



**Developing a Conflict Sensitivity, Gender Equality
and Social Inclusion Assessment Framework**
GESI and Safeguarding Tips for Local Organizations

December 2023

How can we better understand conflict and inclusion dynamics, how they interact and how they could affect our development efforts?

Enhancing Inclusion and Safeguarding in Development Programming: Resources for Local Partners

FHI 360 has developed and contributed to a suite of resources that support local organizations to enhance their Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Safeguarding capacity. These tools are a fundamental part of FHI 360's role as a development partner and advances our commitment to inclusive development, safeguarding and locally led development. Visit our website (www.fhi360.org) for more information on our GESI and Safeguarding work.

We welcome feedback via [this form](#).

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Conflict Sensitivity (CS) and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approaches aim to ensure that development interventions consider the different needs of community members, especially those who are marginalized, to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities and conflicts and negative unintended consequences. Programs and initiatives that successfully address inequalities and potential conflict drivers and strengthen the impact of existing connectors make communities stronger, peaceful and more united.

Crafted to assist you during the assessment phase of the project cycle, this resource is designed to ensure that the foundation for any intervention emphasizes inclusivity and conflict awareness. It is relevant for all projects regardless of regional and topical focuses, recognizing that CS and GESI approaches are essential to any activity.

By focusing on the assessment phase, implementers can set the stage for the comprehensive integration of these approaches throughout the project life cycle, thereby enhancing program outcomes.

Integrating CS and GESI into the project design means linking the findings of the CS and GESI assessment to the activities and objectives of the project. Even if the program's purpose and objectives are not explicitly oriented toward gender equality, social inclusion or addressing and eliminating violence, the activities should include specific needs and challenges of women, men, girls, boys and other marginalized groups identified during the CS and GESI assessment. Otherwise, the intervention can unintentionally generate more gender and social inequalities, harm or violence.

This resource will predominantly focus on the first step of the assessment process, **Defining Your Assessment Framework**. It includes conceptual background information and practical application resources that will help you answer the following question:

How do I conduct assessments that ensure that the design of my activities is grounded in a deep understanding of relevant inclusion and conflict dynamics in the local context and prioritizes inclusivity and conflict sensitivity?

You will find these tips useful if:

- You are a project manager, coordinator or practitioner seeking to design and implement initiatives that have a significant impact on communities.
- You are planning operations or projects in conflict-affected regions.
- You aim to enhance your staff's understanding of CS and GESI within a specific context, recognizing the potential impact on their roles and responsibilities within a program.
- You are committed to advancing GESI and CS and want to apply these principles from the very beginning of your project.

Key Terms

Reviewing the definitions of key terms related to CS and GESI will help you better understand these concepts as you see them throughout this resource.

Conflict and Violence: *Conflict* is present when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually incompatible goals. Conflict exists on a continuum. When channeled constructively for resolution processes, conflict can yield benefits. However, conflict can also manifest violently, as seen in warfare. *Violence* is the intentional use of physical force or power, whether threatened or actual, against another individual, group or community, resulting in (or having a high likelihood of resulting in) injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

Conflict Sensitivity: The ability to understand the context in which you operate; to understand the interaction between your intervention and the context (how the context affects the intervention and how the intervention affects the context); and to act upon the understanding of this interaction to avoid negative effects and maximize positive effects.

Connectors and Dividers: *Connectors* are capacities for conflict prevention and peace. They are the attitudes, behaviors, experiences, systems and structures that connect local actors. *Dividers* are sources of tensions within and between actors. Connectors and dividers can be analyzed by using the SAVES categories:

<i>Systems and Institutions:</i> Formal and informal structures that divide or connect people.	<i>Attitudes and Actions:</i> Things people say and do that divide or connect.	<i>Values and Interests:</i> Things people believe or prioritize that divide or connect.	<i>Experiences:</i> Memories of historical or recent events that divide or connect.	<i>Symbols and Occasions:</i> Public images or events that divide or connect.
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Do No Harm (DNH): DNH is a principle to guide the design and implementation of humanitarian and development activities. It relates to looking for the potential harm that can be caused by interventions and avoiding or mitigating the potential negative impacts avoiding triggering/sustaining tensions or conflict.

Gender Equality: Seeking gender equality, to bring about a more inclusive and equal society, involves working with men and boys, women and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles and responsibilities at home, in the workplace and in the community. Genuine gender equality means more than parity in numbers or laws on the books; it means expanding freedoms and improving overall quality of life so that equality is achieved without sacrificing gains for males or females.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI): Integrating GESI into activities means integrating the perspectives and needs of all members of a community, regardless of their gender, social status or background with the aim of overcoming systemic inequalities and promoting equal participation and benefits for everyone. GESI approaches recognize that certain groups, such as women, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities as well as sexual and gender minority (SGM) populations, are often marginalized and disproportionately impacted by conflicts and development initiatives.

Intersectionality: An approach that deepens and nuances the understanding of gender by examining how gender interacts with other societal markers, such as ethno-religious background, age, social class, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnicity and disability, placing people in different positions of power and privilege, discrimination and exclusion.

Safeguarding: Refers to a development organization's responsibility to put in place effective systems to prevent, mitigate and respond to any type of harm — discrimination, harassment, violence, exploitation, or other abuse — towards personnel or program participants that happens in its work environments or programs. Safeguarding aims to prevent harm from happening in the first place, while ensuring that if misconduct or other harm does occur as a result of a person's engagement with an organization or its programs, there are robust systems in place to respond effectively, including conducting investigations and prioritizing the safety of victims and survivors.

Social Inclusion: "Refers to the ability, opportunity and access of marginalized people to take part in society. This includes rights, freedom, participation in decision-making and access to services and opportunities at all levels of society, from family, community, work and in civil space. In a project, this includes ensuring that the benefits of project activities are fairly distributed." (Networks for Peace, Toolkit for Networks for Peace Project Partners, p. 8).

Understanding the CS and GESI Frameworks and their Interconnection

Before we look in-depth at the intersectional conflict sensitivity (CS) and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment approach, it is important to understand the foundational CS and GESI frameworks that this assessment approach is built upon.

Do No Harm and Conflict Sensitivity: Focus on Dividers and Connectors

Do No Harm (DNH) is a conflict-sensitivity strategy that focuses on minimizing negative impacts. Conflict sensitivity integration extends beyond ensuring that projects don't inadvertently exacerbate conflict dynamics or jeopardize the safety of staff and beneficiaries. Instead, it strives to maximize positive impacts, contributes to reducing tensions and actively seeks to promote peace. At the heart of conflict sensitivity lies a comprehensive analysis of dividers and connectors within communities. Dividers represent sources of tension, mistrust, or suspicion that have historically or could potentially lead to intergroup conflicts. They act as barriers to positive interactions. In contrast, connectors serve as sources of cohesion and trust within a community. These connectors exemplify the local capacities for peace, facilitating positive relationships among diverse groups of people.

GESI: Five Domains for Analysis

Communities are made of various social groups, each having its own unique needs, strengths, opportunities and obstacles. It is essential to integrate GESI principles into your project's assessment phase to ensure that you understand and address the complexities of these groups' social composition. When conducted during the assessment phase of a program, a GESI analysis ensures that your efforts are fair, inclusive and tailored to meet the unique needs of all community members. This analysis not only helps prevent conflicts arising from gender and other social identities but also explores the various dimensions that significantly impact project effectiveness. These dimensions, often referred to as the GESI domains of analysis, are key to unlocking a more comprehensive understanding of your project's social context and its potential impact. They are briefly summarized below:

Domain	What is it?	Why is it important to understand?
Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Examines the legal and regulatory framework that shapes the context in which your project operates. It assesses the laws and policies related to gender equality and social inclusion.	Understanding the legal environment is crucial to ensure your project complies with legal barriers or identifies opportunities to promote and advocate for GESI.
Cultural Norms, Beliefs and Expectations	Explores cultural norms, beliefs and societal expectations within the community where your project is implemented.	It seeks to understand how these cultural factors influence behavior and decision-making and how they can shape how communities respond to development initiatives.
Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Analyzing gender roles and responsibilities, as well as how time is allocated within the community, sheds light on the distribution of tasks and the daily lives of men and women.	Understanding these dynamics helps identify potential areas for empowerment and change. It ensures that project interventions consider and respect existing gender roles and responsibilities.
Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Assesses how assets and resources, such as land finance or education, are distributed among community members, particularly in terms of gender.	Identifying disparities in resource access and control helps target interventions to bridge gaps, empower marginalized groups and promote equity and inclusivity.
Patterns of Power and Decision-making	Focuses on power dynamics within the community. It examines who holds power, how decisions are made and who has decision-making authority.	Recognizing power structures and influencers is vital for equitable project design. Engaging key stakeholders and influencers amplifies project acceptance and impact.

How are CS and GESI interconnected?

Identity can be a driver of conflict and violence:

- Men and boys may be socialized to use violence to gain power, social status and economic prestige, but also to protect their community and groups' interests (e.g., gangs or political parties). Men and boys from certain age groups (e.g., adolescents) or from certain socioeconomic groups may be more at risk of recruitment into violent or extremist groups than others due to, for example, a lack of other employment opportunities.
- Women and girls may support or urge men to use violence to protect or improve their family or community situation or may themselves use violence to break out of cycles of violence and restrictive gender norms.
- Deeply rooted norms that dictate certain groups' power within society could lead to tension and violence.

Conflict and violence create particular vulnerabilities for men, women, young people, LGBTQIA+¹ persons and other marginalized community members:

- Men and boys, especially adolescent men from socio-economically marginalized groups, are the most likely to be killed or wounded by direct physical violence.
- Women and girls, especially those in otherwise vulnerable situations, not only face a disproportionately heightened risk of gender-based violence, but they are also often expected to take up additional household and economic responsibilities if male household members have to flee or are casualties of conflict and violence.
- Gender-diverse persons and members of the LGBTQIA+ community face increased homo- and transphobic violence in situations of conflict.
- Persons with disabilities experience an increased risk of injury, death and other serious harm. Inaccessible emergency information, evacuation routes and humanitarian assistance exacerbate harm in conflict situations.² Older people experience similar barriers to evacuation and recovering their livelihoods during a disaster.³
- Members of ethnic or religious minorities could be specifically targeted in times of violence, leading to significant loss of life and displacement among them.
- Children caught up in violent conflict are not only at risk of death or injury but also of displacement, trafficking, abuse and exploitation, which have long-term impacts on their physical and mental wellbeing.⁴

When thinking about conflict situations, we need to think beyond armed violence. The above dynamics are equally present, even if less lethal, in conflicts at the workplace, in school or in families. Furthermore, considering gender and conflict drivers and effects needs an intersectional approach, as the impacts will vary for women, men, girls, boys and gender-diverse persons of different ages, socioeconomic classes, education levels and social networks, among other factors. Particular attention should be paid to how gender, agency and vulnerability play out for other potentially marginalized persons.

Another important consideration is to ensure that internal project decisions — including those related to operational matters such as human resources and procurement — are sensitive to conflict, gender equality and social inclusion dynamics. Your project and the tools measuring CS and GESI can increase or decrease conflict, gender equality and social inclusion. For example, the people you choose — or do not choose — to work on your assessment team might lead to increased or decreased tensions, which can result in conflicts. Likewise, your choice of staff may promote

¹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual people and those of other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

² [Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre: Conflict and Persons with Disabilities](#)

³ [SCS Implementation Tips for USAID Partners](#)

⁴ [UNICEF: Children Under Attack](#)

gender equality and diversity—or not. Approaching sensitive issues, such as certain questions around issues of gender, sexuality, religion and politics can (without careful consideration) risk increasing conflict.

Analyses of conflict drivers and dynamics that do not consider marginalized communities risk perpetuating inequality and harm. Thus, there is a need to think through CS and GESI in parallel and to support dialogue and training on these issues and concepts, so the project team can effectively address and mitigate, rather than perpetuate, the inequities found in society.

Why should you consider a combined Conflict Sensitivity and GESI assessment?

When CS and GESI are integrated throughout a program cycle, beginning with the assessment phase, they contribute to a holistic and responsive program that addresses the diverse needs of all individuals. This combined approach ensures that programming maximizes its impact and effectiveness and can also help build a resilient system that can adapt to the evolving needs and challenges of all groups in a community. It places the dignity, safety and empowerment of all individuals at the forefront, ensuring that programming becomes a force for positive change. Considering the specific needs of marginalized groups and understanding potential conflict drivers will help design activities that promote inclusion, contribute positively to conflict prevention and foster sustainable and peaceful development.

Using CS and GESI can significantly improve the intervention's positive results and reduce both unwanted consequences and negative backlash on beneficiaries, as well as program implementers. In the same way as a context analysis examines social, economic, political and cultural issues to determine the best approach, a CS and GESI assessment examines the root causes, actors and dynamics of conflict or tensions the organization might face. At the same time, it considers the specific experiences of women, men, girls, boys and other marginalized groups, such as young people, people with disabilities, religious minorities and Indigenous communities. Understanding the conflict factors, as well as the gender and social dynamics in each context, is crucial to monitoring and evaluating the success of a program and determine whether the intervention had a positive or negative impact. CS and GESI approaches do not guarantee success; however, they are key building blocks for effective interventions.

Integrating Conflict Sensitivity and GESI can help to better achieve goals by:

- **Addressing the root causes of violence/tensions:** Understanding the different levels and types of violence within a context can help identify both the perpetrators and survivors/victims of violence; determine perpetrator motivations, incentives and needs; clarify how and whom can be engaged; and provide a clearer path for how to address the root causes of violence in the intervention.
- **Addressing the needs of the most marginalized and promoting inclusivity:** Determining the specific circumstances of the most marginalized populations will enable the organization to identify opportunities to better respond to their particular needs and interests, allowing for gender transformative and inclusive responses in the intervention.
- **Allowing long-lasting and structural change:** Prioritizing actions that benefit and empower women, girls and marginalized groups will promote equality and inclusion and avoid reinforcing existing inequalities. This focus is crucial to achieving transformative, effective and sustainable change.
- **Avoiding backlash:** Determining how the intervention interacts within each context can help maximize positive and minimize negative outcomes. This requires making all decisions with an awareness of how they could affect power and inter-group relations that may contribute to or increase conflict and violence, gender inequalities or social exclusion.
- **Increasing ownership and representation:** Ensuring the active participation of all — including women, girls and marginalized groups — can help generate a sense of ownership of the intervention and representation.

Main Stages of CS and GESI Assessments

In this section, we provide a brief outline of the main stages required to successfully complete a CS and GESI assessment. These stages will ensure that your team is prepared to effectively collect and analyze data. The findings from this assessment will allow you to integrate CS and GESI principles into your project's objectives and activities.



For additional guidance on any of these stages, please refer to [Resources for Further Learning](#). These resources provide additional background information, assessment strategies and activities to support your team in completing CS and GESI assessments.

In the next section, we will provide a detailed look at the first stage, [Defining Your Assessment Framework](#). The information and learning resources included in this section will set the foundation for your team to complete the remaining steps for a CS and GESI assessment.

Defining Your Assessment Framework

In this section, we provide a detailed look at stage one of executing a CS and GESI assessment, **Defining Your Assessment Framework**. The following two steps will guide you through the process of designing the framework for your CS and GESI assessment. Your framework should be customized to the particular objectives and scope of your planned activities and the context in which they will be implemented.

STEP 1: Reflect on your learning questions

Developing learning questions to inform your context-specific CS and GESI assessment framework will help you seek and obtain targeted and focused insights. Once the learning questions are finalized, you can design appropriate data collection tools and methodologies. Investing time in developing robust learning questions can ultimately lead to more effective and impactful interventions.

The following sections highlight possible learning questions under each of three overarching learning areas related to GESI and conflict sensitivity — and their intersection (see Figure 1). For each of the three learning areas, we have provided a table with illustrative learning questions according to the five columns — one for each of the GESI analysis domains — and conflict sensitivity key categories (divided into conflict factors and factors for peace), as well as relevant examples (in *blue and italics*).



Figure 1: GESI and conflict sensitivity assessment learning

Developing your learning questions for your program’s assessment framework begins here. Facilitate a discussion with key team members to gather diverse insights on potential learning questions that will help you collect actionable data needed for the successful design and implementation of your program. During the discussion, use the illustrative questions under each learning area to help your team brainstorm an initial list of learning questions. You will likely end up with multiple possible learning questions, and you can focus in the next stage on prioritizing among them to identify the ones that are most relevant to your project and your assessment’s goal.

Learning Area 1: Who or what influences peace and conflict dynamics? (see [Table 1](#))

Conflict dynamics are influenced by systems and institutions and entrenched cultural, social and gender norms. For example, traditional gender roles assign specific responsibilities and decision-making authority based on gender or social factors, contributing to conflicts over resource allocation and social status. Additionally, identities such as ethnicity and caste can also serve as conflict drivers where they relate to socioeconomic divisions within the community and unequal access to resources. Systemic factors may include economic disparities, political and legal structures, or historical grievances that create a fertile ground for conflicts. Cultural, social and gender norms can shape the behaviors and expectations of individuals and communities, contributing to tensions and disputes. Including key stakeholders in this exercise will help you gain a deep understanding of the individuals, groups, organizations and entities that hold significant roles in the existing conflict, especially as you dive into factors such as their interests, level of influence and their specific positions in relation to the conflict.

Learning Area 2: How can your project influence peace and conflict dynamics? (see [Table 2](#))

Interventions that are not sensitive to GESI and conflict drivers and dynamics can lead to unintended negative consequences. This includes the potential for sparking conflicts rooted in cultural or identity-based grievances and encountering resistance from those who view the program as disruptive to the existing social order. When programs do not carefully consider GESI principles and conflict dynamics, there is a risk of inadvertently reinforcing traditional gender roles and worsening disparities, which can fuel conflicts based on discrimination. Conversely, programs challenging deeply ingrained cultural, social and gender norms may face resistance from the community, leading to heightened tensions and conflicts as community members perceive the program as a threat to their cultural values. Providing resources, opportunities and skills without adequate conflict-sensitive considerations can intensify competition and disputes, particularly when pre-existing power imbalances are left unaddressed. This backlash can manifest in various forms, such as increased gender-based violence, conflicts over leadership and authority, or the surfacing of underlying tensions that trigger intergroup conflicts.

On the other hand, transforming deeply rooted cultural and gender dynamics can make projects contribute to more inclusive and peaceful community dynamics. Empowering traditionally marginalized groups, promoting intergroup dialogue and integrating conflict prevention and resolution strategies that consider the influence of cultural and gender dynamics can lead to more equitable outcomes and reduce the potential for conflict. Providing traditionally marginalized groups resources, skills and opportunities has the potential to disrupt established dynamics that may be contributing to conflicts, foster more inclusive decision-making processes and reduce conflicts rooted in exclusion and inequality. Gender-sensitive interventions further enhance this impact by actively challenging and reshaping harmful gender norms, promoting more equitable social relationships and reducing incidents of gender-based conflicts and violence. Moreover, by facilitating dialogue among diverse identity groups and encouraging their participation, programs create an environment where biases are addressed and mutual understanding is built, thereby mitigating intergroup conflicts. Finally, active community involvement in all program phases ensures sensitivity to local conflict dynamics and promotes grassroots, sustainable conflict mitigation.

Learning Area 3: How can conflict and peace dynamics impact your project? (see [Table 3](#))

There are a multitude of ways in which gender and social norms and the conflict they influence can impact the way you design and implement an intervention. Addressing gender and social inequalities and integrating conflict sensitivity into program design and implementation can help programs allocate resources equitably, reduce conflicts over project ownership and benefits, enhance inclusivity and community participation, increase cultural appropriateness and acceptance and focus on long-term impact by addressing the root causes of inequality and conflict.

On the other hand, failing to consider gender and social norms, as well as conflict dynamics in program design and implementation, may weaken social cohesion among groups in a community, increase marginalization of some of them, hinder stakeholder collaboration, impede community ownership of program activities and outcomes, undermine their sustainability and result in a wasteful use of resources. Recognizing and addressing these factors is essential to avert these adverse outcomes and ensure the program's effectiveness and sustainability.

Table 1. Who or what influences peace and conflict dynamics?

	Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Cultural Norms, Beliefs Expectations	Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Patterns of Power and Decision-making
<p>Conflict factors</p> <p>What factors, issues or elements are causing conflict or dividing people and how?</p>	<p>What laws, policies, regulations and institutional practices act as barriers to gender equality and social inclusion and cause/contribute/exacerbate tensions and conflict?</p> <p><i>Restrictive religious laws that prohibit women from accessing education and participating in the workforce reinforce gender disparities and potentially lead to social unrest.</i></p>	<p>What cultural norms, beliefs and expectations are hindering GESI and dividing people or groups?</p> <p><i>Deeply rooted norms that dictate specific groups such as females, members of specific castes or Indigenous communities; subservient roles in a specific context may create divisions and tensions.</i></p>	<p>What societal gender roles and responsibilities exert influence on men and women to engage in conflict and violence?</p> <p><i>For example, expectations that men must demonstrate their masculinity by protecting their families may result in men feeling pressured to engage in acts of violence.</i></p>	<p>What are the resources and assets within the community that are unevenly accessed or distributed among different groups, potentially leading to tensions? Which groups are denied access to and authority/control over assets and resources?</p> <p><i>Competition over natural resources can ignite conflicts, as these resources become flashpoints for disputes among different groups. For example, a minority ethnic group may face exclusion from fishing rights in a community where fishing is a primary source of livelihood, leading to tensions and conflicts.</i></p>	<p>What groups are excluded from decision-making processes in domains relevant to your programming?</p> <p><i>Voices of youth and women might be consistently excluded from decision-making processes related to project priorities, which may cause dissatisfaction and frustration and lead to potential conflict.</i></p>
<p>Factors for peace</p> <p>What are the factors that currently connect people across gender and conflict lines?</p>	<p>Which processes, legislation or policies offer opportunities for advancing GESI, resolving divisions and reducing violence? How are women, men, sexual and gender minorities and young people involved in these?</p> <p><i>Legislation requiring diverse representation on community councils, for example, ensures that women, men and marginalized groups can participate in decision-making processes, thereby advancing GESI and reducing divisions.</i></p>	<p>What cultural norms, beliefs and expectations are facilitating GESI and connecting people or groups?</p> <p><i>For example, there may be a deeply held belief in respecting the wisdom of elders. This might be leveraged for intergenerational dialogue on gender equality and conflict resolution.</i></p>	<p>What societal gender roles and responsibilities exert influence on men and women to engage in peacebuilding and conflict mitigation?</p> <p><i>For example, when women are traditionally seen as mediators and peacemakers, they can play key roles in conflict mediation efforts.</i></p>	<p>What are the resources and assets within the community that are fairly accessed or distributed among different groups, potentially contributing to peace? Which groups have access to and authority over assets and resources?</p> <p><i>For example, in a rural community where agricultural land and resources are collectively managed by various social groups, cooperation and solidarity can contribute to social cohesion and unity.</i></p>	<p>What groups are included in decision-making processes in what domains are relevant to your programming?</p> <p><i>For example, Indigenous communities have instituted councils that include representation from elders, women and youth, all actively participating in decisions related to land use. This inclusive mechanism helps mitigate these groups' grievances and inter-group conflicts within the community.</i></p>

Table 2. How can your project influence peace and conflict dynamics?

	Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Cultural Norms, Beliefs and Expectations	Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Patterns of Power and Decision-making
<p>Potential positive programming outcomes</p> <p>How might your programming minimize factors against peace/for conflict?</p>	<p>How can your intervention contribute to improving conflict dynamics that are associated with GESI laws, policies, regulations and institutional practices?</p> <p><i>If you plan to implement training and capacity-building programs for government officials, civil servants, or key stakeholders on human rights issues, your program can lead to an improved understanding and implementation of anti-discrimination laws and policies. When these policies are effectively enforced, they can reduce grievances and potential sources of conflict related to unequal treatment and discrimination against ethnic groups/minorities.</i></p>	<p>How can your intervention contribute to improving conflict dynamics associated with gender, social and cultural norms, beliefs and expectations?</p> <p><i>A program that empowers community leaders and role models who support and exemplify social inclusion can influence community norms and beliefs by demonstrating that social norms can evolve positively.</i></p>	<p>How can your intervention contribute to improving conflict dynamics associated with gender roles, responsibilities and time use?</p> <p><i>A program that educates communities about gender equality can lead to more equitable gender roles. For example, it may encourage men to share household responsibilities, challenge stereotypes and promote a balanced division of labor within households.</i></p>	<p>How can your intervention contribute to improving conflict dynamics associated with access to and control over assets and resources?</p> <p><i>A program that addresses land and property rights issues through the provision of Legal support or capacity-building training on human rights can positively impact the access of economically marginalized groups to these resources.</i></p>	<p>How can your intervention contribute to improving conflict dynamics associated with patterns of power and decision-making?</p> <p><i>A program that actively involves and empowers marginalized communities, such as ethnic minorities, can positively impact patterns of power and decision-making by giving these groups a voice and agency in decision-making processes. Such a program can contribute to more inclusive and equitable power dynamics, thereby mitigating the causes of existing conflicts.</i></p>
<p>Potential negative programming outcomes</p> <p>How might your programming maximize factors against peace/for conflict?</p>	<p>How might your intervention exacerbate conflict dynamics associated with GESI laws, policies, regulations and institutional practices?</p> <p><i>If your programming solely focuses on women, perceptions of discrimination among men can deepen gender-related conflicts around gender equality laws and policies that</i></p>	<p>How might your intervention exacerbate conflict dynamics associated with cultural norms, beliefs and expectations?</p> <p><i>Programs promoting social inclusion may provoke resistance from those who are unwilling to accept change. This backlash can</i></p>	<p>How might your intervention exacerbate conflict dynamics associated with gender roles, responsibilities and time use?</p> <p><i>Programs that introduce changes to gender roles without proper consideration of the local context and culture may lead to unintended negative consequences, such as conflicts within families or communities.</i></p>	<p>How might your intervention exacerbate conflict dynamics associated with access to and control over assets and resources?</p> <p><i>Vocational training programs may unknowingly discriminate against individuals with disabilities, resulting in fewer opportunities and resources compared to participants</i></p>	<p>How might your intervention exacerbate conflict dynamics associated with patterns of power and decision-making?</p> <p><i>A program implemented in a region with multiple ethnic groups that fails to consider their unique needs and disproportionately favors one dominant ethnic group can exacerbate historical tensions and power imbalances. Marginalized</i></p>

	Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Cultural Norms, Beliefs and Expectations	Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Patterns of Power and Decision-making
	<i>mandate equal access to opportunities and resources regardless of gender.</i>	<i>result in greater support for restrictive cultural norms and stronger opposition to inclusive participation, further exacerbating intergroup conflicts.</i>		<i>without disabilities. The more limited access to skills and job opportunities may lead to frustration, resentment and social inequality, all of which can contribute to dividers within a community.</i>	<i>ethnic communities may feel excluded, leading to grievances and interethnic conflicts that can erode social cohesion and further divide the community.</i>

Table 3. How can conflict and peace dynamics impact your project?

	Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Cultural Norms, Beliefs and Expectations	Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Patterns of Power and Decision-making
Enabling Factors How might factors for peace enhance the design and implementation of your program?	How can GESI laws, policies, regulations and institutional practices be leveraged in the design and implementation of your program? <i>In conflict-affected areas, peace agreements and conflict resolution mechanisms can provide a framework for peacebuilding interventions.</i>	How can cultural norms, beliefs and expectations be leveraged in the design and implementation of your program? <i>Some religious groups have traditional peacemaking rituals and ceremonies. The program can integrate and respect these practices, incorporating them into the conflict mitigation process and making them more culturally relevant and acceptable to the community.</i>	How can gender roles, responsibilities and time use be leveraged in the design and implementation of your program? <i>Women's unique strengths in building trust, nurturing empathy and fostering open communication can be leveraged by programs to promote reconciliation within conflict-affected communities.</i>	How can access to and control over assets and resources be leveraged in the design and implementation of your program? <i>Programs can leverage the influence of local resource managers in the community to advocate for equitable access and the fair allocation and distribution of existing resources.</i>	How can patterns of power and decision-making be leveraged in the design and implementation of your program? <i>Programs that align with existing or emerging inclusive governance structures can lead to more effective and coordinated efforts, thus reducing the potential for conflict linked to decision-making and ownership.</i>
Impeding Factors How might factors against peace/for conflict challenge	How can GESI laws, policies, regulations and institutional practices challenge/hamper	How can cultural norms, beliefs and expectations challenge/hamper your	How can gender roles, responsibilities and time use challenge/hamper your	How can access to and control over assets and resources challenge/hamper your program design and implementation?	How can patterns of power and decision-making challenge/hamper your program design and implementation?

	Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Cultural Norms, Beliefs and Expectations	Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Patterns of Power and Decision-making
your program's design and implementation?	<p>your program design and implementation?</p> <p><i>Laws or regulations that explicitly or implicitly discriminate against certain groups based on factors like gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or nationality can hinder the implementation of interventions promoting GESI.</i></p>	<p>program design and implementation?</p> <p><i>In regions with interethnic conflicts or historical grievances, implementing an intervention that involves different ethnic groups can be challenging due to deep mistrust and tension.</i></p>	<p>program design and implementation?</p> <p><i>The unequal distribution of household and caregiving responsibilities may place an extra time burden on women and limit their ability to participate in program activities.</i></p>	<p><i>If specific groups or individuals hold a monopoly over key assets and resources, they may resist changes or perceive the intervention as a threat to their control, leading to opposition.</i></p>	<p><i>Program decisions may not adequately address the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in a community when power and decision-making are concentrated among a select elite.</i></p>

STEP 2: Build your CS and GESI Assessment Framework

Now that you have reflected on the various learning questions, you can use the [Worksheet to Define Learning Questions](#) to build your project-specific learning questions for your CS and GESI assessment. You can adapt or build upon the illustrative learning questions provided under the “Step 1” section above or formulate new questions. As you think with your team on the assessment objective and brainstorm learning questions, think about which ones are the most relevant to achieve your assessment objectives, have the potential to have the most impact on your interventions and are feasible to answer within the resources available to you.

Once your learning questions are finalized, you can determine your data collection and analysis methodology (e.g., key informant interviews, focus group discussions, or surveys). You will then need to develop your data collection tools, including questions that will allow you to collect the information needed to answer your broader learning questions, which will in turn enable you to reach the findings that will help you ensure that your design prioritizes inclusivity and conflict sensitivity.

Resources for Further Learning

Consider using the following resources to further your learning on considerations and implementation recommendations for CS and GESI Assessments.

[Conciliation Resources: Gender and conflict analysis toolkit for peacebuilders](#) – This toolkit provides practical guidance to peacebuilding practitioners on gender and conflict analysis. It is based on Conciliation Resources’ experience in conflict-affected contexts and draws on their participatory approach to conflict analysis. It includes conceptual background information, guiding questions for gender-sensitive analysis and a set of exercises to help explore gender in relation to peacebuilding.

[EvalCommunity: A Guide to Designing Effective Evaluation Questions](#) – This article introduces the three types of evaluation questions, explains how to draft effective questions and explores how to analyze the results of your evaluation questions.

[FHI 360: Toolkit for Networks for Peace Project Partners](#) – This toolkit supports local partners in integrating gender equality and social inclusion into their peacebuilding work in South and Southeast Asia (although many recommendations can be applied to other contexts). It includes concepts, guides and activity prompts that explain the function, interrelation and use of various assessment tools.

[FHI 360: Conflict Sensitivity Integration Hub](#) – The Conflict Sensitivity Integration Hub activity’s goal is to integrate conflict and violence prevention into USAID programming and to increase evidence and learning on conflict sensitivity in Honduras. The resource library includes tools, documents and trainings on conflict sensitivity that provide Honduras-specific and general recommendations.

[USAID: Data Collection Methods and Tools for Performance Monitoring](#) – This paper introduces the types of data, data collection methods and considerations to guide data collection method selection. It also explains how to develop a data analysis plan and pilot the selected data collection tools.

[USAID: Data Quality](#) – This webpage introduces the five data quality standards that all data for performance monitoring indicators must meet. It includes a checklist and a how-to note on conducting data quality assessments.

[World Bank: Data Collection in Fragile States: Innovations from Africa and Beyond](#) – This open access book includes case studies with data collection innovations in Africa. It highlights the challenges of collecting data in conflict-affected and fragile regions and offers recommendations for overcoming those challenges.



CS and GESI Assessment Framework: Worksheet to Define Learning Questions

This worksheet is a tool for defining your learning questions for a CS and GESI Assessment.

First, as you develop your customized learning questions, you may build on or adapt the illustrative questions provided in the [Defining your Assessment Framework](#) section (Step 1). While you could choose to add a question or more in each of the boxes of the table, you do not need to complete each box if it is not significant for your project and context.

	Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Cultural Norms, Beliefs, And Expectations	Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Patterns of Power and Decision-making
Who or what influences peace and conflict dynamics?					
Conflict factors					
Factors for peace					

	Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	Cultural Norms, Beliefs, And Expectations	Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	Patterns of Power and Decision-making
How can your project influence peace and conflict dynamics?					
Potential positive programming outcomes					
Potential negative programming outcomes					
How can conflict and peace dynamics impact your project?					
Enabling Factors					
Impeding factors					

Second, facilitate a discussion with your team on the relevance, impact and feasibility of the identified questions. You can use prompts such as:

- Will answering this question help us to achieve the objective of our assessment?
- How critical is this question for our understanding of the CS and GESI factors and dynamics in our context?
- Would answering the question provide us with critical information that could significantly impact how we design or implement our interventions?
- Is it feasible to adequately answer the question within time and budget constraints?

Finally, your discussion on prioritization will lead you to decide on the final list of learning questions to include in your assessment framework. As a team, make sure you agree on the assessment objective and formulate your learning questions so that they are clearly tied to this objective. By the end of this exercise, write up the final objective and learning questions to guide the rest of the phases of your assessment. We have provided an example below of an objective and learning questions for illustrative purposes only. Your final assessment framework and specific learning questions will be customized to your needs so that they provide you with evidence that aligns with your intervention's objectives.

Sample CS and GESI Assessment Objective:	
<i>Enhance the project team's understanding of the key factors and dynamics related to conflict, peace, gender equality and social inclusion in the project's five target communities and how they interact with the activities in order to ensure the project's design not only mitigates potential risks but also positively influences conflict and inclusion dynamics.</i>	
Sample Assessment Learning Questions:	
1	<i>What groups have access to and authority/control over key economic and political resources and assets within the community, and what impact does that have on community dynamics?</i>
2	<i>What groups are included and excluded from decision-making processes related to local development and the distribution of economic opportunities, resources and assets in each community?</i>
3	<i>How can your intervention avoid exacerbating and contribute to improving conflict dynamics associated with access to and control over economic and political assets and resources?</i>
4	<i>How can the project mitigate obstacles and proactively leverage in the design and implementation of programming factors related to access to and control over economic and political assets and resources?</i>



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