

W A G E

# Why do localized indicators matter for women's empowerment & peace?

Emerging findings from analysis across six countries in Asia

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Search for  
**Common Ground**  
Trust, Collaboration, Breakthroughs

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## Introduction

If you work in the peacebuilding, international development, or humanitarian sectors, you have undoubtedly grappled with the challenge of aligning the impact that you measure in your programming with the lived, daily experiences of the communities you serve. With support through the [Women & Girls Empowered \(WAGE\)](#) consortium, this brief aims to shed light on how locally-generated indicators on people's everyday experiences of concepts like "women's empowerment" and "peace" can contribute to a more grounded understanding of impact and greater accountability to communities.

The Grounded Accountability Model, or GAM, is one of the research approaches that practitioners can use in co-developing localized indicators with the people directly affected by conflict. GAM is the first pillar of the **Peace Impact Framework (PIF)**<sup>1</sup>, which provides a structure to capture and evaluate outcomes of interventions in conflict contexts on peace by accounting for the experiences of affected communities and practitioners. It empowers international and local practitioners to analyze the impact of their work and contribute evidence on what matters for peace, drawing on three pillars: lived experiences, aligned measures, and expert observations.

Search for Common Ground (Search) has committed to co-creating localized indicators of peace with people living in conflict around the world through GAM-aligned processes. As a member of the Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE) consortium, several Search country teams implemented WAGE initiatives and were among the first to hold workshops to co-create localized indicators with project participants. This brief draws from these indicators as well as data from similar workshops Search conducted in other locations in Asia, to provide analysis, key findings and trends related to gender inequality and discrimination as a contribution to the WAGE Learning Agenda<sup>2</sup>. The practical insights and examples of localized indicators are valuable for program designers, implementers and evaluators working on Women, Peace & Security (WPS), Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The following table lists the six countries where Search facilitated processes to co-create these indicators, and where WAGE initiatives have taken place for this analysis:

*Table 1: List of countries where GAM and WAGE were implemented*

|                | GAM implemented                     | WAGE implemented                    |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Afghanistan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2. Indonesia   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3. Kazakhstan  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Kyrgyzstan  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Pakistan    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 6. Sri Lanka   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

In what follows, we give a brief overview of the Peace Impact Framework and discuss who shared their lived experiences with us. We then dive into the analysis of what peace, women's empowerment, and religious and ethnic freedom mean to local communities across given contexts, and wrap up with suggestions about how practitioners can shift programming, strategy, and investments drawing from the localized indicators as they strive to pave the way for a more peaceful and equitable world.

<sup>1</sup> For more on the Peace Impact Framework: <https://cnxus.org/peace-impact-framework/>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.wageglobal.org/learning-agenda.html>

## WHAT IS THE PEACE IMPACT FRAMEWORK & WHY USE IT?

From poverty reduction to health, education, economic growth, gender equality, climate action and more, peace is essential for all interventions working towards healthy, safe, and just societies. However, strategies and investments around peace often lack a common language for understanding impact and exclude the people affected most by conflict. The Peace Impact Framework makes it possible to build evidence and identify the investments that have the best peace outcomes by bringing together insights from practitioners and people affected by conflict alongside consistent, aligned measures. Based on input and insights from people in more than 180 organizations in 45 countries worldwide – including local community organizers, government representatives, academics, and other experts - the Peace Impact Framework identifies **five essential themes** as vital for peace, and **three ways to understand and measure** it.

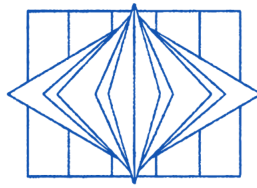
### What we measure:



**VIOLENCE**



**AGENCY**



**POLARIZATION**



**LEGITIMACY**



**INVESTMENTS**

### How we measure:

#### Lived Experience

Locally-developed indicators for accountability. This pillar includes the Grounded Accountability Model (GAM).

#### Aligned Measures

Global language & indicators for long-term tracking.

#### Expert Observations

Capturing unexpected changes & outcomes for adaptation.

To learn more about how to measure and track what matters for peace, click [here](#).

The first pillar of measurement, co-creation of localized indicators, is essential for several reasons. **First**, it allows implementers of international peacebuilding, development and humanitarian work to **ground measures of impact in the specific context, culture, and concerns** of the communities they serve. The resulting metrics are more likely to accurately reflect the community's perceptions and the factors that affect their experience of these concepts. **Second**, engaging communities **empowers them to actively participate** in the process to address complex social issues and concepts like women's empowerment, peacebuilding, and religious and ethnic freedom. When communities have a say in defining what these concepts mean to them and how it can be measured, they feel a sense of ownership over the programs and initiatives that follow. This involvement fosters a greater commitment and a sense of agency among community members. **Third**, community engagement promotes **inclusivity**, ensuring that the voices of marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women and girls, are heard and considered in the peacebuilding efforts. It helps identify the unique challenges these groups face and allows for the development of indicators that address their specific needs, thus advancing gender equality and social justice. **Finally**, localized indicators are more likely to be **actionable**, allowing implementers to inform their monitoring and evaluation as well as program design.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS ANALYSIS?

This brief contributes to the Women & Girls Empowered (WAGE) learning agenda. [Women and Girls Empowered](#) is a global consortium to advance the status of women and girls, funded by the State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues and 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). Within its broader learning agenda, the WAGE consortium asked: what are some of the most promising practices in measuring women's empowerment, including but not limited to WEE, at the institutional, family, and individual levels? And how do these practices manifest differently or similarly comparatively across regions?<sup>3</sup> The comparative analysis in this brief addresses these key research questions.



This is one of the first reports that provides analysis of broader data from Search's use of the first pillar of PIF for measuring peace through lived experience. Between June 2021 and June 2023, Search teams in **16** countries engaged **1,787** people in target communities through workshops aligned with the Grounded Accountability Model to co-create localized indicators of peace and related concepts. In this brief, we present the **data from six countries in Asia** (Afghanistan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and analyze **how communities' lived experiences of peace intersect with gender**.

The Women & Girls Empowered (WAGE) project has partially supported the production of this brief as one of the learning products of its broader learning agenda. [Women and Girls Empowered is a global consortium](#) to advance the status of women and girls, funded by the State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues and 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). Search for Common Ground's Sri Lanka team held workshops to co-develop indicators of peace and women's empowerment as it led a WAGE initiative in the country. Search's Afghanistan and Pakistan teams held GAM-aligned workshops as part of the pilot and focused on their projects on access to justice and social cohesion, respectively. Search's Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia teams held GAM-aligned workshops as part of the Asia Religious & Ethnic Freedom (Asia REF) global project<sup>4</sup>.

Although each team focused on slightly different concepts related to peace (e.g. access to justice, social cohesion, religious freedom, women's empowerment),<sup>5</sup> this brief highlights how **gender-related aspects intersect with the essential components of peace across contexts**. We put the voices and experiences of women and marginalized groups at the forefront. By doing so, we believe we can shed more light on common patterns and tendencies that we observed in local priorities and indicators that communities

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://www.wageglobal.org/learning-agenda.html>

<sup>4</sup> The Asia Religious and Ethnic Freedom (REF) award was funded by USAID and implemented by Freedom House, Search for Common Ground with Pact, Internews, and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative. GAM workshops held in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Indonesia within the framework of the Asia REF project, have fed into the analysis in this document.

<sup>5</sup> Search's Sri Lanka team held workshops to co-develop indicators of peace and women's empowerment as it led a WAGE initiative. Search's Afghanistan and Pakistan teams focused on access to justice and social cohesion, respectively. Search's Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia teams focused on concepts of ethnic and religious freedom as part of the Asia Religious & Ethnic Freedom global project.

themselves identified. We can also understand how they prioritize addressing gender-based disparities and unequal access to resources and justice as a large part of the peacebuilding and development processes.

## HOW DO LOCALIZED INDICATORS CAPTURE LIVED EXPERIENCES?

In every location, Search's country teams typically engage either program participants or target community members where they wish to implement programming. In alignment with the requirements of the GAM approach, Search country teams aim to intentionally involve individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The teams ensure that they engage people who differ demographically along age, gender, ethnic and residential lines, and those who differ in their religious and political affiliations as well as social roles.

Search's program teams mobilize and engage with diverse social groups to co-create localized indicators. Sometimes it is project participants, and in other cases it is local community members. To illustrate, Search's team in Afghanistan engaged both men and women in Bagram district, where they were planning to roll out a project on access to justice. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Search's teams engaged civil society organization leaders who work on religious issues as well as representatives of religious minority groups who came from Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, Uyghur, and other ethnic backgrounds. In Indonesia, Search's team similarly engaged civil society organization leaders and religious and ethnic minority representatives. In Pakistan, Search's team engaged people in target communities living in Lahore and Karachi, and they all came from Muslim, Christian, Hindu and other religious backgrounds. Finally, Search's Sri Lanka team engaged women who serve as civil society organization leaders, elected leaders, and economic leaders coming from Sinhalese and Tamil-speaking communities in Ampara.



*Photo from GAM-aligned workshop in Indonesia*

When necessary, community members from most dividing lines were consulted in separate groups in order to let them speak freely. By engaging with those who come from very different backgrounds, GAM can capture a comprehensive range of experiences and insights, leading to more informed and equitable outcomes. It also helps to avoid reinforcing existing power imbalances and ensures that the voices of marginalized or underrepresented groups are heard and valued.

In contexts where it is not appropriate to mix people of different genders, Search country teams typically hold separate discussions with men and women. This was the case in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

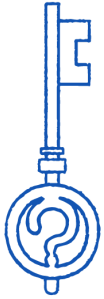
Table 2: GAM principles and their relevance in each case

| GAM PRINCIPLES <sup>6</sup>                                                                                                                                     | COUNTRIES                           |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                 | Afghanistan                         | Kazakhstan                          | Kyrgyzstan                          | Indonesia                           | Pakistan                            | Sri Lanka                           |
| Co-develop indicators for concepts that are typically hard to measure, such as peace, safety, cohesion and others.                                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Co-develop intangible things like sentiments, perceptions, values, grievances that community members may express.                                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Include trust-building as a key part of the process in preparation for the implementation of GAM but also using GAM as a vehicle to strengthen trust relations. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Validate the co-created indicators with the community members afterwards.                                                                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Give community members a chance to make decisions about what actions are taken based on indicators.                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| GAM implementers negotiate how to deal with indicators that come from opposing segments (for example, ethnic groups or religious groups that are in conflict).  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Continuous engagement and dialogue with communities around locally-developed indicators.                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

<sup>6</sup> The Grounded Accountability Model (GAM) [Community of Practice](#) has discussed and agreed upon these key principles that ideally all the practitioners of the approach would follow. The principles presented here are however to be further refined and finalized in 2024.

## What does peace and its related concepts mean to local communities across six countries in Asia?

### AGENCY



Across all countries, we engaged communities in discussions of what 'peace' and related concepts such as 'access to justice,' 'religious freedom,' and 'women's empowerment' mean to them. Much of these discussions brought out localized indicators around the theme of **agency**, particularly regarding the limited agency of women as well as marginalized social groups.

Agency is about the connection people have to their societies. Importantly, agency is relational; it encapsulates an individual's ability to positively affect the world around them. Those who are unable to do so may look elsewhere to find power and purpose – and this is one key recruiting tool for many violent groups. Violent groups often recruit the most marginalized, providing real or perceived agency. We might also look at powerlessness as its opposite.

In each context, the participants, regardless of their age or gender, highlighted the limited agency of women and girls in their communities related to many aspects of everyday life. The localized indicators often signaled severe limitations on women's ability to make choices and to exercise their basic human rights and autonomy as they access education and healthcare, choose what to wear and whom to marry.

**Education:** In Afghanistan and Pakistan, indicators consistently reflect restrictions on women's freedom, particularly related to education. Such limitations are pervasive within education and healthcare, marriage, and mobility.

The fact that girls are not allowed to continue their education after third grade demonstrates that girls and women in some communities have no agency in shaping their educational paths, hampering their ability to gain knowledge, skills, and opportunities for personal growth.

#### *Afghanistan*

"The number of girls who continue their education after third grade."

#### *Pakistan*

"The number of girls who can make decisions about their education without their fathers and brothers involved."

#### *Afghanistan*

"The number of women who cannot get necessary medical treatment because their husbands and parents-in-law do not allow them."

#### *Pakistan*

"The distance that [women] travel for reaching health facilities" signals peace according to communities, implying that the longer the distance, the less peace there is."

**Healthcare:** Women as well as marginalized communities in Afghanistan and Pakistan are often denied access to hospitals by family members or relatives, including for childbirth, illustrating a lack of agency in making decisions about their health and well-being. This not only impacts their health but also undermines their autonomy in medical matters.



**Mobility:** Restrictions on young girls' and women's ability to leave the house alone, and the requirement to obtain permission from their father or husband, limit their freedom of movement and personal agency.

Communities also describe the high level of scrutiny and control of women and girls in public, particularly if they are not accompanied by males. These negative reactions to girls and women appearing in public point to the societal constraints on their agency and mobility as well.

The absence of Tazkera identity cards for women in the village signifies a lack of formal recognition and agency in legal and identity matters.

*Afghanistan*  
 "The number of women who do not have a Tazkera identity card."

*Kazakhstan*

"The number of people in my community who feel condemned if they perform their religious practices (prayer, ablution, fasting) in public spaces."

*Indonesia*

"The number of places of worship that are welcoming or open for LGBTIQ people."

"The number of people who report that they can visit places of worship freely, regardless of their sexual orientation."

*Pakistan*

"The proportion of Muslim women and Christian women who have the right to independently choose their spouse."

*Sri Lanka*

"The number of representatives of different religious groups from the community who come together in Shramdaan."

**Religious freedom:** In Kazakhstan and Indonesia, indicators consistently signal lack of religious freedom and the ability to practice one's religion without restrictions or fear. This is particularly so for women, who fall under stricter regulations and surveillance when they are part of a conservative religious community. But it is similarly true about how safe women and men feel when they are veiled and whether they are allowed to practice their religious identity in other public spaces.

In Pakistan, community members mentioned discrimination faced by Christian women compared to Muslim women. This highlights the intersection of gender and religion in shaping social norms and rights and that women from certain religious backgrounds are more likely to experience discrimination.

In Indonesia, there is an emphasis on the lack of freedom to express one's gender identity and sexuality openly, particularly for LGBTQI+ individuals in religious spaces. This indicates a low level of acceptance and inclusion in religious spaces for LGBTIQ community members.

**Marriage, inheritance, and family finances:** In Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kyrgyzstan, girls marrying at a young age and leaving school or not having a say about who they marry is a common pattern, highlighting gender disparities that start in the family. When women are constrained in making choices about marriage, this entails further restrictions.

Within conservative patriarchal families, women do not typically receive inheritance from their parents, like the indicators from Afghanistan signal. This underscores women's limited agency in property and inheritance matters. The negative treatment of women who do receive inheritance emphasizes their lack of agency even

*Afghanistan*

"The percentage of arranged marriages."

"The proportion of women who do not receive inheritance from their parents."

"The proportion of women who are not treated well by their paternal family when they receive inheritance."

*Kyrgyzstan*

"When there are more representatives of different religions who can marry without being criticized or condemned [by their community]."

after acquiring property, as they continue to face discrimination.

In Kyrgyzstan, communities also co-created an indicator that speaks to both women's agency and their right to marry a person of a different religious background.

*Pakistan*

"The number of women who can make their decision about marriage without their fathers or brothers involved."

*Sri Lanka*

"The number of women leaders who are able to defuse tense situations by alerting community members."

"The number of women leaders who can guide community members in using arable land to tackle the food crisis."

"The percentage of local residents who misperceive women councilors as less capable of infrastructure development in comparison to men."

**Participation in politics:** In Sri Lanka, women's involvement in politics commonly emerged positively framed as their capability to contribute to infrastructure development as well as resource mobilization for community members. Yet, indicators also show that women are often viewed by communities as less capable leaders in local or national-level politics.

This suggests a complex relationship between what women actually do in their political roles and whether the environment they encounter actually supports or undermines their leadership.

**Voice and expression:**

As indicators from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and other countries show, young people do not have channels to express grievances. This highlights a broader lack of agency among young people, regardless of gender, to voice their concerns and influence change within the community.

*Afghanistan*

"The number of government programs for youths."

*Indonesia*

"When religious community members do not welcome/support young people."

"When youngsters can participate in social life and do not feel discriminated against by others in the society."

*Pakistan*

"When girls are educated about harassment situations."

*Sri Lanka*

"When young girls get involved in children's clubs, school clubs, Sunday schools (daham pasel)."

In summary, these indicators collectively paint a picture of significant limitations on the agency of women and other marginalized communities such as young people, religious minorities, and LGBTQI+ community members in many contexts. The restrictions span multiple aspects of their lives, from education and healthcare to mobility, marriage, and financial matters. The communities' patriarchal norms and practices have led to an environment where women have minimal control over their own lives and decisions.

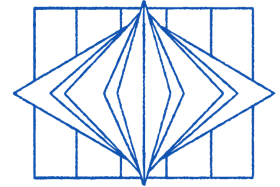
These findings are consistent with those found in other WAGE learning products. For instance, a participatory assessment on "Increasing Access to Justice and Holistic Services for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Sudan"<sup>7</sup> highlighted that male relatives often deny agency to their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. Gender-based violence, particularly with male relatives beating women and girls, emerged as a common and distressing reality in Kassala, White Nile and Khartoum. Similarly, in line with the localized indicators from the six countries, Sudanese respondents shared that men frequently restrict the agency of women and girls

<sup>7</sup> Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-sudan-participatory-assessment.pdf>

through various practices, including confining them at home, not allowing them to make their own decisions regarding education and careers, and perpetuating early and forced marriages. These interconnected insights underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions aimed at addressing deeply ingrained norms and empowering women and girls as well as other marginalized communities to reclaim their agency.

## POLARIZATION

**Polarization** concerns how much people trust each other to share a social contract – to share the same rules and the same opportunities, and to rely on each other. When people lose that trust, they often fear other groups pose a threat to their humanity and their dignity. We might also look at solidarity as its opposite. While some indicators point towards efforts to promote tolerance and unity, others highlight persistent divisions and inequalities. The provided localized indicators reveal several intersections between gender-related aspects and the theme of polarization in various communities.



While there are positive signs of interfaith interaction, there are still instances of tensions, especially concerning ethnicity and religion. Such tensions spill over to a wide range of everyday experiences, including conflicts over burial sites and converts not being allowed to be buried on the same sites as the rest of the village. Participants in Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka emphasized these ethno-religious tensions.

Some institutions further fuel biases and a sense of division. For example, the media (and particularly social media) has contributed to the spread of disinformation about certain religious groups, further adding to the polarization. Additionally, Indonesia's practice of including religious affiliation on ID cards promotes a sense of division based on religion.

These intersections shed light on how gender dynamics can either exacerbate or mitigate polarization in different cultural contexts:

*Afghanistan*

“The number of girls vs. the number of boys allowed to go to school.”

*Kazakhstan*

“The number of girls who dropped out of school because they were not allowed to veil.”

*Pakistan*

“When girls can attend religious places independently.”

*Sri Lanka*

“When young girls get involved in extracurricular activities (school clubs, Sunday schools) ”

### **Gender-based**

**discrimination:** In many of the countries where community members discussed polarization, discussions showed a clear gender-based division where only boys are allowed to attend school or to attend religious ceremonies and express their values and preferences freely. This indicates a significant gender divide.

**Religious polarization:** While religious denominations are officially equal, informants indicate that on the ground, religious minorities do not fully enjoy the same rights as those in the majority. In some of the contexts, representatives of religious minority groups expressed a fear of religious discrimination and suppression. People hide their religious affiliation, which suggests a lack of religious freedom and a climate of fear.

Religious minorities in many contexts face threats, harassment, and discrimination from members of the religious majority. Such acts reportedly happen in schools and other public places.

People who convert from the majority religious denomination to those in the minority experience shaming and bullying. New converts are reluctant to express their religious beliefs openly due to fear of prejudice and judgment. Such lived experiences signal a lack of tolerance for religious diversity and a freedom for religious expression.

#### *Sri Lanka*

"The number of instances when Muslims and Sinhalese work together in the same spaces despite the language barrier."

"When I see Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim community members cooperating on a common project/effort."

#### *Kazakhstan*

"When women are discriminated against because of their gender and because of their religion."

#### *Kyrgyzstan*

"Marriages between representatives of different religions are criticized or condemned."

Achieving greater peace often requires addressing issues of discrimination, economic disparities, and institutional mechanisms that exacerbate a sense of polarization. As some of the indicators illustrate, polarization, discrimination, and social divisions related to gender exist in most of the six countries. Overall, these localized indicators demonstrate that gender dynamics in conservative, patriarchal societies often reinforce religious and cultural polarization within communities.

Similarly, another WAGE learning product, a Rapid Needs Assessment for Ghana,<sup>8</sup> found traditional social norms which position men as breadwinners/family heads and women as caretakers place women in positions subordinate to men and affect their ability to act as heads of household. Local religious leaders, chiefs, and elders, who tend to be men, make and uphold customary law and settle disputes in a way that centers these traditional norms and discriminates against women's rights.

While women in conservative religious communities face common barriers to their empowerment in many other contexts (e.g., decisions around their outfit, appearance, education, marriage), the localized indicators suggest two more nuances. First, there is a high degree of religious polarization and segregation in these societies. Due to this, women may face even more barriers when it comes to their choice of interacting with people outside of their confession. Second, women from religious minorities in some of these societies face compounded restrictions due to their double marginalization.

Localized indicators suggest that there is a clear gender-based division in most of the six countries, where only boys are allowed certain privileges, such as attending school or participating in religious ceremonies. This deep-rooted gender divide perpetuates inequality and hinders efforts to combat polarization. Gender dynamics, especially in conservative, patriarchal societies play a crucial role in shaping religious and cultural polarization within communities.

## VIOLENCE



In the Peace Impact Framework, **violence** refers to people's personal and direct experience with violence – whether they are dying or being attacked, whether they feel safe as they walk home, etc. We might also look at safety as its opposite.

The provided localized indicators highlight the intersection of gender-related aspects with the

<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-ghana-rapid-needs-assessment-2022.pdf>

theme of violence in various societies, with a particular emphasis on the impact of violence on women and girls:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Afghanistan</i><br/>"The number of men and boys who get killed by the Taliban."</p> <p><i>Kyrgyzstan</i><br/>"The number of religious minorities who are subjected to physical violence and threats because of their religious identity."</p> | <p><b>Experience of violence:</b> The indicators from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka underscore that men are proportionally more likely to face violence by either participating or falling victim during and after conflict.</p> <p>Yet, it also affects women and families who lose their male family members, often leaving women as heads of households, which can lead to economic and social vulnerabilities. Even within families where both male and female heads of household are present, economic difficulties and unemployment can increase stress within households, leading to a higher incidence of domestic violence, which disproportionately affects women.</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Gender-based violence:</b> Gender-based violence is prevalent in most of the countries, with indicators mentioning women being subjected to physical abuse, threats, and demands to obey their husbands. This indicates a significant problem related to domestic violence and gender inequality.</p> <p>In most countries, the localized indicators also show that despite their marital and economic statuses, women face various forms of gender-based violence, and the lack of awareness of their rights compounds their vulnerability to violence.</p> | <p><i>Afghanistan</i><br/>"When women face violence in our communities."</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Pakistan</i><br/>"Christian women who report being harassed because of their appearance."<br/><br/>"Muslim men seen harassing Christian women."</p> | <p><b>Religious intolerance and gender effects:</b> Security concerns are affecting daily life in most of the countries where we held GAM workshops, including disruptions to commutes and the closure of tourist sites, illustrating the impact of insecurity on society.</p> <p>Women are yet again disproportionately less likely to feel safe and secure and experience bullying, harassment, and sexual violence, especially if they are from religious minority groups.</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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| <p><b>Violence and vulnerable groups:</b> In these societies, violence is deeply intertwined with gender dynamics, and women and girls often bear the brunt of the consequences. Vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities as well as transgender people, are at greater risk of violence, including gender-based violence.</p> <p>For example, in some countries participants illustrated how existing inter-religious tensions can lead to violence, rumors, and misinformation shared online and offline.</p> <p>In some countries, participants, primarily women, reported increased rates of drug addiction among men in light of the economic recession. They voiced their hope that the decrease in drug addiction may contribute to a reduction in associated violence and crime.</p> | <p><i>Sri Lanka</i><br/>"The number of people with disabilities who share facing domestic violence."<br/><br/><i>Pakistan</i><br/>"Transgender people face violence and threats in our community."</p> |
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Other WAGE learning products from El Salvador<sup>9</sup>, Eswatini<sup>10</sup>, Ghana<sup>11</sup>, Honduras<sup>12</sup>, Kyrgyzstan,<sup>13</sup> Sudan,<sup>14</sup> Tajikistan<sup>15</sup> and Uzbekistan<sup>16</sup> identified GBV as a significant and prevalent barrier to women's empowerment. The findings in these studies reveal that women in these contexts often face alarming levels of GBV, which manifests in various forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual violence. These acts of violence not only inflict immediate harm but also perpetuate a culture of fear and subordination, hindering women's ability to exercise agency and meaningfully contribute to their communities and societies. Reducing violence and ensuring peace require addressing not only the immediate manifestations of violence but also the underlying **gender inequalities and harmful cultural practices that perpetuate violence against women and girls**. This involves awareness-raising, legal reforms, and social programs that empower women and promote gender equality as essential components of peacebuilding efforts.

The localized indicators complement the WAGE learning, offering a profound and concerning glimpse into the diverse forms of violence experienced by vulnerable groups in these societies. The prevalence of GBV, particularly impacting women from religious minority backgrounds, underscores the urgency of addressing this pervasive issue. Furthermore, the vulnerabilities and heightened risks of violence including GBV that people with disabilities and transgender individuals face highlight the broader spectrum of challenges faced by marginalized communities. In some instances, inter-religious tensions have led to violence, rumors, and online misinformation, amplifying the challenges faced by these marginalized groups. The evidence presented here provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of violence and underscores the need for inclusive and precisely targeted interventions to safeguard and empower these vulnerable communities. As we move forward, these localized indicators should serve as a catalyst for action, guiding policies and initiatives aimed at dismantling barriers and fostering a more equitable and inclusive society for all.

## LEGITIMACY

In the Peace Impact Framework, **legitimacy** is about how institutions maintain trust from the people they are meant to serve – whether they are accountable to them, and whether or not they represent them. These can be government institutions like security and justice, but they might also be institutions in media, traditional or cultural structures, or within religions. When such institutions maintain communities' trust, individuals and communities feel empowered to engage with them and are less inclined to resort to violence or conflict to address their grievances. Institutional legitimacy is a critical component in fostering peace, stability, and social cohesion within communities and nations. We might look at corruption as its opposite.



In what follows, we analyze the localized indicators with a focus on how gender-related aspects intersect with the theme of legitimacy and how these dynamics affect women and girls in these societies.

<sup>9</sup>Source:

<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/misc/elsalvador-women-economic-empowerment-barriers-opportunities-path-forward-full-10-2019.pdf>

<sup>10</sup>Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-legal-aid-needs-in-eswatini.pdf>

<sup>11</sup>Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-ghana-rapid-needs-assessment-2022.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>Source:

<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/misc/honduras-women-economic-empowerment-barriers-opportunities-path-forward-full-10-2019.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-kyrgyz-republic-rapid-needs-assessment.pdf>

<sup>14</sup>Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-sudan-access-to-justice-report.pdf>

<sup>15</sup>Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-tajikistan-rapid-needs-assessment.pdf>

<sup>16</sup>Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-uzbekistan-rapid-needs-assessment.pdf>

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| <p><i>Afghanistan</i><br/>"Arranged marriages provide money for the women's head of household."<br/><br/>"Divorcing couples feel ashamed of using formal dispute resolution methods (courts)."</p> | <p><b>Gendered impact of traditional institutions:</b> The localized indicators highlight how traditional practices like arranged marriages can intersect with institutional legitimacy.</p> <p>While arranged marriages may provide financial support to women as heads of households, the legitimacy and fairness of these arrangements can vary. There is a potential for women to face disputes in cases of divorce or unresolved marital issues, which may not always be addressed fairly by formal government agencies or local councils. This raises questions about the accessibility and effectiveness of these institutions, particularly concerning gender-related disputes.</p> |
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**Access to justice and law enforcement:** The indicators emphasize the role of law enforcement agencies and the justice system in institutional legitimacy. When these agencies are perceived as untrustworthy, corrupt, or discriminatory, individuals, including women who are victims of violence or injustice, may not turn to them for support or resolution. This lack of trust can perpetuate gender-based violence and injustices.

The response of law enforcement institutions, particularly the police, to gender-based violence is critical. Indicators highlight how the willingness of law enforcement to register and address such incidents can impact institutional legitimacy. A reluctance to address these issues can deter women from seeking justice, perpetuating a cycle of violence.

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| <p><i>Sri Lanka</i><br/>"The number of times when police refuse to register incidents of domestic violence."<br/><br/><i>Kyrgyzstan</i><br/>"The number of people who survived violence and reported to law enforcement agencies."<br/><br/>"The proportion of local community members who share that they trust law enforcement agencies."<br/><br/><i>Sri Lanka</i><br/>"When police do not refuse to register incidents of domestic violence when victims report."<br/><br/>"When police stations have special civil defense units to support women and children."</p> |
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| <p><i>Pakistan</i><br/>"When there is a state hospital in my community."</p> | <p><b>Infrastructure and service delivery:</b> Access to government services, including healthcare and education, is a significant aspect of institutional legitimacy. When such services are inadequate, inaccessible, or subject to corruption, it can disproportionately affect women and girls who rely on them. Gender disparities in access to education and healthcare can result from institutional failures.</p> |
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Other WAGE learning products have also attested to the low level of trust that local communities have toward state institutions. In particular, the Rapid Needs Assessment held in Kyrgyzstan<sup>17</sup>, emphasized that law enforcement agencies and judicial branches do little to prosecute offenders when women report different forms of GBV. While resonant with these findings, the localized indicators illustrated in this section also speak to more nuances as to why local communities may not use formal institutions such as courts to resolve disputes - there is stigma associated with using formal dispute resolution methods in places like Afghanistan. If such indicators are to inform a WPS, WEE or GBV program's MEL plan, we believe that the program team could track outcome changes such as changes in the perception of judicial institutions, or changes in the level of awareness when it comes to dispute resolution mechanisms at large.

In summary, these indicators demonstrate that the legitimacy of institutions is closely tied to the experiences of women and girls within these societies. Issues related to gender-based discrimination, religious freedom, access to justice, and equal treatment all intersect with institutional legitimacy and can either empower or

<sup>17</sup> Source: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/roli/wage/wage-kyrgyz-republic-rapid-needs-assessment.pdf>

disempower women. Patterns observed in these indicators can also be found in countries with similar socio-cultural and political contexts, highlighting the broader relevance of these dynamics.

## INVESTMENTS



In the Peace Impact Framework, **investments** tell us whether a society has the resources to support peace or conflict long-term. More commonly, we look at what investments indicate violence, such as the import and export of weapons. However, knowing the market demand for a free and open media, or the value of time and resources that young people are investing in their communities, can indicate whether peace will endure or devolve over time and help us understand the return on these types of investments.

These investments are strategically designed to address the root causes of conflicts, promote reconciliation, and build the conditions necessary for sustainable peace. Resource investment is guided by the understanding that adequately-resourced and well-targeted interventions can help prevent, mitigate, or resolve conflicts effectively. The localized indicators related to resource investment highlight several common patterns, especially as gender-related aspects intersect with the theme of resource allocation.

**Gender-responsive aid:** Several indicators point to the presence of NGOs, INGOs, and community-based groups providing assistance, including subsidies for agricultural seeds and support for women in farming. These initiatives are particularly important for women who are often engaged in agriculture and may lack access to resources. Gender-responsive aid that targets women's empowerment and economic opportunities can contribute to peace and development.

*Afghanistan*

“The number of NGOs and CSOs providing legal aid and services in our province”

*Sri Lanka*

“The number of women leaders who receive communication and management skills to work with international organizations.”

“Women and community members generally are consulted about international organization's programs.”

*Afghanistan*

“When people in my district can commute to work without security concerns.”

*Pakistan*

“When Christians can earn a stable income by being employed in factories.”

**Economic opportunities and peace:** Economic stability and job opportunities are critical for peace. The results of our GAM workshops and the co-developed indicators suggest that communities associate peace with the availability of jobs with regular income. Additionally, when businesses are flourishing and shops are in regular business, it signifies economic stability for communities. As GAM results show, women's access to economic opportunities is essential for overall peace in the community.



**Equal access to education and healthcare:** The ability of people to access education and healthcare without discrimination is a key indicator of peace for communities.

*Kyrgyzstan*

“The number of school-age children attending classes despite their religious identity.”

*Pakistan*

“When girls can attend school safely.”

“When there is no discrimination in schools on the basis of religion.”

Gender equality in education and healthcare access is crucial, as highlighted in the indicators. Ensuring that both women and men and representatives of all different religious groups have equal rights to education and healthcare services contributes to peace and social well-being.

*Pakistan*

“When there are no electricity shortages in my district.”

“When there’s access to drinking water for everyone in my community.”

“When our community members do not throw garbage in the neighborhood.”

**Access to infrastructure:** Access to basic infrastructure, including electricity, clean drinking water, and waste management, is vital for community development and well-being. The lack of these amenities disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including women. For example, women may be responsible for collecting water, and the absence of clean drinking water can threaten their health, security, and safety.

**Access to information and media:**

Some indicators pointed to the power of social media and mainstream media in raising awareness about religious issues. Access to information through media can influence public perceptions and potentially impact resource allocation, including support for marginalized groups such as women.

*Kazakhstan*

“When there is more positive media coverage of Islam.”

“When there is more positive media coverage about diverse religious practices.”

“When there is no government censorship of journalists and media workers who cover religious content.”

In summary, these indicators reveal that resource investment is intricately linked to peace and development, with gender playing a significant role in how these resources are accessed and distributed. Gender-responsive aid, economic opportunities for women, equal access to education and healthcare, infrastructure development, and community-based initiatives led by women are all crucial elements identified by the participants of our GAM workshops in promoting peace and improving the well-being of communities. The indicators also underscore the importance of addressing gender disparities in resource allocation to achieve sustainable peace and development.

**What are the trends, priorities and next steps?**

The Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE) global consortium adopts a comprehensive approach to address gender-based violence (GBV), women's peace and security (WPS), and women's economic empowerment (WEE) through integrated, intersectional, and multidisciplinary programs. WAGE's Learning Agenda outlines priority research questions aimed at understanding the existing knowledge on integrated programming for women and girls' empowerment, identifying gaps in evidence, and proposing strategies to bridge these gaps. This report aimed to address some of the key research questions in the learning agenda, namely: what are some of the most promising practices in measuring women's empowerment, including but not limited to WEE,

at the institutional, family, and individual levels? And how do these practices manifest differently or similarly comparatively across regions?<sup>18</sup>

As this brief demonstrates, when communities co-create localized indicators of concepts connected to peace and women's empowerment it can offer additional nuance and insight for practitioners and policymakers working on WPS, WEE, and GBV. The analysis of localized indicators of 'peace' and 'women's empowerment' from across six countries in Asia reveal the everyday experiences of how women and marginalized social groups are limited in their **agency**. Women and marginalized groups described having the least degree of power to make key decisions about their own lives and to feel that they can positively change their societies. According to the indicators collected, the lack of agency that women and marginalized groups report negatively impacts their experiences in different spheres of life, from education and healthcare, to mobility, religious freedom, personal identification, marriage, and family finances.

Secondly, according to the localized indicators, gender plays a significant role in **violence** dynamics, with women and girls experiencing gender-based violence, religious intolerance, and vulnerabilities in conflict settings to a higher degree than men. Vulnerable groups like people with disabilities and transgender individuals are also at risk.

Finally, gender-related aspects intersect with institutional **legitimacy**, affecting women's access to justice, law enforcement and government services. It becomes evident that addressing these disparities in agency, violence dynamics, and institutional legitimacy, particularly with regard to women and marginalized social groups, is not only a matter of social justice but also a crucial **investment** in fostering peace and inclusive development across the region.



*Photo from GAM-aligned workshop in Pakistan*

As in any other study, our analysis of all of the localized indicators from six countries has limitations:

- **Timing:** Search country teams all aimed to hold the workshops with communities at the outset of programs so that the results would inform timely and actionable next steps. However, in some cases, like in the case of Sri Lanka, the country team was only able to hold the workshops towards the end of

<sup>18</sup> Source: <https://www.wageglobal.org/learning-agenda.html>

the programming related to the Women and Girls Empowered Consortium. While not all factors are under program implementers' control, Search's experience shows that it is best to plan workshops like these in advance and to hold them at the outset of programs, so that they can serve the purpose of establishing or further strengthening rapport with target community members and providing insights for both MEL plans and program design.

- *Access to communities and language:* Not all communities and community members are easily accessible. In some cases it is due to language/dialect and other factors. In other cases, it is because of difficulties with mobilizing the most marginalized and vulnerable social groups. Search's country teams sometimes first mobilized local partner organizations to co-develop indicators and were later able to access communities on the ground. Ideally, co-creation of localized indicators should happen with target communities directly. Workshop facilitators who hold these workshops should both spend time building trust and rapport with community members (via community mobilizers if possible or local partners) and have the local language skills.
- *Actionability:* Some Search teams have found it challenging to identify actionable steps based on the research findings. While localized indicators can empower communities and advocate for change, transforming research insights into tangible actions can be difficult. Search's experience shows that the research team who leads co-creation of indicators is most effective in informing further actions when they gain managers' buy-in, hold reflection sessions about the usability and actionability of indicators with program teams, and organize validation sessions with community members.

Despite some of the limitations, Search believes that analyses like this where we take a broader look at the localized indicators from six countries helps us **set out priorities around gender-responsive programming** that apply for these contexts: 1) **Empowering women:** peacebuilding, international development, and humanitarian programs need to prioritize empowering women's access to education, economic opportunities, and leadership roles that would enhance their agency. In general, international programs need to close gender disparities if they are to foster peace and development. 2) **Prevent violence rather than mitigating the consequences:** peacebuilding, international development, and humanitarian programs need to invest in gender-responsive violence and conflict prevention strategies through awareness raising campaigns, particularly among law enforcement and justice institutions. This would further foster trust in institutions. 3) **Invest in gender-responsive aid:** whenever peacebuilding, international development, and humanitarian programs work with communities, it would be ideal if they are gender-responsive and provide equal access to resources to women and marginalized communities. All of our consultations with communities signaled that investing in women's leadership in community-based initiatives is essential for broader peace and development.

The analysis of all GAM workshops conducted across these six countries in Asia informed reflections among Search program managers and monitoring, evaluation, and learning staff. Where GAM workshops were conducted at the outset of programs (such as in the Asia Religious and Ethnic Freedom consortium), our program teams are striving to integrate these analyses into their MEL plans as well as the design of some of the program activities. In those cases, where GAM workshops happened close to the end of the life-cycle of programming (like in the case of the WAGE consortium), Search teams plan to inform their prospective program design and business development in these contexts.

The following recommendations illustrate the value of GAM workshops and ways in which they can inform shifts in programming, strategy, and investments that program managers can make in these locations. We believe that these recommendations provide insight for the leadership and program managers at Search as well as in other organizations on the kinds of key decisions they can make in their programming in other conflict-affected contexts using localized indicators. These recommendations also build on learning and insights from WAGE around women's empowerment programming more broadly.

## PROGRAMMING CHANGES

One of the main changes that organizations who adopt the first pillar of the Peace Impact Framework make is respecting the agency that the communities already have. The programmatic shift that happens is with the acknowledgement that women, marginalized groups within these communities, and the broader community members can have a say and control of what happens in the programs that they may participate in. After holding numerous GAM workshops, we recommend that the six countries that are part of this report, as well as the rest of Search’s country teams and organizations working in conflict-affected contexts more broadly, follow these recommendations in their programming:

| Tailored Interventions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Addressing Gender-Based Violence                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Promoting Inclusivity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <p>Program teams and organizations should tailor their interventions to address the specific challenges faced by women and marginalized social groups. For example, if localized indicators reveal limited agency among women in accessing education, organizations can develop programs to promote girls' education and women's empowerment.</p> | <p>Indicators related to gender-based violence can prompt program teams and organizations to prioritize initiatives aimed at preventing and responding to such violence. This might involve advocacy for legal reforms, support for survivors, and awareness campaigns to change societal attitudes.</p> | <p>Program teams and organizations can work towards creating more inclusive and gender-sensitive program initiatives. This might involve ensuring the active participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making and reconciliation efforts.</p> |

### STRATEGIC SHIFTS

Aside from programmatic shifts, program teams and organizations can inform some of their strategic shifts drawing on the localized indicators:

| Intersectional Approaches                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Advocacy for Policy Change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <p>Program teams and organizations in conflict-affected contexts should strive to adopt intersectional or integrated approaches that recognize how gender dynamics intersect with other forms of discrimination, such as religion or disability. This can lead to more comprehensive strategies that address multiple dimensions of conflict and inequality.</p> | <p>As the indicators presented here illustrate, there are multiple hurdles that women and men in most of these communities face related to legitimacy and access to justice, as well as justice services more broadly. Program teams and organizations in conflict-affected contexts can engage in advocacy efforts to reform legal and justice systems, making them more accessible and responsive, particularly for women and marginalized groups.</p> |

### INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

|                           |                                |                   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Gender-Responsive Funding | Support for Women's Leadership | Capacity Building |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|

Program teams and organizations may allocate resources specifically for gender-responsive programs and initiatives. This can include funding for women's economic empowerment, education, and healthcare.

Program teams and organizations can invest in leadership development programs for women and support their active involvement in peace processes and conflict resolution efforts.

Resource investment can also be directed towards capacity-building efforts within communities, especially for women and marginalized groups. This can include training on conflict resolution, mediation, and advocacy skills.

Finally, analyzing the broader scope of indicators from six different countries reassured us that there are several key factors that organizations working in conflict-affected contexts should continue exploring:

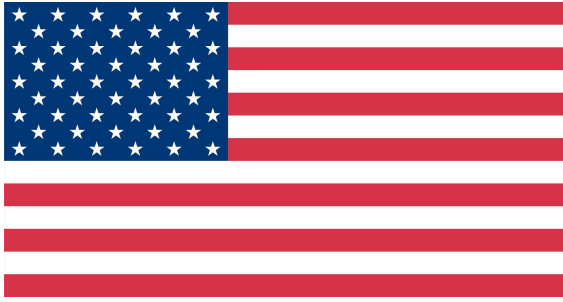
- If we invest in gender-responsive programming, we should also explore the long-term effects of such programming and their contributions to peace and development.
- If we pay attention to gender-related factors, it is best to examine the intersection of gender with other key themes such as agency, polarization, violence, legitimacy, and resource allocation.
- If we commit to using participatory studies at the outset of our programming, we should further rely on the strengths of these approaches and use them as relationship building tools with communities.
- If we use participatory studies and co-develop localized indicators of peace and other related concepts with communities, we should also conduct comparative analyses across different regions to identify common trends and variations related to peace.
- If we do the analyses of localized indicators, research team members and program managers should discuss programmatic as well as policy implications of the results, including for example gender-sensitive policies and interventions in conflict and post-conflict settings.

In conclusion, this analysis offers an important contribution to the WAGE learning agenda<sup>19</sup> and to future programming on WPS, WEE, and GBV in conflict-affected contexts. It sheds light on community-based understandings of how GBV, WEE and WPS issues intersect with challenges that women and marginalized communities across the world face. As this report demonstrates, women and marginalized communities experience GBV, WEE and WPS in a complex and interconnected way in their daily lives.

The findings align with the long-standing recognition within the WAGE consortium that societal barriers, including GBV, act as significant obstacles to women's full engagement in many spheres.

Analysis makes it clear that investing in gender-responsive programming is crucial, but it is equally important to consider the long-term effects and their contributions to peace and development. To truly address gender-related factors, we should examine their intersection with other key themes such as agency, polarization, violence, legitimacy, and resource allocation. Furthermore, committing to participatory studies at the outset of programming can be a powerful tool for building relationships with communities. When using participatory studies to develop localized indicators of peace, conducting comparative analyses across regions can help identify common trends and variations related to peace. Finally, analyzing localized indicators should lead to meaningful discussions about programmatic and policy implications, including the development of gender-sensitive policies and interventions in conflict and post-conflict settings.

<sup>19</sup> Source: <https://www.wageglobal.org/learning-agenda.html>



W A G E

## ABOUT

Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE) is a global consortium to advance the status of women and girls, 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 works to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and private sector organizations (PSOs) in target countries to improve the prevention of and response to gender-based violence; advance the women, peace, and security agenda; and support women’s economic empowerment. In this context, WAGE provides direct assistance to women and girls, including 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 of relevant promising practices in these thematic areas. 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 (S/GWI).

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