

WFD's framework for engaging in fragile and conflict-affected contexts

A path for becoming a more peace and conflict responsive organisation to achieve transformational change

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Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

This framework presents principles and approaches to underpin WFD's programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, offering a guidance for WFD's staff and partners. It outlines:

- The challenges posed by fragility, conflict, and violence
- The dynamics underpinning political settlements in conflict and fragile contexts
- Key principles and programmatic approaches to navigate politics in FCAC
- WFD's suitability to become a more peace and conflict responsive organisation
- Selected programmatic entry points

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Introduction

This section outlines the challenges posed by fragility, conflict, and violence.

A fragile and conflict-affected world

There is no agreed definition of fragile and conflict-affected contexts (FCAC), as there is no universally agreed set of indicators for measuring them. The continued efforts to improve those indicators show challenges in adequately capturing this complex and multi-dimensional political phenomenon.

Fragility, conflict, and violence are often interconnected and reinforce each other. They affect all dimensions of life, including the economic, environmental, political, security and societal as well as relationships among these fields.

However imperfectly defined, a concept of FCAC is important due to its explanatory potential. Fragility is understood to be behind violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises and other emergencies. In relation to the governance sector, it describes how such conditions can affect three dimensions of the state:

- Capacity – to provide quality services
- Authority – over violence and competing multiple institutions
- Legitimacy – value and acceptance



Violence is on the rise and civilians pay the highest price

In the past decade violence has been on the rise, although the absolute number of war deaths has been decreasing. The number of inter-state conflicts and violence is on the decline, but the number of intra-state violence is on the rise.

In the past decade, 1 in 2 people lived in direct contact with, or proximity to, significant political violence. Conflicts have been a driver for 80% of all humanitarian needs.

No matter the nature or drivers of conflicts, civilians are always affected the most. The solid evidence confirms that women and girls, men and boys are differently affected by and engaged in conflicts and peace processes. This is further nuanced by characteristics of individuals and groups to which they belong.

OECD's 2022 fragility index indicates 60 fragile contexts which account for nearly a quarter (23%) of the world's population but three-quarters (73%) of the world's extreme poor.

According to Alert! in 2021 there were:

- “98 socio-political crises were identified around the world, three more than in 2020, confirming the upward trend in the number of socio-political crises that has been recorded in recent years.
- 32 armed conflicts were reported in 2021, a slight decrease compared to the previous year. Most of the conflicts occurred in Africa (15), followed by Asia (nine), the Middle East (five), Europe (two) and America (one).
- 18 of the 32 armed conflicts that took place throughout 2021 occurred in countries where there were serious gender inequalities, with medium, high or very high levels of discrimination”.

Current approaches to peace processes fall short

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) research shows that current approaches to peace processes are not sufficient to bring about long-term stability and resilience.

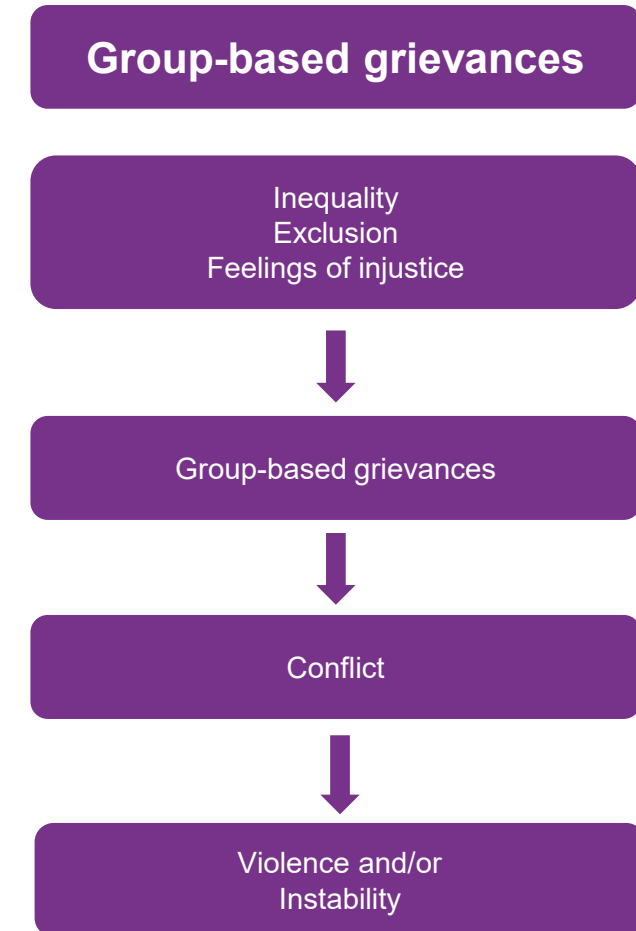
- Out of 288 analysed conflicts between 1989 and 2018 nearly half have recurred.
- Almost one fifth have relapsed three or more times:
 - 64.2% (185) of recurring conflicts were over the same issue
 - 27.4% (79) over overlapping issues
 - 6.3% (18) over new incompatibility
 - 2% (6) of conflicts were found to be unconnected with the earlier episodes of conflict

The researchers concluded that “With few exceptions, recurring conflicts can be traced back to pre-existing issues and grievances, suggesting that failure to address these grievances fosters recurring conflict.”

Group-based grievances

Current conflicts have many drivers including: “ideologies, extremism, illicit flows, transnational shocks (climatic, economic, pandemics) and the integration of criminal and political actors”. Technology has contributed to more dispersed attacks and diversified military strategies.

However, looking at the findings of the abovementioned research of the PRIO, group-based grievance should continue to receive the attention of democracy support organisations. Bringing about equality, inclusion and justice means addressing common drivers of conflict to support a more peaceful and resilient world democratically.



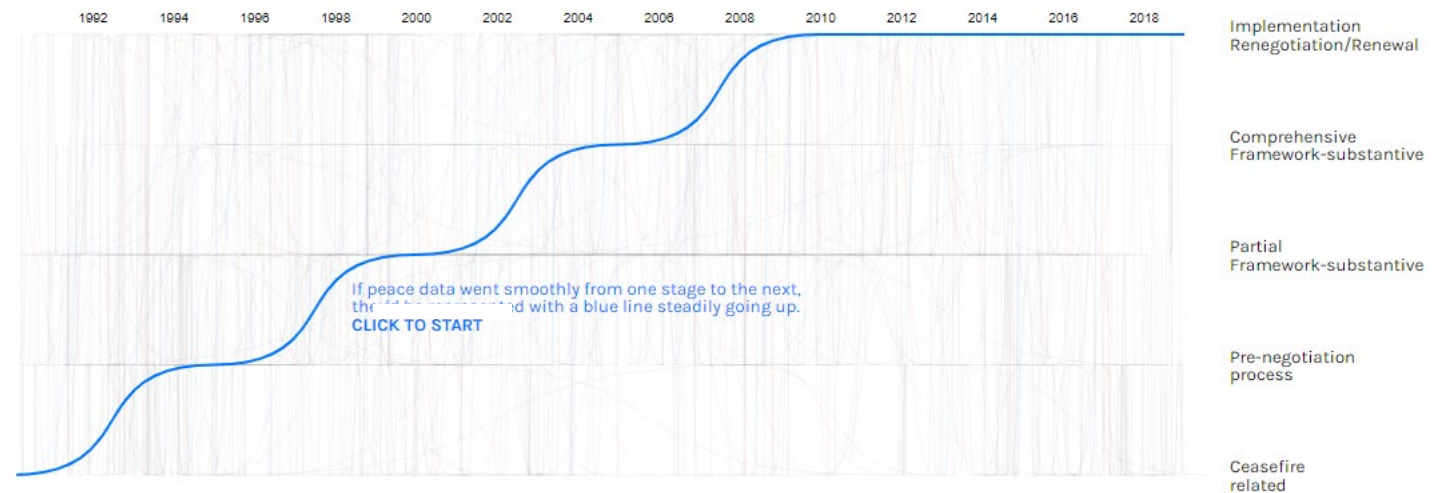
Based on the UN/WB report: [Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict aggression](#), p. 109

Peace is not the absence of war

Peace negotiations have been proving to be a useful tool in stopping the immediate violence they address.

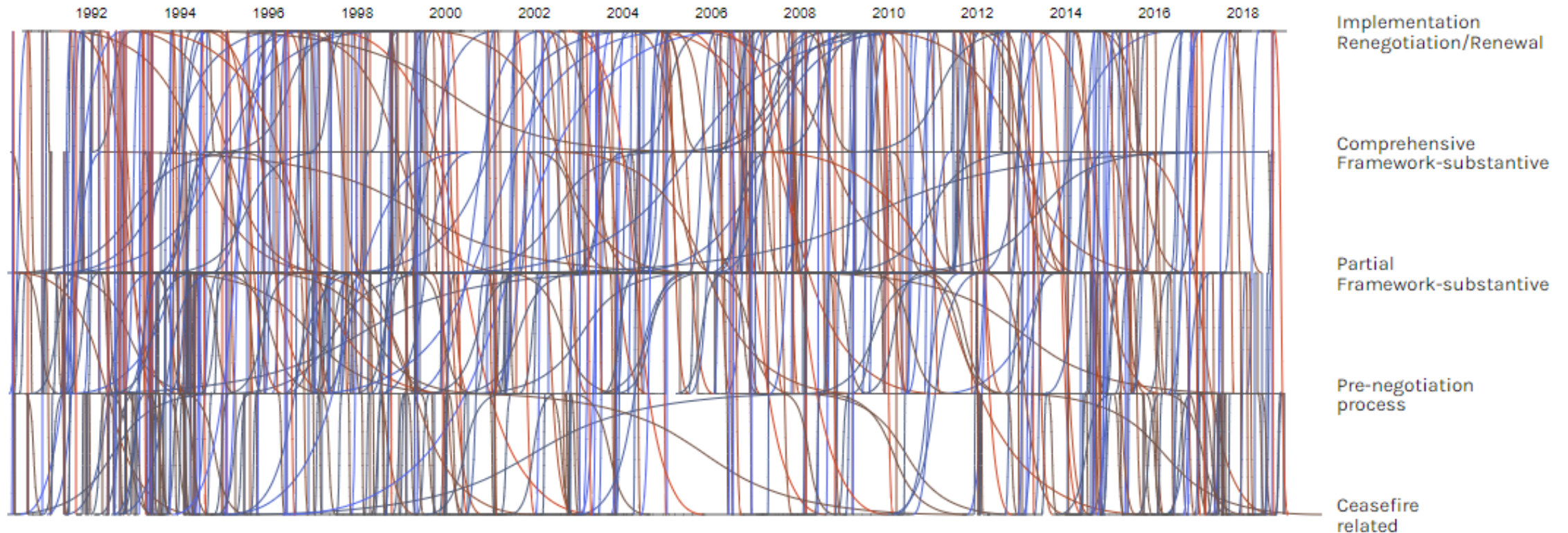
However, peace solutions are often insufficient and incompatible with the changing nature of conflict and violence. They neither address root causes of conflicts, nor resolve the conflicts. It often leads to the situation where while there is no war, there is also no peace, stability, inclusion or development.

In the ideal world, the peace processes should smoothly go through one stage to another, as showed in the diagram on the right. In practice, as seen below, they are often iterative and “messy” processes with many back and forth.



Source: [PA-X: Peace Agreements Database – Visualizing Peace Site](#)

Peace processes are messy



The visualisation above aggregates a “messy” unfolding of peace processes from the period between 1990 and 2019 recorded in the peace agreements database of the University of Edinburgh. It illustrates how long and iterative peace processes are and how unpredictable and nonlinear those processes are.

Source: [PA-X: Peace Agreements Database - VisualizingPeace Site](#)

Gender inequality and violent conflict are linked

Women's political inclusion is critical to sustain peace. Their exclusion is one of the reasons why peace processes are messy and do not bring about a long-term stability. Joint research by WFD and the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at Kings College London demonstrates that women's political leadership is correlated with reduced likelihood to go to war.

Available evidence analysed by Jenny Birchall indicates that there is a strong correlation between gender inequality and outbreaks of violent conflict. However, "gender is never alone a single driver of conflict", and is always linked with other factors. Patriarchal and biased gender norms and concepts of masculinity are perpetuating conflicts. There is also a well documented positive correlation between the levels of violence against women and a state's compliance with international norms and peaceful behaviours in the international system. The more violence, the less compliance.



Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 was the first of the UNSCRs that acknowledged the role of women in bringing peace and security, recognising the gender aspects of conflicts and their different impacts on women and girls, men and boys.

Image source: [a1325.png \(782×496\)](https://www.womensviewsonnews.org/a1325.png)
([womensviewsonnews.org](https://www.womensviewsonnews.org))

Women are more included in peace processes compared to 1990

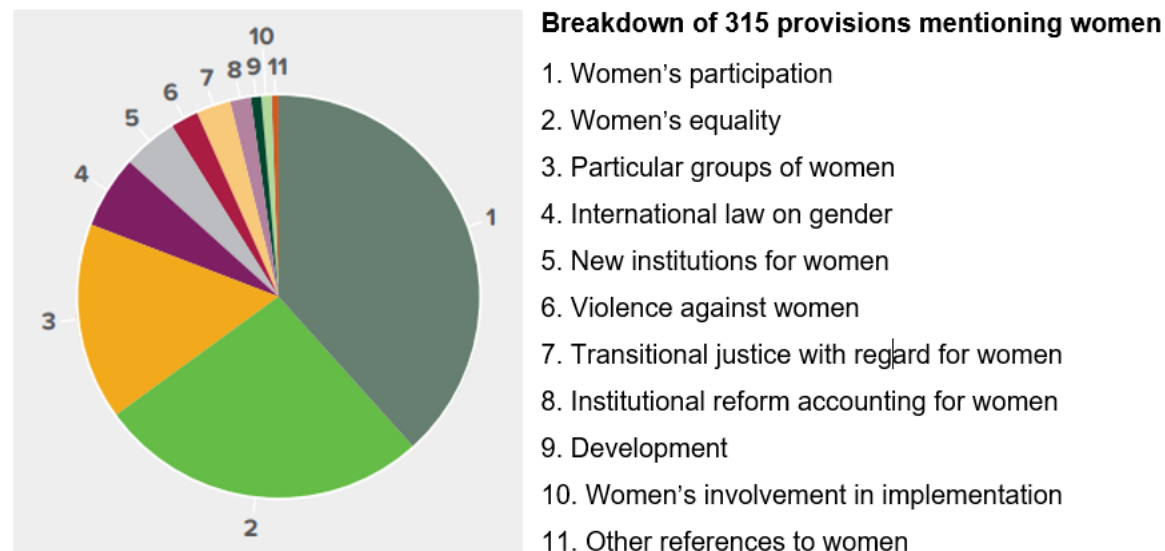
While women and girls are always as much negatively affected by violent conflicts as men and boys, the available data show that between 1992 and 2019, on average, women made: “13 per cent of negotiators, 6 per cent of mediators, and 6 per cent of signatories in major peace processes worldwide. About seven out of every ten peace processes did not include any women mediators or women signatories”.

The analysis conducted within the Political Settlements Research Programme indicates that there is a positive trend of the increased reference to women, girls and/or gender in recently signed peace agreements. Agreements signed in 2015 are almost five times more likely to include references to some level of gender perspective than those signed in 1990.

But there is a long way to go

However, the overall picture remains unsatisfactory. Out of 1518 agreements in the Peace Agreements Database (PA-X), analysed by Christine Bell and Kevin McNicholl, only 315 (21%) contain some “provisions that specifically address women, their inclusion, and their rights”; references to other groups are even less common: to men or boys (85), children or youth (254), or LGBT people (9)”.

There are 11 key topics that are commonly cited when referring to women in peace agreements. The majority of them only include one or two different provisions, or issues related to the victimhood of women. Specific types of provisions are referenced on the right.



Source: https://www.politicalsettlements.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/GJA_Gender.pdf

Underlying dynamics

This section discusses the dynamics underpinning political settlements in conflict and fragile contexts and its broader implications on inclusion and equality

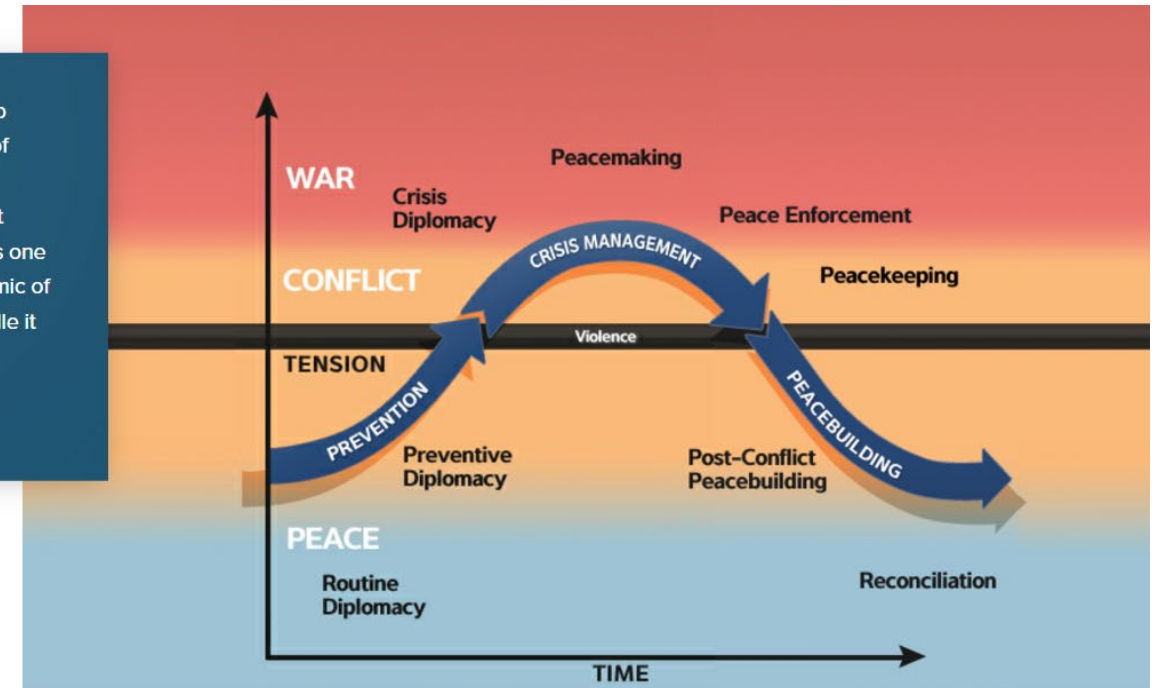
The curve of conflict

Conflicts are an inseparable part of political life and can have both positive and negative effect. They occur when incompatible and hostile attitudes are confronted. Conflicts can, but does not necessarily need to, lead to violent confrontation.

According to the UN, peace efforts aim to “reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development”.

They are expected to lead to long-term stability, understood as a condition where “communities, states and regions are able to develop, and manage conflict and change peacefully”.

Conflict has its own dynamic, and it tends to escalate and recede over time. The curve of conflict helps us to visualize how conflicts typically evolve over time and how different phases of conflict relate to one another. It is one way in which we can deconstruct the dynamic of conflict and seek to understand it and handle it more effectively.



Source: <https://www.usip.org/public-education-new/curve-conflict>

The Inclusion paradox

The evidence indicates that power-sharing arrangements can be an effective stabilisation tool if the negotiation processes involve all warring parties. That means that those who contended for power, and who have either been behind an outbreak of or actively engaged in the violence need to get a seat around the negotiation table. Failure to include all warring parties can create an enabling environment for excluded parties to further contend for power, often through violently undermining any new settlements. With the most striking example of political developments in Afghanistan after 2001.

“Horizontal inclusion between political and military leaders who have been former opponents” is critical to ensure progress. However, such an “elite pact” is an intrinsically exclusive arrangement which prevents a wide cross-section of society from meaningfully participating in and influencing peace processes, including women and representatives of other marginalised groups.

Elite pack

“Elite pack” arrangements have long-term political consequences. They not only define who gets a seat around the negotiating table, but also provide the condition under which the discussions about the future political settlements are taking place.

Political settlements negotiated during peace-processes effectively provide a framework for functioning of the state and state-society relationship. However, it is critical to remember that they are underpinned by social and gender norms, and in words of Catherine O’Rourke they themselves are “gendered and gendering”. They underpin horizontal and vertical lines of exclusion.

Vertical inclusion “looks at how those in power are interacting with broader social groups who seek to participate in or influence decision-making processes”. Or in other words, it asks the question how to influence those who were powerful enough to secure their seat around the negotiation table.

The “elite pack” concept is problematic

- It is against available evidence that inclusion – as an antithesis of exclusion - reduces tensions, frustration, and violent outbreaks of conflicts.
- The evidence collated by OECD indicates that “systematic exclusion from political governance or livelihoods is associated with higher levels of conflict”. The cost of excluding broader social groups from decision making is considerable and also limits transformative powers of peace processes and undermines social cohesion.
- Christine Bell stresses that inclusion is essential for ensuring a peaceful transition, long term stability, participation. It is a key requisite to develop “a more shared concept of state – one that is capable of serving a broader set of interests and operating for the public good” that is a central requirement of the conflict resolution in divided societies.
- A joint report of United Nations and World Bank highlights that non-inclusive peace processes can lead to “inequalities in the distribution and access to political opportunity and power among groups”. Because political exclusion is more “visible” than other forms of exclusion – for example, economic – political leaders and groups “can more easily assign blame, one of the steps considered essential in stirring grievances to violence – than economic disadvantage”.
- It also emphasises that “On their own, inequality among groups and group-based exclusion do not generate violence. But they can create fertile ground upon which grievances can build. In the absence of incentives to avoid violence or address grievances, group leaders may mobilise their cohort to violence. Emotions, collective memories, frustration over unmet expectations, and a narrative that rouses a group to violence can all play a role in this mobilisation”. In other words, exclusion can possibly lead to violent outbreaks and undermine country stability.

Elite pack exclusion of women is a problem

The exclusion of women from horizontal political participation makes peace processes weaker and less sustainable. The available research shows that:

“Women political leaders are reshaping the nature of politics and international relations in a manner that is bringing in issues and problems previously perceived as ‘non-priorities,’ such as gender-based violence and reproductive health. (...) As policy makers, women are prioritising issue areas that benefit the most vulnerable in society through healthcare, welfare and education. As such, more women leaders seem to make for more equal and caring societies”.

While so-called “non-priority” issues are frequently underestimated by politicians and underfinanced, they are frequently prioritised by populations. Results of regional surveys from Africa and Latin America show that when it comes to governance, the key issue respondents care most about is “whether their governments ‘deliver the goods’, such as economic management, growth stimulation, job creation, health, and education. (...) while people may support democracy, what they care about first and foremost is state performance and the ability of governments to deliver on key needs and expectations”

Due to their importance in proper state functioning, the delivery of services like education, healthcare, water, sanitation, justice and security have been elevated to “the glue’ that binds state and society together”.

Transformation towards Inclusive political settlements

Alina Rocha Menocal illustrates how the transformation of narrowly based political settlements towards greater inclusion could look along different dimensions:

- “from war and/or violent conflict towards peace and a state monopoly over the use of violence
- from closed political orders towards systems that are more open and representative
- from clientelism to substantive citizenship and a greater concern for the public good
- from patronage-based power and institutions towards a more impersonal political system and the rule of law
- from an economy that is stagnant, narrowly-based or geared towards violence, towards one based on investment, growth and jobs.”

She concludes that the overarching goal is to transform state-society relations.

Source: Rocha, M. A. (2015) Political Settlements and the Politics of Inclusion. State of the Art No 7. DLP, Birmingham.

Key principles and programmatic approaches

This section presents key principles and programmatic approaches to navigate
fragile and conflict affected contexts

Foundations of the framework

The evidence show that horizontal and vertical types of inclusion can play a critical role in creating a new political settlement. However, [Christine Bell and Kevin McNicholl](#) point at well-documented existing tensions between “an elite bargain necessary to ending a violent conflict (to which horizontal inclusion is aimed), and a broader social contract capable of providing for good government (to which vertical inclusion is aimed)” and, highlight the trade-offs between both approaches and wider implications for peace processes.

The challenge is how to make the political settlements more inclusive without undermining the stability of an “elite pact” through new or revised power-sharing arrangements?

Researchers previously involved in the [Political Settlement Research Programme](#) offer a range of approaches for how to navigate such tensions. Two of them seem to be particularly relevant to democracy support organisations, like WFD:

- **principled pragmatism**
- **a notion of formalised political unsettlement.**

Principled pragmatism

- women's political leadership

A growing number of studies indicate that the engagement of women in peace processes correlates with more sustainable peace, better outcomes for diverse segments of society and more inclusive policies. Women's participation makes the processes more legitimate and helps in addressing the conflict-specific harm and negative experiences that women and men, girls and boys suffer during the conflict.

Opening the space up for participation of women (and other groups) during the negotiations as well as subsequent governance processes is essential for ensuring a peaceful transition, long-term stability and participation.



Principled pragmatism - women's political leadership

However, using “the good” evidence and rationales while negotiating with political-military leaders might not always be the most effective strategy. In the case of women's engagement, there is growing evidence that a commonly used instrumental argument that “women are key to peace” and “women deliver” can backfire if women do not deliver. This is because it can imply that women are needed as long as they are beneficial for the case.

Bell and McNicholl argue that a pragmatic argument for the benefits of engaging women in peace processes and the benefits this brings to the society might not only be rejected, but also carries a risk of reinforcing exclusion, if elite-focused mediators and implementors are not persuaded by such arguments. They suggest that “the involvement of women in alliance with others, has been critical to re-framing of conflict resolution issues around addressing exclusion” and that the concerted efforts of marginalised groups might be an effective strategy for achieving commitments to equality and inclusion.

Therefore, the principled pragmatism would **“involve women making normative or principled claims, but in terms which resonate with the arguments for the nature of the elite pact – arguments of political equality, a need for security, and the need to counterbalance the legitimacy of a deal based on inclusion of (mostly male) armed actors alone”**.

WFD is acutely aware of a complex and unilinear patterns of political change. While being committed to ultimate transformative goals and being guided by normative and principled claims, it achieves it through incremental and pragmatic approaches and outcomes.

This “ principled pragmatic” approach cumulates in the gender- and conflict-responsive political economy analysis (PEA), and subsequent programmatic decisions. The PEA connects high level principles and norms with pragmatic pathways for action. It is the tool that analyses context-specific power relations and identifies opportunities to transform antagonistic relations and bring about long-term stability.

Formalised political unsettlement

The literature shows that a concept of political settlement in the context peace building, offers a sense of stability at a semantic and practical level. It is often defined as an agreement on the balance and distribution of power and wealth between political/military elites. It implies some sort of working order/framework for warring parties to the conflict to operate within, and for further stability and peace building interventions to be built around.

However, as stressed by Christine Bell and Jan Pospisil, the challenge is that political settlements do not resolve conflicts. This is evidenced by the number of reoccurring conflicts and their underlying causes.

They proposed using a concept of “formalised political unsettlement” that more accurately captures the conflict dynamics; and the efforts to manage and contain – rather than resolve – the conflict. They argue the peace processes “absorb” the conflict and what might be needed is an approach where conflict is continually negotiated.



Foundational principles – formalised political unsettlement



Four key characteristics of the ‘formalised political unsettlement’		Transformative potential
1	The political and legal constitutional frameworks contain conflict.	Institutional arrangements are fluid and focused on group accommodation: this can offer space for including previously excluded groups to press and win inclusion in ways that “pure” liberal democracy cannot.
2	Despite being temporary and exceptional in nature, it is in practice a long-lasting arrangement.	The need for perpetual reform can create sudden moments of opportunity in which the political settlement can be revised to be more inclusive, for example of women.
3	It is a “glocal” configuration, with multipolar sources of authority and legitimacy sometimes referencing local consent, and sometimes compliant with international standards.	International, national and local visions can be used to check each other in ways that stop them from being pursued in particularistic self-interested directions which might lead to the imposition of anyone’s unilateral vision for the nature of the state.
4	Characterised by enduring transition and permanent “unsettledness” and the need to renegotiate through exceptional negotiating processes, rather than change things through the incrementalism of normal political processes.	Contestation remains at the heart of the political order – no default position “wins” and this is often the only basis for political equality and can provide for such equality on an incremental basis.

“Formalised political unsettlement” encourages looking out for windows of opportunities to be more inclusive to enhance, and not to undermine, often very fragile political settlements. It seem to capture the political dynamics in post-conflict contexts well, where actors frequently and commonly attempt to negotiate an agreed order and rewrite agreed rules of the game

However, its transformative potential to open the system up and transform it in a way that is more inclusive and benefits the entire society, rather than a narrow ‘pack elite’, needs to be actively sought and deliberately worked towards.

Tools such as political economy analysis and adaptive and iterative programming have been proven to aid these efforts, if adequately designed and implemented.

Human rights

The available evidence shows that human rights (HR) narrative can serve as a connector. Christine Bell points out that it can “enable a common conversation over key drivers of conflict such as exclusion, inequality and insecurity. Framing political grievances in human rights terms can shift conversations beyond irreconcilable differences over ‘which state’ or ‘which people’, towards interests that can be mutually accommodated, such as the desire not to be discriminated against”.

This narrative can be practically used to effectively facilitate difficult discussions as well as ensure that policies, legislation and practices developed or revised in post-conflict settings comply with international human rights standards, and state authorities are held accountable.

According to Christine Bell, HR argumentation can serve to:

- “limit violence and ongoing practices of exclusion;
- create mechanisms for challenging those political decisions made for private ends;
- give non-aligned actors vehicles for addressing any ongoing marginalisation;
- and enable marginalised communities to fight back against fresh exclusions generated by the new shared institutions themselves”.

In addition to UNSCRs on WPS, other tools and mechanisms could be used to uphold human rights in conflict contexts such as: the review processes of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) or the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) under the auspices of the Human Rights Council.

Do no harm

The “do no harm” (DNH) principle was adopted by the international community to prevent possible harm resulting from an operation and programming of international aid organisations and actors.

For democracy assistance organisations operating in the context of FCAS it could be operationalised as ensuring that democracy or governance support programmes do not undermine fragile peace-building processes and/or contribute to outbreaks of violence or conflicts by strengthening the resilience of the political systems.

DNH needs to underpin programme design, implementation and risk management strategies. It needs to consider all levels of social and political ecosystems it affects and intended and unintended programmatic consequences.

Marshall Wallace points out that DNH principles is “ultimately about decision making in complex environments”. Every context has:

- “Dividers - issues, factors, and elements in societies which divide people from each other and serve as sources of tension (things do we want to stop).
- Connectors - issues, factors, and elements which connect people and can serve as local capacities for peace’ (things we want to support)”.

Wallace stresses that DNH requires that interventions are thoughtful and connectors are supported. “Inaction is not less harmful than action - though thoughtless action may in fact be more destructive” and destroy connectors that are critical to building peace and reducing conflicts.

Leave no one behind

The report of the Overseas Development Institute, stresses that leave no one behind (LNOB) is an inclusive and progressive concept that carries a promise of making the progress for the most marginalised groups in societies. It is “central to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals; while addressing two key concerns: poverty and inequality”. It is therefore relevant for “bridging debates about vertical and horizontal inequalities”.

Although the evidence indicates that democratic systems do not always deliver to their inclusivity and transformational potential. However, due to their nature, researchers indicate that they have the biggest potential to offer for all groups of citizens/residents to participate in governance. And also, for the system to deliver for all these groups through debate, policy and legislative anti-discrimination and progressive measures, strong oversight mechanisms, freedom of speech and increasing two way-communication between citizens and states is necessary. And critically in the context of fragile and conflict-affected contexts, to deliver quality services that are important aspects through which citizens experience and evaluate how states operate. The literature shows that lack of satisfaction can manifest itself in demonstrations, unrests or even violence.

Intersectionality

No matter the political system, different identities underpin the multiple forms of discrimination that individuals face. Gender identity - is only one of many possible lines of exclusion next to race, ethnicity, age, geographic location, economic status or disability, religion, sexual orientation, among others. They all affect individuals' and groups' quality of life and the potential they can achieve.

In FCAC the politics of identities often dominate while diminishing multiple identities and needs of individuals and groups. ODI's report points out that

“A focus on intersectionality, rather than dividing constituencies, has the potential to actually build coalitions among those who are most excluded from progress”.

This is particularly true if intersectionality is operationalised as connector and used to bring people together despite conflict, violence or obvious differences. This can be then used to “mitigate conflict or constitute positive forces for harmony in society”.

Rationale

This part discusses WFD's suitability and why WFD is well placed to become a more peace and conflict responsive organisation

Peace and democracy

- two sides of the same coin

The evidence shows “the correlation between democracy and interstate peace” as well as “the correlation between consolidated democracies and absence of internal conflict”. When one is deficient, the other one is endangered.

WFD’s mission is to strengthen democracy around the world through strengthening democratic, accountable, and inclusive governance. By deliberate choices of trying to address underlying causes of conflicts and fragility WFD can maximise peace outcomes through its programmes and operation, while not changing its core mandate.

Peace and programme effectiveness are two sides of the same peace coin, captured in the concept of peace responsiveness. It argues that addressing root cause of fragility, instability and violence and contributing more peaceful and stable environment contributes to enhancing peace and stability, which in turns create and enabling environment for delivery of effective democracy support programmes.



A Roman coin depicting a woman who personifies peace – PAX.

Source: [Pax or Peace as a Reverse Type on Gallienus Antoninianus \(24carat.co.uk\)](http://24carat.co.uk)

WFD's programming

WFD has a record of implementing a diverse range of programmes across different countries and continents in complex and highly-changeable environments that are often characterised by conflict and violent relationship; with programmes funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) or the EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

In many cases, WFD has been proactively approached by donors and/or democracy assistance organisations to deliver programmes in FCAC due to our parliamentary, political party and democratic governance expertise. This shows that WFD's expertise is relevant and needed in FCAC.

WFD's parliamentary and political parties' programmes have been delivered in-person by WFD's teams on the ground (Bangsamoro, Myanmar, and Venezuela) as well as remotely through local and international partners (Sudan, Colombia, and Kurdistan).

Due to its mandate, WFD often engages senior politicians and officials who are at the heart of countries' politics and political systems. Those, who are behind conceptualising and reshaping countries political settlements and the political rules of the games.

Countries where WFD has delivered conflict-related programmes:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Colombia
- the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
- Iraq
- Kosovo
- Lebanon
- the Philippines (Bangsamoro)
- Myanmar
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Venezuela

Stories of change documenting WFD's peace and conflict responsive programming



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ethnopolitics and intersectionality;
a role of gender in enabling
cross-ethnic collaboration



Lebanon

Approaching crisis as a
window of opportunity to
reshape state-society
relationships and facilitate
more cross-confessional
engagement



Bangsamoro

Horizontal and
vertical inclusion

WFD's tools and a way of operation

WFD has a range of tools and approaches that are well suited to deliver peace and conflict responsive programming.

WFD's political economy analyses that are gender- and conflict-sensitive underpin all stages of the programme cycle and necessary adaptations.

The problem focused programme design and implementation is underpinned by core principles:

- Think and work politically
- Analyse and adapt
- Broker and convene
- Listen and lead
- Evidence and learn

The programmes are implemented through adaptive management tools and approaches.

Peace is a shared responsibility

Peace is a precondition for implementing all [Sustainable Development Goals](#). It is also a goal in its own right, as goal number 16 calls for peace.

In addition, global reviews such as [2016 Sustaining Peace Resolution](#) & The Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, stress that peace-building is “a shared task and responsibility” and that this task is too big for peacebuilders to implement alone due to the multifaceted nature of fragility and conflicts which require long-term, intersectoral and transformative efforts. Those reviews call for international actors in development and humanitarian sector to deliberately contribute to peacebuilding.

Security Council’s definition of sustaining peace

“a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account,

which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development,

and emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the government and all other national stakeholders”.

Programming

This section presents selected programmatic entry points
to build peace and mitigate conflict democratically

Peace and conflict responsive programming

WFD is becoming a more peace and conflict responsive organisation in order to maximise peace outcomes through its programmes and operation.

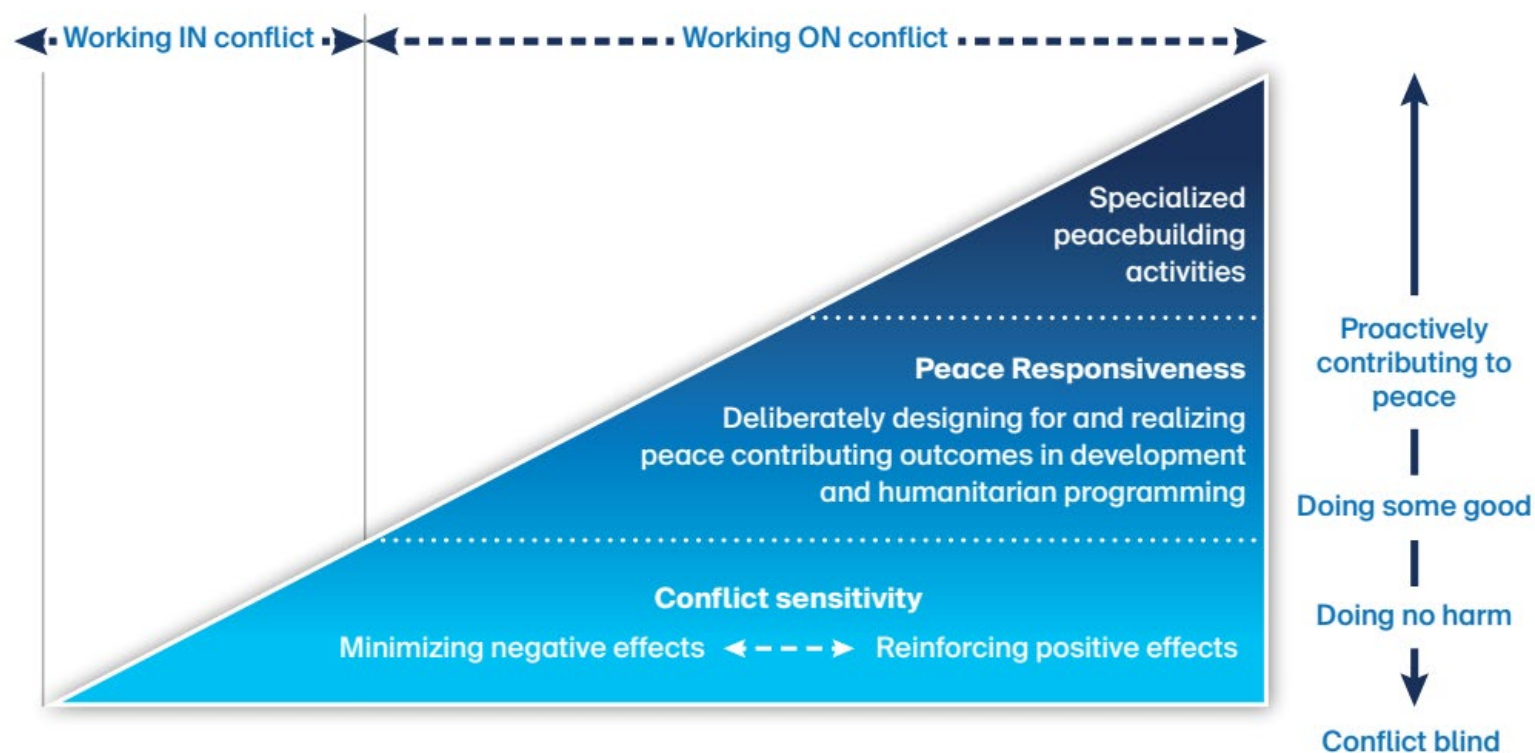
Peace and conflict responsiveness can be either mainstreamed or implemented as standalone programmes.

Gender equality, inclusive political processes and a focus on transformative change with adherence to the “do no harm” principle – should be at the heart of its programmes in FCAC. This is in line with WFD’s mandate that supports democratic transition and enhances countries’ ability to deliver democratically.

However, that requires being more deliberate in the programme design and to move from working “in” the conflict to working “on” the conflict.

Peace and conflict responsiveness

The spectrum from conflict-blind to peacebuilding – via peace responsiveness



“Big P” vs “little p”

“Big-P - ”actions that support and sustain political solutions and securitised responses to violent conflict”.

Little p – actions that focus on building the capacity for peace within societies”.

Source: IASC (October 2020)
[Exploring peace within the Humanitarian-Development- Peace Nexus](#), p. 1.

Source: Interpeace (September 2021) [Peace Responsiveness: Delivering on the promise of Sustaining Peace and the Humanitarian Development-Peace Nexus](#), p. 30.

Programmatic entry points

Considering the immense, complex and multidimensional problems in FCAC, programmatic opportunities are vast. To maximise peace outcomes and reduce conflict, initially WFD could build on its core areas of expertise and mainstream such approaches.

Political inclusion – multiple entry points:

Horizontal political inclusion - women's political participation

Horizontal political inclusion - political parties

Vertical political inclusion - individual citizens, activists and groups

Transformative change

Ending violence against women and girls

Broadening understanding of security

Transforming drivers and root causes of conflict

Political contestation

Other common arenas of contestation
- land and natural resources,
- service delivery
Security,
- justice

Programmatic entry points

Institutions strengthening is still one of the dominant approaches in tackling countries fragility and instability. Parliaments as one of the key governance bodies can play an important role in building a country's long-term stability and directly contribute to making peace processes more inclusive and gender-responsive.

WFD's commissioned paper on the role of parliaments in peace building lists the following areas where parliaments could make a difference:

- Implementing peace agreements, including institutional reform.
- Playing formal roles in relation to peace building, such as supporting transitional justice, integrating former armed groups and bridging main conflict cleavages.
- Longer-term roles that includes parliaments governing in support of peace, becoming sites of national dialogue and holding the executive to account.

It also stresses that the role of parliaments can be both positive and negative. This is heavily driven by contextual factors, including the historical role of a parliament in governance processes, the level of institutionalisation, or the distribution of power among key political forces and their commitment to transform or maintain the conflict.

Women, peace and security

WFD is well placed to contribute to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda that is underpinned by the adoption of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women and Peace and Security, adopted in 2000.

The Resolution 1325 was the first of the UNSCRs that acknowledged the role of women in bringing peace and security, recognised the gender aspect of conflicts and their different impacts on women and girls, men and boys. It has also laid the foundation for creating other normative and legal frameworks.

Following on from that, seven further resolutions of the UN Security Council and three of the General Assembly have been adopted. They recognise the relevance of gender inequality and structural disadvantages to sources of conflict and instability. They call for more substantial and meaningful participation of women in peace processes, gender mainstreaming in peace efforts and eradication of conflict-related sexual violence. They recognise the relevance of gender inequality and structural disadvantages to sources of conflict and instability.



**Pillars of the 1325
Women, Peace and Security Agenda**

WFD and WPS

Building on the parameters set out in the Framework, as well as WFD's expertise, WFD could contribute to the implementation of WPS agenda for instance through:

- Contributing to the implementation of **WPS National Action Plans**, either in their entirety or parts, and use well-tested WFD's oversight tools to oversee the process.
- Building on WFD's programmatic expertise in implementing women's political leadership programmes to enhance **political participation** of women at all levels of decision-making – both horizontally, including through working with political parties, and vertically to engage women's organisations to develop sustainable peace solutions.
- Intersectional gender and conflict responsive analysis to inform the development of policies, legislations and budgets that are conflict and peace responsive and contribute to the **prevention and conflict resolution**.



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Women, Peace and Security Agenda**

WFD and WPS

- Legislative and oversight programming to enhance the **protection** of the rights of women and girls in conflict situations, including through the development of transformative legislation to end gender-based violence, through the full implementation of humanitarian and human rights laws.
- WFD's portfolio related to **ending violence against women and girls**, especially from the MENA region incorporates good international practices such as: building wider formal and informal issue-based coalitions or referring to international human rights standards that could inform programming in other regions/countries.
- Through applying issue-based programming to ensure women's equal access to resources that support the specific needs and capacities of women and girls is crucial in all **relief and recovery** efforts.



**Pillars of the 1325
Women, Peace and Security Agenda**

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This is a presentation version of the Framework paper. Please refer to the latter one for details of all sources referred to and used in this research.



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where freedom and democracy thrive**

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