

# Report

Integrating gender in  
the DNA of peacebuilding:  
Learning with peers



---

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Key findings</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Finding 1:</b> Gender integration exists along a spectrum	<b>6</b>
<b>Finding 2:</b> Balance the technical with the political	<b>9</b>
<b>Finding 3:</b> Leadership and organisation-wide commitment are the cornerstones for change	<b>12</b>
<b>Finding 4:</b> There are multiple entry points for embedding gender integration	<b>16</b>
<b>Finding 5:</b> Align support and tools across the programming cycle	<b>19</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>23</b>

---

## Foreword

**PeaceNexus** is delighted to support two of our former Organisational Development partners in this collaborative learning initiative. We believe that peer-learning is key to unlocking innovative and viable pathways to peace. When done with humility, it can help us mature as a field by providing a safe space to reflect, atone and change. And peer-learning is particularly well suited to help practitioners and organisations more authentically embody the values of peacebuilding, a now urgent imperative.

Evidence shows a strong correlation between gender inequality and violent conflict, yet it is still not taken sufficiently seriously in peacebuilding practice. This paper calls for more courageous leadership and highlights that working on gender at the programme level is not enough. There is an interdependent relationship between what organisations do in their programmes and how they are managed.

This paper clearly distinguishes between the different dimensions of integrating gender into peacebuilding work and shows how they reinforce each other. It proposes there is a spectrum of organisational practice, from gender discriminatory to gender transformative, and that organisations may be positioned differently on that spectrum, depending on the context in which they operate or the department involved. While many peace actors are exploring how to integrate gender in their programmes, there is less

attention to how organisational models operationalise gender equality and inclusion. This is the case for community-based organisations and also for global players managing significant resources and power.

This initiative is a call to action for us to critically review both our peacebuilding practice and our governance and organisational models. We look forward to more opportunities to build on the important conversations that were held and to continue to support our partners on their individual organisational journeys.

**DR CATRIONA GOURLAY**

*Executive Director*

**CAROLE FRAMPTON-DE TSCHARNER**

*Organisational Development Lead*

**PeaceNexus Foundation**

[www.peacenexus.org](http://www.peacenexus.org)

---

## Summary

Over two decades ago, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was passed. UNSCR 1325 acknowledges women's contributions to peace and security and recognises that gender inequality must be addressed to achieve sustainable peace.<sup>i</sup> There is substantial evidence highlighting the gendered impacts of conflict and the links between gender inequality and outbreaks of violent conflict.<sup>ii</sup> Despite the evidence and well-established global normative frameworks, there is a gap between the transformative intent of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and its implementation within peacebuilding and conflict resolution organisations.<sup>iii</sup>

Peacebuilding and conflict resolution organisations have worked to address structural inequalities and power dynamics core to gender discrimination in the wider sector and the contexts in which they are working. Attention has also been paid to integrating a gender perspective into programming. Yet there has been limited focus on how gender equality and the WPS agenda is incorporated into the governance and operational aspects of these institutions. There is an inherent tension in pushing for gender

inclusion in programmes if at the same time organisations fail to challenge their own patriarchal and exclusionary internal practices. To effect transformative change, peacebuilding organisations need to be prepared to undertake fundamental changes to their practices, not only tinker at the edges.

Practitioners grappling with these challenges have developed a wealth of expertise and experience. To capture this wisdom, CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation and Conciliation Resources convened discussions on the lessons learned so far in integrating gender into peacebuilding and conflict resolution organisations.

These reflections have taken place at a time when there is a global pushback against gender equality and a number of UN member states have questioned established standards of women's rights.<sup>iv</sup> Attempts to wipe out hard-fought gains in **gender equality and the WPS agenda make it evident that gender integration is a political process not just a technical exercise**. We hope that this paper is a constructive contribution to the global efforts to transform our sector.

<sup>i</sup> In this report, gender refers to characteristics of men, women, boys or girls, and sexual and gender minorities in a specific context that are socially constructed. Gender can refer to the role of a man or woman in society ('gender roles'), to the expectations of their behaviour ('gender norms'), or to an individual's concept of themselves ('gender identity'). It is different to sex, which refers to the biological differences between males and females (Sophia Close, Hesta Groenewald and Diana Trimiño Mora. Gender-sensitive conflict analysis facilitation guide (London: Conciliation Resources, 2020: 71).

<sup>ii</sup> Hudson, Valerie M., Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli et al. *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Caprioli, Mary and Mark A. Boyer. 'Gender, Violence, and International Crisis', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2001): 503-18.

<sup>iii</sup> Deiana, Maria-Adriana and Kenneth McDonagh. "It is important, but...": Translating the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda into the planning of EU peacekeeping missions', *Peacebuilding*, Vol. 6, Iss. 1 (2017): 34-48.

<sup>iv</sup> Taylor, Sarah and Gretchen Baldwin. *The Global Pushback on Women's Rights: The State of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2019); Cupać, , Ielena and Irem Ebetürk. 'The personal is global political: The antifeminist backlash in the United Nations', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 22, Iss. 4 (2020): 702-714.

**INFO BOX:** **Gender integration:** When discussing ‘gender integration’ we mean that an organisation takes deliberate actions to achieve equal outcomes for women, men, and sexual and gender minorities while taking into account their different starting points. It is a core part of the process of achieving gender equality, and may include work across all areas of an organisation – governance (leadership and decision-making processes and policies), operations (internal systems, processes, policies and strategies) and programmes (which includes research, analysis, and monitoring, evaluation and learning). This paper frames integration as a spectrum.

**Methodology:** In collaboration with PeaceNexus, in 2020-2021, CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation (CMI) and Conciliation Resources (CR) convened three virtual roundtable discussions and additional interviews under the Chatham House Rule with 13 peer organisations to learn together and share insights, recommendations and practical tools.<sup>i</sup> The 15 primary participants were gender technical leads within non-governmental conflict mediation and peacebuilding organisations from Europe, Middle East, South and Central America and Asia. An independent consultant documented and analysed our learning and findings were validated by the participating organisations in a March 2021 workshop.

### Key findings →

**1. Gender integration exists along a spectrum:** When integrating gender into peacebuilding, organisations are situated across a spectrum ranging from gender-discriminatory to gender-transformative approaches. An organisation should set its level of ambition for gender integration and note that at any point in time, governance, operational and programming parts of an organisation may sit at different parts of the spectrum.

**2. Balance the technical with the political:** Integrating gender into peacebuilding is not only a technical exercise. It is also inherently political, as the focus is on shifting power dynamics to ensure greater inclusion and gender equality. Both technical and political dimensions of change are important and mutually reinforcing.

**3. Leadership and organisation-wide commitment are the cornerstones for change:** Organisational commitment is demonstrated by technical support and incentives for gender integration to staff at all levels, ensuring adequate resourcing, and outlining a deliberate strategy for gender integration – one that is incorporated into the overall organisation strategy. Staff have an important role in pushing the gender agenda forward in practice.

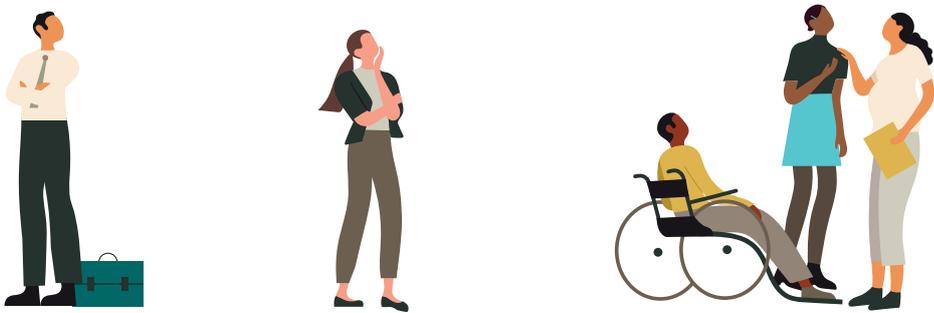
**4. There are multiple entry points for embedding gender integration:** Drivers of change are both internal and external, and include leveraging donor push, demonstrating success through concrete examples, and seizing opportunities created by external events or internal organisational change processes.

**5. Align support and tools across the programming cycle:** Gendered conflict analysis and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) are important to create space for reflection on how peacebuilding interventions include gender, and learning should be integrated across the programming cycle.

<sup>i</sup> See the Acknowledgements section for a list of organisations which participated in this process.

## 1

## Gender integration exists along a spectrum



**Insight:** When integrating gender into peacebuilding, organisations are situated across a spectrum ranging from gender-discriminatory to gender-transformative approaches. An organisation should set its level of ambition for gender integration and note that at any point in time, governance, operational and programming parts of an organisation may sit at different parts of the spectrum →

---

“We decided to adopt gender as part of our core business. We have started to look at governance structures [not just programmes]– looking for parity on boards and introducing collective management approaches.” Roundtable Participant

## Table 1 The gender integration spectrum

**Gender-discriminatory approaches** are exclusionary and prejudiced actions based on perceptions that women, sexual and gender minorities and men are not equal.

**Gender-unaware approaches** do not see gender as a significant factor in interactions between people or as a driver of violence or conflict. There is a failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of women, men, and sexual and gender minorities are ascribed to, or imposed upon, them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts.<sup>i</sup>

**Do No Harm approaches** recognise that peacebuilding efforts are not neutral. Actions affect the gender dynamics in how an organisation is working, either for better or for worse. There is an obligation to pay attention to these dynamics to ensure gender inequalities are not unintentionally exacerbated.

**Gender-sensitive approaches** identify the specific needs of or issues affecting men, women, and sexual and gender minorities in a specific context and account for these when designing and implementing interventions in order to avoid reinforcing norms and practices that cause and fuel gender inequality.

**Gender-responsive approaches** reflect an understanding of gender norms, roles and inequalities when analysing the causes, actors, impacts and dynamics of a conflict and take these into account when designing and implementing interventions.

**Gender-transformative approaches** are intersectional, and challenge and address the underlying structural causes and factors of gender inequality, such as norms and power relations, and explicitly aims for gender equality.<sup>ii</sup>

Figure 1



**The spectrum of gender integration is not a tool for linear classification but could be useful to map out where an organisation’s governance, operational and programmatic practices are currently situated – and what its future objectives are.**

<sup>i</sup>European Institute for Gender Equality definition: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1157>

<sup>ii</sup>An intersectional approach acknowledges systemic discrimination due to sexual orientation and identity, gender identity, age, race, economic status, national origin, and ability (among other aspects of one’s identity), and that all of these impact how different people engage with conflict and peacebuilding. The term ‘intersectionality’ was first used by Kimberlé Crenshaw. See: Crenshaw, K., ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,’ University of Chicago Legal Forum, Vol. 1989, Iss. 1 (1989): 139–167

To deepen commitment, we need to **work simultaneously on governance and leadership at all levels, organisational policies and internal systems, and programming practice.**

This three-track approach requires organisational-wide leadership commitment to set the level of ambition for gender integration (where the organisation wants to be on the spectrum) and consider what entry points there are for change and the support needed to get there.

**“We do not pursue norms change, but gender integration is part of a do no harm approach. I get asked, ‘why should I be inclusive? Can you demonstrate the value of doing this? If we include women, what do we gain?’ I ask back, ‘what have we gained from only including men?’”** Roundtable Participant

**The spectrum can be used to explain the complexity involved in gender integration.** It can help organisations explore how change in different parts of the institution interact to prevent or drive progress. For instance, deepening gender integration across programmes can be a good entry point, yet organisations may find it difficult to advance further if there is no organisation-wide commitment in a binding strategy. Integrating gender into organisational governance requires the examination and unpacking of internal power dynamics (see Finding 2 for more).

**Do No Harm approaches**, focused on risk mitigation, **can be a useful starting point** to open conversations about integrating gender into programming. This approach can ensure gender inequalities are minimised, not unintentionally exacerbated. A recognition that peacebuilding is not neutral can stimulate discussions on how peacebuilding work can exacerbate existing gender gaps and unequal power dynamics.

However, **gender integration can stall at gender-sensitivity**, where organisations focus narrowly on identifying the specific needs of different genders and accounting for these in design and implementation; for example, focusing on how many women attend activities. The challenge is to look beyond an ‘add women and stir’ approach to confront the barriers to diverse groups’ meaningful participation.

What sets **gender-transformative peacebuilding** apart is recognising that gender inequality is a core driver of conflict, **requiring deliberate efforts to address the underlying structural causes and effects of violence** by using an intersectional approach and challenging gender norms and power relationships.

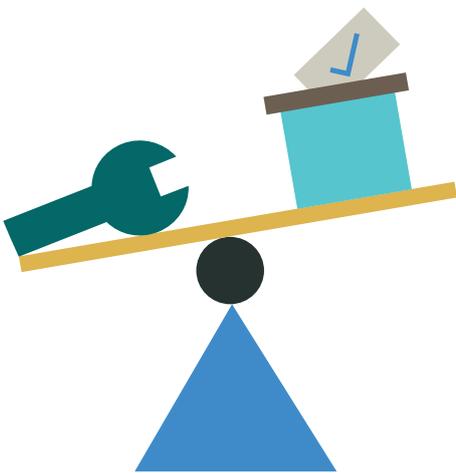
## Practice Tips →

- The gender integration spectrum can be used to map where an organisation is currently. This helps identify strengths and gaps, which can inform the approach an organisation takes to progress further.
- An organisation-wide assessment is important to set a baseline for change.
- Develop a collective vision of where the organisation wants to be on the spectrum, create concrete change objectives, and agree on steps to achieve these in a given time frame e.g. a five-year strategic organisational plan.
- If adopting an approach that uses multiple entry points for gender integration, monitor how the changes in one area impact others. Emphasise the synergy between work on governance, operations and programmes.



## 2

### Balancing the technical with the political



**Insight:** Integrating gender into peacebuilding is not only a technical exercise. It is also inherently political, as the focus is on shifting power dynamics to ensure greater inclusion and gender equality. Both technical and political dimensions of change are important and mutually reinforcing →

---

**Gender work requires political engagement as it questions power dynamics in society, potentially threatening individual peacebuilders' power and privileges.** This can lead to resistance at all levels in organisations.

Where an organisation sits on the spectrum (see Figure 1) will influence its approach to balancing the political dynamics and technical practices associated with integrating gender. For example, gendered MEL is both a technical process (gathering and synthesising gender-disaggregated information on activities, outputs, outcomes and impact) and a political one (looking at how the process can be inclusive and participatory and how it changes gender roles or norms in the given context).

Diverse teams, working flexibly and using local concepts and terminology, can be more successful in integrating gender into programmes. Incremental changes can be brought about by subtly delving deeper into commonly held peacebuilding ideas (e.g. what inclusive peace means) and persistently asking questions about gender roles and norms rather than challenging patriarchal hierarchies directly. In this way, organisations can subtly push back against the deliberate depoliticisation of the peacebuilding agenda and make more visible the links between peacebuilding and gender equality.

**Adopting an intersectional approach to promote gender equality means questioning power and privilege,** both within organisations and their programmes and policy work and, critically, in the way international organisations work with partner organisations.

**“When so much of what we are discussing is about values, power and privilege, it is inherently difficult to have honest conversations. We need safe spaces for open and honest conversations within organisations. This may mean that we need to create a space for women and men separately first and then facilitate conversation between them.”**

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT

Thorough internal organisational and external context analyses can help to ensure a conflict- and culturally-sensitive focus on gender and peacebuilding work.

Organisations need to choose where and when it is appropriate to openly challenge gender discrimination, **recognising that change should be conflict- and culturally-sensitive, and led by local and national organisations.** Some participants found

that in certain cases, it was prudent not be explicit externally about the decision to challenge gender norms as they feared it could disengage some partners or result in community backlash. In every conflict-affected context, there are local and national women's, youth and other organisations promoting gender equality. These partners are best placed to know how to effect change. Without their leadership, the inherently political agenda of gender-transformative work can seem like an imposition of “Western norms.”

Organisations must accept that as they commit to more gender transformative processes they must **engage with the resulting disruptions in power and privilege** that occur when the status quo is challenged. This requires technical expertise, long-term commitment, and partnerships with local and national civil society organisations who are leading this change in their contexts. Yet gender work will not be effective if the focus is purely technical: getting the balance right and adjusting over time is critical.

Creating regular organisation-wide safe discussion spaces, such as internal working groups or meetings to support cross-learning, can help all staff to see the relevance of embedding gender in their work. These spaces are often successful in **simultaneously building understanding as well as personal and team ownership** of changes. They

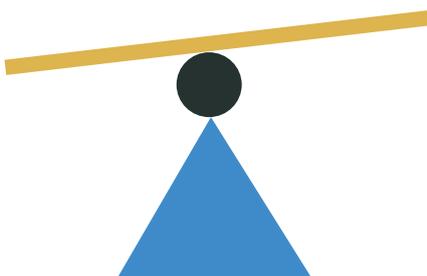
---

can also capture and celebrate good practice, which can deepen commitment. These spaces need to occur not only within headquarters but also in country offices, with project partners and communities, and between fellow peacebuilding organisations, to highlight the importance of peer learning and solidarity.

**“Perhaps the most essential part of the consultation process for the strategy was not only creating buy-in but taking stock of the understanding of gender among staff in a neutral way (asking for their help vs. being seen to be testing them). This buy-in from creating the strategy also made follow up a lot easier.”** Roundtable Participant

## Practice Tips →

- Avoid depoliticising gender. Work that does not recognise how differences in power are exacerbated by the intersection of gender and other identities such as race, ethnicity, class or disability is not just based on a lack of understanding, but constitutes a form of resistance itself.
- It is important to partner with women’s rights organisations and other organisations leading gender transformation in each context.
- Support gender experts to lead the change process in organisations. Identify indicators to assess progress towards and the impact of integrating gender.
- Participatory, organisational-wide safe spaces to discuss gender integration are critical to create internal momentum for change. These can support mutual learning to build solidarity and share tools, insights and experiences.
- Sector-wide collaboration (e.g. co-developing tools or doing joint analysis) and peer-learning platforms can help organisations to work together for change.
- Recognise that the magnitude of change needed to move from gender-discriminatory to gender-transformative approaches is significant, slow and inherently political – and it requires change at the personal level. Organisations need to find strategic opportunities to challenge unequal power dynamics.
- Consider the language used when talking about gender. Involve local stakeholders and partners to frame context-sensitive concepts.



### 3

## Leadership and organisation-wide commitment are the cornerstones for change



**Insight:** Organisational commitment is demonstrated by technical support and incentives for gender integration to staff at all levels, ensuring adequate resourcing, and outlining a deliberate strategy for gender integration – one that is incorporated into the overall organisation strategy. Staff have an important role in pushing the gender agenda forward in practice →

---

**“There are differences in the level of prioritisation when it comes to gender integration. Organisational leadership must determine a level of ambition: ‘How far do we want to go? What’s the link between the gender integration objectives we have and the concrete results we would like to see?’”**

Roundtable Participant

Leadership and organisational commitment are critical to all efforts to integrate gender. It is very difficult to make significant strides in integrating gender without buy-in from senior leaders and the governing board – even when there is motivation and push by programme, operations and policy staff. **Organisational leadership must be explicit about what they want to achieve by integrating gender.** This will make it easier for staff and partners to make strategic decisions and prioritise gender. Communications on the importance of gender should be matched with the investment of resources and building institutional level objectives into job descriptions and performance assessments so every team can be held accountable.

Organisations have tended to focus on integrating gender into policy and programming and neglected to look at their core operations and practices. **Yet unless organisational culture and internal decision-making and learning processes also change it is difficult to advance and sustain gender integration.** For instance, bringing a gender lens to human resource practices (gender gaps in salary scales or staff roles, organisational learning, recruitment and promotions), finance (gender budgeting) or safeguarding (all actions taken by organisations to protect their personnel from harm and harming others) can ensure gender becomes part of the organisation’s DNA.

**“The demand came from the top but we had to organise from bottom-up to decide how we were going to do this to ensure it was not only limited to optics.”** Roundtable Participant

While the role of leadership is essential, over reliance on top-down approaches to gender integration can exacerbate pushback from staff and partners. **Diffusing skills and responsibilities across the organisation is pivotal.** Leveraging staff members who have interest and motivation to advance gender integration can help drive the change from within. Having feminists or gender equality advocates in leadership positions can also be an important internal impetus for change.

Institutional buy-in should also focus on governing boards, which are responsible for holding organisations accountable. Chairs and trustees need to be aware of organisational commitments on gender, how change will be measured over time, and who is responsible for making change. The diverse composition of the board sends a strong message about the organisation’s commitment to equality and inclusion. **As well as being accountable to their board, organisations should also be accountable to the partners and communities they work with.**

**“Colleagues with a genuine interest in gender dynamics can be important allies in pushing forward internal discussions and programmatic interventions on gender.”** Roundtable Participant

**Resourcing a gender advisor position or a dedicated team is essential** to progressing gender integration, as this will ensure that there is specific expertise available within the organisation to drive and support change.

The gender advisor or team’s location in the organisation’s structure also matters. When these advisors are part of organisational leadership they can more effectively advance organisational goals on gender. Positioning gender advisors in programmes (rather than in policy or research teams) can also help staff better contextualise advisory support.

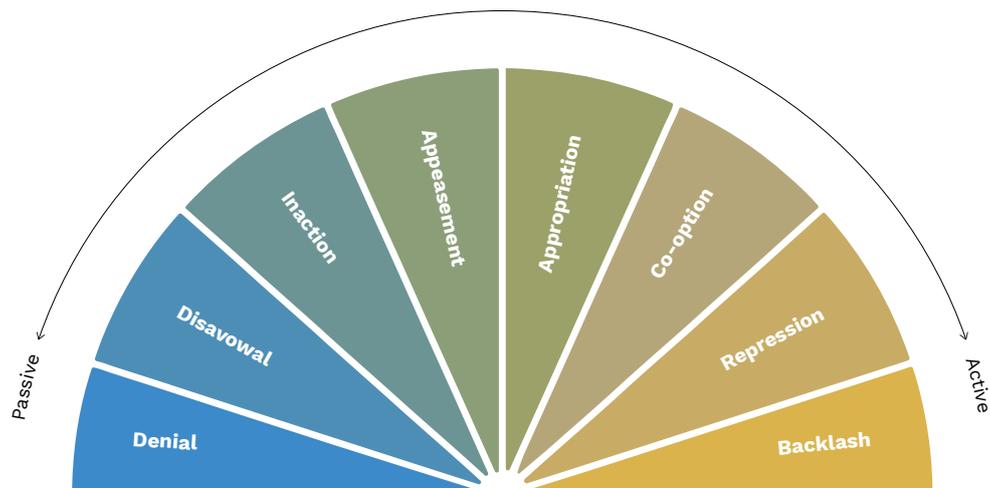


Figure 2: (En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives, VicHealth

In addition to the technical skills required, **staff also need to have the skills to deal with resistance.** Resistance is not necessarily a bad thing, but if resistance is not managed, it can paralyse the change process. Dealing with resistance can be exhausting and sometimes demoralising, and organisations have a responsibility to support those within the organisation who are leading the change processes. Understanding the type of resistance being encountered and proposing specific strategies to address it can help people contribute to discussions safely and effectively (see Figure 2).

Common types of resistance encountered by staff include denial (e.g. “the exclusion of women is not relevant to this conflict”), inaction (e.g. “we need to focus on other things first”, reluctance to partner with women’s organisations who have long had gendered approaches), and appropriation (e.g. requests for evidence that gender norms are a driver of conflict).

Importantly, **organisations need to recognise that their staff are all on personal journeys to understanding gender and how it impacts their lives.** This is a long-term process that requires staff patience and willingness to go through a process of personal transformation. Each person will navigate personal power and privileges

“Gender has a deeply personal impact – cultural, emotional – on our daily lives. Some long-held beliefs are being challenged. So, organisations need to think about how they support people through this very personal journey. It’s supporting an organisational and a personal journey at the same time.” Roundtable Participant

resulting from the intersections of gender and other identities such as ethnicity, religion, disability and social class. Those in positions of privilege may resist change, such as by only adopting a superficially ‘politically correct’ approach.

There is a need to be strategic about when is the best time to talk about gender issues, as times of restructure or external crises are already stressful. Resistance can come from fear, so it is important to **emotionally prepare staff for difficult conversations.** Organisations need to invest in developing tools to support staff and create a culture where power and privilege are safely discussed.

**“In our organisation, one colleague accused another of perpetuating gender-based violence in their communications. Some people felt it had nothing to do with gender. The organisation had to respond. This started conversations on gender.”** Roundtable Participant

## Practice Tips ↓

- Develop a clearly articulated vision for why being inclusive will benefit the organisation and the partners and communities it works with.
- There is a tendency for organisations to prioritise internal organisational policy development before practical implementation. To deepen impact, it is useful to work on policy and practice simultaneously. Practice offers a space to test if the policy is working.
- When hiring new staff, interview panels should be gender balanced and diverse. Interview questions related to gender equality are a useful way to highlight organisational priorities.
- Leaders of organisations should create equal opportunities for all staff, particularly those from less represented groups, to act as organisational spokespersons, moderate roundtables and panels.
- Senior leadership should consult with the gender advisors / gender team / gender advocates on integrating gender into any public statements.
- To increase internal accountability for gender integration, consider setting up a high-level working group of staff and/or peers. This group can be mandated to critique the work of senior leadership, provide strategic advice and monitor the progress toward organisational objectives.
- Set a budgetary minimum for programming that has gender-specific outcomes, and require targeted measures and reporting on gender integration.
- Even rhetorical or superficial commitments to gender can be seen as windows of opportunity to have a conversation on what can be practically done.



## 4

### There are multiple entry points for embedding gender integration



**Insight:** Drivers of change are both internal and external, and include leveraging donor push, demonstrating success through concrete examples, and seizing opportunities created by external events or internal organisational change processes. →

---

There are **multiple entry points** for initiating or deepening gender integration. Drivers of change can be **top-down or bottom-up**; they can stem from **external** donor priorities **or internal** lessons learnt about the effectiveness of inclusive peace; and they can be **planned or opportunistic**. Often organisations must leverage several of these entry points at the same time. Knowing how different entry points intersect can help organisations more strategically integrate gender across governance, operational and programming practices.

## External entry points

External events (e.g., #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo) or pressure from donors can create windows of opportunities to look critically at an organisation. Donors increasingly require organisations to integrate gender-sensitive approaches. **This donor push factor** can be leveraged by staff for increased investment in gender programming and in building organisational, technical, staff and partner skills.

There is also a need to consider how best to **leverage entry points with partners**. One approach is the creation of dedicated opportunities and safe spaces for conversations to unpack gender integration. This requires commitment and resources for reflection and learning. In organisations where women have difficulties in being heard by their male colleagues, gender balance among staff in partner organisations or donors has helped through leading by example on inclusive decision-making and creating space for diverse voices internally.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of donor push. Donors usually expect results in very short timeframes, and few fund institutional change processes. **Donor requirements must be balanced with genuine organisational commitment**, otherwise change is likely to be superficial. It can also be counter-productive if donor pressure is used only by gender advisors: to effectively leverage the opportunity created by donor requirements, organisational leaders have a critical role to play.

“While donor interest and demand can be very useful for getting staff members on board, it can also have its limitations. It can create only a thin layer of interest or a perception that this is about pleasing the donor rather than genuine impact.”

Roundtable participant

**External events and public pressure can create an opening** to internal reflection on gender and reexamination of organisational values. Events like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo have forced organisations to think about decolonisation, diversity and inclusion,

and how they are responding to discrimination. Anti-racism can offer an opportunity to also talk about gender equality for all. Some global events such as International Women’s Day can be used to encourage diverse staff, especially men, to reflect on what gender equality means for them. Such efforts can prompt internal discussions and widen gender solidarity and engagement.

## Internal entry points

Internal discussions focused on **gaining a shared understanding of gender in relation to critical concepts** such as peace and security provide important entry points for advancing gender integration. **Collaborative peer learning** such as experiential training (learning through reflection on doing) have also proved helpful to overcome resistance. Another opportunity is to document success stories by staff and partners to showcase the different ways that gender has been integrated and to generate conversations. Ensuring gender training during induction can also be an important enabler for gender inclusion.

**“Our organisation has the drive to do valuable work that will lead to inclusive peacemaking. So, conversations around what ‘inclusive’ means create a pathway to explore the value-add from gender-sensitive conflict analysis. This analysis helps us understand fundamental concepts of inclusion, peace and security in practice.”** Roundtable participant

It may be strategic to focus at an early stage on entry points within programmes. An important entry point is **building regular use of gendered conflict analysis** into the workflow. This can reveal internal incoherencies and bring about pressure for organisational change. Sometimes **MEL can provide concrete entry points** for systematic integration of gender. Intersectional data gathered through MEL activities can help refocus programmes on gender equality outcomes.

For example, data showing low women and youth attendance – demonstrating that an organisation is not systematically supporting inclusive participation – can be used to prompt a shift in programme design.

**Organisational restructures, reviews or moments of crisis can also open up spaces** to have conversations on gender. The review or development of an organisational strategy creates perhaps the most important window for gender integration: if gender is not integrated into organisation-wide strategy, it is very difficult to hold teams and leadership accountable. A strategy should be owned by all staff – involving them early in discussions is important and should be followed up by support for implementation.

**“The work that we do can bring home to us how important it is to adopt a gender lens – for example, you cannot work on guerrilla warfare and not recognise that women are involved in particular ways, so you have to take this into account in designing a peacebuilding programme.”**

Roundtable participant

## Practice Tips ↓

- It is essential to think strategically and work on multiple entry points at once.
- Demonstrating success in specific programmes or research builds credibility and support for gender integration. These examples can be used to prompt internal reflection.
- Invest in building staff capacity. Inductions of new staff can be an effective stepping stone for change. Explore experiential training or peer learning which may help to overcome resistance.
- Recognise that addressing different forms of resistance to gender integration requires adopting different strategies (see Figure 1 on page 14).
- Sometimes it works to focus first on the programmatic track, as this can reveal internal incoherencies between stated objectives and reality, and bring some pressure to bear on the need for organisational changes.
- Build capacity across the organisation to conduct gendered conflict analysis, as undertaking this analysis can build understanding of how gender inequality is a core driver of conflict. Gendered conflict analysis should not be the sole responsibility of the gender advisor or team.
- Consider establishing a pool of gender experts, especially with geographical or thematic expertise, who can work internally and also across organisations.
- Having gender expertise not just within headquarters but also in local or regional offices can help build local capacity for gender integration.

## 5

### Align support and tools across the programming cycle



**Insight:** Gendered conflict analysis and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) are important to create space for reflection on how peacebuilding interventions include gender, and learning should be integrated across the programming cycle →

---

Peacebuilding is always dynamic. Alignment between research, analysis, programme design and theory of change, implementation, adaptation and MEL will help ensure that measuring gender is considered early rather than as an add-on. For example, if the gendered conflict analysis has highlighted that women and sexual and gender minorities

**“Doing gendered conflict analysis well illuminates a nuanced understanding of conflict drivers and, therefore, improves [the] peacebuilding intervention’s quality and sustainability. When organisational leadership sees this, they are more likely to support this work actively.”** Roundtable participant

do not feel safe participating in peace processes, the programme needs to create safe spaces for diverse voices to be heard. MEL should be participatory and measure the impact of these safe spaces.

**All conflict analysis should integrate gender, not add it separately.** Adopting a gender lens can reveal different power dynamics, causes and impacts of violence, and identify excluded actors. Institutionalising gendered conflict analysis involves

demonstrating the value that a gender lens brings to conflict analysis – this is most visible when the findings are used to make peacebuilding interventions more effective. Organisations that systematically embed gendered conflict analysis into their work are more likely to also strive for gender-transformative research, policy and programming.

The actual **process used for a gendered conflict analysis is critical**: it can entrench unequal power dynamics by prioritising the perspectives of those in power, or it can be empowering, contributing to creating a safe space for dialogue between diverse groups. To enrich the analysis, it is recommended that a participatory process is used, involving diverse people impacted by conflict. While more time and resource intensive, such an approach privileges the lived experiences of those affected by the conflict – and if done well, can be a peacebuilding process in itself.

When there is already resistance to gender, the lack of ready tools can exacerbate pushback. Gendered conflict analysis, theory of change and MEL tools and processes can help to address gender gaps in programme design and implementation. Yet a key challenge for some organisations is having the time, skills and resources to action these.

**“How do we measure changes or impact in gender relations and unequal power? We need to think about this. We are being asked to demonstrate impact in a technical way – by having logframes we are putting gender into a technical box. But what we need to measure is social change, which is political.”** Roundtable participant

**A focus on activities and outputs rather than capturing outcomes and impact, i.e. political and social change, depoliticises gender work.** Frameworks such as results-based management have tried to put more emphasis on analysing outcome-level change, but in practice this is often challenging and requires more time and effort from the project teams. Also, poorly designed monitoring and evaluation can lead to

tokenism; for example, by creating targets for diverse participation without considering if that participation is actually meaningful.

**How MEL processes are designed is as important as the data collected through them:** it is important to consider who does this analysis and where the evidence comes from. It requires trust and openness to discuss programming challenges and difficult issues, including existing power relations. MEL frameworks that use participatory methodologies such as outcome harvesting can help in collecting data on changes related to power dynamics and meaningful inclusion. Participatory methodologies help peacebuilders to assess results that are more political in nature, such as changes in gender norms or relationships.

---

**“Too often, gender indicators are added on to MEL frameworks as an afterthought. The approach of integrating gender into monitoring and evaluation frameworks must be a natural step from integrating gender in programme design – that is, in a programme’s theory of change and logical model. Only then will MEL be able to measure progress on gender integration based on the programmes’ desired outcomes.”** Roundtable participant

## Practice Tips ↓

- The process of doing gendered conflict analysis can be empowering. Engaging technical expertise for contextualised analysis should be combined with good facilitation to manage a participatory process.
- Good analysis should reveal how gender inequality shapes social, political and economic systems, institutions and structures. It sheds light on the diverse forms of violence that maintain power in public, family and community spaces, which are interconnected.
- Gendered conflict analysis can bring to light peace initiatives that entrench unequal power relations and dynamics, forcing organisations to ask what type of peace they are working towards.
- Create programme design and reporting templates based on a shared understanding of key gender language, concepts and approaches. Invest early in internal conversations, gain buy-in among teams and build capacity on integrating gender analysis, programme design and MEL.
- Creating a list of MEL questions for staff to prompt reflection at all stages of a project – not just what activities achieved, but also what new knowledge was gained and what new entry points were found. This targeted approach can help counteract resistance.
- Tracking impact using disaggregated indicators; for example, number of young female participants, can prompt deeper reflection and adaptive programming.
- Build realistic costs into programmes for participatory gendered analysis and MEL, which take longer and are more resource intensive.



## Conclusion

Integrating gender into conflict resolution and peacebuilding takes time. It is a slow and incremental process because organisations need to grapple with many challenges and balance efforts across many priorities.

Our discussions with practitioners have revealed a range of practical insights into what is needed and what can be done to integrate gender in peacebuilding. Buy-in and commitment from leadership is key. Language matters and context-specific terms and concepts can help counter resistance at all levels. Finally, there is a need to recognise that the magnitude of change is significant and that this change is inherently political as well as personal.

There is a need for a sector-wide conversation – with organisations, their partners and donors – on how to effectively integrate gender. These discussions could also help share tools and frameworks, and collectively develop approaches to better integrate gender. It is important to examine issues like patriarchy, gender equality, intersectionality and decolonisation because of how these all relate to

power and privilege. At the heart of the conversation are questions on ‘what kind of conflict resolution and peacebuilding organisations do we want to be and what type of peace is sought?’ The gender integration spectrum (see Figure 1) presented in this report could guide this conversation and be developed into a diagnostic tool with concrete examples and indicators for each point on the spectrum.

There is evidence to demonstrate that gender inequality is a key driver of conflict. Peacebuilding organisations need to invest in thinking about how they are going to promote equality across all aspects of their organisational DNA: in governance, operational and programming work. Such discussions can threaten the interests of some peacebuilders, so organisations need to be prepared to deal with resistance. Creating peer learning platforms, like the one that informed this report, is good practice in bringing together those working for a gendered approach to peacebuilding. Through the process of knowledge sharing, solidarity can be activated and sustain momentum for change.

---

## Acknowledgments

Our sincere thanks to all workshop participants from whom the ideas for this report were generated, for providing their valuable insights and recommendations. We would also like to acknowledge other colleagues from our organisations, and Dr Laura Davies who attended the validation workshop and provided valuable feedback.

This research process was co-designed and co-facilitated by Johanna Poutanen, Head; Laura Hendry, Project Manager; Maria Ristimäki, Project Officer from the Women in Peacemaking Programme, CMI - Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation; and Dr Sophia Close, Head of Gender and Peacebuilding and Chantelle Cummings, Senior Adviser, Conciliation Resources. Dr Anuradha Mundkur, Consultant, led the learning and reporting process and Carole Frampton-de Tschanner, International Partnerships Manager, PeaceNexus Foundation, provided technical advice and support.

Workshop participants included: Aysu Uygur, Berghof Foundation; Azadeh Moaveni, International Crisis Group (ICG); Diana Lepe, Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz (Serapaz); Diana Trimiño Mora, Saferworld; Maho Nakayama, Sasakawa Peace Foundation; Miriam Østergaard Reifferscheidt, European Institute of Peace (EIP); Ndeye Sow, International Alert; Rosa Emilia Salamanca González, Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica (CIASE); Sabrina Quamber, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD); and Sonia Jaber, Masarat – The Palestinian Center for Policy Research & Strategic Studies.

**Report compiled by:** Anuradha Mundkur, Johanna Poutanen, Laura Hendry and Sophia Close.

**Copy-edited:** Asha Pond

**Illustrations, design and layout:** Emma Philip and Tyla Mason

**About CMI:** CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation is an independent Finnish organisation that works to prevent and resolve violent conflicts through dialogue and mediation. [www.cmi.fi](http://www.cmi.fi)

**About Conciliation Resources:** Conciliation Resources is an international organisation committed to stopping violent conflict and creating more peaceful societies. We work with people impacted by war and violence, bringing diverse voices together to make change that lasts. [www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org)

**About PeaceNexus Foundation:** PeaceNexus is a Swiss private foundation that aims to strengthen the capacities of and collaboration between organisations to increase their contribution to reducing violence and building peace. [www.peacenexus.org](http://www.peacenexus.org)

---

---

**CMI** MARTTI AHTISAARI  
PEACE FOUNDATION

 **CONCILIATION  
RESOURCES**

 **PeaceNexus**  
Foundation

  
**international  
alert**

  
**Berghof Foundation**

  
**iase**

  
**SERAPAZ**  
Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz A.C.

 **INTERNATIONAL  
CRISIS  
GROUP**

**SAFERWORLD**  
PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

**EUROPEAN  
INSTITUTE  
OF PEACE** 

 **SASAKAWA  
PEACE  
FOUNDATION**

**“hd** | Centre for  
Humanitarian  
Dialogue

*Mediation for peace*

  
**MASARAT**  
المركز الفلسطيني لأبحاث السياسات والدراسات الاستراتيجية - مسارات