Helpdesk Research Report: Gender and Conflict Assessments
Date: 09.04.2010

**Query:** Please provide a summary of key documents related to a) the methodology, and b) key examples of country Gender and Conflict Assessments.

**Enquirers:** DFID

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1. **Overview**

Guidance for carrying out gender and conflict assessments is not well-developed; conflict assessments and gender assessments exist as separate types of analytical documents but there are comparatively few examples of gender and conflict assessments, and no established methodologies for doing them. Guidance for undertaking such assessments is drawn from three broad sources: a) instances where gender has been mainstreamed or integrated into conflict-related analysis, or vice-versa; b) conflict assessment frameworks and analyses; and c) gender assessments and analyses.

The need for a ‘gender lens’ when analysing conflict is asserted, with the importance of such a lens in all aspects of country-level analysis largely assumed, particularly due to the different types of conflict-related experiences women face in comparison to men. There is a degree of criticism directed at existing Conflict Assessment Frameworks, which are seen to be gender-blind. Mainstreaming gendered concerns into conflict analysis and assessment is understood to be beneficial in three general ways:

1. Developing an understanding of the role, experience and perception of women in regard to the *causes of conflict*, both in terms of structural causes and ‘trigger’ factors;
2. Providing data and an appreciation on the role, experience and perception of women *during conflict*, and the impact this has had;
3. Aiding donors to better design, implement, monitor and evaluate the situation of women in projects and programmes in the *post-conflict period*.

As the above identification suggests, there are three temporal dimensions to consider when undertaking an assessment which concerns both gender and conflict: pre-conflict contexts when conflictual relations may be dormant and early-warning systems are necessary; conflict contexts; and post-conflict contexts where reconstruction is the key concern for the international community, and not least the conflict-affected country.

On the basis of this survey of the literature encompassing the three types of sources identified, it is possible to offer a number of recommendations drawn from the existing guidance available for undertaking conflict- or gender-related assessments:

- The need to identify the country or region’s conflict status: is it pre-conflict, conflict, or post-conflict (based on a retrospective spanning a discrete number of years)?
The importance of conducting a comprehensive mapping of conflict and gender in relation to actors at national, regional and international level. The latter indicates the need to situate the role of the aid industry vis-à-vis the gendered dimensions of conflict.

The importance of using local actors in conducting an assessment, whether this be in data collection, initial consultations or to provide feedback on a draft assessment;

The importance of keeping track of data gaps, and trying to remedy these if possible;

The need to include a wide variety of country office staff;

The possession of a clear idea of how information gathered in the assessment will be used to inform project and programme planning, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

2. Integrating Gender and Conflict in Assessments


This report’s purpose is to enhance the gender-sensitivity of the World Bank’s Conflict Analysis Framework by offering guidance on how to incorporate gender into existing frameworks and facilitate a better understanding of how conflict affects men and women in different ways. In a desk review of eight conflict analysis frameworks the report found that the majority do make mention of gender issues, but none devote sufficient space to issues. They focus too much on the causes and drivers of conflict rather than sources of peace or resistance to conflict. The Conflict and Reconstruction Unit has increased its focus on the gendered dimensions of conflict by employing a gender focus in the following 3 ways: a) identifying the gendered nature of causes of conflict; b) identifying the gendered impact of conflict; and c) identifying the gendered dimensions of peacebuilding.

However, gender variables are missing in most conflict analysis frameworks, compounded by problems of data availability and data disaggregation, or the conflation of gender with ‘social’ issues rather than security, governance, justice or economics. The report offers recommendations for integrating gender considerations into existing conflict frameworks, including the following:

Methodology: this requires a desk review of how gender assessments are undertaken, a look at who participates in workshops, follow-up studies on specific issues, and using concluding workshops as a way to ensure gender is on the conflict agenda.

Framework: when assessing ‘impact on conflict’ actors need to be split into two columns – ‘conflict exacerbators’ and ‘conflict mitigators/resistors’.

Gendered indicators: for example differentiating between men and women when considering social and ethnic cleavages, e.g. how are women portrayed in the myths and stories that sustain the identity of a group? (See Appendix C for a full list of sample indicators).

Changes in report structure: subheadings addressing ‘factors affecting men’ and ‘factors affecting women’ are needed.


How can UNDP staff mainstream gender equality objectives into their work in pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situations? There are gendered dimensions in each type of situation and issue (p5-6 for full table). At base, a gender analysis will aid in providing the detail in each instance. The building blocks of a gender analysis consist of the following three dimensions:
Division of labour between productive (men) and reproductive (women) tasks
Division of resources
Needs

In transition situations, gender analysis is often needed to redress or highlight the following:

Disruption or destruction of social networks
Changes in population balance
Change/flux in division of labour
Contested gender relations
Exclusion of women from political and diplomatic negotiations
Demobilisation often focuses donor attention towards men
Abundance of weapons may create instability in rural and urban areas
Demographic pressures on women to increase nationality
Post-conflict violence
Return of refugees and internally displaced peoples
Post-traumatic stress disorder
Reconciliation problems

Alongside gender analysis, the use of Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis to identify the gendered dimensions of a designated area's physical and material resources, social relations and attitudinal/motivational dimensions in terms of both vulnerabilities and capacities can be instrumental within a conflict assessment.


Gender remains ‘largely absent’ in pre-conflict and early warning exercises and in response this paper presents an initial framework for ‘engendering’ early warning. This occurs in two principal ways: incorporating gender-sensitive indicators into information collection and subsequent analysis; b) incorporating gender analysis and perspectives into the formulation of responses.

Gender-sensitive early warning indicators capture changes in gender-related issues. Although sex and gender are often conflated when collecting and disaggregating data, only collecting sex-disaggregated data is not sufficient. Good examples of gendered indicators are the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), originating from the UNDP. Gendered early warning indicators come in different types, such as long and short-term, proximate, facilitating and triggering factors. Collecting information on the basis of these indicators requires an engagement with women at local (individual) level.

Engendering the analytical process of early warning requires both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the former aiding micro-level analysis of the role of gender between men and women. In general, a gender perspective elicits a better understanding of the causes and effects of conflict, including social hierarchies. For example, a gendered understanding of ‘root causes’ will consider political equality (e.g. percentages of women in parliament), economic equality (e.g. percentage of women in the labour force), and social equality (e.g. fertility rate, level of violence). In terms of proximate causes, a gendered analysis may want to consider the following: gender-specific human rights violations; abrupt changes in gender roles in society; deviation in behavioural trends or demographic patterns; changes in economic patterns; or ‘trigger’ events such as mass reporting of certain events. ‘Trigger’ or ‘intervening’ factors include: the media scapegoating of women, the engagement of women in the shadow economy, resistance to women’s participation in peace processes, lack of presence of women in civil society, short-term empowerment of women and communities, growth of discriminatory attitudes/measures, and insensitive responses to gender by international actors.
In undertaking these two types of engendering activities, the formulation of case scenarios and responses to conflict are enhanced. For instance, gender analysis could have aided in the designing of appropriate responses in Afghanistan by analysing the Taliban’s treatment of women and suggesting more engagement and education rather than force. Lastly, the report suggests in its conclusion that a gendered analysis also plays a role in the communication of early warning signals to decision-makers.

The annexes provide demonstrate how to use gender-sensitive indicators in early warning in an illustration, alongside a further explanation of how generic indicators are related to gendered indicators.


This wide-ranging annotated bibliography provides short summaries of articles, toolkits, and other materials on gender and conflict in Africa. Topics covered include gender-based violence, protection, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, health, HIV/AIDS, psychosocial issues, education, livelihoods, democracy, governance, and women’s roles in promoting peace.


In order to ensure that those conducting fact-finding missions in Iraq adequately mainstream gender considerations during the reconstruction process, this checklist has been formulated. The checklist is organised into a number of sections with specific questions, examples of which are as follows:

- Cross-cutting issues: the impact of conflict on men and women; different coping mechanisms; access to resources; power structures at communal level; prevailing attitudes and religious and cultural norms; availability of data; displacement; access to stimulating and non-violent social situations.
- Education: balance between male and female teachers; specific gendered barriers to learning; safe journeys to and from school.
- Higher education: existence of educational programmes addressing drug use and HIV/AIDS.
- Health and nutrition: impact of the burden of care upon women’s health; addressing gender-based violence; availability of HIV/AIDS facilities; nourishment of young girls.
- Water supply and sanitation: access; female hygiene.
- Conflict prevention and reconciliation: human rights in reconstruction; role of women during conflict; changes in the responsibilities of women; women’s opportunity to contribute to peacebuilding; access to capacity building for peacekeeping and peacebuilding.
- Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR): women’s access to DDR programmes; adequate support for women during the DDR process; role of women’s groups in assisting in DDR; rights and freedoms of female ex-combatants after reintegration.


This report provides a good example of how the gendered dimensions of conflict are identified and assessed. The following aspects of the experience of women in the Great Lakes Region are highlighted:
Sexual violence against women and girls: as a ‘weapon of war’ sexual violence is a common component of many women’s lives in the region. The author considers who is perpetrating the violence (rebel groups, peacekeepers); the impact sexual violence has upon public health, migration and the erosion of socio-economic foundations; the reduction of women’s mobility; and the construction of gendered relations and masculinity.

Women’s security: this includes a consideration of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; gendered problems within the DDR process, such as the extent of coverage towards women and the degree to which DDR programmes cater to women’s needs;

Women’s lack of access to productive land: the report considers the interplay between land as a principal factor in the conflict at macro level, and at household level, where women are often excluded from land ownership, leading to family disputes.

Women’s participation in politics and public life: whilst there has been significant progress relating to women’s participation and representation in the political process, the report identifies a number of challenges, including how gains at national level can be translated to progress at all levels of society; and how this progress can be sustained given a male-dominated and repressive political context.

http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a713767485

Gender audits assess the extent and impact of fluctuating gender relations in times of violent change with flight, exile, displacement and return, alongside inequality between men and women. This particular audit seeks to assess how women’s groups in Kosova are able to enter into political dialogue ‘from a more empowered position’ (p81). A key concern for the author is how ‘rhetoric’ can be turned into reality though gender mainstreaming, the challenges of which centre around the need for a better disaggregation of statistics.

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This article discusses UNIFEM’s use of a research methodology – the Peace and Conflict Gender Analysis (PGCA) – in the Solomon Islands in order to investigate differences in men and women’s experiences of conflict and peace. As ‘gendered processes’ (p231) the impacts of peace and conflict indeed differ, and an understanding of these differences is a crucial part of designing appropriate peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery programmes. The PGCA aimed to address the lack of data surrounding the gender dimensions of the armed conflict and peacebuilding process.

The PGCA’s method was to conduct meetings with both men and women (totalling 250 participants) in 5 diverse communities. The discussion questions generally proceeded as follows:

- What kinds of roles did men play in the conflict?
- What kinds of roles did women play in the conflict?
- What kinds of events and processes impacted upon women during the conflict?
- What kinds of events and processes impacted upon men during the conflict?
- What kinds of roles did men play in peacebuilding?
- What kinds of roles did women play in peacebuilding?
- What kinds of events and processes impacted on women once peace was restored?
- What kinds of events and processes impacted on women once peace was restored?
These discussions were developed around a PGCA Matrix, which took the following form (p233):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although it was recognised that the two seemingly distinct phases of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ often overlap, it was thought that the distinction was a simple and useful way of guiding the research. Ultimately, the research can be noted for the following:

- Challenging stereotypes in gender roles by moving beyond traditional conceptions of women and men’s roles in conflict by highlighting how men were active in peacebuilding, whilst women often took on ‘men’s work’ (p234);
- Highlighting increases in women’s empowerment resulting from changes in socio-economic relations during conflict, particularly in relation to the gaining of respect within community settings;
- Demonstrating differences in the perceptions of men and women on occasion, for example women were more likely than men to highlight women’s increases in economic productive roles;
- Identification of gender-related tensions, with men describing women’s roles in the conflict negatively and suggesting that women had become more ‘aggressive’ after the conflict (p236).


This assessment considers the situation for women in regard to the conflict in Colombia, with recommendations on how the USAID team may work to address issues of conflict and gender in the following areas: justice, human rights, alternative development, internally displaced populations, and the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants. Overall, the report highlights both the changing social role of women in Colombia due to an increase in female-headed households and their participation in the political arena, and an increase in violence against women. The following points are of note:

- **Justice sector**: women suffer problems in accessing justice, particularly in rural areas where there is a lack of coverage. In urban areas the challenges are related to a lack of coordination and duplication of services. Further alternative dispute resolution (ADR) which facilitates ‘conciliated’ agreement (such as USAID’s Casas Justicia programme) does not often reflect the will of women. The report also expresses concern with the promotion of indigenous tribunals and practices, which may be antithetical to gender concerns and the rights of women.

- **Alternative development** approaches which promote private sector development and increased employment opportunities it is essential to be sensitive to gender, ethnicity and regional variation. The following gender dimensions need to be considered: the characteristic of the workforce; the role of women in value chains, the participation of women in targeted producer associations, land tenure policies and their effect on women, and the emerging activism of women at community level.

- **Internally Displaced Populations**: Women and children are especially at risk here, although the skills of rural women are often more easily translated into informal employment in urban areas than those of men. Whilst this can lead to increased income and greater assertiveness over decision-making in the home, this could prompt domestic violence.

- **Demobilisation and reintegration programmes**: Issues relating to returning combatants and women in communities have only been addressed minimally. Women are at risk of violence, particularly from partners. Demobilised youths also present problems to young girls.
3. Conflict Assessments


USAID’s Conflict Assessment Framework is a diagnostic tool designed to identify and prioritise the causes and consequences of violence, understand how existing programmes interact with factors linked to violence, and determine where development and humanitarian assistance can most effectively support local efforts to mitigate and manage peace. The framework itself is divided into two parts: a synthesis of over a decade of research on the causes of internal violence; and a consideration of how development assistance is linked to the causes of conflict. Analysing the causes of conflict necessitates an appreciation of the incentives which lead to violence. Often these are framed in terms of both ‘greed’ and ‘grievance’. These should be analysed under the following headings:

- Ethnic or religious divisions
- Economic causes, such as negative economic growth
- Natural resources and conflict, which is linked to economic causes
- Demographic shifts, e.g. a ‘young’ population

In terms of incentives and interaction, the following components apply:

- Organisations and collective action
- The financial and human resources of mobilised groups

Next, a state’s institutional capacity for managing violence, comprising:

- Levels of exclusion/inclusion
- Economic capacity
- Level of security
- State fragility

Lastly, regional and global forces, such as international support for actors in conflict or the activities of refugees, and windows of vulnerability, such as elections, are crucial aspects of a conflict assessment.

With regard to gender, the second part of this report states that there is a greater need to understand the relation between conflict and gender, particularly in terms of the assumption or redefinition of existing roles.

(Adapted from GSDRC’s Conflict Topic Guide)

Understanding the social and economic factors that affect conflict improves the effectiveness of development strategies and programmes. In undertaking a conflict analysis at country level creating buy-in for the analysis by country teams, use of local partners and dissemination of analysis findings are key to executing an effective conflict analysis.

In a country affected by conflict, where stakes are high and the situation often fluid, understanding social and economic contexts is critical to effective aid delivery. Development organisations are now making a systematic effort to conduct conflict analyses and integrate findings into their strategies and programmes.
A conflict analysis consists of: 1) the process by which the analysis is planned, organised, conducted and applied; and 2) the content of the analysis, including its thematic focus and scope. This study examined a number of completed analysis processes and recommends ways to strengthen the organisation and application of the exercise.

Relevant findings of the study are:

- To acquire knowledge on conflict escalators and de-escalators, the analyses used techniques such as desk research, expert input, workshops, studies and fieldwork.
- Single-agency analyses were usually conducted when there was a need for quick and confidential analyses for internal use. However, multi-agency analyses were increasingly the norm, leading to shared analysis and improved understanding between participating agencies.
- Local partners have increasingly been more involved in conflict analysis exercises.
- Use of analysis findings was weak in some cases due to limited country-team buy-in and lack of follow-up by analysis teams. Analysis dissemination appears limited, due to lack of strategy and resources.
- Typical organisation and implementation challenges included time and funding constraints, limited capacity, unstable and volatile security climates and political sensitivities encountered in preparation of the analysis.

It is important to note some of the serious organisational challenges that should be addressed to prevent problems during analysis implementation. It is important to:

- Create buy-in for the analysis by a range of actors;
- Select an analysis team that includes skills in conflict analysis, local expertise and specific technical fields;
- Forge a partnership between local and international partners and involve or at least inform the host government of the exercise;
- Consider the host government's sensitivities to conflict findings, i.e., focus on factors rather than actors, if feasible;
- Prepare contingency plans to deal with volatile and fluid environments; and
- Emphasise the need for dissemination of the analysis as part of a longer-term process of promoting findings and encouraging their inclusion in programs and strategies.

Use of conflict analysis has broader implications beyond a one-time-only approach. In order to apply the conflict perspective into other programme areas, it would be helpful to:

- Establish conflict analysis exercises as the entry point in conflict-affected countries; make the analysis operationally relevant.
- Test and mainstream conflict impact assessments for development interventions.
- Use the conflict lens to strengthen country social analyses. Integrate a systematic conflict perspective into studies such as poverty, participatory assessments and livelihood analyses.

(Summary below taken from the GSDRC’s Conflict Topic Guide)

These guidance notes explain the principles and methodology of conducting effective strategic conflict analyses (SCAs) in DFID. DFID’s SCAs have three key aims: to map out causes and trends in a conflict; analysis of international responses to it; and development of future policy options. An abridged example is given as an appendix to the guide, along with sources of further information. SCAs should include international factors, risks and impacts of development interventions, and suggestions for making policies more conflict-sensitive. Flexibility is key, with the following pointers provided: adapt SCAs to the end user's needs; be
aware of the nature and phase of conflict; identify particular actors and triggers which could cause latent tensions to erupt into conflict. The following points are made:

- A multi-leveled approach to SCAs is ideal, due to the multi-level structural causes and conflict, and actors and interests vary over time.
- A political economy approach is useful. Analysing the interests of those involved in conflict and their motivations for continuing/desisting in terms of ‘greed’ (opportunities for predatory accumulation) and ‘grievance’ (negative reactions from disadvantaged).
- Analyse structures: underlying political, economic, military and social factors.
- Analyse actors: specific interests, capacities, peace agendas and relationships between them; also what incentives could encourage peace-making.
- Analyse dynamics: long-term trends, triggers for violence, capacities for containing conflict, likely future scenarios.
- Conduct all of the above at local, national, regional and international levels and determine key factors for each.
- Map international responses in a similar fashion - different actors, even within governments, often have different interests and their policies may undercut each other in the field.

Analysis should not only describe the conflict situation itself, but also the relationships between conflict and development or aid interventions. Typically, interventions work around conflict, seeing it as an obstacle to be coped with. This considers the impact of conflict on interventions, but not vice-versa. Instead they should work in conflict ensuring that interventions do not inadvertently exacerbate tensions or on conflict actively seeking to contain or end it. SCAs provide the basis for coordinating and developing appropriate responses to conflict in the following ways:

- Determining whether existing interventions are likely to have a negative effect on tensions through opportunities for greed and grievance.
- Considering whether development funding is significant compared to other finances and whether conflict actors are therefore susceptible to pressure.
- Looking for structural tensions such as poor governance or inequitable distribution of development benefits which interventions could influence.
- Sharing analysis, forging common approaches with other external actors, and aiming to sensitise them on conflict issues. An economic policy prescription may be good in a general analysis, but could trigger conflict in a particular situation.
- Identifying gaps in current responses and encourage better coordination amongst actors.

4. Gender Assessments


Understanding the impact of gender on projects and programmes of the World Bank is central to their social analysis, particularly in terms of inclusive institutions, cohesive societies, and accountable institutions. What should a gender-responsive social analysis add to projects and programmes?

- Assessment of project feasibility, by highlighting constraints and opportunities for realising social development objectives
- An understanding of the project environment
- Project responsiveness to community needs
- Maximisation of project benefits by adequately targeting resources
- Sensitivity to project-related risks
- Efficiency of project implementation because risks and challenges are foreseen and mitigated
Evaluations of project outcomes and impacts, due to the identification of gender-specific areas of intervention and programmatic concern.

Secondly, what cross-cutting issues may need to be addressed?

- Power relations between men and women
- The empowerment of women to participate, negotiate, influence and control institutions that affect them
- Access to productive and human resources, such as educational facilities and training
- Time use and work burdens
- Poverty and vulnerability to poverty
- Violence
- Migration
- Demographics, such as life expectancy and less access to social insurance due to membership of the informal employment sector.

The analytical framework provided suggests a consideration of the following aspects of social, economic and political life:

- Gender roles and other factors such as ethnicity and class
- Institutions, rules and behaviours in both an informal and formal sense
- Stakeholder analysis identifies gender-differentiated project-related interests and priorities, costs of participation, benefits and risks
- Gender-equitable participation in terms of project identification, design, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.


Section 4 (p78) of DFID’s guidance note provides a suggested structure for writing up a Gender and Social Exclusion Analysis (see below):

| Summary/overview | Which groups are discriminated against and excluded, and what they are excluded from? Include headline data. |
In terms of methodology the note suggests the following:

- Joint donor assessments where possible, carried out in-house or with the help of consultant. Other country advisors should be brought into the writing process, although this can be led by the Social Development Advisor.
- Consultation with civil society
- The use of qualitative and quantitative data (see Annex 1 and 2 for guidance). Disaggregated quantitative data is likely to be lacking and, where it exists, biased. Where gaps exist, the feasibility of undertaking additional studies should be assessed.

5. Additional Information

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Websites visited

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