotiations to leadership, and security focused training). Mentoring and coaching schemes.	Reviews of donor interventions to support women's individual political leadership capacity have focused more on non-FCAS settings and have generally found mixed results when looking at individual interventions (see for example the 2018a K4D review of donor interventions in support of women's political leadership[74]). Effectiveness depends on contextually informed design and quality of implementation. The combination of different types of interventions and working at different levels, and targeting different stakeholders is important. In general, classic, short-term trainings were seen to be less effective than sustained support with mentoring, peer learning techniques, experimental learning and opportunities to apply skills. Sustained and combined interventions tackling barriers at both individual and collective levels are highlighted, focusing on groups of women, not individuals, and delivering support through collective structures and building collective capacity. For women participating in peace and transition DM, targeted capacity building support for preparedness for technical negotiation areas where there is less expertise is important to enable full participation (e.g. DDR, SSR).[75]
Financial and logistics support	Support to cover costs of transport and visas, logistics (like access to printing, physical space for meetings), child-care, and access to individual security plans and self-care.[76]	The importance of financial and logistics support for women's participation in DM processes is underscored across existing guidelines and analysis. Strategies promoted include: • Access to flexible and responsive funds to respond to opportunities. For example, in Myanmar, in late 2017 the US Agency for International Development (USAID) established a Women's Participation Fund to lower practical hurdles to participation such as travel, childcare or translation support. Requests are approved within hours allowing women to seize critical opportunities in relation to peace processes related events.[77] • Flexibility built into grants to women's rights organisations and women peacebuilders and organisations, so that they can use funds to respond quickly to opportunities.[78] There is no comparative analysis of different types of interventions, but evidence points to the need for systematic, long term support structures for women's participation in peace and transitional processes, ideally delivered through permanent institutional structures.[79]
Collective action strategies[80]	Convening/brokering networks, relationships and dialogue between different actors, developing capacities of individuals and organisations, providing funding for coalitions, advocacy, and policy dialogues.	For peace and transition DM processes, support to coalitions of women and collective action are highlighted as a key area for women's influencing. Combinations of "insider strategies" (direct access and submission of proposals to DM) and "outsider strategies (public statements, mass action) are identified as important features of effective collective action to influence processes.[81] Spaces where women can develop joint positions are identified as an important strategy to support influence.[82] Support structures (see above) are important interventions to create an enabling environment for women's collective action strategies. The 2018b K4D review[83] of different donor interventions in support of collective action that facilitates women's political empowerment points to the importance of the quality of the design and the quality of the implementation. Elsewhere in the literature, women caucuses and networks are highlighted as an important strategy to support collective action of women across party lines. Similarly, networks of professional women within other institutions have been seen to support collective action to advance women leadership.

	Intervention types	Considerations and examples
Women mediators	• Capacity building. • Support to networks. • Influencing to support women mediators to be selected for peace processes.	<u>Support to women mediators</u> is an important strategy to increase women's representation in peacebuilding DM. Strategies identified in the literature include: • Support to women mediation networks (peer-to-peer support, advocacy for women's participation, support to individual members' work, and linkages across different tracks I, II and III). • Identifying and supporting women on lists of nominees for UN envoy positions and active support to those women who are appointed to positions. • Supporting countries to identify women mediation capacity across local and national levels to make it visible and available. • Tackling institutional barriers that prevent women mediators to pursue career pathways from across different levels and across civil society into government-led systems. • Targeted training for women mediators, including on how to bridge the gap from local to national and national to international level mediation. In terms of effectiveness, similar considerations to those highlighted under individual leadership and collective action should be considered. Based on evidence reviewed, support to women mediation <u>networks</u> is likely to be one of the most effective interventions to support their role. An over focus on "building capacity" of individual mediators risks distracting from barriers within processes and institutions that contribute to the exclusion of women mediators when decisions about mediation teams and their composition are made. There also needs to be more research to unpack assumptions around women mediator influence on gender sensitive provisions in agreements which tends to be conflated with women's roles as mediators.[84]
Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations	• Core funding to organisations. • Project based funding for women's rights. organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations. • Organisational capacity building support.	There is significant evidence highlighting the importance of an independent and diverse women's movement to promote and facilitate women's participation across DM spaces during and after conflict. WROs and feminist organisations are seen as important for advancing gender equality within the decisions that they influence. Women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations can provide and sustain spaces where women can engage, network, and develop individually and collectively to conduct wider social action, even in the most difficult contexts. Funding can be provided to specific organisations, to networks, or to grant-making entities supporting WROs in their activities and advocacy. Predictable, flexible multi-year core funding[85] is generally seen as more effective than project-based funding. Core funding is unrestricted funding that allows organisations to pursue their mission and set their own priorities and strategies. Core or project-based funding can be combined with organisational capacity building. Catalytic funding can be provided to emerging organisations but should not be at the expense of larger, core funding.
Targeted gender expertise	• Gender advisers in key DM bodies. • Gender expertise and gender training provided to mediators.	<u>Gender expertise</u> to inform process design and improve DMs' understanding of gender dimensions is important. Gender expertise was found to be targeted at mediators, but less so at negotiating parties and other DM. Analysis reviewed suggests that the positioning of the gender expertise – for example a senior gender adviser - is important – i.e. it needs to directly access and influence senior DM, including different elites participating in DM processes. For HMG, support to such roles is most impactful when there is close collaboration with HMG, rather than a "fund and forget" approach. HMG can facilitate adviser's political access and they can help identify where HMG influencing support is useful.
Quotas and electoral/political system reform	Design and advocacy for quotas (across DM processes, political institutions and government administration).	Women in politics are more likely to progress in mixed or <u>proportional representation</u> electoral/legislative systems as opposed to simple "first past the post" systems.[86] There is <u>strong evidence</u>[87] <u>supporting well designed quotas as an important strategy</u> for women's increased representation in DM processes and institutions. Through their role modelling effect, quotas or affirmative action are also seen to influence societal perceptions of women as leaders and social norms.[88] Quotas are particularly effective where gender inequality is high.[89] Quotas' effectiveness is linked to their design and enforcement, women's collective action, and broader changes in institutions and society which support their implementation (e.g. addressing and resourcing the removal of institutional barriers, shifting social norms). In peace processes, the adoption of quotas is important for women's presence, but on its own does not automatically lead to greater influence of women on processes or gender-sensitive provision in the outcomes of processes.[90] Women's delegations have been found to have a stronger effect on women's influence than quotas for negotiating parties.
	Political parties and systems.	<u>Donor interventions that work to make political parties more gender-responsive</u> have been of mixed effectiveness overall.[91] It is important to engage with political parties because they are often a key barrier[92] for women's political participation and transitions away from conflict can present opportunities and entry points for reforms.[93] Effective strategies identified include[94]: (1) Adopting measures, including action plans or quotas, to ensure women's participation in party DM structures. (2) Addressing gender equality in governing documents of the party, such as internal statutes and rules, and gender mainstreaming into policies. (3) Establishing women's sections that are formally/strategically integrated into party structures and fully resourced.

|	Intervention types	Considerations and examples
Girls and young women's empowerment	Interventions targeted at adolescent girls and young women's empowerment.	For young women's political empowerment, the literature[95] highlights mentoring and education initiatives (e.g. school-based initiatives to build interest in politics and programmes to mentor women leaders) to help empower girls and young women to participate in networking and convening to learn about their political rights and routes for their engagement. There has been a growing focus on Adolescent Girls Safe Spaces or Girls Clubs, as an effective strategy to empower and build life and leadership skills for adolescent girls and young women, including in FCAS. Some of these programmes have included modules on peacebuilding and civic engagement. The long-term effects of these interventions on young women's future leadership in communities or politics are not yet understood, as these programmes are relatively new and these effects would only become clearer 5-10 years after the end of programming. Facilitating inter- and intra-generational dialogue to foster inclusion, and develop strategic alliances between younger and older women, especially within civil society networks, is identified as a promising strategy. Young women's engagement can also be prioritised as part of interventions that build individual skills and collective action and make processes more inclusive. For example, by supporting participation criteria that incentivise young women's participation, funding young women's rights organisations, women peacebuilding organisations and their participation in processes and tackling gender- and age-related stereotypes.

Table 2: Interventions supporting an enabling environment for women's participation in DM

	Intervention types	Considerations and examples
Institutional gender mainstreaming	Policies with a focus on promoting women's career progression and retention in public sector institutions. Institutional capacity building to women's machinery.	Policy provisions to support women's career advancement and retention in institutions include provisions for child-care, changes to discriminatory recruitment and HR policies and policies that protect women from gender-based bullying and harassment in the workplace. Institutional gender equality strategies and action plans can help identify and implement required changes in policies and institutional culture. The K4D review of support to women's political leadership found that institutional mainstreaming approaches reviewed as part of making parliament more women-friendly (including better rearranging of sitting hours, entitling members to parental leave, providing breastfeeding rooms, and establishing childcare centres in parliament and engagement with men parliamentarians and citizens), appear to have largely been effective. Institutional leadership buy-in and adequate resourcing is critical for mainstreaming gender at the institutional level. Interventions in FCAS have included support to women's ministries or institutions, through institutional capacity-building, donor influence, and sectoral gender audits, but success of these interventions was generally found to be "slender and very context-specific".[96]
Social norms change	Social norms change programming with components on women's political participation. Gender transformative interventions that seek to change norms and behaviours that are mainstreamed into other interventions.	There are gender equality programmes that successfully combined social norms change interventions and collective action interventions to generate positive effects, for example, the V4C programme in Nigeria (see box 11). Design features included social network analysis, intensive gender interventions targeting influential traditional and religious leaders and influencers combined with message diffusion strategies, collective action and coalition building to support changes in social norms defining women's leadership and DM and transform institutions. Mainstreaming: Gender transformative interventions that seek to address gender norms and behaviours have been mainly integrated into programming addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG), women's economic empowerment programming and programming on uptake of health and family planning interventions. Analysis suggests that substantive social norms mainstreaming is largely absent in core governance and peacebuilding programmes. Given existing learning and success elsewhere, there is significant scope to develop and test social norms mainstreaming interventions to support women's participation in DM. Key considerations include: • Work with male advocates, role models or change agents: The engagement of men and boys should be done across all levels of society, from the individual, to the community to the institutional and systemic levels, and should include the engagement of community, religious and political leaders, most of whom are still men.[97] • The length, quality and intensity of interventions are important: Shifting deep-seated social norms cannot be achieved through 'light touch' interventions and short timeframes. Evidence from VAWG programming that integrate interventions tackling social norms suggest pilot interventions can achieve results within 18 – 36 months of implementation, depending on the context, but need to consider 12 – 18 months from design and adaptation before implementation can start.[98] • Create opportunities for women and girls, men and boys to actively challenge gender norms: for example, consider adapting community mobilisation interventions that have been successful (for example SASA![99]) to mainstream social norms change into community level governance and peacebuilding approaches that focus on women's participation.

Intervention types		Considerations and examples
Economic empowerment programming	Interventions targeted at economic empowerment combined with collective action and movement building.	There is still limited understanding of <u>economic empowerment interventions</u> that contribute to women's political empowerment in conflict and post-conflict settings. Some evidence from What Works[100] suggests that economic empowerment combined with gender transformative interventions can shift social norms in the area of women's DM, but there is limited analysis of how these programmes have affected women's DM power in the public space. There are examples of economic empowerment programmes that included deliberate interventions strengthening women's collective action. These appeared to support political participation where this was seen to contribute to women's movement building and developed over a sustained period of time.
Girls' education	Broad investments into girls' access to quality education.	<u>Girls' education</u> is a critical factor for fostering women's political leadership.[101] In countries with large gaps in educational attainment between men and women, education is a barrier to women's entry and advancement in politics.[102] Broad investments into girls' education are necessary to expand the pool of women leaders beyond elites.

4.2. Essential building blocks and principles for supporting women's participation in DM

Building blocks:
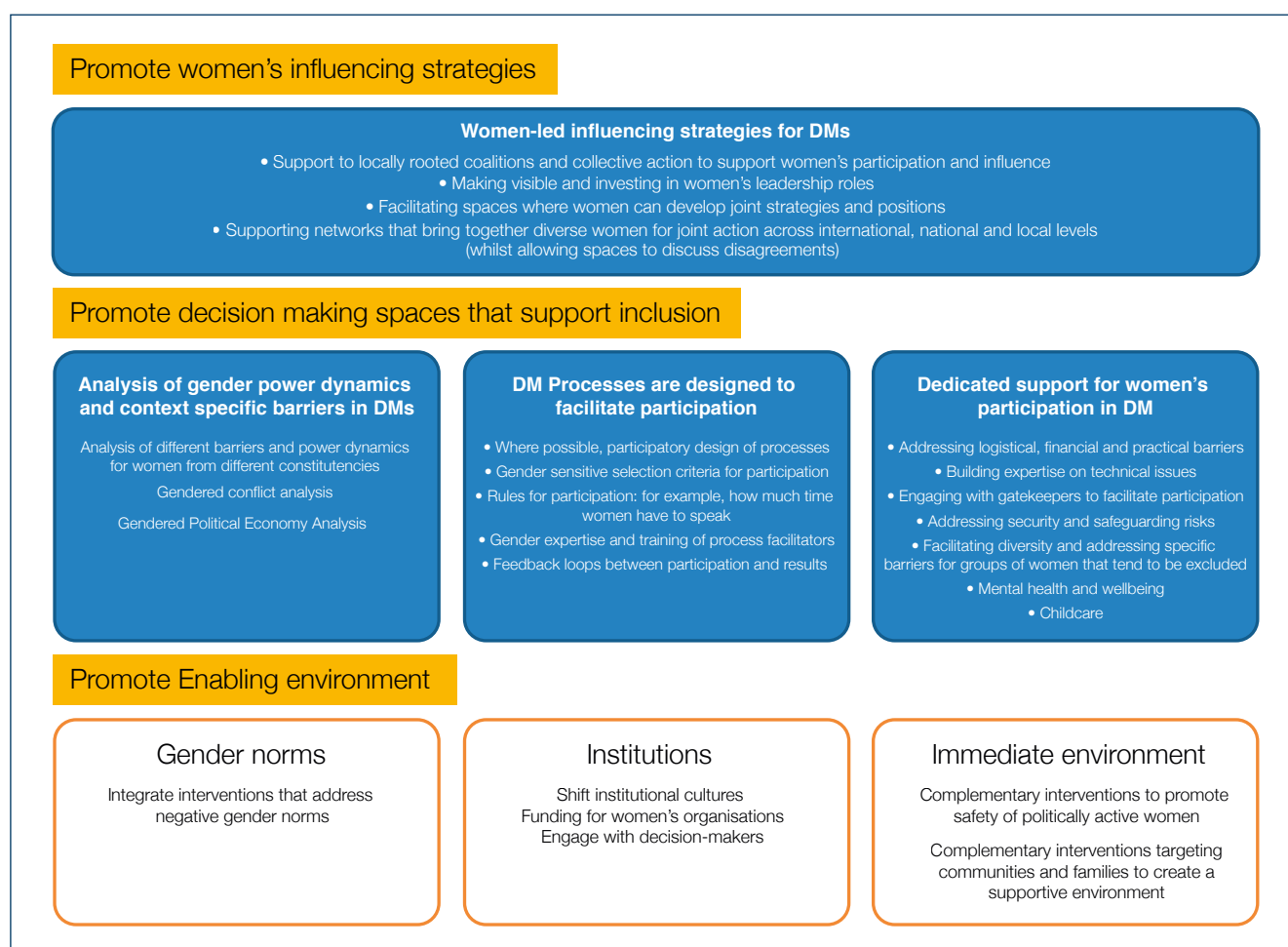
The following **key principles** guide **how** effective interventions are designed and implemented:

- **Take the context as the starting point:** Successful interventions are rooted in an understanding of gender and power dynamics and how these dynamics intersect in the local context. They promote locally-led, politically-aware and adaptive approaches based on a thorough and nuanced understanding of women's roles.
- **Start early:** Efforts need to be made from the outset. In order to achieve long-term inclusion, women's participation should not be approached in an ad hoc manner, as an add-on or afterthought.
- **Support diverse women's groups:** Meaningful and sustained partnerships with women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations are critical for effective interventions. This includes consulting WO's views to inform engagement with DM processes.

- Apply **a conflict sensitive and intersectional approach**, recognising that women are not a homogenous group and that different groups of women face different barriers and represent different interests. Women's representation and participation should be diverse and cut across ethnicity, race, age, (dis)ability, class and geographic location. Whilst it is important to support and create spaces for the development of shared agendas by diverse women, space also needs to be created for women to discuss disagreements.

- Identify and implement **multiple strategies and interventions that reinforce women's individual and collective agency to support women as change agents**. Successful interventions work at multiple levels, with multiple actors and connect women leaders at the local, subnational, national and international levels to influence processes.

- **Implement a cross-cutting and multi-layered approach:** Women's participation in DM needs to be integrated across all HMG programmes and influencing strategies. It should not only be a siloed, stand-alone programme but mainstreamed across broader peacebuilding and state building interventions.

- **Address safety and safeguarding risks:** Interventions should support women and women's groups to assess potential risks from their engagement and jointly develop plans to protect their safety and wellbeing. Proactive support for women's mental health and wellbeing should be considered as part of a holistic programming approach. Complementary interventions to strengthen the protection environment for politically active women should be designed and implemented. Safeguarding considerations should be front and centre of engagement with young women, and women in situations of vulnerability such as, but not limited to, survivors of sexual violence.

- Draw on **gender expertise and political economy analysis** to design and influence inclusive DM processes. Expertise can be provided by external experts or local feminist organisations. Prioritise use of local expertise and local organisations to reinforce feedback loops.

Promoting an enabling environment for women's participation

- **Mainstream a focus on transforming gender norms.** Restrictive and socially conservative gender norms are a main barrier to their participation in public DM and limit women's economic, social and political empowerment. Understanding and addressing norms is critical to transforming the power dynamics that exclude women from DM.

- **Target and include male DM** as important champions and gatekeepers for women's participation.

- Target **families and immediate communities with complementary interventions**, especially for those women who experience additional barriers that marginalise them in DM spaces, for example young women or women with disabilities.

4.3. Suggested entry points for an HMG approach

4.3.1. Context analysis

The UK's engagement strategy and specific interventions to support women's political participation should be driven by an understanding of the social, political and conflict context.

- **Conduct gendered conflict and political analysis to develop smart, context adapted strategies to support women's participation in DM processes.** The SU guidance note on 'Applying a gender perspective to the JACS' is a useful starting point. Other tools for integrating gender, conflict and political economy analysis are summarised in Annex B.

- **Partner with women and women's groups** to develop and shape analysis jointly: Use **participatory analysis to identify contextually relevant pathways** to increase women's participation in DM.

Questions to help identify entry points into DM processes:

- Where are decisions about resources, status and rights being made at local, subnational and national levels – informally and formally?

- What are women's diverse roles in relation to these processes?

- What are the informal and formal norms and mechanisms that exclude/include women from DM processes?

- What are the rules that constrain behaviour/roles and what are the incentives to shift these?

- How far is conflict shifting gender roles and norms in relation to DM processes (more fluid, static, more entrenched)?

- What are the different norms and rules affecting diverse women's access and influence of DM spaces (non-elite women, young women, women with disabilities, minority women, LGBTI women, poor women)?

Stakeholder mapping:

- Map women and men actors relevant to the DM processes in (e.g. politicians, religious leaders, traditional leaders, women leaders, influential international actors, groups that are excluded etc). What are their attitudes to women's participation? What is their influence?

- Map women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations: What types of organisations are they and what do they represent? Which areas do organisations engage on? What is their influence? Who do they connect to – elite/non-elite? What areas don't they engage on? Who is missing? How does intersectionality affect organisations?

- Map women peacebuilders and women leadership (e.g. female mediators in the context, repositories of female leaders across politics, business, civil society) and identify how these interact with DM processes identified.

- Map other stakeholders promoting a pro-women's participation agenda (e.g. government gender machinery, parts of civil society, men champions for gender equality).

- Map connections between stakeholders.

Identify entry points and pathways of change:

- Are there connections and change agents that we previously overlooked?

- Are there political or institutional reform processes underway that would allow for greater inclusion of women as leaders?

- Are there key trends, or government-led/international processes/initiatives under design that can be influenced in the future?

- What evidence is available? Where are the major research gaps?

- What types of interventions are underway by other actors? What worked, what didn't? What can be re-enforced/complemented?

Box 8: Case Study - Working with politically informed approaches to promote participation:

The Peace Leadership Programme in Myanmar (led by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies) has trained a selection of women peace leaders in support of more gender-inclusive peacebuilding efforts. The programme has included gender as a key lens within conflict and political analysis. It has worked with a selection of women identified as having high levels of trust and legitimacy within their local contexts, with a "unique ability to directly and/or indirectly influence conflict parties and behaviour by way of direct mediation, advocacy, and/or building consensus with negotiating parties". Although women formally have very limited roles in Myanmar's peace processes, the analysis has enabled the programme to work with women with informal change-making potential, and has also identified persistent and significant gaps in women's DM power. Based on this analysis, the programme works with women to support and expand their influence and participation in peace processes in the country. (**Source**: Rebecca Haines and Tam O'Neil, **Putting Gender in International UK political economy analysis:** Why it matters and how to do it, Practitioners' Guidance Note, Gender & Development Network, 2018).

Box 9: Case Study - Using PEA to inform influencing and programming on women and elections:
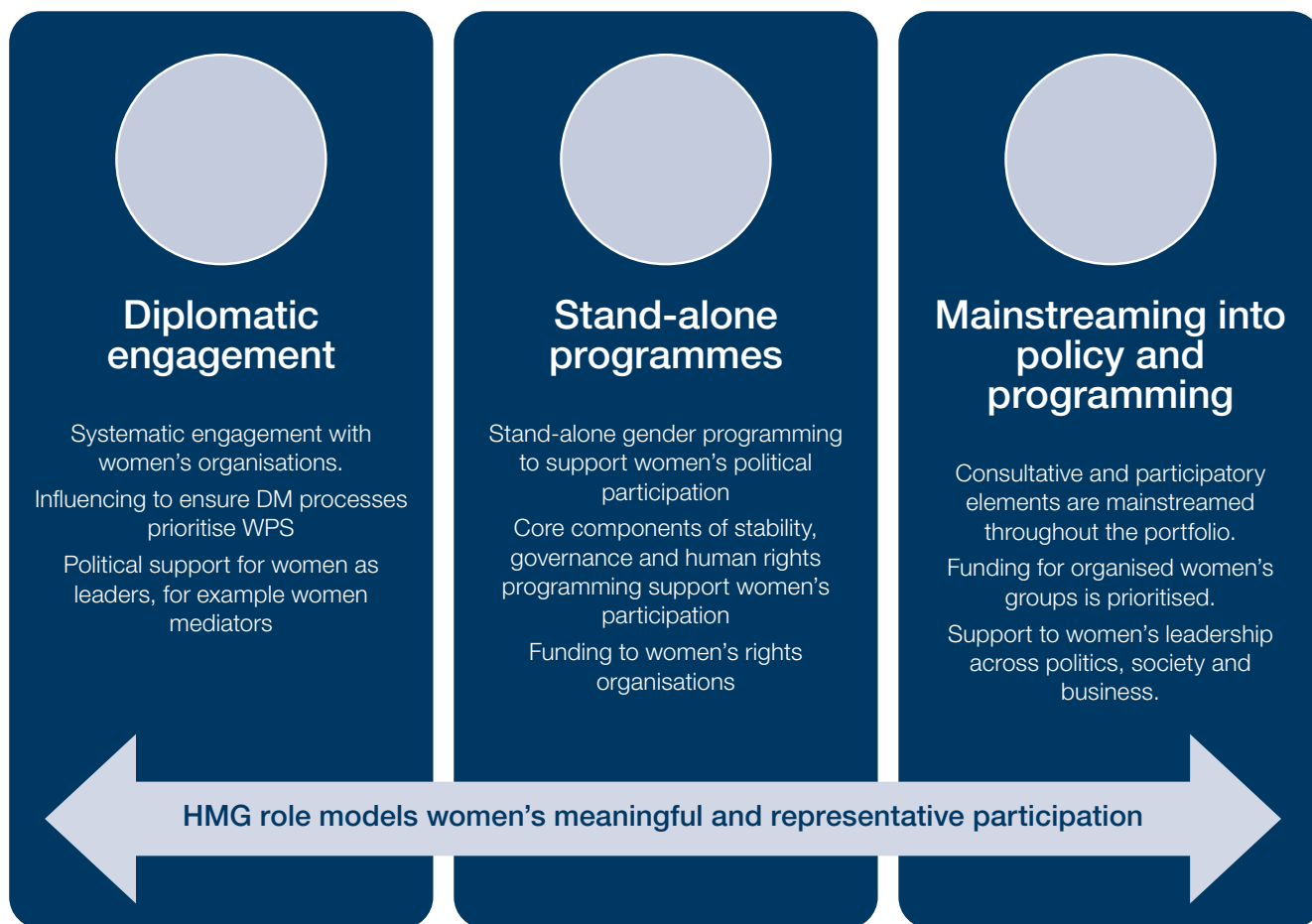
FCDO DRC's Evidence, Analysis and Coordination Programme (EACP) delivered tailored political economy analysis across the UK's thematic engagement areas in the DRC. In 2015, ahead of the delayed 2018 elections, the EACP conducted an analysis on Women and Elections. The analysis identified key barriers and opportunities for women's participation in the electoral processes and made recommendations for priority advocacy, policy and programming actions. The analysis was used by donors to support coordinated lobbying towards members of parliament and the Electoral Commission and helped identify priority areas for electoral support for women's political participation. It was used by donors to influence the UN-led electoral support programme and to develop stand-alone support to women's participation. FCDO DRC, through NDI, supported the Cartel des Femmes Politiques Leaders Actives as part of its support to national elections in 2018. This platform brought together women in politics from different political parties and supported them to run for elections. Key learning from the process was that it was important for the analysis to be owned beyond those working on gender equality and WPS in order to inform engagement with electoral processes. (**Source**: DFID Annual Reviews and Project Completion Reports for both programmes, KII).

4.3.2.   Developing an HMG strategy for women's participation in decision-making

HMG can support women and girls' participation in DM related to conflict prevention and response across its diplomacy, programmes and policy. Stand-alone interventions, mainstreaming and diplomacy in support of women's participation in DM should be combined to develop a "whole of portfolio approach". It is important that linkages between different parts of the HMG portfolio are identified and strengthened. When women leaders and women groups are systematically consulted, included and partnered with across the portfolio this allows HMG to draw on diverse women voices to inform its own DM and influence DM processes.

Questions for establishing HMG's baseline on women's participation in DM

- What is HMG's previous experience working on women's participation in DM?
- How far does portfolio-level analysis and prioritisation identify entry points and pathways for women to influence diverse DM processes underway at different levels?
- How does HMG currently engage with women leaders and women's groups across its political and programming work? Who is missing from engagement?
- How far is engagement with women and women's groups systematised across the portfolio (e.g. regular consultations with diverse women's groups to consult and inform on decisions, advisory boards, joint reviews with women's groups).
- Is there accountability for how far teams and units have prioritised women's participation?
- Can existing partnerships with women's groups be expanded to support increased focus on women's participation across the portfolio?
- Is there dedicated gender expertise at the portfolio level – in the form of technical advisory capacity, or in the form of partnerships with WROs - which can be drawn upon by teams to inform design of DM processes that promote women's inclusion?
- What is the level of financing for diverse partnerships with women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations and groups across the portfolio?

Diplomatic engagement

Systematic engagement with women's organisations.

Influencing to ensure DM processes prioritise WPS

Political support for women as leaders, for example women mediators

Stand-alone programmes

Stand-alone gender programming to support women's political participation

Core components of stability, governance and human rights programming support women's participation

Funding to women's rights organisations

Mainstreaming into policy and programming

Consultative and participatory elements are mainstreamed throughout the portfolio.

Funding for organised women's groups is prioritised.

Support to women's leadership across politics, society and business.

HMG role models women's meaningful and representative participation

Box 10: Case Study - Building political support, donor coherence and coordination, and support to WROs in Iraq

The UK in Iraq does significant work to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda through strategic political and diplomatic engagements, including with other donors at the bilateral and multilateral level, and with the Iraqi government. WPS is raised in political engagement, including at ministerial and ambassadorial levels. The UK is co-chairing the International Gender Group with Canada and is part of a Gender Champions Group with other embassies. The UK played a leading role in getting the UN, embassies and donors to agree on WPS priorities, improving coordination and continuity in a context of high staff turnover. The agreed priorities are: 1) increasing women's political participation; 2) providing documentation for women only households including in camps for internally displaced people and for children; 3) delivery of the Iraqi NAP; and 4) the passage of the anti-domestic violence law.

The UK's WPS political and diplomatic engagements are informed by ongoing consultations with Iraqi WROs, including supporting the meaningful participation of women's rights organisations (WROs), women peacebuilders organisations in drafting content for the anti-domestic violence bill. This ensures that work is aligned with their priorities and maximises impact, including taking advice on what issues the UK can advocate for publicly and which are better supported "behind the scenes". The UK also directly supports women's rights organisations, women peacebuilders and organisations through the FCDO's human rights international programme and the CSSF MENAFEM project with funding, capacity strengthening, advocacy support and training on how to mitigate and respond to threats against women human rights defenders. The CSSF programme is implemented by the feminist INGO Kvinna till Kvinna. Kvinna provides funding for WROs to conduct peacebuilding activities in their respective areas of expertise - including trauma work, leading a network of WHRDs, re-integrating women perceived to be affiliated with the Islamic State, and advocacy on women's participation. Capacity building focused on increasing the WRO's capacity in financial management, monitoring and evaluation, as well as in security and risk management. **Source**: HM Government, **Evaluation of the UK's National Action Plan Women, Peace and Security (2018 -2022)**, Strategic Outcome 7 – UK Capabilities, Evaluation Report and CSSF Reporting.

Portfolio-level do and don't

DO

- Sustain engagement on women's participation for the long term, and **actively involve women and WROs, women peacebuilders and organisations in design and implementation** of engagement.
- Develop **dedicated stand-alone interventions as part of core state building and peacebuilding programming to support women's political participation/women as change agents**.
- **Value partnerships with WROs, women peacebuilders and organisations and support them to influence decisions across the portfolio**. Identify how parts of the portfolio that support women and girls' empowerment and WROs, women peacebuilders and organisations can be connected with each other, and to parts of the portfolio that work with decision-makers and DM processes.
- **Systematise engagement with women leaders and women's organisations across the portfolio, and at all levels**. For example, consider setting up an Advisory Board comprised of diverse women's groups and representatives to engage in continued strategic dialogue with HMG in a particular country context or policy area. Integrate women's participation into portfolio level or interventions level **oversight and review mechanisms**, for example, through integration into **third party monitoring mechanisms**.
- Identify **relationships between different parts of the portfolio** – for example – girls' education, investment in women-led business or women's economic empowerment, and interventions tackling gender-based violence – and women's participation in DM.
- Make sure that the **full HMG footprint (including HQ funding streams)** with women leaders, women's organisations and organised women is understood and informs influencing strategies on women's participation.
- **Ensure dedicated gender expertise and gender and political economy analysis expertis**e is available to help teams develop and commission quality interventions that support women's participation in DM.
- **Role model good practice** in all processes (see Beyond Consultations Tool). **Promote women's leadership** across sectors by all staff. HMG uses its social and political capital to link women leaders with decision makers.
- Proactively identify **risks for women engaging as change agents** at the portfolio and intervention level and develop portfolio level strategies to mitigate risks.

DON'T

- **Work in silos** within departments or within sectors and interventions.
- **Limit interactions** with women organisations and women leaders to staff leading on WPS and gender equality. Democratise and own these relationships at all levels and in all sectors.
- **Be extractive** in engagement with women's organisations and women leaders. Engagement needs to be systematic, based on partnerships and have mutual benefits.

4.3.3.   HMG diplomacy and influencing

Diplomatic engagement has a key role to support women's participation in DM. The UK has influence as a member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), its global leadership on international development, and its important roles in networks like the Commonwealth, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The UK, across its diplomatic missions maintains influential relationships with diverse political, social and economic actors who are also key actors for women's political participation (WPP).

Areas	Tools and examples
Strategic dialogue with bilateral partners	The UK can support collective action with like-minded bilateral partners to influence broader international stakeholder groups. Dialogue can focus on identifying feasible actions and joint messages to support women's participation in DM. In contexts where the UK supports conflict prevention, reduction and transitions through coalitions with other partners, the UK can show-case approaches that work and encourage others to scale up effective practices: • Informal and formal gender champions groups with key bilateral partners to coordinate and amplify messages. • Active participation and chairing of Gender donor groups with a priority focus on WPP. • Championing women's participation as a core agenda of political, humanitarian and peacebuilding bilateral partners' and Head of Missions groups.

Areas	Tools and examples
Influencing multilateral architecture to implement WPS commitments	The UK can systematically engage with the multilateral architecture to support commitments to women's participation in DM and hold institutions to account for delivery of existing commitments: • Proactive engagement in support of Women Envoys. • Proactive engagement with UN Missions to ensure guidelines to promote participation are being implemented. For example, ensure UN missions visiting countries include meetings with WROs and gender experts to discuss women's participation. • Ensure Peacekeeping Mandate Renewals include locally relevant language promoting women's participation. • Encourage close coordination between UNDP, UN Women and the UN's Political Mission to support women's political participation and hold actors to account for delivery of commitments. • Advocate for IFIs to prioritise women's participation in DM as part of their dialogue with partner governments, and as part of their practice when developing support packages. • Proactive engagement with the humanitarian system to advance commitments to women's participation in DM at all levels.
Engaging with WROs and providing platforms for women's voices	The UK can systematically engage with WROs, support their initiatives and amplify their voices by integrating their messages into strategic dialogue with bilateral and multilateral partners and lobbying host governments, political parties and other conflict parties: • Cultivating diverse and systematic relationships with a wide range of WRO and women activists at all levels – at post, regional and international level - with regular formal and informal meetings which inform UK messages. • Facilitating dialogue and direct engagement and partnerships between WROs and those parts of the UK machinery that are directly involved in shaping and influencing relevant DM processes (Ambassadors, Heads of Political Sections, Governance and Conflict advisers, Stabilisation Advisers, Humanitarian Advisers). • Identifying creative strategies to facilitate relationships between WROs and Women Human Rights Defenders and political and security DMs.
In-country lobbying with host governments, conflict parties, and political parties	Lobbying can focus on amplifying women's voices and making the case for the importance of women's inclusion in DM, for example in the design of peace processes, national laws, or policies and systems to promote changes supportive of women's participation: • Develop an HMG influencing strategy/core brief for WPP. • Communications strategy and strategic communications integrate a focus on women's participation – e.g. access to briefing for women journalists and women's organisations, visibility and support for women leaders across society. • Avoid deploying all male UK delegations to "lecture" DMs on women's participation.
Leadership and support on women's participation at the UN and other multilateral (ML) fora	The UK can use its soft influence to continue to provide leadership and amplify messages towards formal and informal multilateral fora. • High level messages promoting women's participation delivered in the UN Security Council, and in UK engagement with important multilateral fora for regional peace building efforts such as the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, OCDE and NATO. • Invite WROs, women peacebuilders and organisations, women human rights defenders and other civil society representatives to informally brief the Security Council/other ML fora on their assessment of the situation and/or on how a particular peace operation is implementing commitments to women's participation. • When inviting women peacebuilders and civil society organisations to brief the UN Security Council/other ML fora, or to international conferences, apply **Beyond Consultations** good practice. • Show-case work and recognise female leaders and activists (in line with their wishes). • Support the SG's gender parity strategy, i.e. the nomination of greater number of women leaders in key multilateral positions, including in Peace Keeping Operations and Humanitarian Coordinator roles and in Envoy roles.
Defence diplomacy engagement (see Guidance on SO 2 for more detail)	• Advocate for partners that are Troop Contributing Countries and Police Contributing Countries (TCC and PCC) to increase the numbers of women that they deploy and encourage countries to join the **Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations**, aimed at addressing barriers for women in uniform deployed into military and police roles in UN peacekeeping. • During routine diplomatic and defence engagement, encourage partners to increase the number of female candidates nominated for UK-provided courses, and to highlight that the MOD requires that 15% of places on international Tier One UK-funded courses are reserved for international women officers. • Invitations to training courses can encourage applications from female candidates or set aside a minimum number of spaces for female participants as appropriate. Where numbers are low in a particular branch of the security services, the UK can encourage nominations of more junior female candidates with leadership potential or female candidates with potential to be re-trained in functions that will be deployed on peace operations.[103]

4.3.4. Stand-alone programming

Wherever possible, dedicated programming to support women's participation in DM should be developed as part of HMG's core peacebuilding and state building strategies.

Gender programmes with a focus on women's political empowerment or advancing women's leadership within institutions aim to shift structural barriers for women's participation and create an enabling environment for gender equality. Stand-alone gender programmes should be designed with strong synergies into the broader HMG portfolio to avoid risks of being siloed. In order to deliver change at scale they need to be adequately resourced and take a long-term view to change.
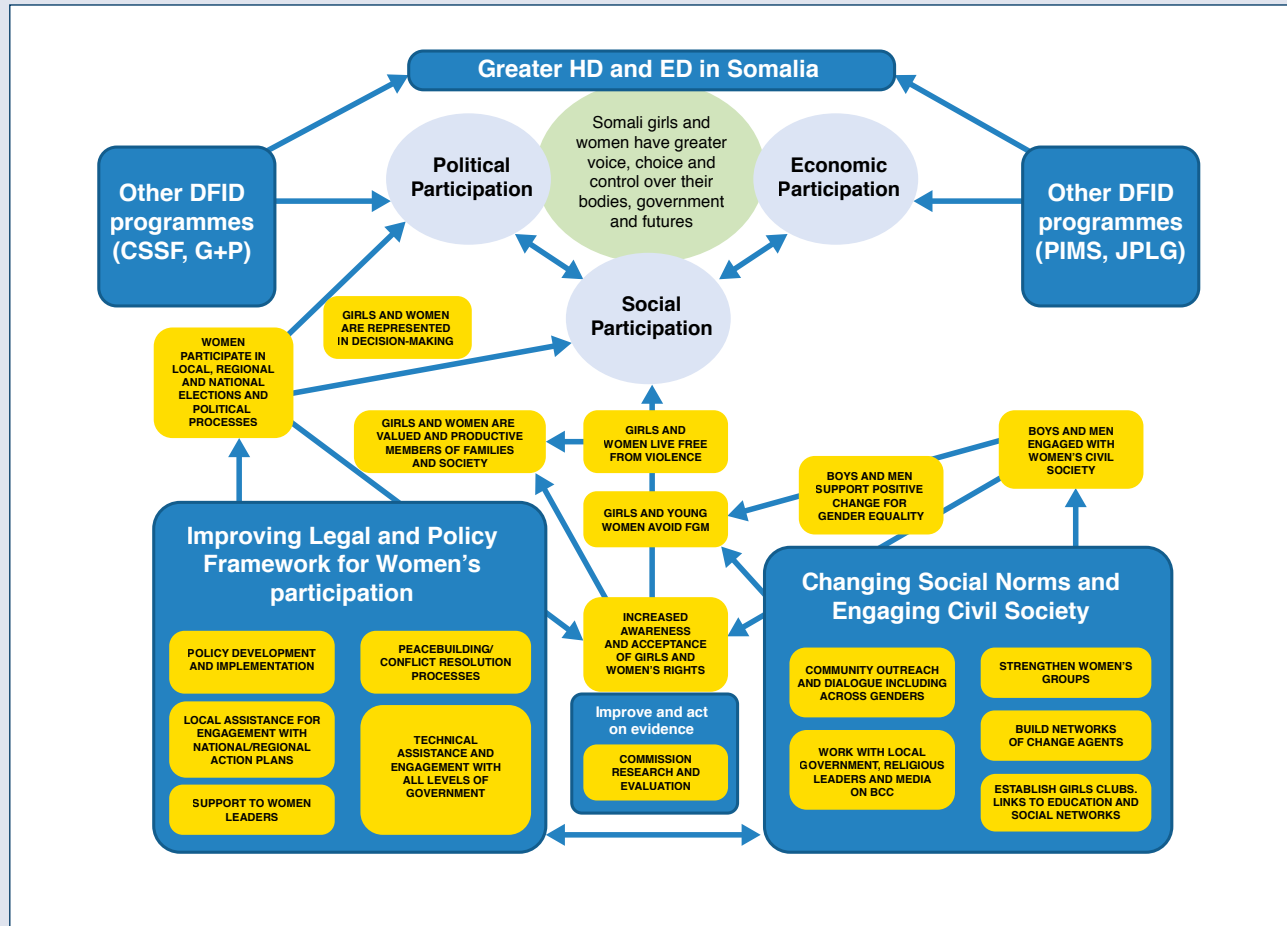
Women's political empowerment (WPE) programming can be designed as a dedicated component of broader peacebuilding and state building programmes, alongside mainstreaming approaches. In these programmes, WPP and empowerment are identified among the core objectives from the outset and are integrated into ToCs. They are resourced substantively during design and implementation. **Funding to women's organisations and networks working on WPS in FCAS can** be designed as a stand-alone gender programme intervention or as a stand-alone component of broader peacebuilding and state-building programmes.

Box 11: Voices for Change - Improving the Enabling Environment for Adolescent Girls and Women in Nigeria (2012 – 2017)

Voices for Change (V4C) was an innovative, large-scale gender-transformative programme that aimed to strengthen the enabling environment for girls and women's empowerment in Nigeria. The programme combined interventions at the individual, societal and structural level to support women and girls to make informed decisions and life choices and shift gender norms through a diffusion model, targeting influencers amongst young women and men, traditional leaders and religious leaders. V4C also implemented a digital campaign which promoted gender-equitable values for young people to aspire to. A large-scale, end-line study found that attitudes of young men and women towards women taking leadership roles and behaviours towards women's DM in the household had improved. The programme used **social network theory** to identify and engage key influencers – connected young people and custodians of social norms in society, such as religious and traditional leaders, to shift attitudes and behaviours including on women's leadership. V4C supported the passing of two pieces of landmark legislation (Full Case Study - **Thinking and Working Politically for Legal Reform on Gender Equality**). At the local level – mainly driven by participants to the programme themselves - a number of changes to both formal and informal institutional structures were noted. For example, changes in policy on women's leadership in student bodies and institutionalising women leader's participation in traditional leaders' structures (Case Study – **Traditional Leaders**). Clubs in tertiary education institutions and state level platforms for including women in politics supported broader movement building and advocacy, resulting in successful female candidatures for leadership positions in provincial parliaments and Unions. (**Source**: based on DFID **PCR** 2017 and **ITAD Legacy Outcome Paper 2017**).

Box 12: Example of a Theory of Change (ToC) - FCDO Somalia SNAP programme (Source: PCR 2021)

The Social Norms and Participation programme (SNAP) in Somalia worked with a UN Women and UNDP to support Somali WPP in elections and other political processes. At the same time, it worked with different INGOs to shift harmful social norms at the local level, working with community organisations. The ToC below shows how different strands of the programme were designed and interacted with other FCDO Somalia programmes to support women's social, economic and political participation.

Examples of integrating WPE components into peacebuilding and stability funding	
Funding windows for women's organisations Support structures for participation and influencing	In Myanmar, the Peace Fund supported a WPS window with core funding for WROs to support peacebuilding and reconciliation activities at the local level. The Gender Peace and Security (GPS) window was established in 2016 within the Paung Sie Facility as a targeted funding mechanism to support sub-national organisations seeking to promote gender equality and women's rights in Myanmar. The GPS window has applied a three-pronged approach, including: (1) Core funding provided to the selected organisations, covering staff salaries, office rental, flexible transportation, childcare support, office equipment and communications. (2) Organisational Development and technical support, to enhance organisations' 'institutional strength' to plan and engage more effectively in and towards the peace process. (3) Strategy development aimed at helping partners define and develop their strategic orientation. This three-pronged strategy contributed to increased self-confidence and capacity for organisations to engage and influence DM spaces. It enabled long-term strategic planning and sustainability, agenda setting and locally driven problem-led actions. Organisations improved their networking capabilities, strategic coalitions and recognition in civil society, in communities and in their own households. Increased voice and influence of GPS implementing partners was evident in their work through peacebuilding activities, engaging with legal and policy change, engaging with government bodies and DMs, responding to GBV survivors in their communities, contributing to social norms change and increasing the visibility and status of implementing partners, which shifted their ability to influence. (**Source**: Learning Brief Paung Sie Facility[104]).
Women led early warning and conflict resolution	The FCDO-funded Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme created 'Observatories' in five states to gather and analyse data on VAWG, and established multi stakeholder Observatory Steering Committees (OBSTECs) in the same states. OBSTECS brought together government, CSOs and relevant administration that played a role in tackling violence. The advocacy undertaken by OBSTECs influenced response agencies (including Police, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health) to review policies and practices on VAWG, leading to enhanced responses. The PCR found growing government ownership of the OBSTEC and Observatories influence on other donors. For example, USAID's Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa (REWARD) project used the Observatory model for data collection and analysis tools working with ECOWAS to enhance conflict early warning and response systems to reduce the risk of violence in 15 ECOWAS member states. (**Source**: PCR 2018).
Examples of integrating WPE components into political, governance, citizen engagement and institutional reform	
Women as voters and elected women Women's engagement as agents of change at the grass-root level	The CSSF Pakistan's Consolidating Democracy Programme included a central focus on WPP. The programme adopted multiple strategies operating at different levels targeting individual, collective and systemic change. Interventions included: • supporting policy changes and support for traditionally marginalised women to gain national identity cards and register to vote; • support to Gender and Disability Working Groups to engage and influence the work of the Electoral Commission; • civic education targeting women; and • support to coalition building and capacity building of women representatives in parliament. In the immediate run up to the 2018 elections, the CSSF programme also developed joint programming with the FCDO led AAWAZ programme which supported women as change agents in local communities to engage in local conflict mitigation and social accountability efforts. AAWAZ' local Aagahi hubs -local citizen hubs for women and other marginalised groups – engaged local groups in delivering civic education campaigns for elections. The A4E research on Pakistan found that the *"UK's government's support to democratic spaces, in both demand and supply side programming (such as the AAWAZ and CDIP programmes) has been valuable to generate support towards electoral reforms affording greater protection and inclusion of women voters, and generating capacity at the grass-root level for engaging in participatory processes"*.[105] (**Sources**: CSSF reporting, PCR and A4E).
Women's leadership	As part of its Programme for Democratic Change, FCDO Myanmar supported IFES' flagship women's leadership program, "She Leads" (www.ifes.org/sheleads), which has trained women (including young women, women from conflict affected areas and IDP camps) through beginner, intermediate and advanced courses, as well as programs tailored for women from conflict communities in Shan and Kachin States. As a result of the program, "She Leads" alumnae developed formal and informal personal networks, increased their self-confidence and taken on leadership roles to advance WPP, taking on leadership roles as elected officials, local government leaders and advocates.

4.3.5. Mainstreaming women's participation in decision-making across programmes and policy

All HMG staff should ensure that their initiatives and programmes include analysis and measures to support women to meaningfully participate in influencing DM. Mainstreaming interventions to support women's participation can encompass a very wide range of practices. Key factors for successful mainstreaming are adequate resourcing of mainstreaming and the application of gender expertise in the design of interventions. It is important to combine mainstreaming at the level of interventions with a portfolio approach that identifies strategic priority areas for increasing women's participation with dedicated stand-alone interventions.

No mainstreaming leads to women's exclusion	Design includes limited analysis of gender and power dynamics, and limited identification of barriers to women's participation in DM. Status quo is accepted and reinforced.
Limited mainstreaming risks women's tokenistic participation	The design stage recognises importance of women's participation. Some provisions are made to increase participation, for example requirement that women are represented in all trainings and participate in meetings and committees. But there are no resources dedicated to actively address barriers that women face in accessing and influencing processes. Design ambitions to include women are not followed up or prioritised during implementation. M&E includes data on women's numerical participation at best, but no qualitative analysis of changes in their influence over processes.
Mainstreaming to support meaningful and representative participation in DM	Mainstreaming approach actively identifies gender and power dynamics in DM at the design stage and dedicates resources to address barriers and pursue opportunities during implementation. Contextually informed strategies are designed and implemented. Progress is continually reviewed and interventions are adapted based on learning.

Tools for mainstreaming women's participation in DM across programming and policy:

- **Gender expertise** to support the design and implementation of mainstreaming approaches. Where practitioners are seeking to implement gender training or gender transformative interventions, consider partnering with local WROs to deliver interventions, rather than delivering interventions with international consultants. This is both cost-effective and builds WROs networks and relationships with institutional actors.

- **Mainstreaming participatory approaches** to DM. This can include gender criteria that provide for women's participation in all DM processes supported by programmes and support structures to address barriers for women's meaningful and representative participation.

- **Mainstreaming consultative elements into DM**: Encourage quality consultations with diverse women and women's groups to feed into DM processes. Where HMG practitioners support consultations to inform DM processes, apply principles identified in Beyond Consultation Tool to model good practice.

- **Systematic partnerships with formal and informal groups of women** relevant to the sector are built and down-stream implementing partners are incentivised to develop partnerships with local groups of women, women's organisations and women-led civil society. This can include, for example, earmarking part of **broader funding support to civil society** to WROs.

- Mainstreaming support to **women's leadership in partner institutions**. This can draw on approaches that have been applied in standalone programmes. For example, mainstreaming support to women leadership could include supporting networks of professional women, or networks of retired leaders that provide mentoring and peer-to-peer support. It could also include support to women's participation in activities that could help advance their careers.

- Pilot **gender transformative interventions tackling gender norms and behaviours** with key influencers and DMs (see social norms in evidence of interventions section 4.1). Design should be mindful of length and intensity required to deliver meaningful interventions that address social norms.

Box 13: Women's inclusion in community driven development social accountability mechanisms in the DRC

In Eastern DRC, DFID implemented a large-scale Community Driven Reconstruction Programme, Tuungane, between 2007- 2016, reaching over 1000 villages and 2.6 million people with participatory implementation of local infrastructure and basic services. Design features included a requirement for gender parity in local development committees. Towards the end of its implementation, the programme tested a small-scale gender pilot specifically targeting women and men leaders in committees to increase women's influence in DM. Pilot activities included improving the leaders' skills and tools for gender inclusive leadership by applying participatory social network analysis to identify DM spaces and appreciative inquiry techniques to identify diverse women's needs. Confidence-building and networking between female leaders were facilitated. Activities were applied in two settings: with women leaders-only groups and with mixed leaders' groups. The pilot suggested some promising results with higher levels of engagement and confidence reported by female leaders, although scale-up and rigorous testing was not possible due to the programme coming to an end. Randomized control trials studying short-term and long-term effects of the programme did not show impact of women's participation in Tuungane supported committees on broader perceptions of gender roles. The RCT showed increased participation of women in other village committees, but the result was not statistically significant. The findings of the gender pilot and impact evaluations suggest that in addition to promoting women's physical representation in committees, programmes need to design and test complementary gender interventions to support women's meaningful participation and transform their DM roles. **Source**: Based on PCR, IRC's Gender Pilot Assessment 2016 and WB Policy Research Paper, **Assessing the longer term impacts of community-driven development programs**, 2020.

Considerations across programming and policy areas relevant to WPS

Peacekeeping:	Gender-based violence:	Humanitarian response:	Security and justice:
• Increase women represented in leadership of civilian and Military Peace operations, and as part of TCC and PCC contingents. • Meaningful consultations with diverse WROs, WPS and civil society. • Consultations with women in communities with active PKs are done in line with good practice. • Document good practice through vignettes and scenarios used in pre-deployment training. The **Guidance Note on SO 2** provides more detailed guidance on how to promote women's leadership in peacekeeping.	• Mainstream interventions to prevent and respond to violence against politically active women, WHRD and WPBs into VAWG programming. • Support local WROs working on GBV to engage in DM processes to make voices of survivors heard (whilst respecting safeguarding and safety protocols). • Support women-led early warning mechanisms that track data on violence against women. The **Guidance Note on SO 3** provides more detailed guidance on how to design interventions to prevent and respond to VAWG.	• AAP: Meaningful and representative women's participation as part of Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP), Citizen Engagement and SEAH. • Localisation agenda: Representation and participation of local WROs and women-led CSOs in humanitarian architecture (Cluster system). • Funding: Increase funding to WRO and women-led CSOs for implementation of response through humanitarian mechanisms. • Institutional: Support UN SG in ensuring parity in leadership in UN organisation leadership in the humanitarian architecture. • Protection: mainstream protection for WHRDs and women peacebuilders into protection frameworks. The **Guidance Note on SO 4** provides more detailed guidance on engaging with the humanitarian system.	• Funding to women groups engaging in security policy dialogues. • Support participation of diverse women in community level security management mechanisms. • Mitigating risks of women's exclusion when working with male dominated traditional dispute resolution mechanisms by identifying pathways for women's increased participation and influence in these mechanisms. • Promoting women's career advancement within security sector institutions. • Mainstreaming prevention and responses to violence against political women, WHRD and women peacebuilders into interventions seeking to address VAWG. The Guidance Note on SO 5 provides more detailed guidance on engaging with the Security and Justice sector.

4.3.6.   Monitoring and learning from interventions to promote women's participation.

Key **considerations** include:

- Focus on measuring **changes in power relationships**, not numbers of women who participated.
- Promote **participatory M&E methods and tools. Role model women's meaningful and representative participation as part of the implementation of these tools**. Use reviews, field visits and beneficiary feedback mechanisms, role model good practice for meaningful participation.
- Use monitoring to support continued learning from interventions, **applying methods that are suitable for adaptive programming**, for example[106]:
  - **Outcome harvesting, outcome mapping, most significant change approaches** that focus on measuring changes in relationships between stakeholders.
  - **Action research** into changes in power dynamics.
  - **Peer researchers and peer monitors** to highlight experiences of hard-to-reach groups of women (see box 13 on La Pépinière M&E working with peers).
  - Social network analysis and measuring changes in social norms to assess how power relationships evolve over time (see box 11 on V4C).
  - **Combine quantitative and qualitative M&E approaches** to measure changes.
- Document and share learning systematically.

Examples of indicators and tools for measuring women's political participation:

Quantitative indicators	Perception indicators for women's influence	Social norms indicators[107]
• Number/% of women who are chair/co-chair or hold other influential roles in local committees. • Number/% of women in DM roles (parliament, cabinet, local government, senior levels of core institutions (finance, security), customary leadership. • % women in local committees' leadership. • % of local committees where women's membership is above 30%. • # of incidents of physical, sexual, psychological violence against women participating in DM. • # and type of security incidents involving WHRDs. • # postings with online harassment, abuse and bullying against politically-active women.	• % of women who feel that decision-makers are addressing their concerns. • % of women who feel that they can influence decision makers. **Indicators measuring broader shifts/enabling environment alongside political participation (indirect measures):** • women's DM autonomy. • women's participation and influence in the household and community DM. • changes in men and women's division of labour, women's ability to access and control assets.	**Norm** = Dominant expectation (or rule) of behaviour shared within a cultural or social group). Indicators should aim to measure an individual's perception of how common the behaviour is, the behaviour, factors influencing the behaviour and the sanctions or rewards driving the norm. <u>Examples</u> % of respondents who practice *X behaviour (e.g. women do not speak in public)*. % of respondents who think that *X behaviour* should stop in their communities. % of respondents who believe that *X norm* still holds. % of respondents who think that most people support *X behaviour* in their community/and believe that *X norm* still holds. % of respondents who can identify negative consequences for abandoning *X behaviour.* **Stereotype** = a widely held expectation about a group's personality, attitudes and behaviour (e.g. women are less dominant than men). Example of measuring **attitudes**: % of men/women who believe men make better leaders. % of women who feel they are able to express political opinions without fear.

Systematic disaggregation of quantitative data by socio-economic status, rural/urban, minority status – religion, ethnicity (if feasible from a protection perspective), disability status, or other categories relevant to the context

Qualitative

- **Document stories of change**: e.g. change in practices, or informal polices. **Most significant change techniques** involve selecting change stories that appear most significant through rigorous processes and feeding information back to the local level.
- **Qualitative tools** to track the quality of collective efforts towards advancing specific reforms, e.g. scales measuring progress on policy reforms).
- **Record and track women's inputs** in DM meetings, and analyse information to identify blockages or improvements. **Qualitative analysis** of the extent to which outcomes of decisions reflect priorities raised by women (for example analysis of gender sensitive provisions in peace agreements, analysis of implementation of gender-sensitive provisions compared to other provisions).
- **Vignettes** and case studies.

Box 14: Case study - Peer-to-peer led M&E

In the DRC, La Pépinière trained girls as peer researchers to identify the key barriers and opportunities for girls' empowerment in Kinshasa. The peer researchers were involved in the design of pilot projects to support girls' empowerment. The M&E system for the pilot projects applied a range of quantitative and qualitative strategies. The peer researchers conducted regular interviews with the pilot participants to collect M&E data. Analysis found that the participatory process involving peers was effective in gathering M&E information that would normally remain hidden from monitors. The peer-to-peer M&E strategy could also be explored as a gender transformative strategy as participants reportedly experienced the peer-monitors as empowered and empowering role models to aspire to. Recognising these benefits, young women trained as peer monitors were engaged by other donors to conduct monitoring of activities with adolescent girls and young women in Kinshasa. **Source**: Discussions with project participants.

4.3.7. Identifying and managing risks[108]

It is crucial to identify and mitigate risks when implementing interventions to support women's participation in DM. Risks are context specific, but the table below outlines some common risks and examples of mitigating actions.

Risk	Example of mitigating actions
Key stakeholders – such as political and traditional leaders, influential family members– oppose women's participation in DM.	• Conduct risk assessments jointly with women and girls, and develop joint protection plans and guidelines. • Monitor what stakeholders are communicating about women's participation in DM. • Engage proactively with stakeholders and develop contextually appropriate messages on the importance of women's participation together with women groups. • Work with male champions amongst stakeholders to influence others.
Women's participation in DM supported by the programme exposes them to risks of violence and backlash.	• Ensure implementing partners of interventions - including organisers of conferences -have mechanisms, resources and protocols in place to mitigate risks and develop individual security plans if necessary. • Stay in contact with women at risk throughout interventions to monitor and mitigate risks. • Support training and institutional capacity development on personal security, digital security, and self-care/ mental health and wellbeing for women peacebuilders and their organizations. • Adapt public messaging in support of women at risk of violence to their needs and requests – discreetly low key or by providing visible public recognition and public statements. Do not engage media or other stakeholders without first consulting with women at risk. • Where requested by WHRD and WPBs- lobby for protection measures – both through reforms of policies and laws and in support of individuals at risk. • Link women activists that are at immediate risk of violence with last resort support options that provide assistance. (1) **Protect Defenders EU** offers practical support and relocation grants for human rights defenders at immediate risks; (2) **Front Line** Defenders provides 24-hour support to human rights defenders at immediate risk.
Women's participation in DM supported by the programme exposes them to risks of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.	• Ensure all implementing partners have robust safeguarding policies in place. • Ensure HMG and partner organisations' safeguarding guidelines are implemented, with particular focus on mitigating risks for adolescent girls and young women and vulnerable adult women. • Facilitate spaces to build mutual understanding and ownership of safeguarding policies with women's organisations, and work with implementing partners to adapt protocols to local needs and context together with adult women.
Women's participation in DM is captured by a narrow set of actors.	• Approach each DM process and space with a fresh look to consider who needs to be involved. • Use contextual analysis to identify those specifically and/or traditionally excluded in each context, and strategies to address their specific barriers they face in accessing and influencing the DM process concerned. • Make an effort for consultative processes to engage women beyond the 'usual suspects'.
"Consultation fatigue" amongst women and women groups.	• Engage women in setting the agenda for consultations so that the issues that matter most to them are covered. • Ensure women and girls benefit from participation. • Provide feedback on how information gathered in consultations was used to inform decisions.
HMG's data security and media engagement puts women at risk.	• Ensure confidentiality and data security. When there is information about threats, only share information with consent from women at risk. Do not share women's personal contact information without their permission. • Ensure risks associated with media coverage, social media, photographs, disclosure and who to contact with specific concerns are all included in safety and safeguarding protocols.

Good Practice: Protection of Women Peacebuilders

ICAN developed a **Protection Framework for Women Peacebuilders**, which includes detailed guidance on how to protect women peacemakers:

- **Building a Legal and Political Safety Net for Women Peacebuilders:** actions for those working on international, national and institutional policies that could be improved to better protect women peacebuilders, including counterterrorism and violent extremism policies, and human rights monitoring frameworks.

- **Prevention and Mitigation of Threats Against Women Peacebuilders in the Field:** practical steps to reduce risk of, prepare for and respond to threats, harassment and attacks women peacebuilders face.

- **Security for Women Peacebuilders at the Peace Table and in International Spaces:** practical steps to ensure women's safe participation in international events such as peace negotiations and security council briefings.

- **Emergency Relocation and Assistance for Women Peacebuilders:** actions to facilitate emergency relocation and assistance as needed, in the case of acute threats.

Examples of Programming and Monitoring Guidance to Prevent Violence against Women Politicians

The National Democratic Institute (NDI)'s (2018) #NotTheCost Programme Guidance for Stopping Violence against Women in Politics (VAWP) includes several specific recommendations on preventing digital harassment against women politicians on how to: integrate online issues into training and mentoring for women candidates; share coping strategies on how to decrease vulnerability and respond effectively to online attacks; raise awareness across justice and security sectors on the existence of legislation on violence against women where it exists; and train media representatives to prevent online VAWP. NDI have also produced an online form for reporting violence against women in politics, launched in November 2016, which allows women and men worldwide to submit electronic reports of violence against politically active women safely and securely (no details available on effectiveness or usage). UNDP and UN Women's (2015) programming guide on Violence Against Women in Elections makes suggestions of indicators to measure in pre-election phase (# posts of online harassment targeting women) and post-electoral period (# postings with online harassment and bullying against women elected officials) (Ballington and Bardall, 2015). **Source**: Case study highlighted in Erika Fraser and Sophie Stevens, Digital Harassment of Women Leaders: A review of the evidence, VAWG Helpdesk Research Report, October 2018.

Annexes

A. HMG resources

- FCDO Gender and Conflict Team for policy guidance.
- FCDO Social Development Advisers working in teams across missions and HQ.
- CSSF Gender Advisers providing regional and global support to CSSF projects.
- Access targeted WPS gender expertise through the Stabilisation Unit's Civilian Stabilisation Group.

Relevant **helpdesks** for UK Government practitioners:

- **VAWG Helpdesk**: access to senior VAWG experts to provide research and evidence on VAWG, including violence against politically active women and women human rights defenders, and digital violence against women.
- **Disability Inclusion Helpdesk**: access to senior disability experts to provide research and advice on disability inclusion in programming and policy.
- **Safeguarding Resources and Support Hub**: access to expertise to provide resources and advice on safeguarding.
- **Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development (K4D)**: supports UK government practitioners with evidence and learning for greater development impact. Its **Research Helpdesk** provides rapid research of evidence, complex emerging issues reports. It can also facilitate **Learning Journeys**, and **Learning Products**.

B. How to counter arguments pushing back on women's participation

ICAN's Better Peace Tool[109] includes a detailed discussion of common negative arguments practitioners may encounter when promoting women's participation in track I processes and includes detailed strategies for countering arguments. The points below summarise some of the most common arguments:

- *"If women are physically present in the room, they have participated in DM"*: A number of factors will shape how far women will be able to speak, be heard, and influence decisions. Their presence is not the same as participation and does not resolve marginalisation. Resources and time need to be allocated to make women's participation meaningful.
- *"Women's inclusion can wait until later"*: Research shows that the earlier women are included, the more likely it is that they will participate substantively in later stages. For example, references to women's inclusion in early cease fires can provide a basis for making a strong case for women's inclusion in later stages. Delaying participation is detrimental for women's long-term inclusion.
- *"Women's participation is a cultural or religious issue and international actors should not get involved – it doesn't belong on the negotiating table"*: Women's participation is a political issue and belongs on the negotiating table that defines how power will be shared. In addition, a range of other issues that may be on the negotiating table have roots based on grievances that are shaped by cultural factors – for example the exclusion of an ethnic minority. Yet, that does not keep international actors from getting involved.
- *Women can participate but are only there to speak about "women's issues":* Women should speak and influence all issues relevant to their lives, not just women's issues. Limiting their role to speaking on behalf of women's issues only limits the potential benefits of their inclusion for lasting inclusive peace.
- *"There are no capable women to engage in DM processes":* Capable women leaders are active in political groups, institutions, civil society and local peacebuilding activities. Even where capacity has been made visible – for example in women mediators' networks – these capabilities are not always systematically drawn upon suggesting an issue of political will, not capacity.
- *"Involving new actors like women will threaten already fragile negotiations":* Research shows that including women makes it more likely parties find agreement. Research[110] on power-sharing agreements has found that both references to women in peace agreements, and human rights provisions in peace agreements are frequent and have increased over time, indicating that forms of accountability and inclusion are not routinely viewed as threatening.

C: Gendered PEA and Gender-sensitive Conflict Analysis Tools

To help identify entry points to support women's participation in DM, it is important that gender analysis informs power analysis that practitioners use to develop their priorities and strategies to engage in a conflict setting.

- **Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS)**: Gendered analysis of conflict and power should be included, with particular attention to understanding different roles men and women are taking in fuelling conflict and building peace at all levels and how women can be supported to participate in DM. To help understand and advance women's decision-making roles, gender analysis should also be systematically included in elite bargains analysis, including identification of elite entry points and non-elite entry points.

- **Conciliation Resources Gender and Conflict Analysis Toolkit for peacebuilders** provides detailed guidance on how to conduct a gendered conflict analysis. The toolkit includes practical exercises on women's participation in peace processes, including exercises to help promote women's participation.

- **Political Economy Analysis (PEA)** is used to analyse a context, or a specific question or problem to help practitioners "think and work politically" to address problems and develop theories of change. PEA tools are used across programming and policy design and adaptation, but gender analysis is still often absent from these. For more on how to integrate gender into political economy analysis see this **guidance note** by the Gender and Development Network.

- **Politically informed approaches to working on gender equality in fragile states:** This OECD publication makes the case for working politically on gender equality in fragile states and explores different tools to integrate gender analysis and power analysis.

- **Gender and elite bargains:** This paper makes the case for making elite bargains more inclusive and identifies entry points for promoting women's participation in elite bargains.

Endnotes

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18 UN Women, **Facts and Figures**, (accessed February 2021).

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