Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes

A Toolkit

OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

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Acknowledgments:
The authors would like to thank all those who provided their experiences, insights, and expertise during the interviews conducted for this toolkit. Special thanks go to the research consultants, Marina Cherenkova and Britta Nicolmann, who prepared the initial mapping of women's peacebuilding work. Gratitude is also expressed to the independent experts and representatives of international organizations, women mediator networks, and local and international NGOs who provided valuable input on early drafts.

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Foreword

The lack of women's meaningful participation in peace processes presents a major challenge to global efforts to resolve violent conflicts. Since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security nearly 20 years ago, states and international organizations have been working to raise awareness about this gap, committing themselves and urging others to ensure that women are included when peace is in the making. Regrettably, calls for women's meaningful participation in peace processes frequently go unanswered. It is high time to address this challenge.

The OSCE has a long track record of engaging in political dialogue and mediation toward the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts. The commitment by OSCE participating States to use negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement for the peaceful resolution of conflicts dates back to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. The importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction was highlighted in the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. With OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11, participating States strengthened their commitments to use and enhance the Organization's tools and capabilities for conflict prevention, management, and resolution. Recalling UN Security Council resolution 1325, the Decision also reaffirmed the significant role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding.

These commitments provide a framework for ensuring women's meaningful participation in dialogue, negotiation, and peace processes that are supported by the OSCE. But we have significant room to improve *how* we ensure that women are included in these processes. We need concrete tools to help us implement our commitments more effectively.

First and foremost, we urgently need to address the lack of women engaged in the four formal negotiation processes. This toolkit provides practical advice and steps on how to achieve more gender-responsive dialogue and mediation processes.

The inclusion of women in dialogue, negotiation, and peace processes is important for a number of reasons. Women are differently embedded in society than men are, and they have been shown to widen the range of central topics discussed at the negotiation table. More inclusive processes can contribute to more comprehensive agreements that better integrate and reflect the concerns of the broader society. This, in turn, will strengthen the sustainability of the agreements.

However, increasing the participation of women at the negotiation table is not enough. Long-simmering disputes cannot be settled by means of high-level political peace agreements alone. Settlements require looking beyond the negotiation table to the peace process at large, where agents for peace—including women's groups—formally or informally work on different levels towards sustainable peace.

The OSCE still has a fair way to go to ensure the meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes. Further steps towards fulfilling our commitments will need to be based on joint efforts and agreed understanding among the OSCE Chairmanship, mediators, and participating States. I hope this toolkit will provide useful practical guidance for such efforts. In the twenty-first century, there is no justification for the absence of women in OSCE-facilitated peace processes. The time for change is now.

Thomas Greminger
OSCE Secretary General

Concepts and Working Definitions

Conflict analysis	A systematic and structured examination and assessment of conflict causes, actors, and dynamics.
Gender mainstreaming	The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and social spheres—in such a way that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.
Gender-sensitive conflict analysis	A conflict analysis in which a gender perspective has been integrated throughout the analytical process. It explores women and men as actors in conflict and peace, and examines how gender norms (i.e. social constructions of masculinity and femininity) play out in conflict situations. It includes the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data and the exploration of potential gendered drivers of conflict and peace.
Meaningful participation in a peace process	The capacity to have influence on the negotiations.
Mediator	An impartial third party mandated to work with conflict parties to find commonly agreeable solutions to their dispute in a way that satisfies their interests at stake. For the purpose of this toolkit, the term OSCE mediator refers to special or personal representatives, heads of field operation, and other persons appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office that have a mandate for mediation or dialogue facilitation. The term applies also to persons fulfilling the role of co-ordinator, facilitator, or moderator in an established format.

Negotiator	A member of the delegation of a side participating in the negotiations. For the purpose of this toolkit, the term also applies to participants of discussions in the established formats.
OSCE-supported formal negotiation processes	Official negotiation processes involving the OSCE, usually consisting of more than one format—i.e., more than one negotiation table. Such formats can take the form of structured bilateral meetings; negotiations involving various political, administrative, or security representatives; and thematic working groups and incident response mechanisms, among others. The variety of formats allows for topic-specific negotiations involving a wide participation of actors.
OSCE Troika	A format of co-operation between the current, previous, and succeeding chairmanships that was established to bring continuity to the OSCE's leadership.
Track 1	Official discussions, typically involving high-level political and military leaders that focus on ceasefires, peace treaties, and other agreements.
Track 2	Unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships and encouraging new thinking that can inform an official process. Track 2 activities typically involve influential academic and religious actors as well as leaders of non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors who can interact more freely than high-ranking officials. The term **track 1.5** is used to denote a situation in which official and non-official actors work together to resolve a conflict.
Track 3	People-to-people contacts between individuals and private groups to encourage interaction and understanding between hostile communities. Normally focused on the grassroots level, track 3 diplomacy often involves organizing meetings and conferences, raising awareness, generating media exposure, and conducting political and legal advocacy for marginalized people and communities.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CiO	Chairperson-in-Office (OSCE)
CBMs	Confidence-building measures
CSBMs	Confidence- and security-building measures
EU	European Union
GID	Geneva International Discussions
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PRCiO	Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TCG	Trilateral Contact Group
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council resolution

Setting the Scene

In the 20 years since United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was adopted, the normative framework on women, peace, and security has become well known and far reaching. The international legal and policy framework as well as several OSCE commitments have called on stakeholders to address the lack of women's inclusion in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction. Yet, globally, women remain significantly underrepresented in peace processes, including in the OSCE area.

Moreover, within the OSCE-supported formal negotiation processes, work to integrate a gender perspective is largely undone. In the reference guide *Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation in the OSCE*, a sound rationale is set out for why OSCE mediators and mediation teams should include a gender perspective in the mediation processes they conduct—ranging from ensuring compliance with normative frameworks to increasing the effectiveness of mediation processes and the sustainability of their outcomes.[1] Likewise, the OSCE *Guidance Note on Gender-Responsive Mediation* [2] outlines key principles of gender-responsive mediation and provides further guidance to mediators. The UN *Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies,*[3] published in 2017, aims to enhance gender-sensitive mediation at the international, regional, and national levels. This toolkit builds on existing guidance.

1. OSCE, *Mediation Reference Guide*, pp. 13–4.
2. OSCE, *Guidance Note on Gender-Responsive Mediation*.
3. UN, *Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies*.

Despite the existence of a sound international framework in this area, implementation has been hindered by practical challenges, conflicting priorities, and a shortage of operational ideas. UN and OSCE guidance provide recommendations on incorporating gender-sensitive provisions into peace agreements and provide direction on preparing and designing gender-sensitive mediation strategies. However, a set of concrete tools that have been adapted to the OSCE's specific context has been lacking. Therefore, this toolkit aims to provide practical, OSCE-specific tools that complement existing recommendations and guidelines. It also contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions.

The OSCE-supported official processes are differently structured and mandated. The Geneva International Discussions enable dialogue on the consequences of the 2008 war in Georgia but do not have an explicit mandate for conflict resolution. The Minsk process contributes to finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Trilateral Contact Group and the Transdniestrian settlement process are mandated to find solutions to the respective conflicts. All of them enable constructive exchanges and maintain dialogue between the sides, but advancing the inclusion of women in a systematic manner within them remains a challenge.

With the exception of the Trilateral Contact Group, the OSCE-supported official negotiation processes address protracted conflicts—those that are characterized by their longevity and intractability. Due to their specific complexities, such as the need for delicate compromises related to unresolved status issues, protracted conflicts often carry on in established formats over long periods and resist attempts at change. A particularly pertinent question for the OSCE is how to increase the

inclusion of women in official processes that address protracted conflicts, where changing the process design would be difficult or unlikely.

Nevertheless, the inclusion of women alone will not make a peace process more effective. By nature, women are not more peaceful than men, and like men, they may be politically affiliated. Considering women only as agents for peace reinforces gender stereotypes. However, increasing women's meaningful participation at the negotiation table, establishing links to women's peacebuilding activities on unofficial tracks, and gender-mainstreaming negotiations all allow for more perspectives to be brought into the management and resolution of conflicts. Studies have shown that diversifying the voices that contribute to decision-making can increase effectiveness in problem-solving.[4] Thus, ensuring gender diversity in negotiation processes can be a means to enhance the sustainability of their outcomes, because the diverse needs of the population will have been taken into account.

To that end, the inclusion of women in peace processes as set out in this toolkit comprises three elements:

- The direct and meaningful participation of women at the negotiation table
- The linking of official and unofficial processes
- The inclusion of gender perspectives in peace processes

To differentiate official from unofficial processes, this toolkit refers to tracks. Tracks are traditionally seen as parallel but separate; information may be

4. See e.g., UNIDIR, *Still behind the Curve* and UNIDIR, *The Value of Diversity.*

shared between them but not the actors involved or their purviews. However, with the development of peacemaking practices, new opportunities exist to increase a process's inclusivity. Broadening the thinking on what a peace process entails, where and by whom decisions are taken about the futures of conflict-affected societies, and how peace efforts are supported by third parties, could lead to new methods to include wider segments of population.

A lot has been said about "the end of big peace"[5]—a shift away from comprehensive peace agreements and the formal mediation processes that produce them. The move is from single, unified processes toward separate formats that address different aspects of a conflict's settlement, either sequentially or in parallel. Increasing the number of formats has the potential to increase inclusivity. However, as separate formats are often supported by different mediators and facilitators, they may lead to fragmentation and a lack of coherence. The potential solutions to this challenge fall outside the scope of this toolkit, but the OSCE and other mediation actors would benefit from reflecting on it.

Methodology

To contribute to the effectiveness of OSCE-supported formal negotiation processes by increasing the inclusion of women, this toolkit pursues a threefold objective. It aims to identify:

- how women and women's groups are engaged in peace work in the contexts where the OSCE is supporting a formal negotiation or dialogue facilitation process, as well as possible linkages between unofficial and official processes;

5. See e.g., Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, "The End of the Big Peace?"

- OSCE process- and context-related factors that advance or hinder the inclusion of women in such processes; and

- tools and practices relevant in the OSCE context that will increase the meaningful participation of women.

A substantive review of the role of women in peace work was conducted to obtain firsthand information from the contexts in which the OSCE is supporting an official process. The first research phase assessed the link between women's participation in informal initiatives on the track 1.5 to 3 levels and the impact those initiatives have on formal processes. Existing peace initiatives were mapped by research consultants, who then conducted 25 in-depth interviews: 17 with women and eight with men. The respondents were selected based on their involvement in track 1.5, 2, and 3 initiatives.

In the second research phase, the OSCE conducted interviews with current and former senior mediators (relevant special representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office and heads of OSCE field operations) and members of their mediation teams. Interviews were also conducted with senior mediators and their teams from co-mediating organizations, namely the UN and the EU. Of the 22 respondents, 16 were men and six were women. The gender imbalance among respondents reflects the gender imbalance, in particular, among OSCE mediators and within their teams. The research results as well as the draft tools and recommendations developed from them were then discussed in focus group sessions with representatives of international organizations, women mediator networks, local and international NGOs, and independent experts. These discussions provided invaluable insights and recommendations, and helped to validate the results.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit makes actionable proposals on how to increase women's inclusion in peace processes. It includes three separate but interlinked sections: increasing women's meaningful and direct participation at the negotiation table, linking official processes and informal peace initiatives, and integrating a gender perspective. The toolkit can be used as a handbook, with readers selecting tools from each section as relevant to their work. The tools comprise recommendations that are accompanied by practical suggestions on how the recommendations can be implemented. The tools are specifically designed for different audiences: OSCE mediators and their teams, the Chairmanship, participating States, the OSCE Secretariat, OSCE institutions, and OSCE field operations.

Meaningful and Direct Participation at the Negotiation Table

OSCE-supported formal negotiation processes have a long history. Established in the early 1990s, the two oldest—the Transdniestrian settlement process and the OSCE Minsk process—have been ongoing for over two decades. In the early days of these processes, the need to consider the role of women in conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation had just started to be recognised.[6]

However, despite the continual development of the relevant international normative framework—which saw the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its supporting resolutions, and the agreement of gender-related OSCE commitments and Ministerial Council decisions[7] —there has been little increase in the participation of women in formal negotiation or settlement processes in the OSCE area.

6. E.g., the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action calls for an increased participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, and in all levels of decision-making.
7. The 2004 OSCE Gender Action Plan foresees the proactive nomination of women candidates to higher-level positions, including heads of institutions and missions. It also encourages women's participation in all phases of the conflict cycle. MC Decision 14/05 calls on participating States and OSCE structures to develop specific policies to encourage the full and equal participation of women and women's organizations in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation. MC Decision 3/11 reaffirms the significant role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and recognizes the important role of civil society.

Likewise, within the Geneva International Discussions, established in 2008, and the Trilateral Contact Group, established in 2014, few women have had a seat at the table. The structural and institutional changes that would enable women's direct and meaningful engagement at the negotiation table have been slow to materialize. Rather than consistent and systemic access, women's direct participation depends on the context and the actors involved: when women do not have access to power structures or formal actors, the possibilities to become involved in negotiation processes are low.

Official processes, including those supported by the OSCE, usually consist of more than one format—that is, more than one table for negotiations. The formats range from structured bilateral meetings between the parties, to negotiations involving various representatives of the parties at the political, administrative, or security levels, to thematic working groups and incident response mechanisms. The variety of formats allows for topic-specific negotiations involving a wide participation of actors, which provides more options for the direct participation of women.

Leaving aside the participation of experts, advisers, and representatives of civil society, among others, who can be invited on a needs or ad hoc basis, men and women can participate at the negotiation table in the three following roles:

- Mediator—including, for the purpose of this toolkit, co-ordinators, facilitators, and moderators. In OSCE-supported processes, this role can be assumed by the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO); the CiO's appointed special or personal representative/envoy; the OSCE Secretary General; the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre; heads of OSCE field operation with a mediation or dialogue facilitation mandate; the High Commissioner

on National Minorities (HCNM); the Director or relevant staff of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR); the President or special representatives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly; or other relevant staff and mission members.[8]

- Adviser within the mediator's team—including political advisers and thematic experts as well as, for the purpose of this toolkit, respective Chairmanship staff and OSCE policy and mediation support officers within the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre.

- Negotiator—including, for the purpose of this toolkit, participants and representatives of the conflict parties' or sides' negotiation teams or delegations.

8. For more details on OSCE actors and specific instruments, mechanisms, and procedures, see OSCE, *Mediation Reference Guide*, p. 11.

Official Negotiation Processes Involving the OSCE

*The **Trilateral Contact Group** (TCG) was formed in June 2014 as means to facilitate a diplomatic resolution to the crisis in and around Ukraine. It consists of representatives from Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the OSCE—with the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group facilitating the negotiation process. The TCG includes four working groups dealing with security, political, humanitarian, and economic issues.*

*Established following the August 2008 war in Georgia, the **Geneva International Discussions** (GID) are co-chaired by the OSCE, the United Nations, and the European Union. The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, as GID Co-chair, co-facilitates the GID Working Group 1 dealing with security matters. A second GID Working Group dealing with humanitarian issues is co-moderated by the same organizations; for the OSCE, the co-moderator is usually the Deputy Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre for Policy Support Service. The CiO's Special Representative also co-facilitates meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM)—jointly with the Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM)—in Ergneti (concerning the South Ossetian context). These meetings address security and humanitarian matters that affect the daily life of populations on the ground. A similar mechanism in Gali (relating to the Abkhaz context) is co-facilitated by the UN and the EUMM.*

*The **Transdniestrian settlement process** aims at finding a comprehensive, peaceful, and lasting political settlement of the conflict in all its aspects, consolidating the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova with an understanding about a special status for Transdniestria within Moldova's internationally-recognized borders. Negotiations are held at three levels: the 5+2 format (Permanent Conference on Political Questions in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement), the 1+1 meetings of the chief negotiators, and several thematic expert working groups (currently 13). An important role is played by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process as well as by the OSCE Mission to Moldova, which facilitates the negotiation process on the local level as per the Mission's mandate.*

*The **OSCE Minsk process** contributes to finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Core elements are the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference (PRCiO), and the High Level Planning Group (HLPG). The PRCiO represents and assists the Chairperson-in-Office on issues related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He reports to the CiO on activities and, through the CiO, to the Minsk Group and its co-chairs. He assists the parties in implementing confidence-building and humanitarian measures. The HLPG is tasked with advising the CiO on a possible peacekeeping operation in the area of conflict. The Budapest Summit (1994) established a Co-Chairmanship to lead negotiations on behalf of the OSCE Minsk Group, which is currently co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States.*

The Mediators

An analysis of women's roles in major peace processes worldwide conducted between 1992 and 2017 found that women comprised only 3% of chief mediators, 3% of witnesses and signatories, and 9% of negotiators.[9] The lack of women in leading roles continues to be seen in OSCE-supported official negotiation processes. The research shows that the OSCE has hardly ever called on women to mediate, facilitate, or moderate in the four formal processes. Out of 52 special and personal representatives/envoys, working group co-ordinators, and co-chairs, only one has been a woman, who served as CiO Special Representative in Ukraine and in the TCG. In addition, one woman represented the OSCE as Co-moderator of GID Working Group 2 on Humanitarian Issues. From the co-mediating organizations, one woman served as UN Co-Chair of the GID and one as EU Co-Moderator of GID Working Group 2. The OSCE Mission to Moldova, which is mandated to facilitate the negotiation process within the framework of the Transdniestrian settlement process, has had 14 heads since its establishment, out of which one was a woman.

The OSCE CiO takes the lead in activities to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in the OSCE area. With regard to OSCE-supported processes, the CiO may appoint special/personal representatives dealing with conflicts, with a one-year mandate. When an incoming CiO takes up office, new representatives are appointed or the mandates of existing representatives are extended. More often than not, the CiO's special/personal representatives are nationals of the Chairmanship country, with advanced political or diplomatic careers, who have past experience with the OSCE or specific expertise on the issues to be addressed.

9. Data from UN Women, see Council on Foreign Relations, "Women's Participation in Peace Processes."

Recent research has shown that 85% of career ambassadors worldwide are men.[10] Although these statistics may vary amongst the 57 OSCE participating States, they do indicate one of the challenges in identifying women for appointment to leading positions within official negotiation processes. As women with well advanced political and diplomatic careers do exist in the OSCE area, further analysis is required to identify and resolve the obstacles that hinder their appointment to leading conflict-resolution positions. Bringing about the structural and institutional changes needed to increase women's participation—in particular in the diplomatic and political arena—will be a long-term endeavour. At the same time, women are substantially engaged in peacebuilding work and have specific mediation expertise acquired outside the traditional diplomatic or political arenas. These untapped resources could also be considered for leadership roles. Women mediator networks, of which most are established and supported by ministries for foreign affairs, can assist in identifying suitable women mediators.

Perceptions

As few women serve as mediators in OSCE-supported official processes, the way women are perceived in this role must be inferred, alongside the specific challenges they might face or the advantages they might have. Some respondents felt it would be difficult for women to be respected in largely "male dominated" contexts, putting them at a disadvantage when leading negotiations. Some felt that women mediators have to prove themselves more than men and are judged more severely. However, some respondents observed that a woman mediator can change the dynamics in the room, eliciting more respectful interactions between the sides.

10. Aggestam, Karin, and Ann Towns, "The Gender Turn in Diplomacy," p. 9.

At the same time, the work of OSCE mediators and mediation-team members can be time consuming and labour intensive, in particular, in the initial phases of a process or during intensive negotiations periods, when extensive travel and late working hours are the norm. Some respondents felt that women, in particular, had to choose between their private lives and a career in conflict resolution.

Women have proven themselves able to establish relationships with conflict parties based on trust. Having a woman as a mediator at the table also breaks the ice. Some may say that in certain contexts women are not respected as mediators, but this has not been my experience. Certainly, women need to prove themselves and are always judged more severely than men. However, the issue is not the mentality of the negotiator; it is the professionalism of the mediator. Having intimate knowledge of the situation on the ground, getting to know the context, travelling, visiting affected communities, and investing time in nurturing relationships with civil society are very helpful in this regard.

Women negotiators also bring another perspective to the table. They contribute knowledge on issues of daily life, for example, access to markets or the need to rebuild a shelled maternity ward, and make them a matter of priority.

Women need to be given opportunities to develop their careers and to be promoted to positions, from which they can gain the expertise necessary to become leaders in mediation processes. The OSCE can contribute to this effort. It is important to promote women to the right positions—and not to be apologetic about it.

Rasa Ostrauskaite
former Co-moderator of the GID Working Group 2 and
former political adviser to the Co-ordinator of the TCG Working Group on Political Issues

The Mediation Team

An OSCE mediator is usually supported by a small team of political advisers who, by the nature of their work, have an indirect influence on the negotiations as compared to the mediators or negotiators themselves. Advisers are recruited by the Chairmanship or by participating States but, because there is no standardized process for selecting advisers, it can be difficult for the OSCE to ensure gender parity.

Within a mediation team, the number of advisers and the composition varies. A core team of advisers is usually augmented with advisers from the Chairmanship and/or ministries for foreign affairs, who second nationals to support a mediator from their respective country. In some processes, staff from the Conflict Prevention Centre and relevant field operations are part of the mediation team. Because of the fluid composition of the teams and the continual appointment of new special representatives, the exact number of advisers could not be established for all OSCE-supported processes. However, in general, OSCE mediation teams have been and continue to be composed of mostly men.

The skillset required in mediation teams often includes knowledge of mediation processes as well as the specific local context and languages, skills in negotiation and political analysis, expertise in regional affairs, and an understanding of mentalities. In some processes, specific technical knowledge is also required, for example, expertise in military or financial issues.[11] This expertise does not exclude women per se. However, when a specific combination of technical knowledge is required, for example, security sector experience combined with Russian language skills, the pool

11. For more information on expertise in mediation teams see OSCE, *Mediation Reference Guide*, p. 31.

of women candidates can be small, making it difficult to identify qualified women for such roles.

Nevertheless, qualified women possessing the necessary expertise for positions in mediation teams do exist. Therefore, further analysis is needed to determine the reasons why a higher proportion of male advisers are appointed to OSCE mediation teams. In the meantime, the number of female advisers could be increased through more targeted secondments or appointments that are co-ordinated between the OSCE mediator, the Chairmanship, and seconding participating States. Such a co-ordinated approach would also ensure that different expertise is available to the mediator throughout the process as well as on an ad hoc basis, for example, when experts on process design, legal, or financial issues are required.

Increasing the number of women advisers might seem an easy way to increase women's direct participation. However, on its own, it is an insufficient measure, because the influence political advisers have on negotiations will always remain weaker than the influence of mediators and negotiating parties.

Perceptions

Women advisers were perceived to be less affected by the challenges faced by women mediators. For OSCE mediators, the ability to establish a trust-based relationship with their advisers was deemed essential, regardless of whether the advisers were men or women. Some respondents referred to the good relationships women advisers had established with conflict-affected communities and, in particular, with local women and civil society. Women were also seen as able to "open the hearts and minds of people," including of detainees and prisoners. Such qualities, however, were not attributed solely to gender.

The Negotiators

Within OSCE-supported processes, women participate in negotiations and formal discussions as members of delegations. Women rarely head those delegations, but there are a few exceptions—in the Transdniestrian settlement process women have held the position of chief negotiator on both sides, although not at the same time. Instead, women often assume supporting functions, such as note-taking, rather than speaking or decision-making roles. For most OSCE mediators, requesting negotiating parties to apply quotas was not considered a good tool to increase the number of women negotiators. Some mediators also referred to a certain awkwardness in encouraging negotiating parties to improve their gender balance when OSCE mediation teams did not lead by example. In their view, the lack of women in leading positions in conflict resolution efforts points to a need for a larger societal discussion on the roles of women and men.

Moreover, women tend to participate in discussions related to humanitarian, economic, and social issues, rather than those on security or political matters. The traditional sequence of processes, in which a ceasefire is negotiated first, followed by negotiations on a political settlement, does not favour women's inclusion. In most cases, ceasefires are negotiated by arms-bearing groups, and military expertise is expected from the delegation members involved in ceasefire mediation. In the four contexts studied, women rarely find themselves in this position. However, some OSCE mediators felt that including civilians in negotiations on security issues—for example, politicians, diplomats, and security experts—would benefit the discussions; they could change the atmosphere in the room by introducing civilian considerations into military logic. Broadening the pool to include civilians not only allows for additional perspectives to be brought to the process but also creates more opportunities for women's participation. However, civilian groups should not consist only of women to

avoid reinforcing stereotypes. Care also needs to be taken to ensure that the security of civilian participants is guaranteed.

Security aspects—like all other aspects of negotiations—concern men and women alike, and some form of representation that takes into account the needs of society as a whole is needed to ensure that broader perspectives are taken into consideration. As a good practice, holding consultations with the conflict-affected population helps to integrate missing perspectives, including those on a ceasefire. At the same time, a discussion with the negotiators on the necessity of women's meaningful participation at the table should also be initiated.

Perceptions

In many of the contexts in which the OSCE is supporting an official process, traditional gender roles persist, with women strongly in the domestic sphere and men predominantly in the public arena. This may explain why gender-biased behaviours and remarks are not uncommon during negotiations. Women in negotiating delegations, particularly younger ones, tend to be closely scrutinized and even belittled by their older male counterparts. At times, women negotiators are ignored when speaking. At others, gendered language is used to attack them. Women negotiators have been labelled "annoying women," among other stereotypical labels connected to their gender. This demonstrates the stigma attached to women for having their own political agendas and agency—traits that are not perceived unfavourably among men. Despite this, one mediator observed that the presence of women negotiators resulted in a change of attitudes and improved personal relations around the negotiation table.

Tools

For OSCE mediators:

Create balanced mediation teams in terms of expertise and gender:

- In recruiting advisers, close co-ordination between the mediator, the Chairmanship, and seconding States will help improve gender balance and the breadth of expertise available within the mediation team.

- In identifying suitable candidates, women mediator networks can provide assistance based on their specific knowledge of the local, national, and international mediation spheres.

- In increasing gender expertise, in-house OSCE capacities are available to provide targeted training and coaching to special representatives and mediation advisers, without increasing the size of mediation teams (see Gender Perspective for specific tools).

Discuss inclusivity with negotiating delegations:

- Discussing the meaningful participation of women in the process with negotiating delegations can provide impetus toward more gender balanced delegations.

- The inclusion of civilians in ceasefire negotiations—politicians, diplomats or security experts—can give new impetus to the discussions, while providing more opportunities for women's

participation. However, women should not be the only civilians in the room. Care also needs to be taken not to expose participants to danger.

Be aware of gender dynamics in the room and encourage the genuine participation of all participants by:

- setting ground rules that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated;
- encouraging participants to treat everyone in the room with respect; and
- responding in an equal manner to interventions from both women and men.

For the Chairmanship and participating States:

Appoint women as special representatives dealing with crises or conflicts:

- The Chairmanship's commitment to the principle of gender parity in conflict prevention, management, and resolution will help increase the number of women special representatives.
- A more standardized process, including early consultations on the appointment of new special representatives, will help facilitate the identification of suitable female candidates.
- The existing framework of meetings between the Troika and

the Secretary General can be used to initiate timely discussions with the incoming Chairmanship on mandate extensions or new appointments of special representatives.

- The Conflict Prevention Centre's Mediation Support Team is available to provide incoming chairmanships with advice on the necessary skill-set and expertise for OSCE mediators.

- Enlarging the pool of candidates for high-level mediation positions to beyond the diplomatic and political field will help to identify skilled professionals with substantive mediation and dialogue-facilitation experience. Women mediator networks can also support the identification of suitable candidates.

Identify and address issues on the national level that hinder the secondment of women to mediation teams:

- Determining the gender-specific challenges within national systems that affect the professional careers of men and women will make it possible to address issues that hinder women from being seconded to mediation teams.

Aim for more women in meaningful positions in negotiating delegations:

- Determine who needs to participate directly at the table. Also take into account that women may have fulfilled functions during the conflict that go beyond conventional roles.

Increase the number of women security experts:

- Providing more opportunities to increase women's representation in the security field will broaden the pool of women security experts available for mediation assignments. A good example is the OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security, a joint initiative with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

For the OSCE Secretariat:

Appoint women to mediation-related positions in the OSCE Secretariat:

- Some OSCE Secretariat positions include direct involvement in negotiation processes. Appointing women more often to such positions increases the probability that women will moderate, facilitate, or participate as advisers.

Confidence-Building Measures

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) are actions taken by conflict parties to increase transparency and create trust in a peace process. In the non-military sphere, they often take the form of political, economic, environmental, social, and cultural CBMs. Different types of CBMs can be used in a mutually reinforcing manner, and the line between them is often fluid. The OSCE refers to CBMs in the military sphere as confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). CSBMs are often undertaken by conflict parties to reduce the fear of an attack and function as the first step to build trust in negotiations toward a ceasefire. A minimum amount of trust helps to prepare the ground for conflict settlement. Track 1 CBMs, track 2 dialogue, and other civil society CBMs can thus be used to move from pre-negotiations to negotiations and to build further confidence during the negotiation process.

Involving participants from a wide range of backgrounds in the design and implementation of CBMs can increase their success, but as diversity can be difficult to achieve from the outset, efforts to broaden participation should be intensified once a CBM starts to take root.[12] *Involving women in the planning and implementation of CBMs and CSBMs can help to create new types of measures, including those between actors that have never before participated in confidence-building activities. The involvement of women can also create a link between official*

12. OSCE, *Guide on Non-military Confidence-Building Measures.*

processes and women's work on the ground, and women-led initiatives themselves can be CBMs of benefit to an official peace process. Examples could include communication and trade across borders or contact lines, social and cultural activities, and humanitarian engagements. A gender analysis should be incorporated in the planning, prioritization, and implementation of CBMs and CSBMs to identify the different effects on men and women.

Linking Official Processes and Informal Peace Initiatives

The research conducted for this toolkit identified three main structural factors that affect the way women's civil society work can influence OSCE-supported formal negotiation processes:

1) **Societal factors**—including gender roles and stereotypes that persist in society, in particular, overt or latent patriarchal structures that affect women's societal standing and the roles they play in public life.
2) **Institutional factors**—including the civil society landscape as well as the co-operation between civil society and governmental institutions.
3) **Process-related factors**—including the setup of the formal process and the strategies women's initiatives use to link with it.

While societal and institutional factors are often interconnected, all three structural factors are mutually reinforcing in how they hinder informal peace initiatives from linking their work with formal peace processes. In societies where formal and informal power structures are male dominated, structural factors often limit women's opportunities to play a meaningful role in public and political life. These limits also hinder women's engagement in official negotiation processes, prompting women to focus their efforts on civil society.

The research for this toolkit highlighted that links between informal peace initiatives—regardless of whether they are led by men or women—and OSCE-supported official processes remain weak and decrease as they move from track 1.5 to track 3. This means that the more peacebuilding initiatives are community based, the less exchange there will be with track 1 processes. Thus, although women are generally well represented in civil society initiatives dealing with conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding, their ability to influence official negotiations is limited.

To be able to engage with formal peace processes, women peacebuilders in several of the contexts studied felt they needed training, such as in negotiation skills. It remains to be explored whether this limitation has been set by the women themselves, by others, or by both. It also needs to be better understood whether the need for such skills is symbolic of other characteristics, like self-confidence, deemed necessary to engage in official negotiations. Other studies have observed that women disempower themselves—undermining their own qualifications to work in the political sphere.[13]

However, while dedicated to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict, many of the women interviewed for this toolkit did not see a need to engage further with formal OSCE-supported processes. These women were motivated by humanitarian values, and gradually became engaged in peacebuilding work. Some, who started out as doctors or psychologists, wished to mitigate the suffering of the conflict's victims. For others, engagement on humanitarian issues with "the other side" gave them an alternative perspective, leading them to take part in dialogue initiatives because they began to view the situation through the lens of the other. Many of these women emphasized the importance of achieving tangible

13. E.g., Kvinna till Kvinna, *Listen to Her.*

results in a short timeframe, which they did not feel was possible within the formal process.

In addition, the way affected societies perceive official processes plays a major role in either motivating or deterring the engagement of civil society actors, including women peacebuilders. In contexts where a negative perception of the official process prevails among the larger population, civil society actors may want to distance themselves. In this regard, a communications strategy is an indispensable tool to build legitimacy in the process, to engender wider ownership, and to create an environment conducive to sustainable peace. Managing expectations and perceptions, including through the media, helps to create a balanced and non-politicized narrative around a formal process. Particularly in the context of protracted conflicts, civil society's systematic, sustained, and constructive engagement in peacebuilding and dialogue is crucial if a vision of peace is to be developed and supported by society.

Women's Peace Work in Civil Society

The OSCE's research found that women's engagement in Ukraine is concentrated on track 3 efforts and that women have less influence on track 1.5 and 2 initiatives. The same findings have been confirmed by other studies.[14] While only few informal initiatives were identified that cut across the contact line, women on both sides play an important role in small-scale grassroots initiatives. Examples include negotiations on the distribution of humanitarian aid across the contact line and on solving documentation issues for children in non-government-controlled

14. E.g., Mediation and Dialogue Research Center, "Understanding Dialogue in Ukraine."

areas. Some women also engage confidentially with decision-makers to negotiate local ceasefires, search for missing persons, and provide support to the victims of the conflict.[15]

In the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, women are leading informal initiatives but have limited engagement with official negotiations. On tracks 2 and 3, women have facilitated direct meetings between individuals or representatives of civil society. Many civil society respondents felt there was a lack of access to the track 1 space, perceiving it as a closed format with limited possibilities to exchange with members of the negotiation teams or the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. Despite this, some civil society initiatives have been able to transmit messages to official actors and exchange information with the co-chair teams.

In the Republic of Moldova and the Transdniestrian region, the OSCE's research identified few women-led peacemaking or peacebuilding initiatives or women with influence on the track 1 space. Several respondents described the NGO sector in Moldova and Transdniestria as "male dominated," including those NGOs conducting activities across the conflict divide. The limited influence women do have on official processes (apart from the small number of women involved in the official formats) arises through the few track 1.5 initiatives being led by international NGOs. However, there are a number of informal processes that bring together women with different backgrounds from Moldova and Transdniestria to discuss conflict-related matters. One such process involves a former senior parliamentarian from Moldova. Another involves three women mayors from Moldovan towns who organize dialogue initiatives with participants from Transdniestria.

15. OSCE, "Thematic Report: Gender Dimensions of SMM Monitoring."

In the Georgian context, where initiatives concentrate on dialogue between Georgians and Abkhazians with little engagement of South Ossetians, most civil society organizations are led by women. Initiatives, including in the field of peacebuilding, are predominantly implemented on tracks 2 and 3. However, some processes also operate at the track 1.5 level, involving civil society and government representatives in their personal capacities, with a rough balance between women and men. Members of the teams of the GID Co-Chairs and the negotiation participants have sometimes been invited to attend track 1.5 discussions in an unofficial capacity. When visiting the region, the GID Co-Chairs have also recently begun to meet women's organizations in a more systematized way. In such ways, messages can be transmitted to the GID, which provides women some access to the official process.

Perceptions

Women engaged in informal peace processes either perceive a lack of avenues to influence the official process or do not think they need such a link. Some are able to rely on informal channels and personal contacts to the negotiators. Others have been able to transmit messages to the formal processes, through public declarations or in direct exchanges with the mediation team. Some members of mediation teams have, on their own initiatives, established regular contacts or made themselves approachable in the field. Some of the formal processes have established mechanisms to engage with civil society, including women's civil society organizations.

While exchanges and links exist, respondents were not fully satisfied with them. Some mediators felt that the topics raised by civil society were not relevant to their processes, or that they were expected to one-sidedly provide information. They did not always see consultations

with civil society as a necessity, particularly in the early stages of conflict management. They felt that engagement with wider society, including gender considerations, was more relevant at a later stage, for example, during deliberations on agreement implementation. At the same time, civil society respondents felt they were expected to provide ideas without knowing the status of the negotiations or receiving feedback on their input.

Many respondents from mediation teams emphasized the resourcefulness of civil society actors and initiatives, and their ability to inform and inspire ways forward in official processes. Some mediators also commended civil society actors for looking beyond the technical issues of peace processes and designing future models for society in the political, socio-economic, and cultural spheres. However, engaging in meaningful dialogue with civil society actors and initiatives requires time and resources to build trust. Therefore, extended informal meetings, discussions, and other efforts are needed to nurture such relationships, while ensuring that civil society actors are not exposed to risk. Because they spend limited time in the conflict environment, some mediation teams found it difficult to establish trustful contacts with civil society or to broaden their network of contacts.

The challenge for mediation teams is to identify how civil society can best contribute to the objective of the official process and how, within the existing process design, inclusivity can be increased. In this regard, field operations and international mediation organizations can support platforms for exchange between civil society and the mediators of official processes.

Women are well positioned to perceive changes in dynamics, attitudes, and tensions that are emerging within communities and in society as a whole. Although the role of women in civil society is increasing in conflict-affected societies, women's input is limited and scarcely visible in conflict-resolution and peacebuilding processes—including in early warning and early engagement.

It has become more accepted and better understood that underlying structural sociological, cultural, and historical factors shape conflicts. Increasing the participation of women will allow for a better understanding of these structural factors and for the concerns of civilian populations to be better integrated into political processes.

Due to their societal roles, women not only bring different life experiences and information to the process but also make it more inclusive and reflective of people's needs. Through their participation, women contribute their own political views to negotiation processes as well. However, there is still a missing link between informal and formal processes that can substantially increase women's engagement in efforts to make and consolidate peace. Women should play an active role in conflict resolution processes. The OSCE has the power to be a platform for women's voices on how a conflict could be settled.

Ertuğrul Apakan
former Co-ordinator of the TCG Working Group on Security Issues and former Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Tools

For OSCE mediators:

Establish and systematize links between informal peace initiatives and OSCE-supported negotiation processes:

- Establish long-term consultation processes with civil society that are feasible and beneficial for both the mediation team and civil society.

- Create or support the creation of an appropriate platform to directly interact with civil society, including women's organizations. Such platforms could also be established online.

- Consider establishing a women's advisory board that will provide additional perspectives on the issues under discussion and make recommendations on the process. Ensure that any such board complements other efforts to increase women's meaningful participation at the table.

Develop a communications strategy (including a media strategy) for the formal process:

- Acquire the necessary expertise to develop a communications strategy, making use of OSCE capacities.

- In the strategy, highlight the peacebuilding efforts carried out by civil society, thereby acknowledging its contribution to conflict resolution efforts.

For the OSCE Secretariat, institutions, and field operations:

Support OSCE mediators in engaging with civil society peacebuilding initiatives:

- Map the civil society actors engaged in peacebuilding and support mediators in establishing and maintaining contact with them.

- Support civil society in agreeing on and providing relevant input to official processes. Such support could take the form of funding, logistical assistance, or capacity building, and be provided in partnership with international mediation organizations.

- Organize focus group discussions with civil society groups on specific issues under negotiation in order to gather feedback for the official process.

Civil Society Consultation Mechanisms

In the design of a formal peace process, consideration should be given to establishing civil society consultation mechanisms, including women's advisory boards. Consultations with women's advisory boards have proven to be a good practice for bringing women's views to official processes. However, while women's advisory boards can be innovative ways to bring women's voices to official peace processes, there is a risk that women's input will be restricted only to consultations. Care must be taken to ensure women's direct participation, as mediators and negotiators. Therefore, the establishment of consultation mechanisms must complement other efforts to increase women's meaningful participation at the table.

Women's Advisory Board in Syria

After the Syrian crisis unfolded, calls for greater inclusion of women in the negotiations were partially answered in 2016 when the office of the Special Envoy for Syria established a women's advisory board. The board consists of 12 women civil society actors who participate as third-party observers in the UN-led negotiations. For every round of negotiations, the board consults with the Special Envoy to Syria, providing a gender perspective on the issues discussed and making recommendations. The board members come from various political, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, with some supporting the Syrian government and others supporting the opposition.[16]

16. See e.g., Women's Network for Change, "Women's Participation in the Syrian Peace Process" and Council on Foreign Relations, "Women's Participation in Peace Processes, Syria."

Public Consultation Mechanism in Columbia

To ensure a more inclusive approach to resolving the Columbian conflict, the negotiating parties established consultation mechanism with the public, including a website for citizens to provide input. Thousands of suggestions were received from the public, thus broadening the formal peace process with the input of civil society. Civil society organizations were also consulted on the methods of their involvement so that negotiators could prepare sessions with them more meaningfully.[17]

17. See e.g., Nylander, Dag, Rita Sandberg and Idun Tvedt, "Designing Peace."

It is not sufficient to focus only on increasing the number of women in peace negotiations. The emphasis should be put instead on integrating a gender perspective into a peace process, because not all women have a gender perspective and not all men lack it. Everyone in the process must be aware of inclusivity and take active steps to include a gender perspective in the process.

The most effective way to ensure gender mainstreaming is by sharing the responsibility. Therefore, rather than adding a gender expert to a mediation team, a better strategy would be to increase the gender expertise of the whole team through training and coaching.

My team in the OSCE Mission to Moldova has built its own capacities to bring a gender perspective to conflict analysis and the issues under negotiation. This approach has helped the team develop new ideas and innovative ways to approach the protracted conflict we are working on.

Claus Neukirch
Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova and OSCE mediator in the Transdniestrian settlement process

Gender Perspective

In its 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the OSCE commits to gender mainstreaming as its key strategy in working toward gender equality.[18] The Action Plan positions gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting activity in all OSCE efforts, including conflict prevention and resolution. It underlines that promoting gender equality is a joint responsibility of the participating States, the CiO, the Secretary General, and heads of OSCE institutions and field operations.

The research for this toolkit showed that, within the OSCE-supported official negotiation processes, the integration of a gender perspective remains weak. Respondents confirmed this weakness and acknowledged the need to find better ways and new methods to gender mainstream negotiation processes. This toolkit identifies two possible ways to strengthen gender mainstreaming in OSCE-supported formal negotiation processes: gender-sensitive conflict analysis and integrating a gender perspective into the issues under negotiation.

Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis

Conflict analysis is a fundament of the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox because it facilitates a better understanding of conflict causes, dynamics, and actors. It is also the starting point for developing a strategy for the peaceful resolution of a conflict. A conflict analysis toolkit developed by

18. In the UN Beijing Platform for Action, gender mainstreaming was agreed to be the major global strategy for the promotion of gender equality.

the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre is available to all OSCE mediators and their teams. It sets out the methodology for and good practices in conflict analysis, including the need to integrate a gender perspective.

A missing or weak gender perspective in a conflict analysis can impede the identification of adequate responses to conflict-related incidents and developments as well as the recognition of potential peace drivers and opportunities. By not including it at the conflict analysis stage, a gender perspective will likely continue to be ignored in formal negotiations.

While there does not seem to be a standardized practice for conducting conflict analysis within OSCE mediation teams, most mediators and advisers reported preparing and updating their conflict analysis through focused discussions during retreats. Sometimes OSCE field operations with mediation-relevant mandates contributed to the conflict analyses of mediation teams. Similarly, the integration of a gender perspective into conflict analyses has not yet become systematic or institutionalized, and depends largely on the interests and efforts of the individuals engaged in the process.

The research for this toolkit identified a few examples of efforts that have been made to integrate a gender perspective into conflict analysis. In at least one process, a gender checklist was used to assess and update the conflict analysis. Some mediation advisers have also consulted other organizations and a range of stakeholders in the conflict-affected society to collect information on the conflict's specific effects on women and men.

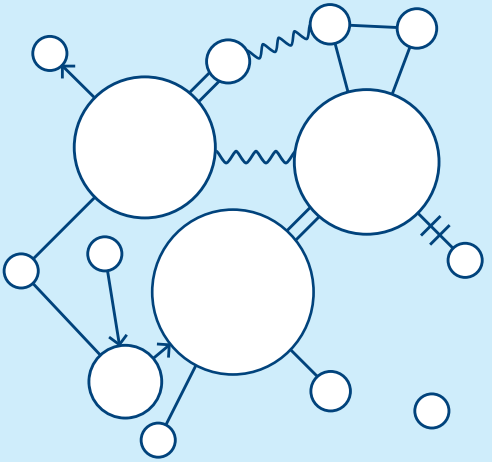
This toolkit does not provide an exhaustive overview of conflict analysis tools. Instead, it uses examples to illustrate how some key aspects of conflict analysis could be gender mainstreamed. One major element of conflict analysis is actor and stakeholder mapping. While conflict actors

can be individuals or representatives of groups, organizations, and states, they are also men and women. An argument sometimes heard is, "since armed conflicts are caused by men and carried out by men, they have no gender perspective." Such reasoning disregards the roles that women play in conflict—as agents for peace or wagers of war—and overlooks the impact of conflict on the lives of women and girls.

A gender-sensitive actor mapping, even if based on rough estimates rather than detailed statistics, can make visible the exclusion or marginalization of women in conflict resolution processes. It can also help a mediation team to assess whether the representatives of conflict parties speak for their entire group. Male commanders of armed groups may, for example, ignore the needs of female combatants or of women who have taken on supporting roles (e.g., in logistics or medical services).

A gender-sensitive mapping can also illustrate how some women's groups may be closely connected to one conflict party or another. Such groups may take public action in support of a conflict party or may be able to influence a particular group's position at the table. Furthermore, mediators must keep in mind that some women who are active in the conflict arena may have little interest in becoming involved in formal negotiations. It is necessary for mediators to understand why this may be the case.

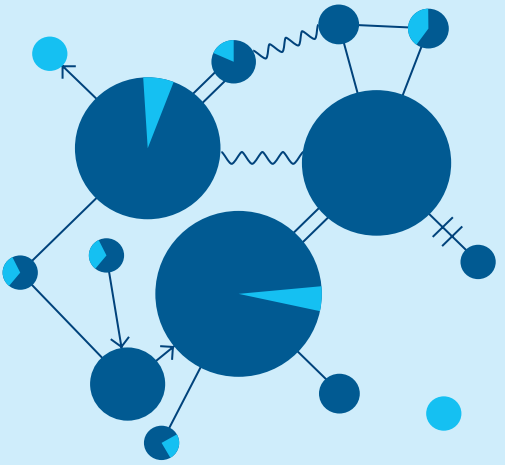
Gender-blind actor mapping



Gender-sensitive actor mapping

Men

Women



Gender-blind vs gender-sensitive actor mapping

Another important element of conflict analysis includes identifying and analyzing the conflict profile. The key questions—what, where, who, why, and when—can be "gendered" by answering them with sex-disaggregated data and by paying attention to the different roles of men and women in society. The causes of conflict and its dynamics should also be examined from a gender perspective. Good examples of gender indicators can be found in early warning systems that pay attention, for example, to how gender-based violence can trigger conflict escalation or how forced recruitment of young men or boys into armed groups may lead to an increase in tensions.[19]

Conflict analysis should examine the gender aspects of structural and proximate conflict causes and symptoms. For example, systematic violations of human rights—including women's rights—may not only entail violence against women but also other factors that must be kept in mind, such as denying women opportunities to participate in political and public life. Likewise, if a conflict over a territory has restricted the movement of civilian populations, it is necessary to ask whether women, men, girls, and boys are affected differently. If military checkpoints are present, are girls restricted from education due to real or perceived security risks? If the freedom of movement of young men is being restricted, is it due to forced recruitment by armed groups? If teachers or healthcare personnel are affected by conflict, are the affected individuals women or men? Are the social impacts of the conflict different for women and men?

When analyzing a situation, mediation teams should also critically examine their sources of information, including how gender sensitive they are. For example, media sources may represent women and girls

19. See OSCE ODIHR, "Gender and Early Warning Systems," for a good introduction to the topic.

primarily as victims and report cases of sexual violence in order to provoke reactions in the public sphere. Not detecting biases or false information may have negative consequences, leading to a reinforcement of gender stereotypes or the development of a conflict analysis that is based on false premises.

Conflict analysis is a continual process. Findings must be constantly updated and revised through regular and broad consultations with various actors and stakeholders in conflict-affected societies. When visiting conflict-affected areas, mediation teams must ensure that they meet with and interview different population groups, including those that are socially disadvantaged. Women can provide more and different types of information on how the conflict affects the daily life of the local population, for example, about how it affects access to markets or schools. In many conflict contexts, mothers have taken action to seek information about missing sons and daughters and to try to find ways to bring about detainee release.

A well-designed participatory conflict analysis is not overly time-consuming and will result in a better understanding of how different groups perceive and understand conflict causes and dynamics. Engaging with the same individuals over a longer period of time can also help build confidence in the process and enable participants to take ownership of it.[20]

20. Conciliation Resources, “Inclusion in Practice.”

Gender Perspective in Negotiations

The inclusion of a gender perspective in peace processes is still rare. Only 18% of peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2015 make reference to women.[21] According to the research for this toolkit, a gender perspective is also largely absent from discussions in OSCE-supported negotiations—at the table, in working groups, and on the margins of meetings.

While gender-related issues are occasionally touched upon in discussions on humanitarian issues, they play no role in discussions about the security or military aspects of a conflict. A recent study shows that there is no mention at all of gender in the majority of ceasefire agreements. Women's inclusion in ceasefire processes has been considered irrelevant because of the technical language and military knowledge required—knowledge that is possessed by armed factions, whose members are predominantly men. The only gender references found in current ceasefire agreements are those to sexual violence in conflict.[22] A tendency to link gender aspects with only sexual and gender-based violence or the protection of civilians was also identified in the research for this toolkit.

In the course of the research, a number of reasons were given for the lack of gender perspective in negotiations: working groups include very few women or only men, particularly when they focus on hard security issues. Women in negotiation teams may not be empowered to put forward their views. Gender aspects are perceived as something only women should raise. However, some women in negotiations prefer not to be labelled the "gender representative." Instead, they would rather advance the political

21. Bell, Christine, "Text and Context."
22. Inclusive Security, "Inclusive Ceasefires."

objectives of the parties they represent. In some cases, negotiating parties were also perceived as reluctant to discuss certain issues, such as gender-based violence or the situation of displaced populations that may vary among women, men, boys, and girls.[23]

Integrating a gender perspective should not be limited to assessing the impact of the conflict on women and men. A gender perspective also needs to include a thorough understanding of power relations between men and women; the different status, roles, and needs of women and men; and the impact of gender on people's opportunities and interactions in a given context.[24] It also needs to be intersectional, by considering the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination overlap—in particular, related to different age groups and minorities. For example, if access to farm land for the conflict-affected population were under negotiation, an assessment would be needed as to whether the solution would equally benefit women and men. A solution that distributes farm land to all might appear gender-neutral but, in fact, it may benefit men over women if land ownership is legally or culturally only possible for men. Some practical tools on how to include a gender perspective in peace negotiations are provided below.

To ensure a gender perspective is included in a peace agreement, it must form part of the preceding negotiations. In the research for this toolkit, some respondents stated that the gender mainstreaming of a peace process only becomes relevant once a general power-sharing agreement has been achieved and the focus has shifted to negotiating how that power-sharing would work in practice. Integrating a gender perspective at the conflict analysis stage and in the early phases of negotiations

23. OSCE and UNHCR, *Protection Checklist*.
24. Bell.

may help to identify possible ways to shift the focus from power-sharing arrangements toward a settlement that is more sustainable because it benefits the population more widely.

If a gender perspective is to be integrated into formal processes, when and by whom should this happen? Existing formal negotiation formats may not allow the mediator to put new issues on the agenda. If this is the case, mediators and their teams can use other occasions to raise gender issues with the parties. For example, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda was discussed during an information session in the GID. Mediators also have regular bilateral meetings with conflict parties, during which they can discuss a wide variety of topics. Sensitive issues, such as cases of gender-based violence, may be broached bilaterally by mediators, even when they are ignored in formal talks. It is important to be cautious of stereotypes, for example, that men would be uninterested in gender equality or that women attach importance to it. Systematically collecting sex-disaggregated data, having it readily available during meetings, and informing negotiation teams of the availability of such data can also increase the likelihood that gender aspects will be taken up during discussions.

Even those who acknowledge the lack of interest among the sides to include a gender perspective may still welcome efforts by the mediator to do so. In the words of one respondent, "[We] could make use of opportunities to bring up issues related to women's inclusion or gender in the meetings. [We] could also organize specific discussions on such topics or invite experts."

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Path to More Inclusive Processes

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda refers to ten United Nations Security Council resolutions adopted since 2000: UNSCRs 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). It covers four thematic pillars: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery.

Several of these resolutions call for UN Member States, international organizations, and conflict parties to increase the representation and participation of women in all aspects of mediation, peace, and decision-making processes that relate to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. UNSCR 1325 calls for all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective.

A priority area of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality[25] is to encourage women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction. To this end, OSCE participating States tasked executive structures, as appropriate within their mandates, to promote the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in these areas. OSCE structures were also requested to assist participating States, as appropriate, in developing programmes and projects that bring about equal opportunities for women to participate in

25. OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/04.

the promotion of peace and security, including those conducted at grass-roots and regional levels. The empowerment of women in the politico-military dimension is also seen as essential to comprehensive security.

Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through national action plans and other means is a responsibility of UN Member States. Such policies and plans can provide guidance to mediators and their teams on how to best raise with negotiating parties issues, such as women's participation, sexual and gender-based violence, and the situation of displaced populations. National action plans in many conflict-affected countries include explicit references and clear targets to include women in peace negotiations and peacebuilding efforts. Where such states have adopted a national action plan to implement UNSCR 1325, mediation teams can discuss the plan's objectives and actions during bilateral meetings with those state's negotiating parties.

Tools

For OSCE mediators:

Increase gender awareness in mediation teams:

- Request that gender expertise be made available. Expertise and awareness can be increased by including a gender expert or adviser in the mediation team (this may be a better solution for larger mediation teams) or by requesting external expert support.

- Ensure that mediation team members receive practical training on gender mainstreaming in order to raise awareness, sensitivity, and skills related to gender issues.

Prepare gendered conflict analyses:

- Task the mediation team to systematically collect sex-disaggregated data on conflict actors and stakeholders as well as on conflict-related incidents, events, and processes.

- Include gender when updating conflict analyses, for example, during mediation strategy retreats.

- Make use of existing tools when preparing conflict analyses (see Appendix A for a list of key questions).

- Make use of existing gender expertise when preparing conflict analyses. This expertise is available in field operations, the Secretariat, and institutions.

Examine how a gender perspective could be integrated into all negotiation issues, including those related to security and political issues:

- Make use of existing gender-mainstreaming tools, such as checklists (see Appendix B for a sample checklist and Appendix C for related charts). Dedicated workshops or regular mediation strategy retreats can provide an appropriate opportunity to use these tools.

- Gather gender-sensitive quantitative and qualitative data on all issues discussed during negotiations. Data can be gathered by advisers in the mediator's team, by the OSCE, by commissioned researchers, or by civil society organizations.

- Gather and make use of good examples of integrating a gender perspective in conflict-specific issues, such as on the impact of ceasefire violations or on SALW proliferation as a consequence of armed conflict. Specific tools related to gender and SALW are available.[26]

Encourage negotiating parties to integrate a gender perspective:

- Bring gender-sensitive data to the attention of negotiating parties, including the impact of potential agreements on men, women, boys, and girls. This can be done in bilateral discussions with the sides, in working groups, or in separate information sessions/workshops organized on the margins of talks.

26. E.g., see SEESAC (http://www.seesac.org/) for useful information on SALW and gender.

- Suggest the establishment of an informal working group on gender mainstreaming.

- Ask leading questions that encourage the negotiating parties to reflect on the gender perspective of the issues under negotiation.

- Highlight positive developments, achievements, and lessons learned in integrating a gender perspective as the process moves forward.

- Find out the views about gender equality and mainstreaming within negotiation teams. Do not assume that men are uninterested or that women attach importance to gender equality. If there is resistance, try to find out whether it is due to lack of awareness or for other reasons.

For the OSCE Secretariat, institutions, and field operations:

Enhance the skills and expertise available to support gender-sensitive conflict analysis in mediation teams:

- Make the necessary expertise available to mediation teams to prepare a gendered conflict analysis.

- Build the capacities for gender-sensitive conflict analysis in relevant field operations, the Secretariat, and institutions through internal and external training.

Support the collection of data and insights from a wide range of groups, including conflict-affected populations and civil society:

- Develop and maintain gender-related statistics, sex-disaggregated data, and quantitative and qualitative information on the conflict-affected area.

- Establish long-term connections with civil society in conflict-affected areas, as they often possess data on conflict impacts.

Prepare and support processes to integrate a gender perspective into all negotiation issues:

- Prepare files/non-papers with a gender perspective on societal issues and the impact of the conflict on civilian populations, and make these available to mediators and their teams prior to each round of discussions.

- Collect and make available information on the relevant international and national legal frameworks related to gender equality and human rights.

- Prepare and make available to mediation teams a list of experts that could be invited to present gender-related topics to conflict sides.

Develop further tools for gender mainstreaming:

- Prepare studies and tools on how to integrate a gender perspective into hard security issues, such as ceasefires and CSBMs.

Appendixes

A. Gender Perspective in Conflict Analysis: Key Questions

A conflict profile consists of three elements: (1) conflict issues, including structural and proximate conflict causes and symptoms; (2) conflict actors; and (3) conflict dynamics. The following questions and examples can be used to identify and better understand a conflict profile in a gender-sensitive manner. The list is not exhaustive and the relevance of questions depends on the particularities of the conflict setting.

1) Conflict issues

Key questions could include:

- What are the gendered elements in the root causes of conflict? For example:
  - Long-term economic inequality may have led to the mass migration of men seeking labour opportunities, leaving women as single parents and sole breadwinners of households.
  - There may be systematic human rights violations, including violence against women by security actors that have led to marginalization and grievances in some population groups.

- What role does gender play in the proximate causes of conflict, i.e. in escalatory factors? For example:
  - Proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in a society is proven to have gender-specific impacts, as the majority of people

killed by SALW are men. Small arms may also be a factor in violence committed against women.
    - If there is sexual violence against women or men of certain group, it may lead to actions of revenge and contribute to creating a cycle of violence.

- Are there gendered symptoms of conflict escalation? For example:
    - Efforts may be made to mobilize people to take up arms, including through social pressure or gendered arguments in the media.
    - Images of hyper-masculinity or idealized violent behaviour in men may be used to recruit fighters.
    - Women may be pressured to support armed groups by providing services or, if they do not comply, be accused of failing feminine ideals.

2) Conflict actors (primary, secondary, third-party actors)

Key questions could include:

- What is the gender balance among the identified actor and stakeholder groups? Are such groups all men, all women, or mixed? Are there other significant characteristics, such as age, wealth, or class?

- Do women's groups and organizations have access to information? Do they have influence or are they being influenced by key actors?

- Do family or kinship relations play a role, for example, in how conflict actors are connected (or not)?

- If men are absent due to armed conflict, have women taken up social or political leadership roles in communities and municipalities?

- Are there connections between women across the conflict divide? Do networks exist that could promote or support peace?

3) Conflict dynamics

Key questions could include:

- Are there conflict-enabling gender norms of how men or women should be or behave in society? For example, a norm of violent masculinity.

- Are there security threats and risks for men, women, boys, and girls? If so, how do these differ from each other?

- Are there displacement situations that affect men, women, boys, and girls? For example:
  - Protracted conflict situations can lead to long term displacement of populations.
  - Men may be at greater risk of flight due to forced recruitment by armed groups.
  - Women fleeing with children may become single parents in situations of displacement.
  - Displaced women may be at greater risk of human trafficking.

- Is there gender-disaggregated data available on killed, injured, disappeared, displaced, or detained people?

- Is there evidence of gender-based violence in conflict? If so, who are the victims?

- Are there gendered peace drivers? For example, groups of mothers of missing persons.

B. Gender-Mainstreaming Conflict Issues: A Checklist

This checklist provides step-by-step instructions on how to integrate a gender perspective into an issue under negotiation. Charts 1 and 2 contained in Appendix C can be used to support the process.

STEP 1: Determine the issue that needs to be addressed and draft a short description of the agenda item being negotiated (see the first column of charts 1 and 2 in Appendix C).

STEP 2: Prepare a gender analysis of the issue. Chart 2 of Appendix C can be used to prepare a more comprehensive gender analysis, after which the key points can be transferred to the second column of Chart 1:

- *Clarify the roles men, women, boys, and girls fulfill in the conflict-affected society in relation to the issue at hand.* Key questions could include: What are the expectations in families and society of men as fathers, women as mothers, boys as sons, and girls as daughters? What professional and social activities do they engage in that are linked to the issue? Are both boys and girls educated? How mobile are men and women expected to be in fulfilling their roles?

- *Assess who controls and who has access to resources.* Key questions could include: Who owns farm land and who tends it? Who has the right to reside on or inherit property? Do men and women have equal access to social capital? Do their social networks allow them equal access to justice, public officials, or policy makers? Who is financially dependent on whom? Are there differences in the rights and obligations of divorcees and widows? Are there differences in access to resources between minority and non-minority groups?

- *Assess if and how the conflict/context affects men and women differently.* Key questions could include: Are security risks different for men and women in relation to their everyday activities? If civilians' freedom of movement is restricted, for example by checkpoints, how do these restrictions affect men and women? If conflict has restricted access to public services, do such restrictions affect all groups in the same way? Are men forcibly recruited into armed groups? Who is being displaced and who remains in the conflict zone to care for property?

STEP 3: If you have insufficient data to prepare a gender analysis, look for primary and secondary sources of information to strengthen your knowledge and analysis (see the third column of Chart 1 in Appendix C).

STEP 4: Map the international and national legal and policy frameworks that are relevant to the issue (see the fourth column of Chart 1 in Appendix C).

STEP 5: Based on the gender analysis, re-examine the issue being negotiated and the positions of the sides (see the fifth column of Chart 1 in Appendix C). Key questions could include: Have gender aspects been raised in any way? Do the positions of the sides represent the needs of the whole population or only the interests and needs of some groups? What agenda items are missing that should be brought into the negotiations? How would their inclusion benefit the process and the different stakeholders?

STEP 6: When you have identified the gender aspects that should be included in the negotiations, develop good arguments to justify the benefits of introducing them to the sides and select the best methods to do so (see the sixth column of Chart 1 in Appendix C). Possible methods could include information sessions with participants, bilateral meetings with the sides, conferences and seminars, published studies, and campaigns related to the issue.

CHART 1: Integrating a Gender Perspectives into the Issues under Negotiation

1. Short description of issue under negotiation	**2. Gender Analysis** (Use Chart 2 below to prepare a comprehensive gender analysis, before transferring the key points here.)	**3. What data is needed? How can the missing data be collected and from which sources?**	**4. What are the relevant international and national legal frameworks?**	**5. What additional topics related to this issue would need to be negotiated?**	**6. What options exist to promote the inclusion of the identified additional topics in the negotiations?**

CHART 2: Gender Analysis

1. Short description of issue under negotiation	2. What are the roles of men and women that are related to the issue under negotiation? What are the needs of men and women related to the issue?	3. Who is in control of resources? Who has access to resources?	4. How does the conflict/social context affect men and women differently?

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