

W A G E

# What works for conflict- and gender-sensitive media campaigns

## Case study from Central Asia

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## Introduction

International development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian organizations and other practitioners are increasingly using media campaigns as part of their programming. Media campaigns are powerful tools for spreading information, raising awareness, and disseminating messages related to peace and conflict resolution. In conflict-affected regions, access to accurate and timely information is often limited, making media campaigns a valuable means of reaching diverse audiences. Yet, how gender mainstreaming and conflict sensitivity can be implemented in media campaigns has not yet been sufficiently documented and illustrated around the world. There is a pressing need for practical, real-world case studies and best practices to guide organizations in their efforts.

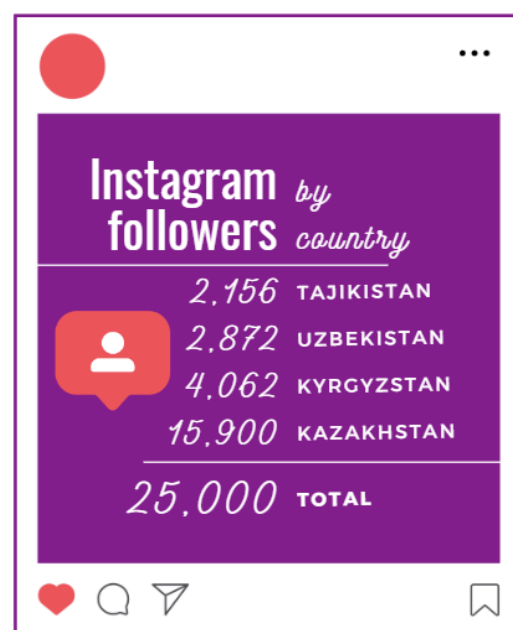
With this in mind, Search for Common Ground's (Search) Kyrgyzstan team and Search's Institutional Learning Team developed this case study to share best practices in implementing conflict- and gender-sensitive media campaigns. This case study is based on Search's experience of running two extensive media campaigns across Central Asia.

Most recently, Search's Kyrgyzstan team ran two extensive media campaigns as part of the [TaasirLink](#) project and [National Women's Business Agenda](#). TaasirLink aimed at involving vulnerable youth in combating violent extremism in Kyrgyzstan, while the National Women's Business Agenda initiative focused on advancing women's entrepreneurship and dismantling gender stereotypes in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This agenda was implemented under the Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE) consortium's work. To account for the deeply interconnected nature of women's and girls' experiences, WAGE's initiatives employ approaches that are highly collaborative, integrated, and inclusive. WAGE is funded by the U.S. Department of State Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues and implemented initiatives across 10 different countries by core partners including the American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI), Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Grameen Foundation and Search for Common Ground (Search).

Despite the sensitive nature of these themes, the campaigns achieved resounding success in terms of engaging a wide audience, while considering both gender dynamics and the unique context of conflict.

The TaasirLink project successfully engaged a substantial audience, accumulating 14,000 social media followers and directly reaching over 250,000 individuals across the designated locations. The final evaluation of the media campaign showed that 75% of the project participants confirmed that the media campaign had contributed to their personal development and more than 60% of participants improved fact-checking and critical thinking skills in their lives.

The National Women's Business Agenda under the Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE) project achieved an even more significant online presence, accumulating a total of over 25,000 social media followers. These followers were distributed as follows: Kyrgyzstan (15,900), Kazakhstan (4,062), Tajikistan (2,156), and Uzbekistan (2,872). In total, the media campaign for this project reached over 5 million individuals across four countries. The final evaluation of the project showed that the media campaign was able to shift the views of people on female entrepreneurship. 79% of the audience that consumed WAGE's media content reported that they now perceive women in business more positively than they did previously. Moreover, they shared that the media campaign made them want to start their own business, with 45% of the audience reporting their plans to start their own small



business within a year<sup>1</sup>. The media campaign inspired women to start their own business and shifted public opinion to more positive perceptions of women in business.

Gender- and conflict-sensitive approaches enhance the effectiveness of media campaigns by ensuring that communication strategies are inclusive, respectful, and empathetic, thereby promoting understanding and unity in diverse and conflict-prone contexts. Our team believes that these media campaigns were successful in large part because we adopted the tactics of gender- and conflict-sensitive media campaigns. In what follows, we share the key steps we followed. We hope that our discussion and the illustrations provide insight to you as you launch and run a campaign that informs, engages, and inspires action, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and peaceful world.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation #1

Make gender and conflict sensitivity integral to the goals of media campaigns.

### Recommendation #2

Be inclusive as you identify the target audience of your media campaign.

### Recommendation #3

Ensure that the campaign narratives are gender- and conflict-sensitive.



<sup>1</sup> M-Vector. (2023). Research on the topic Outreach Campaign Analysis of the National's Women's Business Agenda in Central Asia. Search for Common Ground. 2023.

## RECOMMENDATION 1. Make gender and conflict sensitivity integral to the goals of media campaigns

Starting from 2020, Search for Common Ground Kyrgyzstan ran several media campaigns. At the outset of every campaign, we first identified the goals we wanted to attain. We ensured that the goals of media campaigns were gender- and conflict-sensitive by considering several aspects outlined below.

**Gender sensitivity in a media campaign** refers to the efforts of ensuring that gender dynamics are taken into consideration in assessing needs, formulating objectives, messaging, production, feedback as well as evaluation of media campaigns. Gender-sensitive media campaigns can raise awareness, advocate for gender equity, and challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes even when they do not aim to address specific gender issues as their primary goal. **Inclusivity** is an important factor here, and a media campaign should strive to include the voices, perspectives, and experiences of women, men, and gender-diverse individuals, to the extent possible. Along with sharing grievances of those marginalized, gender-sensitive media campaigns can also provide a vision of **potential prospects** for empowerment. For example, a media campaign can highlight political and economic empowerment opportunities for women, such as training sessions for those who want to enter politics or access to financial resources, as a means of promoting sustainable peace.

**Conflict sensitivity in a media campaign** starts with examining and aiming to understand specific conflict contexts in which we implement our media campaign. This includes recognizing historical grievances, power dynamics, and local cultures which may impact the way local audiences receive messages. The **Do No Harm principles** are key here, as conflict-sensitive campaigns should ensure that their messages do not inadvertently exacerbate tensions or create new conflicts. Media campaigns can play a pivotal role in promoting dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting parties. Content should encourage constructive communication, empathy, and understanding among different stakeholders.

Ensuring that media campaigns are both gender- and conflict-sensitive is not only ethically imperative, but also essential for their success. By taking these considerations into account, organizations can create campaigns that resonate with diverse audiences, promote inclusive and sustainable peace, and contribute to positive change in the targeted regions. Below, there are two illustrative examples of how we ensured gender and conflict sensitivity in our media campaigns.



### ILLUSTRATION #1

As part of the TaasirLink project, Search for Common Ground had an overall goal of conducting five media campaigns aimed at preventing radicalization among vulnerable youth. Furthermore, each media campaign had its own specific goals. We defined these goals based on research that explored the root causes of radicalization among Kyrgyzstan's youth.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN	CONFLICT & GENDER SENSITIVITY
The first media campaign aimed to increase the sense of belonging of vulnerable youth (both men and women) to their homeland, be that a village, town, city or the country in general.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> By focusing on increasing the sense of belonging among vulnerable youth to their homeland, this goal acknowledges a common driver of conflict: the feeling of exclusion or marginalization. By addressing this issue, the campaign aimed to reduce the potential for radicalization, as marginalized individuals may be more susceptible to extremist ideologies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Gender sensitivity:</b> This goal has implications for gender dynamics. We ensured that both young men and women feel a sense of belonging is vital, as gender-based exclusion or discrimination can contribute to conflicts. This goal recognizes the importance of inclusivity for all genders.</li> </ul>
The second media campaign aimed to develop critical thinking skills among young men and women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> Promoting critical thinking skills is conflict-sensitive because it encourages youth to analyze information critically and question extremist narratives. This can help prevent radicalization by equipping young people with the tools to challenge divisive ideologies and make informed decisions.</li> <li>☑ <b>Gender sensitivity:</b> This goal was gender-sensitive as we aimed to empower both young men and women to think critically, which is essential for breaking down gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality.</li> </ul>
The third media campaign aimed to foster proactivity among youth (both men and women) and a sense that they can also be agents of change in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> Encouraging proactivity among youth can be conflict-sensitive by providing them with constructive ways to engage with their communities and address grievances. Proactive individuals who are equipped with knowledge about peaceful solutions to conflicts are less likely to resort to violence.</li> <li>☑ <b>Gender sensitivity:</b> Promoting proactivity is also gender-sensitive, as it can help challenge traditional gender roles and empower both young men and women to take an active role in their communities.</li> </ul>
The fourth media campaign aimed to empower local young women, as they typically are more marginalized in conservative communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> This goal recognizes the importance of empowering marginalized groups, including young women. Our team aspired to empower local young women to contribute to reducing gender-based violence and inequalities, which are often linked to conflicts.</li> <li>☑ <b>Gender sensitivity:</b> This goal is explicitly gender-sensitive as it focuses on addressing the specific needs and rights of young women, acknowledging that they may face unique challenges and opportunities.</li> </ul>
The fifth media campaign aimed to improve collaboration between the government and other local institutions with youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> Strengthening collaboration between the government and local institutions with youth is conflict-sensitive because it promotes dialogue and engagement, which can help address grievances and build trust.</li> <li>☑ <b>Gender sensitivity:</b> While not explicitly gender-focused, this goal can benefit both young men and women by ensuring their voices are heard and that their needs and concerns are considered in decision-making processes.</li> </ul>

As indicated in the table, Search for Common Ground Kyrgyzstan's media campaign for the purpose of preventing radicalization was designed to be both conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive. This means that careful consideration was given to the conflict context during both the design and implementation phases, and equal attention was paid to addressing the specific needs and roles of both young men and women in their vulnerabilities to radicalization.

**ILLUSTRATION #2**

As part of the WAGE project, Search for Common Ground and its partner, Center for International Private Enterprise, co-developed the National Women's Business Agenda. The National Women's Business Agenda sought to improve the business enabling environments for women in the Central Asian economies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and partly of Turkmenistan. In the table below, we show how we ensured that the media campaign within the National Women's Business Agenda project was both conflict- and gender-sensitive in its goals.

PROJECT GOAL	CONFLICT & GENDER SENSITIVITY
To increase awareness about the coalition activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> The goal to increase awareness about the Coalition's activities aligns with conflict sensitivity by promoting transparency and understanding among stakeholders. Our team knew that in conflict-affected regions, lack of information or misinformation can contribute to tensions and mistrust. By providing clear information about the Coalition's work, the media campaign helped reduce potential misunderstandings or conflicts related to its initiatives.</li> </ul>
To increase awareness about barriers faced by women entrepreneurs and to tackle gender stereotypes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> Addressing the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs is conflict-sensitive, as gender-based discrimination and inequalities are often sources of tension and conflict. By highlighting these issues, the media campaign acknowledged and sought to mitigate potential conflict drivers related to gender disparities.</li> <li>☑ <b>Gender sensitivity:</b> This goal was explicitly gender-sensitive as it focuses on challenging gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality. By tackling stereotypes, the media campaign helped create a more inclusive business environment and empowers women to overcome obstacles they face as entrepreneurs.</li> </ul>
To increase motivation of women entrepreneurs for running their own business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ <b>Conflict sensitivity:</b> Encouraging women to pursue entrepreneurship is conflict-sensitive, especially if it fosters economic opportunities and reduces disparities. Economic empowerment, including through entrepreneurship, can contribute to stability and peace by providing alternatives to engagement in conflict.</li> <li>☑ <b>Gender sensitivity:</b> Empowering and motivating women entrepreneurs directly addresses gender dynamics. By boosting the confidence and motivation of women to run their businesses, the media campaign contributed to women's economic independence and challenged traditional gender roles.</li> </ul>

As the table reflects, the media goals within the National Women's Business Agenda project demonstrated both conflict and gender sensitivity. They addressed the potential conflict drivers related to gender disparities and aimed to create an inclusive, empowering environment for women entrepreneurs in Central Asian economies. By doing so, the campaign aligned with the project's overarching goal of improving the business enabling environments for women in the region, promoting peace, and advancing gender equality in a conflict- and gender-sensitive way.

## Challenges & Lessons Learned

Setting gender- and conflict-sensitive goals is crucial because these goals serve as the foundation for the entire media campaign. However, when implementing the outreach campaign in four different countries, it can be challenging to establish such goals due to the varying contexts in each country. It is essential to adapt to the unique circumstances of each location and to remain well-informed about the context and the gender and conflict dynamics. To this end, the goals of the media campaign should be tailored to address potential risks. For instance, in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, the wording and framing of the media campaign narratives were similar. The campaign aimed to disseminate information and highlight the work of coalitions in developing women's entrepreneurship and reducing gender-based violence. However, in Uzbekistan, due to the sensitivity of the context, women were not comfortable with this framing. Therefore, all narratives were carefully worded using the term 'Expert Group' to better align with the local context.





## **RECOMMENDATION 2. Be inclusive as you identify target audiences and who will be represented in your media campaign**

Inclusivity stands as a fundamental cornerstone of conflict sensitivity. A conflict-sensitive media campaign must embody inclusivity by taking into consideration the following key aspects:

### **Inclusive target group identification**

Recognizing that the audience shapes the design and execution of the media campaign, it is imperative to encompass all segments of the community, including minority and marginalized groups impacted by the campaign's theme. Their unique needs, challenges, and expectations must be thoughtfully considered.

### **Inclusive message formulation**

Following the inclusive identification of the target group, the messages crafted should resonate with all social categories and groups affected by the subject matter. Campaigns should steer clear of messages that perpetuate feelings of exclusion or discrimination among certain community members.

### **Inclusive production**

When selecting languages, characters, music, duration, and format for campaign productions, it is crucial to represent all segments of the population in the target areas. The team should be cognizant that certain production choices can alienate specific groups, potentially reinforcing inequalities or fostering a sense of bias.

### **Inclusive choice of broadcasting channels**

The channels and platforms we employ must also embody inclusivity. Some media outlets may be more accessible to certain groups than others, so the campaign should opt for, or diversify, distribution channels with the aim of promoting inclusivity and ensuring equitable access to our productions for all segments of the community affected by the theme.

As Search for Common Ground Kyrgyzstan identified its target audiences for its media campaigns, the team ensured that it was **inclusive** and developed detailed personas that represented different target audience segments. As you will see in illustrations below, each persona represented diverse demographic groups along age, gender, residential status, and other backgrounds.

### **ILLUSTRATION #3**

As part of the TaasirLink project, Search for Common Ground focused on vulnerable youth from rural areas, where a significant number of inhabitants had left for conflict zones. The project team drew from previous research results and endeavored to determine at what age youth were more vulnerable to radicalization. Based on these analyses, we identified two personas that would represent our target groups:

1. The first persona is a young man from the target areas. He is 26 years old and comes from ethnic minority groups, speaking either Uzbek, Kyrgyz, or other local languages.
2. The second persona is a young woman from the target areas. She is 20 years old and has completed only secondary education up to the 9th or 11th grade.

**Conflict sensitivity:**

- ☑ *Targeting Vulnerable Youth from Conflict-Affected Rural Areas:* By focusing on vulnerable youth from rural areas who have been affected by conflict, our team recognized the impact of conflict on this specific demographic. Conflict often leads to displacement and heightened vulnerabilities, and addressing the needs of youth in these areas was crucial for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- ☑ *Drawing from Existing Research Results:* As the project team analyzed previous research results, they demonstrated their conflict-sensitive approach. The team acknowledged that by understanding the root causes and drivers of radicalization, they can tailor their interventions to address these underlying issues effectively.

**Gender sensitivity:**

- ☑ *Identification of Two Personas:* As the project team developed two personas, one being a young woman, they demonstrated a gender-sensitive approach. By recognizing the unique vulnerabilities and experiences of young women in this context, the project acknowledged the importance of addressing gender-specific factors in radicalization and conflict.
- ☑ *Secondary Education as a Gender-Relevant Criterion:* The inclusion of educational attainment (only secondary education till 9th or 11th grade) as a criterion for the second persona reflects a gender-sensitive perspective. Educational disparities can significantly affect women's opportunities and empowerment, making it relevant to understanding their vulnerability to radicalization.

As shown above, the team acknowledged the impact of conflict on vulnerable youth and tailored the media campaign based on research findings, and it recognized gender-specific factors and vulnerabilities among young women, which is crucial for effective and inclusive peacebuilding efforts. We believe that such approaches can contribute to addressing the root causes of conflict and radicalization while promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

## ILLUSTRATION #4

Within the WAGE project’s National Women’s Business Agenda, there was a specific focus on two target groups:

- 1) Women aged 20-30, residing in rural regions, and those who aspired to start their own businesses.
- 2) Men aged 20-30, in both urban and rural settings, with the objective of challenging traditional gender stereotypes and altering their perspectives on female entrepreneurs.

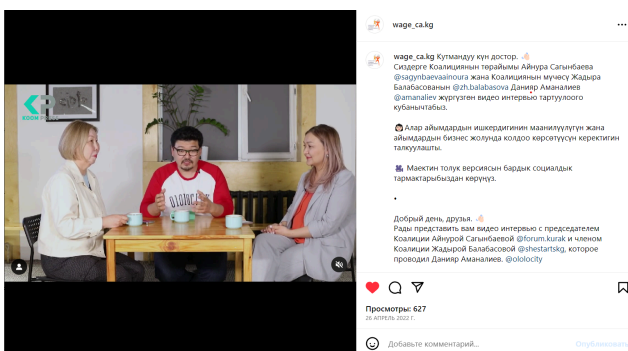
### Conflict sensitivity:

- ☑ By focusing on women aged 20-30 residing in rural regions, we acknowledged the potential vulnerability of this demographic. Conflict-affected rural areas often face economic challenges, limited opportunities, and social disruptions. Empowering women in these regions through entrepreneurship can contribute to economic stability and conflict prevention.
- ☑ Our team recognized that engaging men would help us with gender-related tensions and traditional stereotypes. In conflict-affected regions, changing gender dynamics can be essential for fostering more inclusive and peaceful communities.

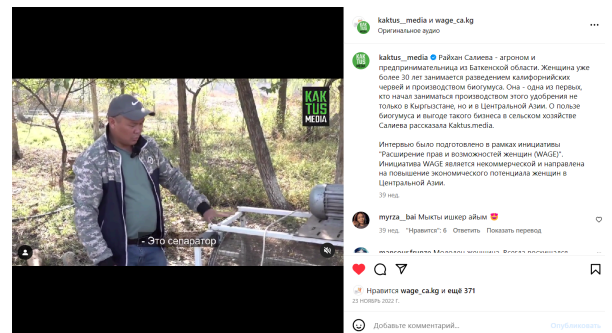
### Gender sensitivity:

- ☑ Gender disparities, limited access to resources, and traditional gender roles can be significant barriers for women entrepreneurs in these contexts. Addressing these issues was essential for our team in promoting gender equality and reducing gender-based conflicts.
- ☑ Encouraging men to support and promote female entrepreneurship was crucial for advancing gender equality and reducing gender-related conflicts.

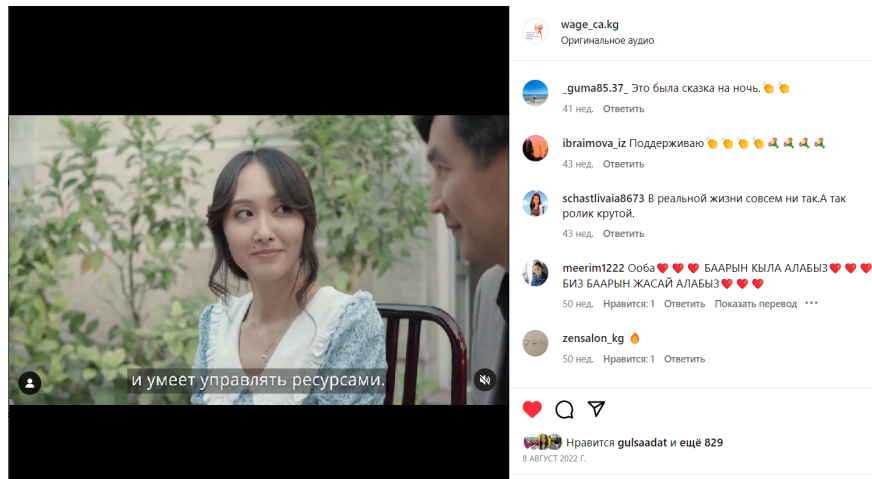
Since our target audiences included both women and men, our team also made sure that people portrayed in our media content were representatives of both genders and different backgrounds.



In the [video with influencer Daniar Amanaliev](#), Search for Common Ground intended to raise the important topics about women entrepreneurship through men’s voices. One video was targeting two different audiences at the same time.



In this [example of a media product](#), we aimed to increase male engagement and support in women’s entrepreneurship activities. The main message of this video is for family members to support women entrepreneurs. In Kyrgyzstan, one of the primary obstacles to entrepreneurship lies in the absence of family support.



This is a screenshot from a social video featuring a retired businesswoman who wishes to pass her business onto a family member. She explains her desire to transfer the business to the most responsible, intelligent, and courageous person. In the video, she chooses her daughter-in-law as the next business leader. The video's primary focus is on the concept of "women supporting women", promoting family support, and addressing conflicts between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. In Central Asian culture, conflicts between these family members are common, and women often lack support in pursuing their business ideas. As can be seen, the comments on the social video were overwhelmingly positive and supportive. Subscribers left concise comments such as "I love it" and "I support the idea", along with emojis.

As outlined in this section, being inclusive when identifying target audiences and representation in the media reflects another principle of conflict- and gender-sensitive approaches in media campaigns. Diverse target audiences and diverse representatives in media content can help address specific challenges faced by women in rural areas, address the role of males in challenging traditional gender stereotypes, and maintain inclusivity, ensuring that the campaign effectively promotes inclusive understandings of peace.



Figure 2. Number of views, likes, and comments on videos with women entrepreneurs.

## Challenges & Lessons Learned

The final evaluation of the media campaign assessed that it successfully shifted the audience's perceptions of female entrepreneurship. In fact, 80% of respondents in the final evaluation answered that their opinion regarding women in business changed, and 79% of respondents reported that they have a more positive attitude toward women in business after having consumed the campaign's content. However, it is worth noting that more than 70% of the campaign's followers in four countries were female. This suggests that women, too, internalize harmful gender norms. The final evaluation indicates a positive shift in women's perceptions, recognizing women as capable entrepreneurs on par with men.

One noteworthy observation from the final evaluation report is the relatively low level of male engagement in the campaign. Search assumes that the reasons for this low male participation may include the following:

- The content of the media campaign was more focused on women and was perceived as more relevant to women, potentially making it less appealing to men;
- Some men may avoid content on gender equality due to societal stereotypes and stigmas associated with being advocates or allies;
- Men might not have been aware of the campaign at the level it was aimed at because most of the coalition members and social media pages supporting information dissemination were women-oriented, with a mostly female audience;
- The campaign may not have used communication channels popular among men;
- Cultural and regional factors can influence the reception of gender-focused content.

This finding highlights an opportunity for future initiatives to address the persistence of harmful gender norms and stereotypes among men. To bridge this gap, here are some steps that can be taken in future similar programs:

- 1) **Targeted Outreach.** Develop marketing and outreach strategies that specifically target male audiences. Use language, images, and channels that resonate with men and highlight the benefits of gender diversity in society.
- 2) **Engage Male Influencers:** Collaborate more with male influencers, leaders, religious leaders, and advocates who are committed to gender equality. Their support can significantly impact male audience engagement and contribute to changing harmful norms.
- 3) **Learning events:** Implement educational components within the campaign that provide information and resources about gender equality, breaking down stereotypes, and promoting inclusivity.
- 4) **Diverse media campaign products:** Create content that aligns with men's interests while promoting gender equality and challenging harmful stereotypes. For example:
  - Short documentaries or interviews featuring male role models who support gender equality.
  - Entertaining and informative videos addressing common misconceptions and biases.
  - Animation or whiteboard explainer videos that simplify complex gender equality concepts.
  - Male-hosted podcasts discussing gender equality, women in leadership, and related topics.
  - Interviews with male advocates and experts in the field of gender equality.
  - Storytelling podcasts that share personal experiences and journeys of individuals who have challenged stereotypes.
  - Interactive quizzes or games that challenge gender stereotypes and encourage discussion.
  - Virtual seminars and workshops featuring male speakers on gender equality topics.

## RECOMMENDATION 3. Ensure that the campaign narratives are gender- and conflict-sensitive

Media campaigns can unintentionally use narratives that are not gender- and conflict-sensitive. We all hold unconscious biases and stereotypes that influence our storytelling. These biases can lead to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes or the portrayal of certain groups in a biased manner, inadvertently perpetuating discrimination or marginalization. In the illustrative examples below, we discuss how our team ensured that the narratives we used in media campaigns remained both conflict- and gender-sensitive. We used two main languages for content, Kyrgyz and Russian, as the main official languages of the country, as well as Kazakh and Uzbek languages. The narratives were developed with consideration for sensitive topics within the target audience, ensuring that they do not provoke hostility, are clear and positive, and were also crafted in consultation with a gender expert. Illustration #6 points to the choice of language for narratives.

### ILLUSTRATION #5

In Central Asia, there is a common misunderstanding that the term 'gender' solely includes the concepts of opportunities and rights for women. When running media campaigns concerning women's rights and capabilities, our team starts with the recognition that gender sensitivity pertains not only to women but also to men. Media campaigns aimed at addressing women's challenges and barriers must inevitably involve men's participation – rather than repelling them, it should attract them. Campaigns focused on empowering women often adopt narratives or messages targeted exclusively at women. In certain countries with prevalent patriarchal systems, such an approach can be perceived negatively.

Within WAGE's National Women's Business Agenda, our team was convinced that new methods and approaches were required to effectively convey information to men about projects related to women's empowerment.

We made sure our narratives were inclusive and that media products were diverse. We also recruited male ambassadors for the media campaign. Male ambassadors and influencers participated in interviews, videos, as well as various media products we produced for the project, as demonstrated in the below examples.

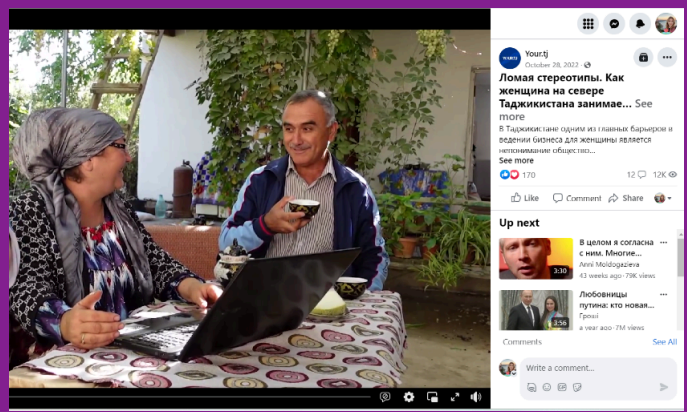


Figure 3. Video about a woman entrepreneur in Tajikistan that represents both herself and her spouse.



Figure 4. Screenshot from video with influencers.

## ILLUSTRATION #6

When people use inflammatory or biased language, it can further polarize opposing parties and escalate tensions. Choosing words carefully can promote understanding and reduce hostility. Below is an example of the text that a Social Media Marketing (SMM) specialist<sup>2</sup> in Uzbekistan wrote in Uzbek for the project (left-hand side) and the text as it was edited by our project team (right-hand side):

### What prevents women in business ?

We want to tell you about the three main barriers faced in the field of women's entrepreneurship:

- ♦ Lack of necessary education and business experience among women.

This word is not conflict sensitive.

**In a patriarchal society**, there are problems with access to education. In our country, there are often families who do not or cannot give education to their daughters. **The reason for this is often the belief that a girl should get married, and education will not be useful to her.**

This sentence is not conflict sensitive.

- ♦ Lack of time for doing business due to household obligations and unpaid care for children and other family members.

Due to the sentence being extremely straightforward, it can be conflict insensitive. The sentence should be rephrased.

**The patriarchal system of values dominates in Uzbekistan, and society is inclined to traditional ideas about the role of women and men in the family.**

Therefore, women face the double burden of work due to household chores. Often, women simply do not have enough time for everything, what kind of business can be discussed if they have the whole house, husband and children who need care.

There is no law or statistics to prove this assertion.

- ♦ **Limited access to financial resources due to limited scale.**

**Women in Uzbekistan have some limitations in their ability to own land or other property, as they are most often registered in the name of a husband or male head of household.**

**We help women develop their business and solve these problems.** Become part of our community by joining the club 📍

Too big promises and big words, which is not a project mandate.

### What prevents women in business ?

We want to tell you about the three main barriers faced in the field of women's entrepreneurship:

- ♦ Limited access to education for women. In our society there are a lot of families who do not want or cannot afford to give education to their daughters. The reason for this is the traditional belief that education is not useful for girls, because they will leave the family after marriage.
- ♦ Lack of time for business development, due to household obligations, taking care of children and other family members. Women face the double burden of work due to household chores.

- ♦ Restriction of access to finance due to lack of property, as well as various stereotypes. Unfortunately, in society there are stereotypes about women that are not true and subjective.

- ♦ Let's improve the environment for the development of women's entrepreneurship together.

<sup>2</sup>A Social Media Marketing (SMM) specialist is a professional who specializes in planning, implementing, and managing marketing campaigns on various social media platforms to promote products, services, or brands. Their primary goal is to use social media channels to increase brand visibility, engage with the target audience, drive website traffic, and ultimately, generate leads or sales.

## ILLUSTRATION #7

Within the TaasirLink project, we also used the alternative messaging technique as part of the conflict-sensitive approach. Alternative messaging refers to presenting the intended message or information using different approaches. This process involves considering various ways to communicate the core content to the target audience with the aim of enhancing understanding, engagement, and resonance. This approach is particularly useful when a direct or traditional message might not effectively reach or resonate with the intended audience. Alternative messaging is also known as positive messaging. Our team drew from the best practices of other media campaigns, where the preference has shifted towards messages and content that help audiences envision favorable scenarios.

Here are some of the examples of how we used alternative messaging:

1) **“I love my village”, “I love my town”, “I love my country”** instead of the statement «Do not leave your homeland». Here, by emphasizing love for one's community and homeland, the messaging aimed to strengthen the youth's sense of belonging. Our team communicated that there is value and significance in their roots, encouraging them to feel connected to their environment and culture.

2) **“My possibilities are endless”**. The phrase carries a positive and optimistic tone. It suggests that there are no limits to what individuals, specifically marginalized youth in this context, can achieve. This positivity encourages a sense of hope, self-belief, and empowerment. This statement serves as an alternative to narratives that may limit or discourage young people. Instead of reinforcing stereotypes or suggesting that youth's opportunities are constrained, it sends a powerful and positive message of empowerment and potential.

3) **“My life is my responsibility”**. The message encourages individuals to take ownership of their lives. By stating that one's life is their responsibility, our team aimed to empower individuals to recognize that they have agency and control over their decisions and actions. This empowerment fosters a sense of self-confidence and autonomy.

4) **“I explore. I think. I verify”**. was a statement in a media campaign about strengthening critical thinking. This message implies a sense of curiosity and the desire to explore and learn. It encourages individuals to be proactive in seeking knowledge and information. This positive approach fosters a mindset of continuous learning and growth.

5) **“We are one”**. was a statement in a media campaign about strengthening engagement with diverse stakeholders. It underscores the importance of shared goals and objectives. It reminds different actors that they have common interests or purposes that should take precedence over differences. We used this positive framing to help align efforts toward common outcomes.

Within media campaigns, Search for Common Ground Kyrgyzstan uses alternative messaging to mitigate negative consequences and to present alternative avenues for resolving issues.

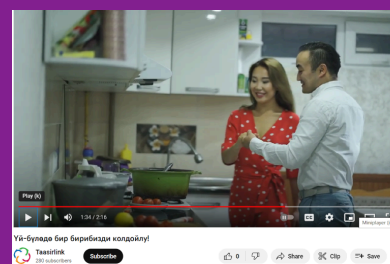


Figure 5. [Video](#) example of alternative messaging.

Our team used positive or alternative messaging in most of the videos and publications. By clicking the following links, you can explore more examples of media content that had positive messaging at its core:

- [Video about the importance of collaboration.](#)
- [Video about women empowerment.](#)
- [Video about social cohesion.](#)
- [Women entrepreneurship.](#)



## ILLUSTRATION #8

During the execution of the media campaign, it is key to use local languages to enhance accessibility and inclusiveness. Throughout the TaasirLink project, we distributed all information in Kyrgyz, Russian, and Uzbek languages. Notably, at the project's outset, Search encountered instances of hate speech related to the use of the Uzbek language, prompting the project team to emphasize the importance of inclusivity carefully. Our team did not delete these comments or criticize them. On the contrary, we thanked them for their comment and explained very politely that we have many citizens who speak Uzbek as well, and it is important to provide information in different languages. Eventually, negative comments about the use of Uzbek language dissipated, and we also received positive feedback about producing multilingual content.

In the WAGE project, we disseminated information in Kyrgyz and Russian languages within Kyrgyzstan, Kazakh and Russian languages within Kazakhstan, Tajik and Russian languages within Tajikistan, and Uzbek and Russian languages within Uzbekistan. The development of the content plan involved a gender specialist, and the initial 20 publications underwent editing by a gender specialist. Search made a concerted effort to avoid stereotypes and divisions rooted in characteristics within their text and other media materials, with a focus on unifying rather than divisive elements. Below are examples of providing information in two languages.

The collage consists of four distinct media elements:

- Top Left:** A video frame showing a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white jacket, sitting in a modern office environment with blue chairs and a wooden desk.
- Top Right:** A social media post from 'wage\_ca.kg и sfcg\_centralasia'. The text is in Russian and discusses women's entrepreneurship. It includes a video player and a date: 'Сегодня 19 ноября важный для всех нас праздник — День женского предпринимательства...'.
- Middle:** A graphic titled 'БИЗНЕС И МАТЕРИНСТВО как совмещать?' (Business and Motherhood: how to combine?). It features an illustration of a woman in a blue shirt sitting on the floor with a laptop, next to a blue baby stroller.
- Bottom Left:** A graphic titled 'КАК НЕТВОРКИНГ МОЖЕТ ПОМОЧЬ ВАШЕМУ БИЗНЕСУ' (How networking can help your business). It shows an illustration of a woman in a black top and orange pants standing in the center, surrounded by a network of blue circles and icons representing people and business connections.
- Bottom Right:** A social media post from 'wage\_ca.tj' in Russian. It lists networking opportunities in Tajikistan, such as industry conferences, business trainings, and networking breakfasts. It also includes a list of hashtags like #centralasiawomen and #womenempowerment.

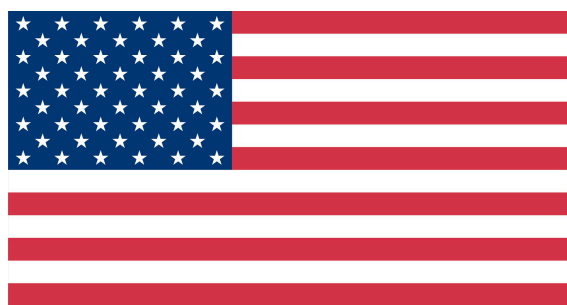
## **Recommended Resources**

We hope that this case study of gender- and conflict-sensitive media campaigns has been informative and interesting to you. The case study serves as a valuable illustration of the potential of gender and conflict-sensitive media campaigns as catalysts for peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion. It underscores the role of media not only as a disseminator of information but also as a powerful force for positive change in conflict-affected regions. As we move forward, it is clear that such campaigns hold the promise of not only resolving conflicts but also laying the foundation for lasting peace and stability, built on understanding, empathy, and inclusivity.

### **Here are top 5 tools to help you design your media campaign:**

1. [Gender-sensitive conflict analysis: a facilitation guide](#) by Saferworld
2. [Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media: Framework of Indicators to Gauge Gender Sensitivity in Media Operations and Content](#) by UNESCO
3. [Handbook: A Conflict Sensitive Approach to Reporting on Conflict and Violent Extremism](#) by Internews
4. [Social Media to P/CVE: Toolkit for Practitioners](#) by Search for Common Ground
5. [Can peace be built from a distance? Effective and conflict-sensitive digital peacebuilding](#) from the 2021 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development





W A G E

## ABOUT

Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE) is a global consortium dedicated to advancing the status of women and girls. It is led by the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) in close partnership with the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Grameen Foundation, and Search for Common Ground (Search). WAGE's primary mission is to enhance the capacity of civil society organizations and private sector organizations (PSOs) in target countries. This is done to improve the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, promote the women, peace, and security agenda, and support women's economic empowerment. In this context, WAGE provides direct assistance to women and girls, offering them the information, resources, and services they need to succeed as active and equal participants in the global economy and public life.

WAGE also engages in collaborative research and learning to build a body of evidence regarding promising practices in these thematic areas. Recognizing the deeply interconnected nature of women's and girls' experiences, WAGE's initiatives employ highly collaborative, integrated, and inclusive approaches. The consortium is funded by the U.S. Department of State Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI).

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