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The National Agenda for the Future of Syria (NAFS) Programme

Towards post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation in Syria

By Syrians, For Syrians



Standardizing Cross-Cutting Themes

Gender Cross-Cutting as a Pilot

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هذه الورقة هي من نتائج منصة الحوار التقني السوري لدى برنامج الاجندة الوطنية لمستقبل سوريا.

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اخلاء مسؤولية:

طبعت هذه الوثيقة في الشكل الذي قدمت به ودون تحرير رسمي، وهي تعكس آراء الخبراء الذين عملوا على كتابتها ضمن إطار " برنامج الاجندة الوطنية لمستقبل سوريا" ولا تعبر باي شكل من الاشكال عن رأي اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا الاسكوا. أصبحت هذه الوثيقة ممكنة (جزئيًا) من خلال منحة من مؤسسة كارنيجي نيويورك. إن التصريحات التي تم الإدلاء بها والآراء المعبر عنها في الوثيقة هي وحدها مسؤولية برنامج الأجدة الوطنية لمستقبل سوريا.

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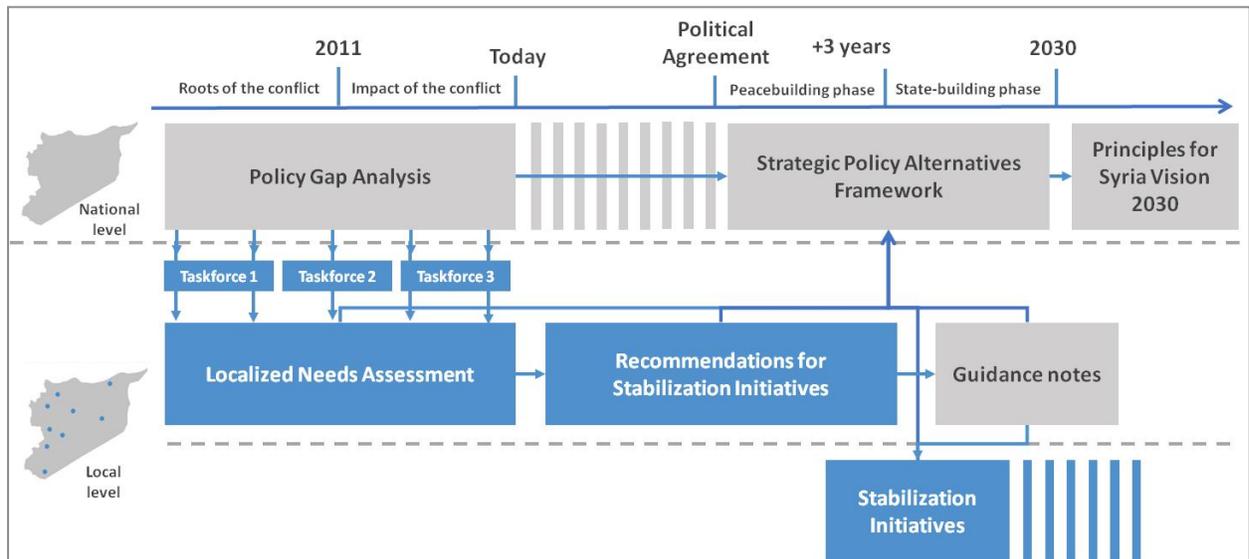
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1. Gender Standards in the NAFS Phase II Lifecycle

The NAFS Programme in Phase II continues its mandate to create a dialogue platform with its stakeholders to discuss the future of Syria post-conflict and to ensure that the results already achieved are **owned by a broad spectrum of Syrian stakeholders and remain relevant to the changing realities inside Syria**, thus ensure that the policy alternatives embodied in the continuously updated Strategic Policy Alternative Framework document remain relevant taking into consideration the rapidly changing realities on the ground. Furthermore, the Programme will translate the policy recommendations proposed in the SPAF document into **tools and guidance notes** that would guide the normative technical discussions and would pilot the design of initiatives in support of local stabilization and the long-term reconciliation and peacebuilding, the **stabilization initiatives**. Linking those initiatives to SPAF would ensure their long-term sustainability and would test the policy recommendations at a localized level, and therefore contribute to the cycle of the continuous update of SPAF for Syria 2030.

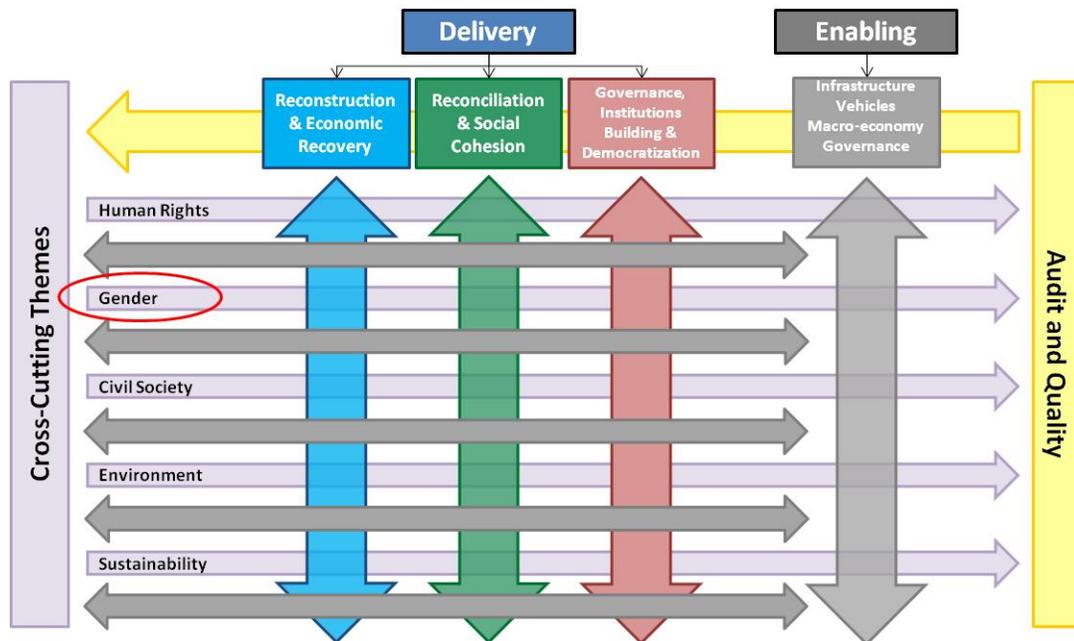
NAFS II lifecycle



The National Agenda for the Future of Syria Programmes utilizes the lens of gender as an integral part of the planning for the future of Syria. The Programme examines the impact of the conflict on women and the particular vulnerabilities they face during times of conflict. However women are not viewed merely as victims, but as leaders, activists, heads of war-affected households, breadwinners, and active agents for peace, change and reconciliation and as bearers of prime responsibility in recovering and reshaping the future of their country.

In order to better capture these issues NAFS mainstreamed the gender lens across all delivery sectors and placed it as one of the five guiding principles or cross cutting themes.

Gender is strategically positioned within a multi-layered system-based approach to plan the delivery of the three pillars of the programme: 1- Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2- Reconciliation and Social Cohesion, and 3-Governance, Institutions Building and Democratization. It is one of five cross cutting themes that cut across along the 57 development sectors/themes covered by the Programme. The Gender cross cutting theme is mainstreamed as well into the enabling vehicles of the Programmes those being governance, the macro-economic framework and infrastructure.



The goal of this document, in this context, is to present the guidelines on incorporating a gender perspective and gender analysis into all NAFS outputs. The goal of such guidelines is for NAFS units to develop a 'gender mindset' or way of thinking about NAFS work. In addition, it is meant to unify the lens through which NAFS sees gender and unify the framework with which it approaches gender as a theme that cuts across all the Programme.

This document will incorporate the gender perspective at all levels and stages of the NAFS Lifecycle seen above. This includes incorporating it in the Policy Gap Analysis (PGA), Local Needs Assessment (LNA) as well as subsequent stabilization initiatives. This guide will discuss as well the concrete steps for gender mainstreaming in the process of policy formulation throughout those processes.

2. Gender and Conflict

By **gender** we mean the social and cultural differences between men and women, as opposed to **sex**, which identifies biological differences between women and men. Gender is socially constructed, and consists of variables that include differences in roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints. Gender roles vary between and within social groups, but they generally define what is considered appropriate for men and women within the society, social roles and division of labor. They

involve a relation to power, who holds it, how it is used or shared. They are also influenced by class, religious beliefs, ethnicity, and age. Gender is a relational term, and therefore refers to women and men.

Gender mainstreaming is “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and the inequality is not perpetuated¹.”

Conflicts in particular raise a range of gender-related issues. These range from individual impact of conflict on mental and physical health to broader social and economic disruptions. They also have to do with issues regarding peace negotiations and post-conflict reconciliation. And although many conflicts witness a rise in women's voices, women's activism, and empowered responses to conflicts and their impacts, however, conflicts mostly have stern negatives impact on the various gender-related dimensions. Some of these elements are outlined below.

Elements of conflict and gender dimensions	
Psychological trauma, physical violence, casualties and death	Men are primary soldiers/combatants. Yet women may also be combatants. Women and girls are often victims of sexual violence, though men also face sexual violence
Social networks disrupted and destroyed-changes in family structures and composition	Gender relations can be subject to stress and change. The traditional division of labor within a family may be under pressure. Survival strategies often necessitate changes in gender division of labor. Women may become responsible for increased number of dependents.
Mobilization of people for conflict and changes in the workplace	Gender division of labor in workplace may change. Women may take over traditionally male-dominated occupations and responsibilities.
Material shortages (food, health care, water, fuel)	Women’s role as provider of everyday needs of the family may mean double the stress and work as basic goods become more difficult to locate. Girls also face increased workload. Non-combatant men may also experience stress related to domestic gender roles if they are expected but unable to provide for their families.
Creation of refugees and displaced people	People’s ability to respond to emergency situation is influenced by whether they are male or female and by the context and place of displacement. Male and female refugees have different needs, priorities and responses.
Dialogue and peace negotiations	Women may be excluded from formal discussions, however women are often at the forefront of local

¹ United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 1997/2

and other negotiations and settlements and their social networks are often utilized in similar circumstances.

3. Gender in the Syrian Context

This section provides a concise overview of Syrian specific gender issues. It is not meant to be exhaustive, rather to introduce some of the main Syrian and Syrian conflict-specific issues regarding gender. Deep inequalities between men and women existed in Syria. However, disparities were not uniform and tended to vary across class and regional lines. Assumptions about roles of women should therefore be questioned.

In 2010, Syria ranked 124th in the world in the Gender Gap Index² out of 134 countries. Syria's legal system is based on French, Ottoman and Islamic law. Syria acceded to the CEDAW treaty in 2003 with reservations about several articles including article 16, which CEDAW Committee indicated is incompatible with the convention³. Disparities also existed regarding issues of nationality, divorce rights, guardianship and custody, inheritance rights, freedom of movement, and protection from gender-based violence, among other issues.

Political and other institutional participation issues of women showed progress, but Syria still had relatively low number of members in house of parliament (12 percent in 2011) as well as lawyers and judges. Participation in the labor market was also very low, only 21 percent as compared to the global rate of 52%. Importantly, the Syrian public sector had higher representation of women as well as higher percentage of women in positions of management than Syrian private sector⁴.

Participation in the labor force does not necessarily imply empowerment. For example, the women's share of Syria's agricultural labor force increased from 31.7 percent in 1980 to 60.7 percent in 2010 largely induced by Syrians agricultural development programme. However while this may have resulted in greater voice for women in many places as well as a larger sense of dignity, personal fulfillment and self-esteem, marketing and decision-making over income within rural households was either male-dominated or did not result in significant empowerment or autonomy⁵.

Today, and after seven years of conflict, Syrian women stand at the forefront of the struggles for justice, peace and reconciliation. Through their changing roles as displaced heads of households, to organizers of civil society organizations, as well as entrepreneurs and political activists, Syrian women are a strong and visible presence within Syria and in the diaspora.

During the conflict women like men, have suffered from loss of life and permanent disability as well as arbitrary detention and torture and general violation of their human rights. However, there are women-specific burdens that the conflict has imposed. For many women, the loss or detention of their spouses

² World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report 2010 (rankings for total of 134 countries).

³ UNICEF, Syria: Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, United Nations. Children's Fund, Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa October 2011.

⁴ NAFS Administrative governance reform document.

⁵ Abdelali-Martini, Malika, and Jennie Dey De Pryck. 2015. "Does The Feminisation Of Agricultural Labour Empower Women? Insights From Female Labour Contractors And Workers In Northwest Syria", *Journal of International Development*, 27(7): 898-916.

or sons has turned them into heads of households and their displacement has meant that hundreds of thousands face their plight in exile and isolation. Many are subject to harassment, sexual abuse, rape, trafficking, girl child marriages, and other forms of gender and sexually-based violence inside the country as well as vulnerable refugee communities in neighboring countries. Women headed households also tend to have higher rates of poverty, and food insecurity within 80% of the Syrian population thought to be below the poverty line.

There are a variety of gender-specific legal issues that must be addressed in the next phase. Some of these are conflict-related dilemmas like inheritance, property and other entitlement laws for girls and women who have been displaced or lost their male guardians or spouses. Others are more long-standing legal issues such as discriminatory clauses in the Nationality Law and Personal Status Laws. Laws that clearly state the full equality between men and women as well as address the particular issues resulting from the conflict must be considered priorities for legislative reform in the peacebuilding phase.

Political voice and representation of Syrian women in both national and local governance processes is a key component of expanding their capabilities and empowering them to be partners in reconstruction. An important (though not sufficient) condition for this is ensuring numerical representation of women on local and national councils as well as on any government and non-governmental boards with input on key economic, political and social issues.

Having such representation not only reduces the marginalization of women and incorporates their concerns it also allows a broader spectrum of women's voices to be heard. Furthermore, as mentioned above women are not a homogeneous group, and important divisions exist according to educational level, class and regional lines. Allowing women from different regional backgrounds greater access to local and national decision-making allows their different priorities and concerns to be articulated.

4. Gender Guidelines for Policy Formulation

By definition, mainstreaming involves integrating a gender perspective into all stages of designing, implementing and evaluating projects, policies, and programmes. Following this multi-step checklist approach helps incorporating gender in a more effective and seamless manner.

Step 1: Identifying the issues

The first step towards incorporating gender involved identifying the main ways that gender matters for the subject matter you are examining regardless of how broad or narrow the question is. It involves asking several questions including:

1. What is the subject of your research product (sector/theme)? How does this issue affect men and women in different ways? What are the responsibilities, activities, interests and priorities of men and women and how do their experiences of problems differ? How have these evolved as a result of the conflict?
2. What are the goals from this research product? Do these goals pay attention to both men and women and incorporate commitment to improving gender equality? Articulate ways that will make our output gender sensitive.

Step 2: Identifying the stakeholders

If relevant, the policy formulation process can identify and locate the appropriate stakeholders and expertise on the topic and engage them. This is particularly important in the context of the Syrian conflict where there are multiple agencies and stakeholders involved and where Syrians are displaced and some in hard to reach areas or abroad. It involves asking the following questions:

1. Is there gender balance in policy formulation? If not, how will input or expertise on gender be incorporated? What resources will be consulted?
2. Who are the appropriate stakeholders to engage? Where is gender expertise available?

Step 3: Mapping the situation, identifying key indicators

A mapping exercise allows us to focus in on the specific issues at hand, identify the problems, gaps, resources, knowledge available to address the issue. The mapping exercise involves responding to the following:

1. What are the responsibilities, activities, interests and priorities of men and women and how do their experiences of problems differ?
2. Obtain the data or information that allows the experiences and situation of both women and men to be analyzed. This includes quantitative indicators, research reports available, NGO reports, Governmental publications, and donor's activities.
3. Question assumptions about 'families', 'households', that may be implicit in the way problems are posed or policies are formulated. Do not assume that all women share the same needs and perspectives and be mindful of differences between them (class, ethnicity, rural/urban, age) and how these differences may create differences in their needs and perspectives. Of course, this also applies to men.
4. What has been the impact of the conflict in your sector/theme on gender-related issues? Have gender roles changed in your sector/theme? What are the factors, actors and forces driving those changes? What are the impact of those changes?
5. How will your intervention seek to create an equitable distribution of benefits and opportunities from all interventions after analyzing it from a gender perspective.

Step 4 Research and follow-up

The next steps involve finalizing the desired output with a gender perspective. The final outputs must be checked against the originally identified gaps and needs. The following indicators are designed to measure the extent of gender incorporation into research outputs. They are meant for an after the fact check of the accomplished output. Following and articulating Steps 1-3 above ensures that the outputs are likely to be significant or principal in terms of gender markers.

Gender marker	Considerations for research output
Blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender is absent throughout the research, although the research topic has a gender dimension • Sex-disaggregated data is not used, in spite of their availability • Gender-sensitive language is not used throughout the research
Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research addresses some gender aspects, but gender is not mainstreamed throughout the entire process • The research has only one section dealing with gender • Sex-disaggregated data are used, whenever available • Findings and recommendations may suggest ways to fill gap in absence of sex-aggregated data and knowledge about gender issues in this specific area • Gender-sensitive language is used throughout the research
Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-sensitive perspective and approaches are mainstreamed throughout the research • Sex-disaggregated data is used on the primary and secondary levels • Gender-sensitive analysis of the data is employed • Findings and recommendations reflect the different needs and priorities of both men and women • Gender-sensitive language is used throughout the research
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality objectives are the primary intended result of the output • Gender-sensitive perspective and approaches are mainstreamed throughout the research • Sex-disaggregated data is used on the primary and secondary levels • Gender-sensitive analysis of the data is employed • Findings and recommendations reflect the different needs and priorities of both men and women • Gender-sensitive language is used throughout the research.

5. Sectoral Guidelines on Gender

The table below contains general sectoral guidelines on how gender and women’s issues are relevant in a select number of sectors and themes. These are not the most important nor only ones where gender analysis is relevant. Rather the examples below are illustrative rather than exhaustive. They are meant to be a starting point for inquiry and thought about gender issues within that sector or theme that should be supplemented with more in-depth analysis as the researcher moves from a macro to micro level. These basic questions can be generated in other sectors and themes by following the guidelines and steps outlined in the previous section.

Importance of gender issues by sector*	
Agriculture	Women are major contributors to the agricultural sector, whether by paid work or through unpaid work at home or in the community. Yet they may be excluded from access to resources, essential services, and decision making. Outputs must consider the different roles, needs and perceptions of women & men in agriculture.
Education	Education is a human right & essential tool for achieving equality, development and peace. Non-discriminatory education benefits both men and women and ultimately equalizes relations between them. Women literacy allows them to empower themselves and become agents of change, and is key to improve health, nutrition, and education of themselves and their community. It is essential that access to education be available to the poor in particular and their children
Energy	Lack of access to energy sources for heating, lighting, cooking, transport, and economic production inhibits productivity of men and women. Women are often tasked with coping with energy poverty for food production, heating, cooking, and water transport. Yet they often remain invisible in energy sector in terms of their needs, constraints, access & affordability issues, input, with resulting negative impact on energy infrastructure and services development.
Health	Women have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health. Though women are visible in the health-care system as both caregivers and clients, health projects do not necessarily address their needs and contribute to their empowerment. Gender gaps in health status, access & use of health services, health outcomes persist. The multiple roles & responsibilities of women in providing health and mental care to their community is not always acknowledged or supported socially, psychologically, or economically. Poverty and gender are often interrelated and exacerbate women's vulnerability to health issues as does violence against women across communities.
WASH/Housing/Urban development	Women are often primary collectors, transporters, users or managers of domestic water and promoters of home or community based sanitation. Women also play an important role in waste disposal and environmental management. Targeting women has multiplier effects in terms of economic benefits, benefit to children, and empowerment of women.
Resettlement and Rehabilitation	Social dislocation often exacerbates gender disparities and inequalities due to lack of property rights, lower levels of education, informal sector, unpaid labor, and limited mobility

due to economic or cultural barriers. Gender issues relating to rights and equity need to be tackled when thinking about any resettlement issues while keeping an eye on intra-household dynamics as well as institutional and legal barriers. Breakdown of social networks increases women's vulnerability, their work burden and exposes them to violence.

***Based on Asian Development Bank gender checklist**