CFFP THE CENTRE FOR FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

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TOWARDS MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF LGBTQI+ GROUPS IN THE WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

A Practical Guidebook

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2023 marks the 23rd anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, presenting an opportune occasion to take stock of the accomplishments of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda and critically reflect on the necessary actions needed in its third decade. One of the key emerging themes focuses on addressing crucial knowledge and implementation gaps, in particular, better accounting for the experiences of people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) across all four WPS pillars: participation, protection, relief and recovery, prevention. This holds the promise of strengthening the rights of these individuals and communities and would allow the WPS Agenda to live up to its transformative potential. For example, it would contribute to more inclusive political processes in peace and mediation efforts, better meet the needs of all survivors of conflict-related sexualised violence and work towards achieving gender-transformative prevention of violent conflict by addressing harmful gender norms and strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all.

While governments, international organisations, and civil society are increasingly aware of the need to address this gap, efforts in mainstreaming gender into the framework of WPS have not yet led to the meaningful inclusion of LGBTQI+ needs, priorities, and perspectives. To a large extent, engagement with LGBTQI+ rights has been limited to the UN human rights frameworks in silos instead of being mainstreamed across all relevant areas, including the WPS. Consequently, LGBTQI+ individuals are continually excluded from WPS research, policy development, programming, and implementation (Daigle & Myrttinen, 2018).

The persistent exclusion is partly the result of the delimited focus on women in the Agenda. Even when there are explicit references to 'gender' in the Agenda, the term is primarily understood in the sense of mainly relating to (heterosexual and cisgender) women. This restrictive and circumscribed notion is perpetuated by some governments and feminist and women's rights, peacebuilding, and development organisations, which fail to advocate for the genuine intersectional implementation of the WPS Agenda.[1] This limited emphasis on intersectionality is exacerbated by the lack of cooperation among actors working on advancing the WPS Agenda, those protecting and advocating for LGBTQI+ rights, and the broader peacebuilding and development community both within government institutions and civil society networks as well as their failure to see and understand how the work of LGBTQI+ organisations relates to the broader context of gender and peacebuilding.

It is in this context that CFFP, with support from Berghof Foundation, has developed this guidebook along with an E-learning programme to support civil society representatives and policy practitioners in national governments to better account for the needs, perspectives, and lived realities of LGBTQI+ individuals in the WPS Architecture, strengthen strategic alliances across different

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[1]The perpetuation of the restrictive and binary understanding of gender can result from intentional efforts, e.g., regressive policies, as well as unintentional actions as result of lacking relevant knowledge and expertise. In Chapter 1, we will delve into some of the main reasons why there is a persistent lack of intersectional approaches in the WPS Agenda. With the aim of distinguishing unintentional ignorance from wilful harm, we would like to highlight that it is imperative to centre open discussions and adopt a nuanced perspective to facilitate constructive exchange in certain contexts as opposed to taking a wholesale approach of naming and shaming any individual actors.

movements, and advance a more intersectional international policy debate on WPS. The content has been developed based on three rounds of consultations with the project's Working Group consisting of 18 feminist, peacebuilding, and LGBTQI+ organisations from the Global North and Global South and two rounds of consultations with the Reference Groups comprising various representatives from governments and implementing partners. These contributions were complemented by desk research, interviews, and invited inputs from experts in the field.

REFLECTING ON OUR POSITIONALITY

The Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP) is an independent, non-partisan research, advocacy, and consulting organisation committed to promoting an intersectional feminist approach to foreign policy worldwide. Supporting the intersectional implementation and advancement of the WPS Agenda forms a crucial part of our daily work. Using our platform, networks, and resources to advocate for better and more meaningful inclusion of LGBTQI+ groups in the WPS Architecture is the essential ethos of our methodology and work approach. We are committed to doing that in a participatory way that intentionally acknowledges, centres, amplifies and builds on the crucial efforts of LGBTQI+ organisations and scholars working on LGBTQI+ inclusion in the sphere of WPS for decades.

The Berghof Foundation (BF) is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organisation supporting people in conflict in their efforts to achieve sustainable peace through conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Its key mission is to create spaces for conflict transformation through peace process support, peace education and participatory research. In participatory research, we are dedicated to creating a richer and more diverse understanding of conflict settings with those experiencing and changing them first-hand. These insider research approaches generate unique policy recommendations, to which this publication also contributes. Berghof Foundation's work has long sought to lift the voices of those marginalised from political and social processes and to broaden the knowledge base. In the realm of WPS, engaging with LGBTQI+ actors often rendered invisible within our standard peacebuilding work is particularly valuable.

In this guidebook, we would like to make the clear distinction between our goal of providing actionable insights for both governments and civil society organisations (CSOs) to enable LGBTQI+ individuals and organisations to meaningfully participate in and shape the WPS Architecture and further actions needed to queer the WPS Architecture. As highlighted in **Chapter 3** with readily implementable strategies, meaningful participation in this context is understood as going beyond mere consultation and requires a sustainable and long-term engagement that leads to a significant impact. It requires a genuine commitment to inclusivity and an ongoing effort to identify and overcome barriers that may prevent some groups from fully participating. It also involves building the capacity of affected groups to engage in policy processes effectively and to advocate for their rights and interests (United Nations Peacebuilding 2020; Berghof Foundation 2023). Queering the WPS Architecture, as scholars (Hagen 2016; Duggan 2012; Loken & Hagen 2022) have argued in recent years, goes beyond highlighting LGBTQI+ individuals in the agenda; it must systematically examine how gender norms impact the decision-making and operations at the UN Security Council and centre an intersectional understanding of key drivers of gender-based violence (GBV). The action of queering would also entail examining and addressing the underlying power structures within the overall Architecture, such as greater engagement with policymakers and stronger ownership of queer organisations in policy processes, policy designs, and knowledge production (Hagen 2016, p. 331). A concrete example of queering is centring LGBTQI+ organisations in developing indicators for homophobic and transphobic violence (Hagen 2016, p. 331). Therefore, while we strive to centre the perspectives and priorities of LGBTQI+ organisations in the consultation and

development processes of the content, this guidebook stops short of efforts to queer the WPS Architecture due to scope limitation. Nevertheless, there is a common thread between these two, and we hope it will act as a first step and build a foundation for actions that can queer the WPS Architecture in the future.

As a Global North based organisation, we acknowledge that this positionality grants us access to privileged ways of knowledge production, networks of connection, and critical resources, among others. Against this backdrop, we have strived to include as broad a range of actors around the world as possible within our capacity, in particular, those working on advancing the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals and groups in (post)-conflict settings while ensuring that their participation and inputs were fairly compensated. Although we aim to create a group composition as diverse as possible in both the Reference Group and Working Group, we recognise that this by no means represents the entirety of LGBTQI+ organisations active in the field and the lived realities of people with diverse SOGIESC in (post)-conflict settings. Nevertheless, we hope that the insights and lessons learned from our engagement can contribute to building an ever-expanding foundation of knowledge, tools, and resources in centring LGBTQI+ groups in the WPS Architecture for policy practitioners and activists who wish to work towards queering the Architecture in the future.

OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDEBOOK

This practical guidebook provides a foundation of key knowledge, conceptual terms, frameworks, and actionable policy recommendations on working towards meaningfully enabling LGBTQI+ organisations and individuals active in the field of gender and peacebuilding to participate in and shape the WPS Architecture. It primarily targets:

1: **Policy practitioners** in governments who work on peace and security issues and would like to achieve greater inclusion of LGBTQI+ organisations and persons in their work streams as well as those working on LGBTQI+ rights from a human rights perspective who would like to integrate their work better in thematic areas in peace and security.

2: **Civil society organisations (CSOs)** that work on LGBTQI+ issues related to peace and security, feminist/women's rights organisations working on the WPS Agenda and those that are part of general peace movements committed to building stronger alliances with LGBTQI+ organisations.

The structure of this guidebook is organised as follows:

CHAPTER 1: Begins with delineating the fundamental conceptual parameters of the WPS Agenda, including a brief history of its emergence, key definition, and the imperative to account for its broader structures, stakeholders, and processes through adopting the term 'WPS Architecture'. Shedding light on the limitations of the current WPS Architecture concludes that foregrounding LGBTQI+ persons and groups is essential to successfully implementing the Agenda itself and realising its transformative potential.

CHAPTER 2: Investigates actionable entry points for meaningfully foregrounding the lived realities, perspectives, needs, and priorities of LGBTQI+ groups in the implementation and preparation of programming across all four pillars of the WPS Agenda — participation, protection, relief and recovery, and prevention. The recommendations are complemented with case studies, tools, and best practices for each pillar.

CHAPTER 3: Zooms out to identify existing barriers and explore pathways, actionable strategies, and requisite resources to enable LGBTQI+ organisations to meaningfully shape and participate in the policy design and processes of the WPS Architecture, including policy processes at the UN level, such as the further development and monitoring & evaluation (M&E) of the Agenda as well as the drafting, implementation, and M&E of National Action Plans (NAPs). It dedicates the last section to sketching a comprehensive set of recommendations for governments to build meaningful, participatory, and inclusive consultations, which lie at the heart of effective, intentional, respectful, and sustainable engagement with LGBTQI+ persons and organisations.

CHAPTER 4: Takes a deep dive into the landscape of anti-gender actors, particularly concerning their most common traits, raison d'etre, mobilisation tactics, key strategies, narratives, etc. The chapter draws on the discrepancies between anti-gender actors and those in the progressive pro-rights movements, providing possible explanations for the relative success of anti-gender actors. The subsequent sections then tackle the common opposition narratives against the inclusion of LGBTQI+ groups in the Architecture with evidence-based rebuttals and lay out concrete policy recommendations for governments and CSOs to bridge the gaps exploited by anti-gender actors.

This practical guidebook is the publication format of our E-learning programme based on the same substantive content. This four-chapter guide contains key knowledge points, interactive exercises, recaps, best practices, and actionable insights that learners can readily grasp and adopt in their work contexts. Designed to facilitate flexible learning and easy reference, this guidebook is not meant to serve as a document that must be read from beginning to end. Instead, readers can start by getting a general sense of the content flow and use it as a point of reference that can be consulted regularly. If you prefer to start with a more linear approach to learning or just to familiarise yourself with the content itself, you can have a look at our E-learning programme which will be launched soon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **BF:** Berghof Foundation
- **CFFP:** Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy
- **CEDAW:** Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- **CSO:** Civil Society Organisations
- **FFP:** Feminist Foreign Policy
- **GBV:** Gender-Based Violence
- **ISIS:** Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
- **LGBTQI+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex people
- **LBTQ+:** Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer
- **M&E:** Monitoring and Evaluation
- **NAPs:** National Action Plans
- **NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisations
- **OAS:** Organisation of the American States
- **OHCHR:** Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights
- **OSCE:** Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- **OWFI:** Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq
- **SGBV:** Sexual Gender-Based Violence
- **SOGIESC:** Sexual orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics
- **SRHR:** Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- **TERF:** Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists
- **UNAMI:** United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
- **UNSC:** United Nations Security Council
- **UNSG:** United Nations Secretary General
- **UNSCR:** United Nations Security Council Resolution
- **WILPF:** Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
- **WPS:** Women, Peace, and Security Agenda
- **WRO:** Women Rights Organisations

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Arria-formula meeting: informal (sometimes confidential) gatherings convened by members of the UN Security Council where states can engage in discussions on issues of international importance. The Arria-Formula meeting is named after Venezuelan Ambassador Diego Arria, who pioneered the meeting format in response to formal constraints at the UN Security Council during investigations into war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Security Council report 2020).

Cis-gendered: refers to people who identify with the gender identity or sex characteristic assigned to them at birth, as opposed to transgender (ILGA Europe n.d.).

Do-No-Harm principle: denotes the obligation to identify, prevent, and mitigate potential negative impacts of humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development assistance in complex settings. At a minimum, these could contribute to an escalation of conflict and violence and/or the increased discrimination of structurally disadvantaged groups. Therefore, the potential social, economic and political effects of programming must be carefully evaluated to act in the most conflict-sensitive manner possible. CDA's Do No Harm Handbook offers a comprehensive introduction to the framework.

Feminism: refers to a set of philosophies which drive political organising. Feminism acts as a tool to analyse and question existing power hierarchies and present new and alternative visions for equal and just societies for all. Its primary goal is to end all types of oppression, injustices, and power hierarchies, including sexism, racism, classism, colonialism, and imperialism, among others. The everyday lived experiences of marginalised people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities are reflected, so intersectionality is a core tenet of feminism. By basing CFFP's work on the principles of feminism, which include equality, justice, solidarity, and transparency, among others, we acknowledge the movements, organisations, and individuals that came before us and on whose shoulders we stand today (CFFP 2021b).

Feminist foreign policy (FFP): the external action of a state or an organisation that defines its interactions vis-à-vis states, supranational organisations, multilateral forums, civil society, and movements in a manner that prioritises equality for all, enshrines the human rights of women and other politically marginalised groups and wholeheartedly pursues human security and feminist peace. By offering an alternate and intersectional rethinking of security from the viewpoint of the most marginalised, FFP functions as a framework that elevates the everyday lived experience of marginalised communities to the forefront and centres their needs in political processes and policy. FFP scrutinises the destructive forces of patriarchy, capitalism, racism, and militarism across all issue areas, such as the climate crises, migration, and trade, as well as its practices, including policymaking, diplomacy, and aid. By doing so, FFP interrogates domestic and foreign policy decisions to push for a more just global order and significantly resources feminist civil society to achieve its goals (CFFP 2021b).

Feminist international cooperation: a feminist approach to international cooperation prioritises intersectional (socioeconomic status, gender, racial, etc.) equity and justice (over poverty reduction measured through nationwide economic indicators such as GDPs), closely supporting and working with feminist civil society, particularly in Southern countries. It further highlights and acknowledges that development aid is a colonial structure and works towards decolonising this policy area (CFFP 2023).

Feminist peace: a feminist understanding of peace goes beyond the absence of war and is the absence of all forms of structural violence and oppression. An intersectional feminist perspective advances demilitarisation, equality, justice, and dismantling of discriminatory structures. Feminist peace requires a constant reflection of historically masculine and Western understandings of peace and offers alternatives based on the knowledge and needs of marginalised members (CFFP 2021a).

Femonationalism and queer-nationalism: the notion where feminists and LGBTQI+ individuals of the dominant ethnic group/nationality intersect with conservative, nationalistic ideologies often driven by xenophobic motivations (e.g., white LGBTQI+ individuals in the Global North advocating for excluding immigrant communities from the list of beneficiaries of the welfare state) (Farris 2017; Lieback 2017).

Gender binary: the notion that there are only two genders — male and female — and that people must fit into one of these categories based on their biological sex (Hagen 2016).

Box: Recognising the colonial legacy of the gender binary

Gender-diverse identities that defy the cis-binary of male and female have always existed. Many of the gender identities and expressions were actively erased by colonial structures, e.g., the colonial expansion under the guise of Christianity missions which regarded non-European cultures as inferior that needed to be controlled and 'civilised'. Today, the criminalisation of LGBTQI+ identities and relationships in many former colonised countries can be traced back to colonial-era laws specifically targeting queer people (Working Group; Atshan 2021; Abruzzo 2008; Lugones 2007).

It is important to recognise the lasting colonial impact of perceiving gender in a rigid and binary manner and its imposition and subsequent institution in many societies previously under colonial rule. To date, this vestigial colonial influence continues to impact how we conceptualise and understand gender and sexuality, with many individuals with non-conforming gender identities still being marginalised in many places worldwide.

Meanwhile, it is essential to note that the term 'LGBTQI+' can be traced back to Western scholarship, ways of knowing, and social movements. While the term has gained recognition worldwide, it may not fully capture the lived experiences of people with diverse SOGIESC worldwide. Queer identities are diverse and complex. Therefore, it is essential to draw on a wide range of scholarly work and knowledge from a diverse range of sources, especially from underrepresented voices, including the Global South and indigenous communities, to gain a deeper understanding of how SOGIESC intersect with culture, religion, and other factors in different contexts (Daigle & Myrttinen 2018; Institute of Development Studies - What's wrong with labels? n.d.)

Gender expression: people's manifestation of their gender identity to others by, for instance, dress, speech and mannerisms. One's gender expression may or may not match their gender identity/identities, or the gender they were assigned at birth. (ILGA Europe n.d.).

Gender identity: one's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms. Some individuals' gender identity falls outside the gender binary and related norms (ILGA Europe n.d.).

Gender mainstreaming: a strategic approach to promote gender equality. It involves considering the different circumstances and interests of women, men, and individuals with diverse gender identities in political and social initiatives and decisions (BMZ 2023).

Gender-sensitive: an approach that takes into account the specific needs of and challenges faced by men, women, and people with diverse SOGIESC in a specific context and integrates these considerations when designing and implementing interventions to prevent the perpetuation of reinforcing norms and practices that contribute to gender inequality (Conciliation Resources, CMI - Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation, PeaceNexus, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, et al. 2021).

Gender-transformative: an approach that aims to challenge and transform harmful gender norms, roles, and relations while addressing the underlying causes of gender-based inequalities. The approach works towards redistributing power, resources, and services more equally to foster meaningful and progressive changes in gendered power relationships (UNFPA 2023).

Gender: a social construct used to differentiate people based on their assigned sex at birth shaped by various factors like laws, politics, media, family structures, and religion. Gender goes beyond being a set of ideas and instead organises power relationships by categorising people as 'masculine' or 'feminine'. This system of categorisation sustains power hierarchies among people, communities, activities, and states (CFFP 2021a).

Global North & Global South: terms that refer to a state's privileged or disadvantaged political, economic, and cultural position in the global context as opposed to absolute geographical locations. Historically, countries in the Global South have had a disadvantaged position in the global system, socially, politically, and economically. The terminology also highlights inequality and the resulting dependency relationships. The terms are intended to replace the outdated terms 'Third World' and 'developing countries'. However, the terms 'Global South' and 'Global North' are also criticised due to their Eurocentric and essentialist categorisation (BMZ 2023).

Heteronormativity: the worldview within which heterosexual relationships are the preferred or normal orientation (Hagen 2016).

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is both a concept and analytical tool that describes how systems of oppression like racism, sexism, classism, and ableism, among others, are interconnected and can be mutually dependent. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the term was originally used to describe the oppression that Black women experience due to both their gender and race. The concept has since expanded in its usage to encompass various forms of oppression. To effectively tackle discrimination, all aspects of identity, privilege, and oppression must be considered in conjunction rather than isolation. The principles behind intersectional thought have been developed and emphasised for more than 150 years, rooted in the experiences and struggles of Black women in the US context. Accordingly, whenever one talks about intersectionality, it is essential to centre intersectional thought in Black feminism (CFFP 2021a).

LBTQ+: an acronym for lesbian, bisexual, and queer, used to highlight the disproportionate and unique experiences that queer women face in (post)-conflict settings as well as the continuous neglect of their priorities and expressed needs in the WPS Architecture in the context of this guidebook.

LGBTQI+: an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex people. The plus sign '+' stands for diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (Human Rights Campaign Foundation n.d.) beyond the limitations of a handful of acronyms. This acronym does not serve to imply that these are permanent and universal forms of identity in the context of this guidebook. Instead, they denote a wide range of sexual orientations and gender identities across all cultural, geographical, linguistic, and temporal boundaries. We acknowledge that the Global North strongly influences this term's origin and intellectual foundation and may not capture all the experiences of people with diverse SOGIESC worldwide. Therefore, we would like to highlight the regional and indigenous terms in this regard, such as Lesbi (Indonesia), Shamakhami (Bangladesh), Hijra (India/Pakistan), Jota (Mexico), and Two Spirit (USA/Canada), etc., that are not included in them (Sauer 2018).[2]

Local Ownership: a concept originally introduced by the Capstone Doctrine in 2008 to promote the legitimacy and credibility of UN peacekeeping operations in the field and enhance the missions' overall chance of success. Through wide representation, inclusiveness, and gender balance considerations, local ownership aims to contribute to a better understanding of the national context and include the civilian population's opinions, concerns, and hopes. In the long term, its goal is to enable conflict-affected nations to become part of the peace process, to empower local actors to build their own peace, and to ease the exit of the peacekeeping mission (Steinbach 2021).

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[2]The acronym will be used throughout this guidebook. In places where deviations occur, the original citations were used.

Masculinities: ways that men and boys are socially expected, and expect themselves, to enact their gendered selves in any given situation and how this is reflected in societal power dynamics (Myrttinen 2019).

Meaningful Participation: a crucial concept in promoting inclusion and social justice in ensuring that affected and marginalised groups are actively involved in all stages of policy decision-making, planning, implementation, and response, in national, regional, and international institutions. This goes beyond mere consultation and requires a sustainable and long-term engagement that leads to a significant impact. Meaningful participation requires a genuine commitment to inclusivity and an ongoing effort to identify and overcome barriers that may prevent some groups from fully participating. It also involves building the capacity of affected groups to engage in policy processes effectively and to advocate for their rights and interests (United Nations Peacebuilding 2020; Berghof Foundation 2023).

Patriarchy: a concept that historically describes a societal structure in which status, land, property, and rights are managed by fathers and passed on to their sons. Although this system is seen in fewer and fewer places worldwide, society is still organised around sustaining men's power. Patriarchy is an institutionalised sexism that perpetuates male privilege and hegemonic masculinities. It is important to note that not all men benefit equally from the patriarchy due to factors like race, class, sexuality, or ability. It, therefore, cannot be simplified as the 'rule of men' but a social system that values and upholds certain racist, classist, and ableist ideas about hegemonic masculinities, which women and marginalised people are also capable of upholding (CFFP 2021a).

Queer: The term 'queer' was previously used as a negative and pejorative term to refer to individuals who identify as LGBTQI+ in the English language. It has been reclaimed by people who identify beyond the traditional gender categories and heteronormative social norms. Depending on the context, some people may still find it offensive, and it is not a universally accepted term within the LGBTQ community (ILGA Europe n.d.; GLAAD n.d.). The LGBTQI+ communities include a wide variety of identities and experiences. There is no perfect umbrella term to encompass the communities, no acronym that can encompass all of its nuances and complexities. We recognise the complex history of the term 'queer' and that not everyone views it as a term denoting a positive or a neutral identity. The term 'queer' is used respectfully and mindfully in this guidebook to be as inclusive as possible (Collins 2019). Queering understood as an action in the context of the WPS Architecture goes beyond highlighting LGBTQI+ individuals, which must systematically examine how gender norms impact the decision-making and operations at UNSC and centre an intersectional understanding of key drivers of GBV (Hagen 2016, p. 331). The notion of queering would also entail examining and addressing the underlying power structures within the overall Architecture, such as greater engagement with policymakers and stronger ownership of queer organisations in policy processes, policy designs, and knowledge production.

Queerphobia: intolerance, fear, unreasonable anger, hatred, and discrimination towards all LGBTQI+ people, including lesbophobia, transphobia, and homophobia ([ILGA Europe](#) n.d.).

> *"While not the only cause of such attitudes, many countries' anti-LGBTQI+ attitudes can be traced back to homophobic attitudes that were introduced and cemented during colonial periods, often by countries which, ironically, now hold far more progressive attitudes. This link is important for a number of reasons, firstly, because an insistence on LGBTQI+ friendly policies can be perceived by many countries, particularly in Africa, as an aspect of cultural imperialism, but secondly, and more significantly, because colonial-era legal and political institutions were not designed to protect the interests of disenfranchised minorities, and post-colonial and transitional structures are often not yet robust enough to protect disenfranchised groups from more powerful interests."*

(Working Group Member, June 2022)

LIST OF BOXES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the increasingly salient focus on mainstreaming gender into the framework of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Architecture, LGBTQI+ persons and groups are continually excluded from WPS research, policy development, and programming due to the delimited conceptualisation of gender, lack of intersectional understanding of the Agenda broadly, and absence of alliance and collaborative work in the policy sphere. Centring LGBTQI+ perspectives and lived realities in the WPS Architecture in an intersectional manner is essential to living up to the transformative potential of the Architecture as it would enable us to effectively address the root causes and key drivers of violence in (post)-conflict settings that not only affect everyone but often inflict compounded harm on LGBTQI+ individuals.

Against this background, this guidebook is developed as a learning and self-assessment tool to assist various stakeholders in governments and civil society networks to better account for the needs, priorities, perspectives, and lived realities of LGBTQI+ individuals in the WPS Architecture across four thematic chapters.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA FROM AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The WPS Agenda emerged as a response to address the gender-specific impact and gendered drivers of armed conflicts. Consisting of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 along with its nine complementary resolutions, the Agenda addresses four pillars: participation, protection, relief and recovery, and prevention. As the Agenda goes beyond formalised processes and procedures, it helps to use the term 'WPS Architecture' to better account for the essential elements that are central to the Agenda, including the ten UN Security Council resolutions, National Action Plans, Global Indicators on 1325, Civil Society Organisation 1325 networks, the Group of friends of 1325, UNSC debates, and UNSG reports. The current scope and setup of the WPS Architecture lack a sufficient focus on taking account of the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ persons who experience disproportionate and differentiated harm and violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. Additionally, focusing only on 'women and girls'', the interpretation of the Agenda is primarily based on a binary, cis, and heteronormative understanding of gender, lacking an intersectional perspective.

The manifold reasons why the Architecture remains unreflective of LGBTQI+ needs as well as an intersectional understanding include the disconnect between CSOs promoting women's rights and those working on the rights of LGBTQI+ groups at times, the scarce resources available that force CSOs into service provision work rather than advocacy, an absence of recognition and legitimation attributed to smaller and grassroots CSOs, as well as a lack of safeguarding and protection mechanisms for them to participate in. Thus, there is a critical need to foreground an intersectional understanding of the WPS Architecture, as it affords the possibility to look beyond the symptoms of violence and harm in (post)-conflict settings by tackling the root causes and key drivers at play to work towards systemic and transformative change.

CHAPTER 2: FOREGROUNDING THE PERSPECTIVES, PRIORITIES, NEEDS AND LIVED REALITIES OF LGBTQI+ PERSONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPS AGENDA

To work towards better and more meaningful inclusion of various groups within LGBTQI+ umbrella in peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts, there are various entry points across the implementation of the four pillars of the WPS Agenda. Firstly, it is imperative to ensure that all programmes implemented within the framework of the WPS Agenda are carried out on the basis of a **gender-sensitive conflict and needs assessment** and an informed understanding of how existing norms and power structures lead to specific patterns of violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTQI+ persons. LGBTQI+ activists often name concerns over their personal safety as a key impediment to their meaningful **participation** in peace processes. Therefore, it is essential to support the creation of safer spaces as well as supply critical resources such as flexible funding to enable their participation in shaping peace agreements and processes. Crucially, persons with diverse SOGIESC identities also have specific **protection** needs, which can be better addressed through establishing specialised services and safer spaces to assist queer survivors of SGBV, and paying attention to the specific barriers encountered by LGBTQI+ persons in the context analysis, programming, and implementation using a consultative, inclusive, and participatory methodology. When it comes to the **relief and recovery** pillar, post-conflict settings that are often laden with tremendous social, political, and economic changes could provide valuable windows of opportunities, e.g., for advancing progressive legislation on LGBTQI+ rights. Processes such as transitional justice proceedings are particularly helpful to advancing changes in social norms through a thorough examination of accountability mechanisms to tackle systemic patterns of exclusion and discrimination that have led to the violence experienced by certain groups. Lastly, it is vital to recognise that efforts addressing the different forms of discrimination and violence caused by harmful gender norms as well as promoting LGBTQI+ inclusion on all levels constitute important contributions to conflict **prevention**. Supporting the advocacy and alliance building efforts of local LGBTQI+ activists and organisations, mainstreaming LGBTQI+ inclusive educational curricula, setting up participatory and accessible structures to formal decision-making processes, and developing functional early warning systems could play a key role in preventing conflicts in a timely manner.

CHAPTER 3: ENABLING LGBTQI+ ORGANISATIONS TO MEANINGFULLY SHAPE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE POLICY DESIGN AND POLICY PROCESSES OF THE WPS AGENDA

LGBTQI+ organisations often face many obstacles that hinder them from meaningfully participating in various WPS Architecture-related policy (design) processes, including policy processes at the UN level, further development of the WPS Agenda, the drafting, implementation, and M&E of NAPs. There are tangible, actionable, and evidence-based recommendations that both governments and CSOs can adopt and mainstream in their activities to work towards broader, better, and more meaningful inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons and groups not only within the WPS Agenda itself but also at the accompanying structures, processes, and infrastructure where all stakeholders have a vital role to play.

1: In **policy processes at the UN level**, governments should remove participation barriers and better involve LGBTQI+ organisations throughout all processes by providing necessary information and resources in the monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up with existing resolutions.

2: Regarding the **further development** of the WPS Agenda, CSO networks can play an active role in fostering an intersectional and inclusive environment by minimising gatekeeping practices and sharing critical resources and information. On the other hand, governments must proactively address the knowledge gaps and myths about LGBTQI+ high-level policy fora.

3: When it comes to enabling LGBTQI+ organisations to meaningfully participate in and shape the drafting, implementation, and M&E of NAPs, governments should hold extensive and participatory consultation with LGBTQI+ organisations during the drafting stage, form formalised partnerships with LGBTQI+ organisations at the implementation stage, set up clear indicators, specific timelines, regular reporting mechanisms, and preventative measures against backsliding in the M&E phase.

At the heart of it, governments can play an important role in fostering effective and meaningful engagement with LGBTQI+ organisations which lie at the core of rendering the implementation of the Agenda, its policy processes, and National Action Plans (NAPs) more inclusive and reflective of their expressed needs, perspectives, priorities, and realities.

CHAPTER 4: LGBTQI+ RIGHTS AT PERIL: A DEEP DIVE INTO ANTI-GENDER AND OPPOSITIONAL ACTORS, THEIR CHARACTERISTICS, AND NARRATIVES

Transnational, multi-level, highly organised (while not centralised), anti-gender actors are well-funded, interconnected, and diverse in political and ideological leanings. To understand the main goal and motivations of anti-gender actors, it would be instructive to take note of the general context of shrinking civic space and democratic backsliding. In this context, anti-gender actors strategically utilise LGBTQI+ rights and SRHR to reinforce and amplify their power by instituting socio-political hierarchies in the face of their perceived decline in power.

There are various reasons why anti-gender actors either lead or support the movements due to their diverse compositions and origins, spanning traditional institutions such as the Church, government-funded think tanks, and trans-exclusionary radical feminists. Nevertheless, they tend to join forces in framing their opponents — those in the progressive pro-rights movements, including intersectional feminist and LGBTQI+ rights organisations — into advocates of an imagined 'gender ideology' that undermines the so-called natural order, family structure, and normality. In addition to their diverse origins and political leanings, anti-gender actors also deploy a wide range of tactics to pursue their goal of undermining LGBTQI+ rights and SRHR movements, including the adoption of rights-based and secular language, exploitation of the lack of consensus across languages on key terms such as gender, and the ability to rally significantly more funding than actors in pro-rights movements. In contrast, those in the progressive pro-rights movements are much more divided on the front of jointly defending LGBTQI+ and SRHR.

Notably, there is evident resistance against the inclusion of LGBTQI+ perspectives in the Architecture emanating from actors across the political spectrum, sometimes including feminists and anti-genders actors alike. Several common and unfounded narratives include that the framing of the Architecture as well as the limited resources available, the restricted setup and complex political dynamics in the UN Security Council, and the imperialistic nature of LGBTQI+ rights do not allow for focusing on LGBTQI+ issues within the Agenda. However, as demonstrated in detail in this chapter, none of these narratives holds true. These unfounded misconceptions show a more urgent need than ever for progressive movements to come together and build sustainable and meaningful alliances in centring the LGBTQI+ perspectives in the WPS Agenda, in which both governments and CSOs have a crucial role to play.

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction: understanding the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda from an intersectional perspective

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

· Acquire a solid foundation of conceptual knowledge of the WPS Architecture that you can readily apply in your work context
· Understand the need for centring an intersectional understanding of the WPS Agenda
· Critically evaluate the status quo of the WPS implementation in the context of the lived realities of LGBTQI+ people in (post)-conflict settings
· Identify the key challenges faced by LGBTQI+ persons in shaping the WPS Architecture

A. THE WPS ARCHITECTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LIVED REALITIES OF LGBTQI+ PEOPLE IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SETTINGS

On 13 November 2000, after decades of persistent advocacy efforts by feminist movements, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted the landmark Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), "Women, Peace and Security (WPS)", which, together with its nine complementary resolutions[3], present the first international normative and policy framework that addresses the gender-specific impacts and gendered drivers of violent conflict (Davies & True 2019). The Agenda emerged as a response to address the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and to meaningfully include them in peace and security processes. Ever since the development and adoption of the Agenda, feminist CSOs have been playing an instrumental part in protecting, advancing, implementing, and institutionalising the WPS Agenda (Davies & True 2019; WILPF n.d.; Bernarding & Lunz 2020).

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[3]The set of ten UNSC resolutions that form the WPS Agenda are: UNSCR 1325 (2000); UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009a); UNSCR 1889 (2009b); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013a); UNSCR 2122 (2013b); UNSCR 2242 (2015); UNSCR 2467 (2019a); and UNSCR 2493 (2019b).

The ten WPS Agenda resolutions revolve around four pillars:

PILLAR 1: Increased **participation** of women at all levels of decision-making and in all aspects of conflict prevention, peace negotiations, and peacebuilding. Increasingly this is being understood as including peace agreements that address gender inequality.

PILLAR 2: The **protection** of women and girls in armed conflict, including from sexual and gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations, such as in refugee camps.[4]

PILLAR 3: Conflict **prevention**, including short- and medium-term operational measures, including early warning and response or preventive diplomacy, and long-term measures of structural prevention "that address the foundational roots of war and militarism", including "transforming gender relations", "eliminating violent militarised power relations and militarisation" (Kapur & Rees 2019).

PILLAR 4: **Relief and recovery**, including economic recovery that promotes economic justice and transformative reparations that redress gender injustices after conflict, disaster or humanitarian crisis (Davies & True 2019; Pfaffenholz 2019; Dönges & Kullenberg 2019; Kapur & Rees 2019; True & Hewitt 2019).

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[4]In this guidebook, the concept 'protection' is understood through a decolonial lens which does not automatically assume the inherent vulnerability of target groups. Instead, the term is used in a way that centres and respects the autonomy, agency, and fundamental rights of those affected. The saviour understanding of protection can often engender or compound harm for the groups at the intersection of multiple marginalisations.

The ten UNSC resolutions form the foundation of the WPS Agenda, but it helps to refer to the term WPS Architecture, as the Agenda goes beyond the formalised policy processes and procedures at the multilateral and national levels. The Architecture also encompasses the broad coalitions of CSO networks and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms and indicators that are pivotal signposts of the implementation progress of the Agenda. In this guidebook, we adopt the term 'WPS Architecture' in a conscious choice to highlight the indispensable role that civil society actors, including LGBTQI+ organisations, play in shaping and influencing the Agenda beyond formalised high-level political fora (Hagen 2016). The term 'WPS Agenda' is used only when it is necessary to refer to the Agenda itself comprising the ten UNSC resolutions in its original meaning. We further chose to highlight the need to meaningfully account for LGBTQI+ groups' perspectives in the UN resolutions and National Action Plans and throughout the entire Architecture.

In sum, the WPS Architecture refers to:

Ten UNSC resolutions passed between 2000 and 2019: all Member States and relevant actors, such as UN system entities and conflict parties, must implement them as binding Security Council resolutions (WILPF n.d.). While some of the **WPS resolutions** go beyond the references to women and girls, e.g., by calling for measures that promote gender equality and address gender-based violence, to date, none of them explicitly recognise the impact of conflict on LGBTQI+ people[5], call for their meaningful participation, and acknowledge the need to account for their needs in relief and recovery. As Outright International states: "the closest any WPS resolution has come to acknowledging LGBTQI+ individuals is Resolution 2106, passed in 2013, which notes that sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations "disproportionately affects women and girls, as well as groups that are particularly vulnerable or may be specifically targeted" (Outright International 2023 p. 18). Moreover, Resolution 2467, passed in 2019, recognises the need for survivors of sexual violence to receive non-discriminatory access to services. "Although the wording does not include LGBTQI+, it is still important grounds to push for services tailored to the specific needs of LGBTQI+ survivors of conflict related sexual violence" (Zeynep Pınar Erdem, MOSAIC Mena, Working Group Member, June 2022).

National Action Plans (NAPs): UN Member States are called upon to develop NAPs to implement the WPS Agenda nationally and internationally. NAPs are strategy documents that outline a government's approach, priorities, timelines, indicators, resources, and responsibilities. As of February 2023, 105 countries have adopted NAPs on WPS (WILPF 2023), out of which 13 account for the specific vulnerabilities of LGBTQI+ persons: Argentina, Albania, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay (Ibid; International Alert 2023; Pinheiro 2023). Most NAPs, including the EU Strategic Approach to WPS, do not refer to people with diverse SOGIESC and overlook intersectional discriminations. The drafting process of many NAPs often remains untransparent and inaccessible, lacking meaningful participation of LGBTQ+ groups (Working Group June 2022; Coomaraswamy 2015; Hagen 2016).

[5]LBTQ+ women and girls are implicitly included in the Agenda, though their SOGIESC is not taken into account.

National Action Plans do more harm than good, "where they normalise binarised understanding of sex and gender and conflate the two, and where they make assumptions around the needs and perspectives of LGBTQI+ community without consulting them."

(Kirthi Jayakumar, The Gender Security Project, Working Group Member, September 2022).

General recommendations Nr.30 and 35 in the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides recommendations to States parties on various women-related issues that require greater attention. As of December 2021, the Committee has adopted 38 general recommendations (OHCHR n.d.). CEDAW General Recommendation 30 (GR 30) provides crucial guidance to countries that have ratified CEDAW, outlining concrete measures to protect women's human rights during and after conflict. It also emphasises the connection between CEDAW and the Security Council's agenda on Women, Peace, and Security (UN Women 2015). In July 2017, the CEDAW Committee adopted General Recommendation No. 35 (GR 35) to update General Recommendation No. 19 (GR 19) on GBV against women, the international normative framework for combating such violence since 1992. GR 35 expands the understanding of violence against women, acknowledges diverse factors contributing to it, and emphasises the responsibility of both state and non-state actors in combating violence. It also highlights the need for specific measures, promotes women's autonomy, addresses cultural and economic factors, and emphasises the importance of data collection and research to ensure women's safety and dignity. In the drafting process, the CEDAW Committee Working Group actively engaged with various stakeholders, including states, civil society organisations, women's groups, UN entities, and academia, receiving over 100 comments to inform the update (Chinkin 2017).

Global indicators on 1325: to monitor the Women, Peace and Security agenda, UNSCR 1889 (2009) requested the UN Secretary General to develop a set of indicators, known as the "global indicators for resolution 1325", proposed in UNSCR 173 (2010). The Global Indicators are a list of 26 quantitative and qualitative indicators grouped into the four pillars of the resolution. They can be found in the UNSC Secretary General's Report (S/2010/498) (WILPF "indicators" n.d.). The indicators lack references to LGBTQI+ individuals and categories (Hagen 2016, p. 320).

Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS: the first official Security Council Working Group on WPS Security was created in 2016 after a decade of concerted calls by women-led civil society. It affirms the Council's 2015 commitment in UNSCR 2242 (OP 5a) to strengthen more systematically the oversight and coordination of WPS implementation work (ESCWA n.d.).

National and regional civil society networks on 1325: Over the years, CSOs have organised themselves in national and international networks on 1325 across monitoring, evaluation, resource mobilisation, and implementation of the Agenda. The most prominent is the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, a coalition of 19 CSOs worldwide working to promote and monitor the implementation of the WPS agenda. In 2018, Outright International joined the Working Group as the first LGBTQI+ organisation.

The Group of Friends of 1325: This is an informal ad hoc group of UN member states organised by Canada to advocate for the implementation of Resolution 1325. It brings together like-minded states to discuss and coordinate stances on matters involving WPS and to maintain pressure on the UN system to carry out Resolution 1325. In addition, the group consults with relevant NGOs (WILPF, "the group of friends of 1325" n.d.).

UN Security Council debates: the UNSC annually reviews the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and holds open debates on specific aspects of the WPS agenda. During this process, CSOs, activists, and government representatives are given a platform to address member states and articulate recommendations (WILPF Open Debates on WPS n.d.). Additionally, UNSC members can call for informal Arria-Formula meetings without the need to find prior agenda consensus to channel the knowledge and expertise from Council outsiders, e.g., the first-ever Arria-Formula meeting on LGBTQI+ rights was held on 24 August 2015 on LGBTQI+ issues pertaining to human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the context of the crimes of ISIS committed against LGBTQI+ individuals (Davis & Stern 2019).

UN Secretary General reports: The Secretary-General's Report on Women, Peace, and Security is published annually with a thematic focus and assessment of the implementation and progress of the WPS agenda and serves as the basis for the annual open debate in the Security Council on Resolution 1325 (UNSC Secretary General's Report (S/2010/498)). In March 2015, the Secretary General's report acknowledged the targeting of "LGBT"[6] individuals in Iraq for the first time (Davis & Stern 2019, p.660), while in 2017, the Secretary General's report unprecedentedly included sections dedicated to LGBTQI+ people (Trithart 2020).

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[6]This was the term originally used in the Arria-Formula Meeting.

B. THE LIVED REALITIES OF LGBTQI+ PEOPLE IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SETTINGS

LGBTQI+ persons face unique and compounded risks in conflict settings, including violence and discrimination perpetuated by armed groups and civilians that predate conflicts and continue throughout all four pillars of the Agenda. Increasingly, reports and studies highlight the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals from, for example, Colombia, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Iraq and Syria to Myanmar, Peru, Nepal, and Northern Ireland (Outright International 2023; International Alert 2022; Duggan 2012). These studies demonstrate that human rights violations against LGBTQI+ individuals can expand across a continuum of violence, including displacement as part of the so-called 'social cleansing' such as the case in Colombia; violence against LGBTQI+ individuals to win the support from parts of the society, conflict-related sexualised violence based on gender norms that devalue femininity to establish control over populations and/or force them into submission or passing of laws criminalising same-sex relations to detain them oppress resistance (Outright International 2023, p. 7-8). In other instances, homo-, bi-, or transphobic violence means shaming, humiliating, dehumanising, or gaining territorial control (Daigle & Myrttinen 2018). While **protecting** women in conflict-settings from gender-based violence (GBV) and supporting survivors of GBV have become one of the most prominent themes of the WPS Architecture, these efforts are rarely inclusive of the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals (ibid).

Given the underrepresentation of these groups in general political decision-making and the risks they face in conflict settings, the numbers of LGBTQI+ individuals **participating** in conflict prevention and peace negotiations remain low. Similarly, the amount of peace agreements addressing the realities of LGBTQI+ groups is scant. In 2022, the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, noted that no more than nine peace deals include measures or references to sexual orientation and gender identity issues; two of them explicitly exclude people with diverse SOGIESC from the political pact emerging from the transition (General Assembly 27 July 2022). One positive example is the 2016 peace process between Colombia's government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), "the first peace process in the world to explicitly include a gendered approach and considerations on the rights of LGBT and gender-diverse persons in its development" (Ibid p.19) (see **Chapter 2**).

"Given the fact that these are lived experiences, one of the most useful methods of data collection that I can imagine is the creation of space to share one's story in an anonymised, storytelling format in writing or oral form. This can go a long way in identifying the nuances, lived experiences, intersectional contexts, and unique engagements with systems and structures."

(Kirthi Jayakumar, The Gender Security Project, Working Group Member, September 2022).

Box: The hierarchisation of knowledge

Throughout the research and development of this guidebook, it became increasingly evident that more and clearer data on the situation of LGBTQI+ in (post)-conflict settings are essential, e.g., to lobby within institutions and organisations and externally for the WPS Architecture to be broadened. While we encourage governments and civil society actors to address this data gap by e.g., increasingly researching and highlighting the experiences of LGBTQI+ in conflict-affected settings, we would like to reflect on which systems of knowledge are valued and considered legitimate and which ones are not. Feminist activists have long criticised the so-called 'hierarchisation of knowledge', which privileges knowledge deemed objective, neutral, and universal, mainly associated with Western, white, Eurocentric ways of knowing, over knowledge gained in "locations of knowledge production in their own right", e,g., insights through lived experiences, in particular by marginalised communities grounded in the social and historical contexts (Haastrup & Hagen 2021, p. 28). This means prioritising the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals, such as enabling governments and civil society to listen to and consult with LGBTQI+ individuals living through conflict and post-conflict settings to inform their actions. Recognising and changing this practice is an important aspect of centring feminist principles in the consultation and development process of this guidebook, during which we have strived to ensure as a diverse and broad representation of LGBTQI+ organisations and allies as possible while compensating them fairly for their inputs. To gain a deeper understanding of the hierarchies of knowledge production surrounding the WPS agenda, we encourage you to read Haastrup and Hagen's article (2021) 'Racial hierarchies of knowledge production in the Women, Peace and Security agenda', which delves into two decades of research within this global normative framework.

Research further shows that **post-conflict transitional justice and reconciliation (Relief and Recovery)** mechanisms have largely ignored the experiences of LGBTQI+ actors (Daigle & Myrttinen 2018). Similarly, humanitarian efforts continue to be tailored to cis-gendered, heterosexual individuals, families, and communities (ibid). Again, Colombia is an exception, where the Colombian Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica released a dedicated report on the impact of the conflict on LGBTQI+ individuals (ibid), which has culminated into a much broader process with an inclusive peace agreement that demonstrates a higher level of engagement with the expressed needs of women and LGBTQI+ groups in a detailed and comprehensive manner (Cóbar, Bjertén-Günther & Jung 2018, p. 25). While less comprehensive in nature, the integration of LGBTQI+ perspectives has also occurred in several other Latin American transitional justice processes (Peru (2001 - 2003), Paraguay (2004 - 2008), Ecuador (2008 - 2009), Brazil (2012 - 2014)) and South Africa (1995 - 2002) also more indirectly (Bueno-Hansen 2018).

"LGBTQI+ survivors of sexual violence in conflict couldn't possibly find access to justice in a legal system that had criminalized them in peacetime."

(Kirthi Jayakumar, The Gender Security Project, Working Group Member June 2022).

Feminist activists have drawn attention to harmful masculinities as a central aspect of conflict **prevention** (Myrttinen 2019). Yet, masculinities and the need to transform gender relations, which disproportionately impact LGBTQI+ in conflict-affected settings, remain largely unaddressed within the WPS architecture. The lack of sufficient focus on masculinities partly results from efforts to reduce the prevention pillar to preventing gender-based sexual violence against women and girls in conflicts and broadly preventing homo-/transphobic violence and other forms of violence (Kapur & Rees 2019). However, as highlighted by Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee: "We should not think for one minute that we can stop sexual violence in armed conflicts. The only way to stop it "is to prevent the conflict in the first place" (ibid.). Transforming gender relations and addressing harmful masculinities, which often lie in the centre of conflicts, to enact conflict prevention at an opportune time, would be one important attempt to seriously take the needs of LGBTQ+ people (and women and girls) into account.

As these two sections have shown, despite recent incremental progress, both the policy design and the implementation of the WPS Architecture, by and large, continue to neglect the lived experiences, priorities, and needs of LGBTQI+ people.

C. (SOME) REASONS FOR THE WPS ARCHITECTURE LACKING INTERSECTIONALITY

Box: Intersectionality

A concept and analytical tool that describes how systems of oppression like racism, sexism, classism, and ableism, among others, are interconnected and can be mutually dependent. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the term was originally used to describe the oppression that Black women experience due to both their gender and race. The concept has since expanded in its usage to encompass a wide variety of forms of oppression. To effectively tackle discrimination, all aspects of identity, privilege, and oppression must be considered in conjunction rather than isolation. The principles behind intersectional thought have been developed and emphasised for more than 150 years, rooted in the experiences and struggles of Black women in the US context. Accordingly, whenever one talks about intersectionality, it is essential to centre intersectional thought in Black feminism.

As the previous section shows, the WPS Architecture has overlooked the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in conflict, post-conflict, and disaster settings (Davis and Stern 2019) for the last 20 years. This is only slowly changing — and to a large extent through the continuous efforts to push for change by civil society organisations such as OutRight International and MADRE, as well as national and local level actors. The dominant interpretation of the WPS Agenda nonetheless continues to be based on a binary, cis-gendered, heteronormative understanding of gender (ibid.)

The persistent lack of intersectional perspectives[7] in the WPS Architecture stems primarily from several key structural factors that hinder stakeholders with critical knowledge on intersectionality, including feminist and LGBTQI+ organisations, from meaningfully participating and providing their inputs. Reasons include an ongoing disconnect between CSOs promoting women's rights and those promoting the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals and communities in some instances (also in the run-up to pushing for the resolution 1325), the tendency to not consider LGBTQI+ rights as connected to peace and security, deliberate negligence, homo- and queerphobia, fear of losing the focus of the WPS Architecture (Outright International & Ghoshal 2023; and Working Group June 2022), and the militarisation and securitisation of the UN Security Council as a site of change.[8]

"In times of conflict, there seems to be a push to disconnect the need to address the experiences of communities that are at heightened risk of discrimination and violence with the need to resolve conflict. What's created is this false dichotomy of the two or what seems to be a false hierarchy of needing to resolve a conflict and then 'going back' to issues around inequalities. Unfortunately, this narrative has made it so that civil society voices are sometimes disregarded in the processes and told to wait until the more "pressing" matters are attended to by those who are said to be qualified to address these concerns, which often includes government representatives or those who are in power.

(Sahar Moazami, Working Group Member, June 2022).

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[7]Intersectionality does not only address SOGIESC but also looks at other intersecting forms of discrimination such as class, age, nationality, ethnicity, etc.
[8]To read more about the critique of the UN Security Council as a site of change, see: 1.Nikoghosyan, A. (2017). Co-Optation of Feminism: Gender, Militarism and the UNSC Resolution 1325. Available at:https://feminist.krytyka.com/en/articles/co-optation-feminism-gender-militarism-and-unsc-resolution-1325 [Accessed 14 June 2023].

> *"There has (...) been push back against some aspects of LGBTQI+ advocacy within WPS spaces as it pertains to the experiences of gay men as some representatives make arguments that reinforce biological conceptions of gender and not wanting to speak to issues that face 'men' in a space dedicated to 'women'".*

(Sahar Moazami, Working Group Member, June 2022).

> *A central theme on the key barriers CSOs face emerged from the working group discussions is the "lack of recognition and legitimacy attributed to civil society, particularly CSOs led by marginalised gender and identity groups, framing them as "too grassroots" or (conversely) "too elite" and thus not qualified to be at the table" (Working Group Member 2022). In other cases, peacebuilders are disregarded as a cohort of practitioners and experts and not as well-recognized as their peers in development or human rights fields" (Working Group Member 2022) or seen as "challengers rather than as partners."*

(Working Group Member 2022).

In addition, financial resources were identified as one of the biggest challenges among working group members. Despite an increasing commitment to fund gender equality, most foundation grants and official development assistance do not reach feminist movements and women's rights organisations, presenting an overall structural issue for feminist CSOs trying to shape, implement, or monitor the WPS Architecture. LGBTQI+ organisations are often facing the compounded and differentiated consequences of patriarchal funding structures, especially if they come from the Global South and/or are mainly advocating for Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) LGBTQ+ rights (Dolker 2020; Shepherd & Hamilton 2020).

"Resources are a huge need when doing this work. Funding around peace and security or humanitarian efforts are still disconnected from LGBTQI+ movements either because funders don't see the link between the areas of work or LGBTQI+ communities themselves do not place their work within these parameters. Additionally, those who currently sit in decision making spaces continue to exclude LGBTQI+ voices either because they actively want to exclude these experiences from the narrative of conflict or, once again they don't see the need to focus on LGBTQI+ lives in conflict."

(Sahar Moazami, Working Group Member, June 2022).

"Civil society organisations need more long-term, general and cross-project funding, enabling them to allocate resources to projects and measures that might take a while to show measurable results."

(Helena Berchtold, MOSAIC (MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration and Capacity Building), Working Group Member, June 2022).

The chronic under-resourcing of LGBTQI+ organisations active in gender and peacebuilding efforts, particularly those from the Global South, and the formal constraints of structures e.g., those that render the funding only available to registered organisations, often force them to focus on service provision instead of advocating for the system to change by trying to shape the WPS Architecture.

"Funding for all this kind of work is critical in order to sustain engagements across the board, and at the moment, most of the funding is being channelled towards the prevention of HIV – a worthy goal, although its pursuit necessarily prejudices other necessary interventions."

(Adrian Jjuuko, LLD, Executive Director, Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF), Working Group Member, Working Group Member, June 2022).

> *"Where there is no social security and even less so for people of diverse SOGIESC, those organisations might use their scarce financial resources for emergency relief."*

(Helena Berchtold, MOSAIC (MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration and Capacity Building), Working Group Member, June 2022).

Box: Feminist funding principles

Implementing and strengthening feminist funding practices can address the under-resourcing of LGBTQI+ organisations and feminist organisations in general. The principles include (AWID & Mama Cash 2020; Gunther & Srivastava n.d.).:

Ensure that funding is predominantly provided to those most impacted by gendered oppression (instead of predominantly to governments and international organisations) and those actors that address discrimination intersectionality (such as organisations that are both promoting women's and LGBTQI+ rights) and that funding is easily accessible to activists and movements (instead of only fully established and registered organisations). The recommendation from GAPS et al. is particularly relevant in this context: "adapt compliance and due diligence processes: Donors should have dynamic compliance and due diligence measures which appreciate the context that feminist organisations and CSOs work within and adapt requirements of due diligence processes according to their capacity and the amount of funding they receive. While such processes must be adapted, WROs and CSOs also need core funding to enable organisations to invest in compliance and due diligence." (GAPS UK et al. 2020, p. 3)

Ensure that funding includes core and institutional funding and is flexible, long-term, and easy to administer. In particular, other funding modalities that do not rely solely on bank accounts of registered organisations should be taken into consideration as some organisations can not directly register/open bank accounts or these are tightly monitored by the state and receiving foreign funding through formal financial channels can put them into danger.

Ensure that funding is provided for activities that drive social, political, legal and cultural change, such as campaigns, research, and advocacy work to shift dominant narratives about gender and sexuality, expanding public understanding of LGBTQI+ issues in their national contexts.

Ensure that funding is provided for cross-issue work, cross-regional movement building and self-care.

In addition to lack of funding and legitimacy, LGBTQI+ activists active in gender and peacebuilding movements located in authoritarian contexts also face security risks such as threats, harassment, and violence from state actors, security forces, and non-state actors, including anti-gender actors, which significantly impacts their ability to mobilise, to participate in public events, engage with policymakers, and peacebuilding processes (Working Group June 2022; Outright International & Ghoshal 2023). It would be pivotal to have emergency funding in place as part of the existing funding structure, with contact points positioned within embassies/consulates in the given country so that a safe channel of communications can be accessed this way for LGBTQI+ activists.

Box: Did you know?

On 21 April 2021, a video with information about Kyrgyz Indigo, a public association supporting the LGBTQI+ community in Kyrgyzstan, was published on YouTube. The personal data of its 16 employees was published, including their full names, dates of birth, photos, sexual orientation and gender identity, and other information about their private lives. This information disclosure puts their lives and safety at risk. Law enforcement officials allegedly created the video using data from the social fund and the tax service of Kyrgyzstan (UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders 2021).

"LGBTQI+ organisations and activists are generally under security risk, especially due to increasing animosity against LGBTQI+ people in conflict and post-conflict situations, especially heightened by the lack of rule of law. Threats and attacks on LGBTQI+ activists and restrictions and even the threat of closure of NGOs working on LGBTQI+ right prevent them to add their input to peace building processes."

(Zeynep Pınar Erdem, MOSAIC Mena, Working Group Member, June 2022).
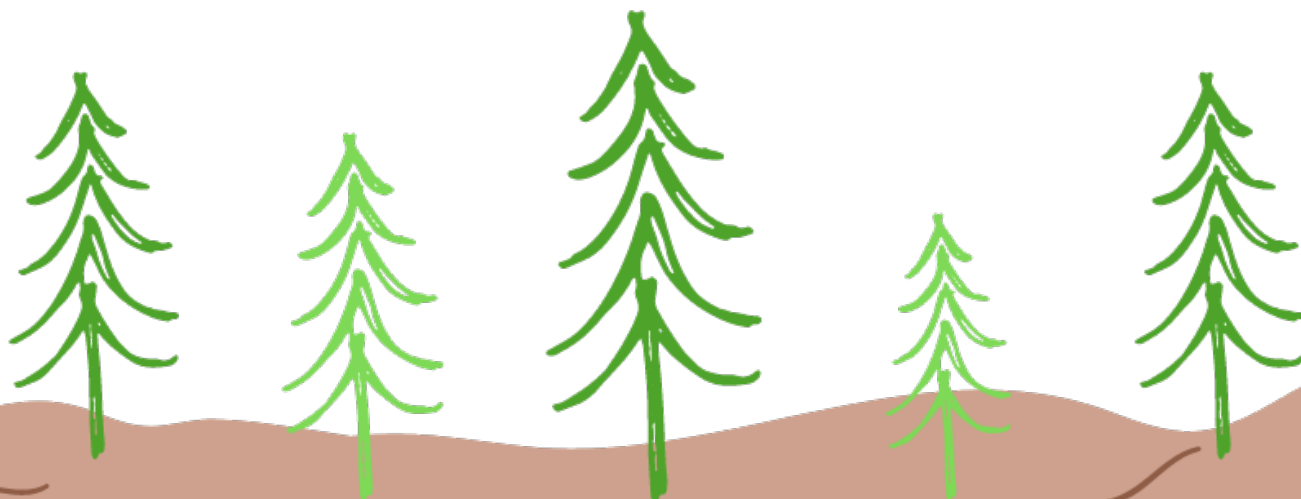
D. WHY WE NEED AN INTERSECTIONAL WPS ARCHITECTURE

> *"In an ideal world, the WPS Agenda wouldn't be necessary."*
>
> (Kirthi Jayakumar, The Gender Security Project, Working Group Member, June 2022).

Foregrounding an intersectional understanding of the WPS Architecture when integrating LGBTQI+ perspectives in the Architecture is critical to its effective implementation, transformative potential, and sustainable impact. In contrast, focusing on women and girls as a monolithic group reinforces the gender binary system where women and girls are seen as vulnerable subjects in need of more protection (often through military means) as opposed to autonomous actors with agency who can assume a multitude of roles in conflict beyond victims. Additionally, binary gender norms and performance are a product of patriarchy and can aggravate existing harms, including the continuous erasure of LBTQ women's experiences and lived realities. Thus, tackling the root causes and key drivers of violence in (post)-conflict settings that not only affect everyone but often inflict compounded harm on LGBTQI+ individuals affords the possibility to work towards systemic and transformative change. However, there are also legitimate concerns that should be addressed when adopting an intersectional approach to integrate LGBTQI+ perspectives in the Architecture, including ensuring that the risk of co-optation by those who are not the appropriate representatives of the LGBTQI+ persons affected and minimising militarised approaches to security that symbolically include LGBTQI+ without pushing for fundamental change which could end up window dressing for patriarchal, heteronormative, and militarised structures and institutions that the approach purports to tackle.

In addition, a genuinely transformative approach is also instrumental in identifying and tackling the nuances and complexities in the LGBTQI+ group due to their intersecting identities, for instance, in the case of trans people who might face compounded risks of violence in comparison to cis-gendered queer people in certain contexts and in the case of queer men who have more access to public resources, spaces, and power than LBTQ+ women (Outright International & Ghoshal 2023, p. 21).

In the following section, we highlight some of the most important reasons for an intersectional approach to WPS Architecture, reflecting on all four pillars. This list is by no means exhaustive.

1. STRENGTHENING CONFLICT PREVENTION — ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT:

Accounting for the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in an intersectional manner has the potential to re-frame and re-define gender and gender roles within the WPS Architecture (Zeynep Pınar Erdem, MOSAIC Mena, Working Group Member June 2022). By moving away from the cis-heteronormative and binary understanding of gender, there is an opportunity to look beyond women's rights within peace and security and to address the structural causes of conflict, in particular discriminatory patriarchal norms and values, hegemonic and militarised masculinities and unequal gender power relations — which lie at the root causes of the human rights violations faced by women, LGBTQI+ individuals and all the other marginalised groups, thus benefiting everyone (International Alert, 2023 & Working Group Members). For example, research has shown that societies with unequal male-dominant family law systems tend to be susceptible to higher levels of violence and state fragility due to the associated rent-seeking and inefficient behaviour (Bowen & Nielsen, 2015). Questioning the gendered power dynamic as such would, in turn, allow governments and UN entities to expand state-led interpretations of security to include considerations of what peace and security mean to marginalised communities and engage increasingly with non-state actors and LGBTQI+ individuals/organisations (Working Group Member, June 2022).

> *"The main transformative potential of the WPS Agenda, in my view, is to shed light on the ideologies and structures underlying the violence perpetrated in the course of wars and conflicts. It could make visible how dominant assumptions of gender are drivers of violence, how ideologies such as nationalism and war discourses are highly gendered and moreover, how war and conflict have an impact on gender roles and, ultimately, how they are constructed."*

(Helena Berchtold, MOSAIC (MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration and Capacity Building), Working Group Member, June 2022).

2. STRENGTHENING PROTECTION — SUPPORTING ALL SURVIVORS OF CONFLICT-RELATED VIOLENCE, INCLUDING GBV:

Accounting for the experience of LGBTQI+ individuals within the WPS Architecture has the potential to better centre the intersecting needs and experiences of all survivors of GBV. For example, the current approach of the WPS Architecture often fails to address the unique experiences of LBTQ+ women: "When talking about "women and girls", in the discourse of the WPS, they are assumed to be cis and hetero" (Helena Berchtold, MOSAIC (MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration and Capacity Building), Working Group Member, September 2022). Moreover, while WPS resolution 2467 recognises, for the first time, men and boys as survivors of conflict-related sexualised violence, research also shows that LGBTQI+ with diverse SOGIESC affected by violence, in particular conflict-related sexualised violence, do not receive the support they need. Moreover, accounting for the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals allows us to increasingly address the continuum of violence marginalised communities experience, which feminist activists and scholars have long highlighted: violence against women and LGBTQI+ might intensify during conflict times, but it is also part of the lived reality of women and LGBTQI+ people in peacetimes (Daigle & Myrttinen 2018).

3. STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION & RELIEF AND RECOVERY — REBUILDING JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES:

Applying an intersectional approach to including LGBTQI+ individuals in the participation pillar, such as in the form of a gender commission of an expansive mandate and participatory consultation mechanisms, is not only critical to strengthening the legitimacy of peace efforts but also to shifting of power structures, e.g., patriarchal gender norms, at the core of conflicts and violence as the Colombian case shows, more inclusion of diverse participants can translate into more inclusive peace agreements, which by — working towards the transformation of gender relations — can lay the foundation for truly changing the social contract of a nation. During post-conflict times, the socio-politico-economic fabric of a society can undergo significant changes, which can provide valuable windows of opportunities for change, such as passing progressive legislation that can safeguard the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals and setting up truth-seeking and redress commissions to amend the past crimes and violations. To ensure that the WPS Agenda does not fall short of its transformative potential, foregrounding an intersectional understanding during periods of relief and recovery is essential, as it could accelerate efforts that work towards systemic change and transformation of exclusion and discrimination that would have likely been overlooked (see **Chapter 3**).

"Give voice to the challenges and experiences of the LGBTQI+ community and provide space to address attitudes and prejudices that have historically exposed LGBTQI+ persons to violence and discrimination as a critical first step towards both legal and social reform."

(Adrian Jjuuko, LLD, Executive Director, Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF), Working Group Member June 2022).

4. STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES:

Advancing an intersectional understanding of the WPS Architecture can facilitate the coalition building and resource sharing/mobilisation of WROs and LGBTQI+ CSOs. This contributes to building a larger and more resilient movement committed to challenging patriarchal gender norms (International Alert 2023).

E. KEY TAKEAWAYS

The WPS Architecture refers to the set of ten UNSC resolutions which form the foundation of the WPS Agenda, NAPs, UN reports, UNSC debates, the broad coalitions of CSO networks, and M&E mechanisms and indicators. The term WPS Architecture highlights the indispensable role that CSOs, including LGBTQI+ organisations, have played in shaping and influencing the agenda beyond formalised high-level political fora and the critical need to include LGBTQI+ groups throughout the Architecture meaningfully.

The lived experiences of LGBTQI+ groups in conflict and post-conflict settings are characterised by a continuum of disproportionate and differentiated harm and violence across all four pillars (Participation, Protection, Recovery and Relief, and Prevention) of the WPS Agenda, which the WPS Agenda often falls short of accounting for and addressing.

While there is a persistent lack of quality data on the situation of LGBTQI+ individuals in (post)-conflict settings, there is a critical need to broaden the scope of data beyond quantitative indicators by centring the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in formats including anonymised storytelling and narrative building.

Those who implement the WPS Architecture often lack an intersectional focus as a result of the continuous disconnect between CSOs promoting women's rights and those working on the rights of LGBTQI+ groups, the lack of resources available that pigeonhole CSOs into service provisions only, the lack of recognition and legitimation attributed to CSOs, absence of safeguarding and protection mechanisms for CSOs to participate.

Foregrounding intersectional perspectives that include LGBTQI+ individuals and groups' lived realities and perspectives is essential, as it can help shed light on addressing the root causes of conflict, supporting all survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, rebuilding truly just societies, and building alliances across movements.

F. LEARNING EXERCISES

Can you describe the LGBTQI+ groups/communities using the concept of intersectionality in your current work context? How do they differ in terms of their SOGIESC (disaggregating instead of treating all LGBTQI+ individuals as one group) and intersecting identities, and to what extent do you think these factors would mediate their lived experiences in (post)-conflict settings?

What kind of data do you and your organisation prioritise and value in your current work context? What is missing?

Do you currently apply a gender-sensitive conflict analysis in your work? Does it adequately ensure the intersectional inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals?

Conduct a brief mapping exercise of the key feminist and LGBTQI+ organisations in your country/local context; what are some of their primary functions? To what extent do they collaborate and work together? What hindering factors might stall their potential alliance building from your view?

G. FURTHER READING

- Davies, SE & True, J (2018), The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security. Oxford UK: Oxford University Press.

- Outright International & Ghoshal, N. (February 2023) LGBTQ Lives in Conflict and Crisis: A Queer Agenda for Peace, Security, and Accountability. Outright International.

- Hagen, J. (2016) 'Queering women, peace and security', International Affairs, 92: 313-332.

- International Alert (2022). Breaking the binary: LGBT+ inclusive approach to the women, peace and security agenda in Nepal and Myanmar.

CHAPTER 2:

Foregrounding the perspectives, priorities, needs, and lived realities of LGBTQI+ persons in the implementation of the WPS Agenda

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify entry points at various phases in which LGBTQI+ perspectives, priorities, needs, and lived experiences can be meaningfully accounted for and integrated into the implementation of the WPS Agenda across the preparatory stage, the four pillars of the Agenda and beyond.
- Distil actionable insights and lessons learned from a set of recent good practice and case study examples.
- Access a pool of relevant tools and knowledge resources that you can readily apply in your work context.

In **Chapter 1**, we discussed the WPS Architecture in detail. Here is a quick recap of what the WPS Architecture refers to 1. Ten UNSC resolutions; 2. National Action Plans (NAPs); 2. Global indicators on 1325; 3. National and regional civil society networks on 1325, such as the NGO Working Group on WPS and the Group of Friends of 1325; 4. UN Security Council debates; and 5. UN Secretary-General Reports.

As touched upon in Chapter 1, the specific risks a person faces in conflict-affected and/or violent contexts are co-determined by different intersecting identity markers. The extent of threat, risk, peace or violence one experiences depends centrally on markers such as gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, religion, language, age, and physical and mental ability. These markers are also known to define peoples' power and ability to cope with and recover from situations of violence. Such intersectionality is — conceptually — already part of many conflict analyses looking at systemic drivers of conflict and drivers of peace (Berghof Foundation 2022b, p. 12) and increasingly foregrounded in policy and philanthropy (Tabet 2023; Robert Bosch Foundation 2023).

Yet, in practice, peacebuilding and humanitarian actors often undertake analyses or plan, implement, and evaluate their programming in the absence of persons who can explicitly share their lived experiences of these differences. The following box summarises seven ways to address this shortcoming:

Box: Inclusion of LGBTQI+ people and voices in the implementation of the WPS Agenda: A short checklist

1: Recognise that LGBTQI+ people face additional risks and exclusion due to heteronormative and patriarchal social norms. Sensitise staff working on the planning and implementation of activities and develop inclusion guidelines.

2: Carry out gender-sensitive conflict analyses and needs assessments considering the realities faced by LGBTQI+ people. Examine existing social norms, attitudes, and power structures to understand how these lead to specific patterns of violence and discrimination based on sexual and gender identity.

3: Address the specific protection needs of LGBTQI+ persons, including in displacement situations.

4: Create safer spaces for and support the meaningful participation of LGBTQI+ actors in peace processes, e.g., through supporting gender commissions and promoting communication and exchange between civil society and formal institutions involved in the peace process. Peace agreements should highlight violence based on sexual and gender identity, reaffirm equal rights for persons of all genders, and propose measures responsive to the violence and discrimination that SOGI persons have experienced, including possible reparations.

5: Collect disaggregated data on violence and discrimination based on sexual and gender identity to ensure conflict-sensitive needs- and Do-No-Harm-based programming and advocacy, as well as to contribute to combating impunity and dealing with the past processes in transition phases.

6: Consult with formalised and less formalised LGBTQI+ organisations on the national and grassroots level, identify existing support structures and contribute to building up capacities for agencies of LGBTQI+ actors through long-term and flexible funding mechanisms (see **Chapter 3**).

7: In the post-conflict period, identify windows of opportunities to transform social norms that lead to violence, discrimination, marginalisation, and exclusion experienced by LGBTQI+ individuals and support the advocacy efforts of LGBTQI+ organisations to promote legislation grounded in international human rights frameworks.

The following sections outline recommendations for the meaningful inclusion and protection of LGBTQI+ persons in peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts across the conflict spectrum and throughout all four pillars of the WPS agenda: participation, protection, relief and recovery, and prevention. Each subsection covers the status quo, specific challenges foregrounding LGBTQI+ perspectives in each pillar, and ways forward, including good practices.

> *"Acknowledging that the historical discrimination, suffered by certain groups of people such as women and LGBTQI+ people, is a factor that has allowed the violence suffered by these groups to be socially justified in many cases."*

(Lucía Ramírez Bolívar, Dejusticia's Gender Research Coordinator, Working Group Member, June 2022).

A. PREPARATION: ENSURING GENDER-SENSITIVE ASSESSMENTS FOR THE BASIS OF PEACEBUILDING AND HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING

During the preparation phase of peacebuilding and humanitarian activities, detailed conflict assessments, including identifying key stakeholders, should be carried out to tailor programming to specific contexts and ensure that conflict sensitivity and Do-No-Harm methodology are in place. For peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts to be responsive to the needs of LGBTQI+ persons, special attention needs to be given to how conflict dynamics and exclusion affect them from the start.

Existing work has highlighted the importance of gender-sensitive conflict analysis and suggested approaches and best practices. The 2020 guide on facilitating gender-sensitive conflict analysis authored by Sophia Close and others at Conciliation Resources is considered the 'gold standard' in this realm. It offers ample practical examples and considerations to keep in mind for such processes. It emphasises the significance of examining how gendered systems of power concerning identities, roles, relations, structures, and institutions fuel gendered violence and conflict, how gender norms influence behaviours and attitudes towards peace and conflict, how the effects of violence vary across different gender identity groups and the groups excluded from these gendered systems of power (Close et al. 2020). Furthermore, a recent report by Interpeace also notes that "attitudes shaping cultural perspectives about non-binary identities or lesbian, gay and bisexual people and other [sexual and gender minorities are] a critical aspect of the wider normative environment" (Banfield et al. 2023, p. 25). Investigating these attitudes is crucial for understanding the conflict context that is as complete as possible.

A key element in preparing inclusive peacebuilding or humanitarian efforts is conducting a comprehensive, consultative and participatory gender-sensitive scoping analysis. Such an analysis would inform efforts that aim to fully map and understand the locally contingent realities and power structures, context-specific forms of exclusion and needs of as well as risks faced by LGBTQI+ persons. As such, it could help understand the 'whole picture' of violence and conflict and help prioritise what kind of support peacebuilding and humanitarian aid provide or the issues they focus on when engaging with conflict parties in conflict settings. For instance, situating the planning of activities in gender-sensitive conflict analysis could lead to humanitarian actors, including health and WASH services for trans persons in their activities, or to peacebuilding actors supporting mechanisms for the meaningful inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons in peace processes. When conducting such conflict analysis consultations, local LGBTQI+ actors and organisations should be engaged and consulted with at eye level, also keeping in mind specific protection needs that might arise for them due to their participation

in these activities (e.g., by limiting their exposure/visibility to other actors that might harm them based on their gender identity and sexual orientation). Also, they should be resourced appropriately and fairly, like other civil society actors (see **Chapter 3**).

Furthermore, peacebuilding and humanitarian actors should critically reflect preconceived assumptions about LGBTQI+ actors' roles in their context. For instance, rather than nurturing the notion of LGBTQI+ persons being marginalised and victimised in the context in question, they should be open to recognising the agency and autonomy of LGBTQI+ actors have and the active roles they already play to contribute to sustainable peace, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance.

> *"Due to patriarchal, heteronormative, and neo-colonialist attitudes, women, LGBTQI+ people, and other marginalised identity groups continue to be perceived primarily as victims, impacted by violence but with little to no agency to resist or influence conflict. This erases their needs and perspectives, the power and influence they already hold and exercise, and their vital skills and strategies in addressing conflict."*

(Rosalie Fransen, Working Group Member, June 2022).

B. PARTICIPATION: STRENGTHENING THE MEANINGFUL INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF LGBTQI+ ACTORS

Equal participation of cis-gendered women and structurally disadvantaged groups is key to any feminist policies, as those impacted by political decisions have a right to shape those processes. Furthermore, they are important not only to increase the legitimacy of the peace efforts but also to contribute to the transformation of the power structures that lie at the root of conflict and different forms of violence and contribute to sustainable outcomes for peace. Local LGBTQI+ organisations are important in highlighting and transforming discriminatory gender norms that contribute to violence and underlying prejudices that fuel violence against LGBTQI+ persons. They can therefore play a significant role in advancing peace agreements based on equality and human rights.

Conservative cultural, religious, and political gender norms hinder women and LGBTQI+ persons from participating in key decision-making processes. Yet, their SOGIESC also creates additional challenges as non-conformity with traditional gender norms and identity compounds their structural discrimination. This, in turn, undermines societal acceptance of the person in question and inhibits their ability to participate, 'make their voices heard', and be heard in decision-making processes. The Colombian LGBTQI+ movement has developed several strategies to counter these challenges, including strategic litigation to further equal rights through the judiciary system, legislative activism to increase the political representation of LGBTQI+ politicians and technocratic advocacy through acting as an expert in the development and oversight of policies addressed to the LGBTQI+ population (Bueno-Hansen 2020).

> *"An inclusive process also implies ensuring that LGBTIQ+ people have a seat at the table and can express their concerns and needs from the beginning of the process. It is also key that they directly, and not third parties, present their situation, lead the process of gathering information to document the harm they have suffered and propose the forms of reparation they consider relevant."*

(Lucía Ramírez Bolívar, Dejusticia's Gender Research Coordinator, Working Group Member, June 2022).

LGBTQI+ activists often cite concerns over their safety as a "key blocker" for their participation in formal and informal political processes. For example, visible participation in protests highly increases their vulnerability to harassment and violence, as highlighted, for instance, by studies on the inclusion of LGBTQI+ approaches in the WPS agenda in Myanmar and Nepal (Sow et al. 2022, p. 24) and LGBTQI+ inclusion in peacebuilding in Colombia and Nigeria (Close et al. 2020). LGBTQI+ actors are even more marginalised and at risk in contexts where they face legal discrimination, e.g., through legislation criminalising homosexuality.

Efforts to ensure the participation of LGBTQI+ persons in peacebuilding have to address the gender norms at the root of their discrimination and exclusion (see below "**Prevention**") and create safer spaces and platforms for their agency, meaningful participation, and local ownership. Civil society and international actors allied with LGBTQI+ persons can support horizontal dialogue between LGBTQI+ actors and networks and facilitate spaces for exchange with local, national, and international policymakers to strengthen LGBTQI+ advocacy through flexible funding. At the same time, the physical and emotional safety of participating LGBTQI+ activists is of utmost importance. Special attention needs to be paid, e.g., to aspects of data protection in direct interactions with LGBTQI+ participants. In a broader picture view, taking into account the peace process itself, national and international allies can contribute to an effective banning of misogynistic, homo- or transphobic behaviour during the process as well as to countering such discourses in the public debate, e.g., in the media.

Donors and allies should pay special attention to the long-term support of LGBTQI+ networks and actors through flexible funding mechanisms, especially in rural and peripheral regions, as these groups tend to face greater risks and are considerably less well-equipped than counterparts in the capital and larger cities. And lastly, investing in alliance-building between women's rights organisations and LGBTQI+ actors could also contribute to strengthening LGBTQI+ inclusion (see **Chapter 3, Chapter 4**).

Inclusive peace agreements

To this date, only nine international peace agreements reference issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity.[9] Therefore, in the case of formal peace processes, the creation of a gender commission with a broad mandate "beyond the binary'' as well as participatory consultation mechanisms for civil society, can also serve to ensure LGBTQI+ actors' meaningful inclusion. A gender-sensitive peace agreement could also lay the foundation for LGBTQI+ sensitive legal reforms. Both mechanisms should have clear and accountable processes for feeding back into formal negotiations to go beyond simple 'ticking the box' exercises. It is also advisable to remember that frequently, "representation, while often a very necessary first step towards challenging inequalities, has not been sufficient in addressing the persistent gaps between policy and people's everyday experiences of (in)security" (Pinheiro 2023, p. 58).

> *It is also advisable to remember that frequently, "representation, while often a very necessary first step towards challenging inequalities, has not been sufficient in addressing the persistent gaps between policy and people's everyday experiences of (in)security."*

(Pinheiro, 2023, p. 58).

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY BOX: INCLUSION OF LGBTQI+ GROUPS IN THE COLOMBIA PEACE AGREEMENT

The peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP is often cited as an example of the innovative inclusion of victims and civil society groups. LGBTQI+ civil society groups advised the Sub-commission on Gender, which was responsible for guaranteeing a gender focus of the peace agreement and actively consulted them. The Sub-commission itself was a product of the advocacy efforts of women's organisations and LGBTQI+ activists who had convincingly highlighted the cross-cutting nature of gender equity and rights.

Civil society pressure and support and capacity-building provided by international partners led to the inclusion of two women delegates to the government's negotiation team, whom women and LGBTQI+ groups could access directly and hold accountable. Cuba and Norway, the two guarantor countries, also provided logistical and technical support to

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[9]Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Northern Ireland/Good Friday Agreement, Nepal, Philippines, South Africa, Zimbabwe; see University of Edinburgh: Peace Agreements database. It is important to note, however, that in three of these, LGBTQI+ persons are referred to in an exclusionary context, e.g., through the reference to the prohibition of same-sex marriage and partnerships.

women and LGBTQI+ groups to strengthen their advocacy capacity. The commitment of these two countries and the UN to gender issues, together with these international partners enjoying high credibility in the eyes of the conflict parties, further increased the commitment to the topic throughout the negotiation process. Measures for the inclusion and recognition of LGBTQI+ people form part of the gender component of the final agreement, which was also gender-mainstreamed through all of its six points and laid the foundation for the extensive examination of violence based on sexual and gender identity by the Colombian Truth Commission (see also 'Post-conflict reconstruction').

However, the Colombian experience also highlights certain challenges concerning the inclusion of LGBTQI+ organisations in formal peace processes. Due to a lack of financial resources, representatives of LGBTQI+ groups travelling to Havana to speak to the negotiators had to pay for their travel arrangements, restricting participation to activists who held the necessary financial resources. Furthermore, the inclusion of provisions related to gender and sexual minorities became one of the most prominent objections and the alleged threat to 'traditional family values'' posed by 'gender ideology' used by conservative and religious actors for the (ultimately marginally successful) 'no' campaign in the plebiscite on the peace agreement. This demonstrates the need to accompany practical inclusion activities with continued advocacy and communication efforts on the societal level (See **Chapter 4** on anti-gender actors).[10]

C. PROTECTION: ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF AND EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT FOR LGBTQI+ PERSONS IN CONFLICT

As outlined in **Chapter 1**, LGBTQI+ persons experience specific risks in conflict-affected settings. LGBTQI+ persons are often disproportionately affected by conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as existing forms of discrimination are aggravated in crises, particularly in contexts where one or more conflict actors use the enforcement of traditional gender roles as a means of increasing their legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Even more so, LGBTQI+ persons often cannot draw on traditional family and community networks to access assistance and are faced with a collapse of their usual coping mechanisms and support structures (e.g., local community centres and support groups).

Humanitarian actors should pay attention to

the specific protection needs of LGBTQI+ persons. This includes establishing specialised services and safer spaces to assist queer survivors of SGBV, as well as including the needs and barriers of the LGBTQI+ community with regard to accessing humanitarian aid and protection in their context analysis and operational planning and guidelines. UNHCR's 2018 Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity furthermore recognises that the complex challenges and settings that render them vulnerable for LBGTQI+ persons are "often severely compounded in situations of displacement, where the nature of the discrimination they encounter can be particularly virulent, their isolation from family and community profound, and the harm inflicted on them severe" (UNHCR 2018,

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[10]For a more detailed analysis on the Colombian experience see "Strategies for including women's and LGBTI groups in the Colombian peace process" by José Alvadaro Cóbar (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2020) and "Inclusion of gender and sexual minorities in peacebuilding" (Langridge et al. 2018).

p.19). Thus, humanitarian actors also need to ensure that their programming is responsive to the specific needs of displaced LGBTQI+ persons, e.g., by providing sanitation facilities that cater to gender-diverse persons, setting up special procedures for displaced persons whose government-issued identification does not reflect their gender identity and actively countering other forms of discrimination displaced LGBTQI+ persons might face. Some humanitarian organisations have already issued guidelines on including the needs of LGBTQI+ persons in their programming, such as UNHCR's 2021 "Guidelines for working with LGBTQI+ persons in forced displacement" and the International Planned Parenthood Federation's 2019 capability statement "LGBTQI+ inclusion in humanitarian action".

The specific needs of and risks faced by LGBTQI+ persons may vary from context to context, which is why humanitarian agencies should emphasise that local LGBTQI+ actors are duly consulted during all phases of programme planning and implementation to tailor responses to their diverse experiences. Humanitarian and government agencies offering services to displaced persons in transit and receiving countries can also partner with LGBTQI+ organisations and solidarity groups in these contexts and offer funding for their work supporting LGBTQI+ persons displaced from a conflict-affected area. This can sometimes be done as simply as through using their infrastructure (e.g., meeting rooms) and contributing to their cause by paying rent or providing safe means of communication (e.g., payment for mobile/internet services, VPNs, and digital security support, as well as providing smartphones, power banks and laptops).

Combating impunity is a further important aspect of the protection against SGBV in conflict. According to Meredith Loken and Jamie Hagen (2022), GBV often follows a logic of regulating gender and sexuality in conflict, which increases the risk for sexual and gender minorities to be targeted as punishment for their failure to meet heteronormative and cisgender expectations of the gender order. Relevant actors should actively collect data on such incidents to inform their programming, raise awareness and increase the understanding of the specific forms of violence LGBTQI+ persons are at risk of. The UN Independent Expert on SOGI (2022) recommends making such data publicly accessible as long as the protection of the privacy of those affected is ensured.

"In an ideal world, governments would conduct objective, prompt, and thorough investigations of allegations of arbitrary detention, use of torture, enforced disappearances, and deaths in custody, as well as sexual violence, and perpetrators would be held accountable. LGBTQI+ survivors would have access to non-discriminatory services at state and private institutions tailored to their specific needs."

(Zeynep Pınar Erdem, MOSAIC Mena, Working Group Member, June 2022)

Prosecuting violence against LGBTQI+ persons can also be an important social signal that can inspire changes in social norms to render violence based on SOGIESC unacceptable. However, the safety and security of those affected need to be paramount in these efforts, and humanitarian actors should closely consult with LGBTQI+ partners to identify strategies that do not place those affected at a higher risk of violence or discrimination for speaking out. This is particularly relevant in contexts where non-cis-heteronormative SOGIESC are criminalised. Here it is also of special importance to safeguard LGBTQI+ persons' personal data in the digital sphere, as access to this data by conflict actors could put the affected persons at higher risk.[11]

> **Box: with regard to the inclusion of cis women, Krystel Tabet and the team at BuildUp (Tabet et al., 2023, p.29) have identified some simple guidelines that can guide safer digital communications:**
>
> Engage with women from these diverse backgrounds individually to ask about their priorities for digital tools to use and the timing of synchronous and asynchronous engagement, and needs to make their digital inclusion in the process secure for them. WhatsApp consultations allowed this to happen: participants were free to mute the group, attend to their paid jobs or unpaid domestic duties, and come back to conversations on their own time. This knowledge could not be assumed without in-depth exchanges in the initiation phase about access to data bundles, cell phone use in the home versus at work or lack thereof, and "peak times" of engagement for participants depending on their areas of residence and lifestyle, among other variables.
>
> Set up rules of engagement for the consultation process, including codes of conduct and house rules. The former can be more geared towards general safety and security, like not taking screenshots, muting groups or notifications so that conversations are not visible until participants feel safe to engage or maintaining the option to not answer questions. House rules can be different and more procedural: a legend of emojis or signals to look out for when scrolling through messages/answering questions, establishing a common atmosphere of respect, communicating the schedule of inquiries and the rhythm of accepting inputs, etc.

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[11] The publication "An intersectional feminist lens on digital peacebuilding" offers a detailed intersectional assessment on using digital approaches in gender-sensitive peacebuilding projects.

At the same time, the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee's 2018 Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action recognize that it is often local LGBTQI+ groups themselves who "are well-placed to respond to crisis and identify solutions in ways that can help to combat gender inequalities and barriers to inclusion in humanitarian response efficiently and sustainably" (Inter-agency Standing Committee, 2017, p.22). For instance, following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukrainian LGBTQI+ organisations immediately switched from their pre-war advocacy work to the distribution of humanitarian aid, e.g., opening shelters in Western Ukraine for displaced LGBTQI+ persons from other parts of the country (ILGA-Europe 2022). Actively reaching out to and partnering with local LGBTQI+ organisations can be thus of great value for humanitarian organisations to meet the protection needs of LGBTQI+ persons and ensure their access to humanitarian aid.

However, as beneficial as such partnerships can be, special attention needs to be paid to the specific risks LGBTQI+ actors face in each context to avoid partnership arrangements where operational risks are "outsourced" to local actors. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that these often small, locally led organisations are usually very limited when it comes to their access to funding and operational work. Therefore, humanitarian actors should also endeavour to support their resource mobilisation and operations to enable them to carry out their protection work. Overall, however, states are the primary duty bearers to safeguard the human rights of their citizens. Representatives of international governments and organisations should, therefore, also highlight and advocate for the protection needs of LGBTQI+ persons in their discussions on protection strategies and state policies with respective governments.

D. RELIEF AND RECOVERY: USING WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

Post-conflict periods are usually times of tremendous social, political, and economic changes. In this context, they often provide openings for the redefinition of social norms and offer significant windows of opportunity to reverse forms of social prejudice, e.g., through advancing progressive legislation on LGBTQI+ rights. This was, for instance, the case in Nepal, where following the end of the civil war, dedicated political activism of LGBTQI+ groups led to the inclusion of LGBTQI+ issues in party manifestos, the constitution (where LGBTQI+ activists were involved in the writing process), educational curricula, and peacebuilding activities (Sow et al., 2022, p.26). Colombian LGBTQI+ activists also seek to challenge negative stereotypes and shift cultural norms through socio-cultural interventions, such as public education and communication campaigns (Bueno-Hansen 2020, p.21).

However, backlashes on transformations of

gender norms that were advanced during periods of conflict are also observed in many contexts where traditional gender roles became more prevalent once again after the conflict had ended. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement between the political parties in Northern and the governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom, for instance, was the first international peace agreement to reference discrimination based on sexual orientation and included an obligation on Northern Irish public authorities to promote equal opportunities among others on the basis of sexual orientation. However, the power-sharing government that resulted from the peace agreement routinely blocked or challenged progressive legislation on LGBTQI+ rights, even though LGBTQI+ groups had played an active role during the peace process (Bell 2019). Donors and peacebuilding actors can contribute to preventing these backlashes through early and continued support for LGBTQI+ organisations over time.

> *"The inclusion process for LGBTQI communities thus needs to be a simultaneous top-down and bottom-up approach and sanctioned at government level. Bottom-up processes to advocate inclusion, if not sanctioned and protected by the state, are likely to increase acts of violence against LBTQ+ people, while strictly top-down approaches are unlikely to affect the kinds of cultural changes necessary to have any meaningful change."*

(Working Group Member, June 2022).

A special opportunity for transforming social norms is inherent to transitional justice processes, as these have the potential to enable systemic change and structural transformation of patterns of exclusion and discrimination through accountability for past violations and offering opportunities for redress and recognition for those affected. At the same time, these processes could also raise awareness about the social, economic, political, and cultural privileges some groups enjoy. The discourse of transitional justice also often allows for an active framing of LGBTQI+ rights within the human rights discourse in the context of activism by other victims' groups and thereby offers an opening for raising awareness of and support for the specific experiences of LGBTQI+ persons who have experienced violence during the conflict in the broader population. Actors supporting transitional justice processes should guarantee the inclusion of the experiences of LGBTQI+ persons in their programming, e.g., on truth-seeking and restorative justice since their specific concerns and needs are often overlooked due to existing prejudice and discrimination. Meaningful consultations and collaboration with LGBTQI+ activists are also key in this area.

The Colombian Truth Commission, for instance, paid specific attention to the inclusion of the voices of specific marginalised groups whose experiences with violence had been neglected to deliver a 'complete' truth. Aided by the gender focus of the final peace agreement, this included LGBTQI+ persons, who were invited to share their experiences in the process. The Truth Commission's gender working group also included members of the LGBTQI+ community. The resulting volume on the gender of the Truth Commission's final report includes the testimonies of LGBTQI+ persons and a structural analysis of the forms and patterns of violence they experienced. Among others, it found that socially reproduced prejudice has exposed LGBTQI+ persons to multiple forms of violence and, at the same time, motivated conflict actors to persecute LGBTQI+ persons based on their non-conforming sexual orientation and gender identity to obtain social legitimacy (see Comisión de la Verdad 2022).

Post-conflict periods also often see constitutional and legal changes, which offer opportunities to advance gender-sensitive progressive legislation and LGBTQI+ rights. In some cases, peace agreements between conflict parties form the foundation of these legal reforms, which can, in turn, lead to a wider transformation of social norms and values. This again highlights the importance of the inclusion of LGBTQI+ concerns in peace negotiations early on. During processes of legal change, donors can support LGBTQI+ advocacy efforts and lobby through coordination activities and exchanges with

experts and practitioners from other contexts and create opportunities for LGBTQI+ activists to access and lobby political decision-makers and lawmakers directly. Furthermore, international donor governments and international organisations can raise the profile of LGBTQI+ issues in their conversations with policymakers to 'keep them on the agenda' and ensure the inclusion of LGBTQI+ actors in civil society consultation mechanisms.

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY BOX: CONFLICT-RELATED WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVANCING LGBTQI+ RIGHTS IN UKRAINE

Social and gender norms often already undergo fundamental transformations during the conflict. This was the case in Ukraine, where attitudes towards LGBTQI+ rights have changed markedly since the start of the Russian full-scale invasion. The visibility of LGBTQI+ persons in the Ukrainian armed forces was increased through projects like "LGBT military", and activists raised awareness about different forms of discrimination LGBTQI+ persons in the armed forces and their partners faced due to their sexual orientation and gender identity. As Ukraine currently does not recognise same-sex civil partnerships, partners of LGBTQI+ members of the military are not able to visit their loved ones in the hospital or make any decisions on their behalf when they are injured or retrieve their bodies and receive benefits when they are killed.

While a loud minority continues to voice anti-LGBTQI+ views, support among Ukrainians in favour of equal rights has increased. This is not only due to solidarity with LGBTQI+ members of the military defending their country but also in reaction to the openly anti-LGBTQI+ discourses by the Russian leadership, partly used to justify the invasion of Ukraine as a measure to protect the Russian population from 'Gayropa'. The wish to delineate oneself from Russian narratives and show closeness with discourses on human rights and equality perceived in alignment with European values and aspirations has also led many Ukrainians to become more supportive of LGBTQI+ issues.

A new law protecting LGBTQI+ persons from hate speech was introduced in 2022. That same year, a petition calling for President Zelenskyy to consider legalising same-sex marriage gained considerably more than the 25,000 signatures necessary for the president to respond to it. He stated that while legalising same-sex marriage would require a change of the constitution, which is impossible under martial law, his party would advance plans to legalise same-sex civil partnerships. In March 2023, a draft bill calling for the legalisation of same-sex civil partnerships was submitted by a Ukrainian Member of Parliament, who had consulted Ukrainian LGBTQI+ groups in the drafting process.

E. PREVENTION: ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Peaceful societies cannot be built on the basis of social, economic and political systems that exclude, marginalise, and discriminate against certain groups of people based on their identity. Too often, 'peace' is understood as the absence of violence for cis-heterosexual men and not as the absence of structural violence and discrimination against women and other structurally disadvantaged groups, which, taken together, would constitute the majority of any given population. Indeed, discriminatory patriarchal norms and values, hegemonic and militarised masculinities, and unequal gender power relations are often the root causes of violence and conflict.

Efforts addressing the different forms of discrimination and violence that result from harmful gender norms and promoting LGBTQI+ inclusion on all levels thus constitute important contributions to conflict prevention. On a societal level, LGBTQI+ inclusion can be promoted, for instance, through supporting the advocacy efforts of local LGBTQI+ activists and organisations through resources, measures to strengthen their organisational capacities and the creation of safe spaces, as well as facilitating spaces for exchange with other LGBTQI+ organisations and allies to build national and international alliances. The education system can be another entry point for advancing these goals, for instance, through advancing reform of educational curricula that would promote equal rights

and address the root causes and drivers of violence against and discrimination of LGBTQI+ persons (e.g., destructive notions of masculinity, patriarchal norms, binary gender conceptions, as well as creating LGBTQI+ friendly school environments (e.g., gender-neutral washrooms and uniforms).

Supporting LGBTQI+ activism can also contribute to increased LGBTQI+ participation in formal decision-making processes, thereby including them as partners and giving them the opportunity to lobby for LGBTQI+ sensitive legislation and political reforms. In addition to providing resources, particularly international actors and prominent national allies can play an important role in facilitating access for LGBTQI+ activists to the rather exclusive spaces where important decisions are made. To be truly inclusive, such processes should also consider LGBTQI+ actors from rural and peripheral regions and ensure fair compensation for participation.

The development of functional early warning mechanisms of potential escalations concerning violence against LGBTQI+ persons contributes to conflict prevention. Monitoring relevant data with regard to anti-LGBTQI+/-gender mobilisations as well as on acts of violence committed against LGBTQI+ persons on the basis of their SOGIESC would enable actors to formulate timely responses to threats of escalating violence.

F. KEY TAKEAWAYS

★ The meaningful inclusion and protection of LGBTQI+ persons in peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts can be operationalised throughout entry points across all four pillars of the WPS Agenda.

★ Starting with the preparation of peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts, it is essential to centre the understanding of how conflict dynamics and exclusions are shaped by locally contingent power structures that affect LGBTQI+ persons from the outset by conducting a comprehensive, consultative, and participatory gender-sensitive scoping analysis. Recognise that LGBTQI+ individuals and groups are agents of autonomy, agency, and voice who can play active roles in sustainable peace, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance.

★ To ensure the meaningful participation of LGBTQI+ persons, it is critical to address the root causes, e.g., regressive gender norms, of their discrimination and exclusion, as well as to create safer spaces and platforms as well as critical resources such as flexible funding, including inclusive peace agreements and processes.

★ To meet the specific needs of LGBTQI+ persons have in protection, humanitarian actors need to establish specialised services and safer spaces to assist queer survivors of GBV and integrate their expressed needs and barriers encountered in the context analysis, programming, and implementation, in accordance with the local specific contexts using a consultative methodology. Importantly, combating impunity is a core component of effective protection of LGBTQI+ persons against SGBV.

★ Periods of relief and recovery can provide important windows of opportunities for meaningful inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons, as post-conflict settings usually bear potential for tremendous social, political, and economic changes, such as progressive legislation change and transitional justice processes.

★ Addressing the different forms of discrimination and violence that result from harmful gender norms and promoting the meaningful inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons at all levels is central to conflict prevention, including supporting the advocacy and alliance-building efforts of local LGBTQI+ activists and organisations, mainstreaming LGBTQI+ inclusive educational curricula, setting up participatory structures in formal decision-making processes, and developing functional early warning systems.

G. LEARNING EXERCISES

Can you devise a roadmap to create and cultivate relations with LGBTQI+ actors across the four pillars of the WPS Agenda? What can you do in the short, medium, and long term?

SHORT-TERM   **MEDIUM-TERM**   **LONG-TERM**

Taking stock and moving forward — look at the entry points to better include LGBTQI+ persons; which options are the ones that you/your organisation are already doing? Which ones are of special interest to you? Prepare a short synthesis on how you would like to move forward with these actionable insights over the next year, five years, and the distant future. Think about what you can do now and which structures, resources, and alliances you will need to push for the change you want to see.

ONE YEAR   **FIVE YEARS**   **DISTANT FUTURE**

H. FURTHER READING

★ Alvarado Cóbar, J. (2020) Strategies for including women's and LGBTI groups in the Colombian peace process. Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

★ Bueno-Hansen. P. (2020) The LGBTQI Movement's Spiral Trajectory: From Peace Processes to Legal and Judicial Gains and Back Again. New York: Astracea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

★ Close, S., Groenewald, H. & Trimiño Mora, D. (2020) Facilitation guide: Gender-sensitive conflict analysis. London: Conciliation Resources.

★ Hagen, J. (2016) 'Queering women, peace and security', International Affairs, 92, pp. 313-332.

★ Sow, N. et al. (2022) Breaking the binary: LGBT+ inclusive approach to the women, peace and security agenda in Nepal and Myanmar. London: International Alert. Available at: https://www.international-alert.org/publications/breaking-the-binary-lgbt-inclusive-approach-to-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda-in-nepal-and-myanmar/ [Accessed 12 June 2023].

★ United Nations Independent Expert on the Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (2022) From wars against diversity to an inclusive peace: Conflict-related violence based on Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity. Geneva: United Nations.

CHAPTER 3:

Enabling LGBTQI+ organisations to meaningfully participate in and shape the policy design and policy processes of the WPS Architecture

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

· Recognise the common barriers that LGBTQI+ organisations face in participating in shaping the WPS Architecture policy design and policy processes.
· Devise viable strategies for rendering the WPS Architecture in policy processes at the UN level more inclusive.
· Identify levers and opportunities to enable meaningful participation of LGBTQI+ organisations in designing and implementing the WPS National Action Plans (NAPs).
· Critically evaluate the diverse range of roles national governments can play in accelerating the work of foregrounding LGBTQI+ groups' expressed needs, priorities, and lived experiences in the WPS Architecture and apply the key concepts in your work to drive the process forward.
· Develop the requisite concept knowledge and skills to bridge the gap between civil society organisations and governments in the joint effort to better centre the LGBTQI+ groups' expressed needs, priorities, and lived experiences in the WPS Architecture.

A. QUICK KNOWLEDGE RECAP: THE WPS ARCHITECTURE

In **Chapter 1**, we discussed the WPS Architecture in detail. Here is a quick recap of what the WPS Architecture refers to:

1. Ten UNSC resolutions;
2. National Action Plans (NAPs);
3. General recommendations Nr.30 and 35 in the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
4. Informal Expert Group on WPS;
5. Global indicators on 1325;
6. National and regional civil society networks on 1325, such as the NGO Working Group on WPS and the Group of Friends of 1325;
7. UN Security Council debates;
8. UN Secretary-General Reports.

B. BARRIERS LGBTQI+ ORGANISATIONS FACE IN MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATING IN THE POLICY PROCESSES OF THE WPS ARCHITECTURE

LGBTQI+ organisations often face various barriers to meaningfully participating in the policy processes related to the WPS Architecture - if they can participate at all. While LGBTQI+ organisations' challenges are not generalisable as they may vary across geographical locations and contexts, participating organisations in the working group consultations identified several common hurdles they often encounter.

1. LACK OF SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Many national governments do not prioritise and support the relevant expertise and experience of LGBTQI+ organisations active in gender and peacebuilding efforts when it comes to including LGBTQI+ perspectives in the drafting, implementation, or monitoring of NAPs. Most states often do not have the necessary infrastructure, resources, and networks to support LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in policy processes fully meaningfully. Meanwhile, some other governments lack the political will and tend to relegate the issue to the back burner. As a result, LGBTQI+ organisations, occupying minimal space and leveraging limited power, struggle with having their voices, needs, and priorities heard and considered in these highly formalised and government-led processes due to the structural barriers that national governments must urgently address.

"The primary obstacles towards incorporating LGBTQI+ individuals, or even issues, in NAPs are, broadly speaking, a lack of acknowledgement of LGBTQI+ identities, or the validity thereof, in more conservative societies and the need to balance conservative and progressive attitudes even in more liberal societies."

(Working Group Member, June 2022)

2. UNTRANSPARENT AND INACCESSIBLE POLICY PROCESSES AND OCCASIONAL DELIBERATION EXCLUSION BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

The lack of transparency and access in policy processes is a particularly prominent issue faced by many small, grassroots, and informally organised LGBTQI+ groups, which often lack the funding and resources to overcome the participation barriers. For instance, when a consultative meeting as part of the process is held at a venue based in the national capital, LGBTQI+ organisations located in rural or more peripheral areas can face barriers in attending these meetings. The excessive bureaucratic and formal procedures often prevalent in governmental processes present another barrier for LGBTQI+ organisations which do not always have the necessary information and briefings to navigate the highly complex and politicised environment. Even in the best scenarios, processes can be very technical and deploy terminology that is not easily accessible to outsiders (especially if the national language is not one spoken by everyone), so there is a need to both ensure that the process is inclusive in terms of language and enhance participants' capacities to discuss, e.g., security sector reform or constitutional processes before the beginning of the process (Henri Myrttinen, Steering Committee, 2023)

In other cases, governments were found to have intentionally excluded CSOs from consultations. However, even when LGBTQI+ organisations are included, working with governments on NAPs and participating in consultations can prove to be highly challenging, as many of these engagements remain unpaid or poorly paid, putting CSOs in the position to choose between having their expertise heard or doing unpaid work. In particular, for small organisations without core funding, this is very challenging. The tokenistic inclusion strategies governments undertake fail to enable LGBTQI+ organisations to have their voices heard truly.

3. ABSENCE OF SUFFICIENTLY SAFE SPACES

Many of these processes and channels are also not always safe for LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in. Even when governments invest in creating so-called safe spaces, they are not always safe for participating LGBTQI+ organisations. Worse still, the potential homo- and queerphobia among policymakers and practitioners are still tangible threats that can pose serious harm to LGBTQI+ persons and organisations, with the associated risks being even worse for those based in countries where people with diverse SOGIESC are persecuted and marginalised by their very governments.

To tackle these barriers identified above, the following sections sketch out:

1: A set of actionable strategies to enable LGBTQI+ organisations to meaningfully participate in and shape the WPS Agenda at both policy design and processes of the WPS Architecture — including:

- At the UN level (both in terms of evaluating the implementation of existing resolutions and shaping potential new resolutions as part of the ever-expanding WPS Agenda, See **Section C**).

- At national levels (the drafting, implementation, and monitoring of NAPs which form the cornerstone of implementing the Agenda, See **Section D**).

2: A list of steps to work towards more meaningful, participatory, and inclusive consultation (See **Section E**), with a list of concrete actions that governments and CSOs should take under each section.

Box: Enabling LGBTQI+ organisations to meaningfully participate in and shape the policy design and processes of the WPS Agenda versus Queering the WPS Agenda:

In this guide, we would like to differentiate between our goal of providing actionable insights for governments and CSOs to enable LGBTQI+ individuals and organisations to meaningfully participate in and shape the WPS Agenda and further actions needed to queer the WPS Agenda. The latter is beyond the current scope of this guide as it would entail examining and addressing the underlying power structures within the overall WPS Agenda, such as greater engagement with policymakers and stronger ownership of queer organisations in policy processes, policy designs, and knowledge production. Nevertheless, there is a common thread between these two, and we hope it will act as a first step and build a foundation for actions that can queer the WPS Architecture in the future.

C. STRATEGIES FOR ENABLING LGBTQI+ ORGANISATIONS TO MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN AND SHAPE THE WPS ARCHITECTURE IN POLICY PROCESSES AT THE UN LEVEL

i. Monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up with existing resolutions

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators can provide useful insights into the implementation progress of the WPS Agenda. In recent years, a set of new monitoring tools have been developed, including the Global Indicators on Women, Peace and Security, monitoring National Action Plans (NAPs), and independent civil society monitoring groups/initiatives such as the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) 'Women Count' project, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG), the first civil society initiative that regularly tracks the implementation of the WPS resolutions (WILPF 'indicators' n.d). Enabling LGBTQI+ organisations to meaningfully participate in and shape the monitoring and evaluation, following up with existing resolutions of the Agenda is critical as it can shed light on where we currently stand when it comes to centring the perspectives and lived realities of LGBTQI+ persons and gather important disaggregated data to inform and improve future interventions.

While M&E tools such as the Global Indicators and NAPs monitoring mechanisms have already been developed, governments should, nevertheless, actively advocate for the inclusion of LGBTQI+ organisations in these processes of existing resolutions by, inter alia:

1. REMOVING ALL PARTICIPATION BARRIERS:

Facilitating accessible spaces at the Technical Working Group meetings and M&E briefings at the high-level UN Fora. For instance, governments should provide guidance on navigating these highly technical and formal processes at the UN level, e.g., in a concise and informative guidance note that includes explanatory information, key reminders, a checklist, a timetable, etc. In addition to providing critical information and guidance, governments should also invest in assisting LGBTQI+ organisations with familiarising with the policy space at the UN, connecting them with critical actors active on LGBTQI+ issues within the UN system, such as the United Nations LGBTI Core Group[12] as well as brokering alliances with other civil society networks.

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[12]The United Nations LGBTI Core Group is an informal cross regional group of United Nations Member States established in 2008. The Core Group does this by: 1. Raising awareness about LGBTI issues; 2. Contributing to multilateral work and negotiations at the United Nations, and 3. Seeking common ground and engaging in a spirit of open, respectful and constructive dialogue and cooperation with UN Member States and other stakeholders outside the Core Group.

However, the scarcity of resources is a persistent challenge that stifles the work of many CSOs. To address this, governments ought to proactively investigate the possibility of providing critical resources such as flexible core funding, long-term projects of 3-6 years, and in-kind contributions to enable LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in the policy processes of the WPS Agenda without constraints. With the right support, CSO networks can be capacitated to act as convenors and providers of participatory platforms and resources for LGBTQI+ persons and organisations. Some notable examples include the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), a coalition of hundreds of women rights organisations from over 40 countries worldwide, which has organised several community-based convenings in countries including the Philippines and Lebanon that brought together LGBTQI+ youth with other stakeholders in spaces centring learning, collaboration, and knowledge exchange on advocacy work related to the WPS Agenda.

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY BOX: CANADA

In 2019, Canada announced the launch of its LGBTQ2I International Assistance Program, which provides $30 million CAD (around 20,835,887.00 EUR) in dedicated funding over 5 years and $10 million per year thereafter to advance the human rights socio-economic outcomes of LGBTQI+ people in countries eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA). Stable, earmarked, and long-term funding schemes are critical resources that LGBTQI+ organisations and individuals can rely on in chronic resource constraints. In addition to earmarked funding, Canada remains an active member of the Equal Rights Coalition, the LGBTI Core Groups of both the UN and the Organization of American States, the Group of Friends in support of the UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the Global Equality Fund.

2. STRENGTHENING INVOLVEMENT AND DATA OWNERSHIP BY LGBTQI+ ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT THE M&E PROCESS:

LGBTQI+ organisations and activists often have access to valuable information and data on the lived experiences of queer people affected by structural drivers of conflicts and violence, which would fill in the data gap that is often the issue in M&E processes. Starting from designing M&E methodologies, governments need to take account of collecting intersectionality-disaggregated data on lived experiences of LGBTQI+ persons affected that inform M&E processes while ensuring that their work and inputs are fairly compensated (see how this could work in practice in **Section E** of this chapter). Take the Global Indicators on WPS, for example; UN entities usually request voluntary inputs from member states using a suggested reporting template developed in consultation with the states. During the reporting process, the UN provides technical and financial support for member states, including capacity development.

These formalised M&E modalities can present valuable windows of opportunities for governments of member states to engage with LGBTQI+ organisations. For instance, governments can start by creating accessible and safer spaces for LGBTQI+ organisations and activists for their input, which is not often present in these highly formalised multilateral fora. Meanwhile, governments should provide concrete support for LGTBQI+ organisations via obtaining adequate financial and technical support from the UN bodies during the monitoring process for the Global Indicators on WPS and share the resource packages in a way that meets the expressed needs and priorities of LGBTQI+ organisations.

Yet, the responsibilities do not fall onto the shoulders of governments. Although an emerging network of independent CSOs worldwide has been monitoring the implementation of the WPS Agenda, most of them lack meaningful representation of LGBTQI+ organisations. What is urgently needed is a critical self-assessment among civil society organisations active in this field to work towards adopting an intersectional working methodology through spotting existing gaps in involving LGBTQI+ organisations and identifying pathways for greater alliance building and resource sharing (See **Section C** in **Chapter 4** on how this looks like in practice).

Box: Global indicators:

To monitor the Women, Peace and Security agenda, UNSCR 1889 (2009) requested the UN Secretary-General to develop a set of indicators, known as the 'global indicators for resolution 1325', proposed in UNSCR 173 (2010). The Global Indicators are a list of twenty-six quantitative and qualitative indicators grouped into the four pillars of the resolution. They can be found in the UNSC Secretary General's Report (S/2010/498) (WILPF 'indicators' n.d.). The indicators lack references to LGBTQI+ individuals and categories (Hagen 2016, p. 320).

ii. Further development of the WPS Agenda

A set of ten resolutions on WPS, which forms the international policy framework for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, has been adopted to date. With the Agenda being continuously updated and developed, there are equally valuable entry points in further developing the WPS Agenda to foreground the lived realities, voices, and agencies of LGBTQI+ people.

The independent civil society networks have played an indispensable role in shaping additional resolutions related to the Agenda — often in liaison with governments represented as permanent or non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. However, many of these spaces are not readily accessible for LGBTQI+ organisations, and they tend to be dominated by CSOs active in the women's

rights movement that lack or do not prioritise an intersectional focus. However, civil society networks have an indispensable role and an inherent responsibility to foster an intersectional and inclusive environment. They can start by critically reflecting on whether current practices and work methods exclude LGBTQI+ organisations. When exclusionary practices are observed, CSO networks need to eliminate barriers and learn to take a step back proactively. Some concrete actions can include identifying pathways to share resources and information with LGBTQI+ organisations, including applying for joint funding and developing communal advocacy goals in the engagement with governments, and voluntarily referring the work of LGBTQI+ organisations to governments when relevant instead of occupying the space. Additionally, those more established and larger in size LGBTQI+ organisations should proactively strive to act as facilitators and convenors for exchange with grassroots organisations by, for instance, providing the platform and sharing critical information based on communal intelligence and trust, e.g., which tactics have proven most useful and which organisations are best to engage with to maximise the impact.

> *"When it comes to the inclusion of civil society actors, in Lebanon, we can witness how it is the well-established (and mostly, less radical) civil society organisations that are invited to the table when it comes to policy reforms regarding gender – here, mostly women's rights. To include a range of civil society perspectives, smaller, less visible groups or organisations should have equal chances to engage in WPS processes."*

(Helena Berchtold, MOSAIC (MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration and Capacity Building), Working Group June meeting).

In this context, policy practitioners working on gender and peacebuilding efforts in governments can play a proactive role in facilitating alliance-building and gap-bridging among civil society organisations that work on the further development of the Agenda. There are two types of concrete support that governments can provide:

1: Addressing the knowledge gaps and misconceptions about LGBTQI+ groups in the women's rights and peacebuilding movement, particularly concerning the erasure of queer women, through targeted advocacy, communications efforts, and knowledge and information hubs.

2: Providing critical infrastructure, including venues, fora, pathways, and financial resources to enable LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in these processes meaningfully. One especially important consideration is that the provision of resources and funds must be predicated on the expressed needs and perspectives of LGBTQI+ organisations instead of assumptions about what they might need. Additionally, setting up structures and processes to ensure the safety of participating LGBTQI+ organisations is vital in some contexts where increasing surveillance and targeted violence against LGBTQI+ persons and organisations persist. As a first step, governments can hold consultative meetings with LGBTQI+ organisations to pool sufficient information on their expressed needs, priorities, and challenges and use the data to inform the development of an early warning system, security risk assessment, and scenario planning to provide sufficient protection for LGBTQI+ organisations throughout the process. Governments need to recognise that security must also be guaranteed in contexts where the setup might seemingly be safe. The notion of security should also encompass a broader understanding of what security constitutes, including provisions in the digital space such as shielding LGBTQI+ from potential hate speech, doxing, and targeted campaigns (See **Section E** of this chapter for more information on how this can look in practice).

D. STRATEGIES FOR ENABLING LGBTQI+ ORGANISATIONS TO MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN AND SHAPE THE DRAFTING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND MONITORING OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPS)

As of February 2023, 105 countries have adopted National Action Plans (UN Women Asia and the Pacific, n.d.). Thus, they are a crucial tool for turning the WPS Agenda into action. Overall, most NAPs lack the incorporation of lived experiences and perspectives of LGBTQI+ groups. An increasing number of countries have launched NAPs with various references to LGBTQI+ groups, including Argentina, Albania, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland,

the Netherlands, the UK, and Uruguay (Outright International & Ghoshal 2023). Yet, the persistently cis-heteronormative binary notion of gender often underpins the formulation of NAPs. For instance, the current NAP of the United States does not include any reference with regard to gender identity/sexual orientation and only vaguely refers to "women from under-represented groups" (United States 2019).

The designing, implementation, and monitoring of most NAPs have remained largely exclusive, untransparent, and hierarchical, with limited or no observable engagement with LGBTQI+ organisations.

These processes, however, can also provide various opportunities for governments to enable the broader and more inclusive participation of LGBTQI+ organisations. Concretely, governments should strive to move away from the state-led, hierarchical, and asymmetrical implementation process. They should also explore the establishment of mechanisms to level the playing field with civil society. This could include setting up advisory and oversight councils to oversee the processes, share decision-making power, and ensure that LGBTQI+ groups can meaningfully shape and participate in the NAP policy processes.

DRAFTING PHASE

Starting from the **drafting phase**, governments should hold extensive consultative sessions with CSOs, including LGBTQI+ organisations, and focus on transforming power relations beyond symbolic gender mainstreaming only to account for the systemic, cultural, and structural exclusions of LGBTQI+ groups. Governments should proactively investigate the underlying gender relations and other intersecting systems of oppression and power and the root causes of conflict-related violence in the respective context. The consultation must be designed to facilitate eye-level, participatory, and safe interaction with the affected LGBTQI+ groups in a geographically inclusive way. A context-specific and nuanced consultative methodology is crucial to assessing the lived realities. It needs to be commensurate with the local situational peculiarities, as LGBTQI+ groups are not monolithic. Their experiences are not always comparable across different contexts (See **Section E in this chapter** on how a meaningful and inclusive consultation can be conducted in practice). However, consultation alone is not an end in itself. Governments can set up a joint drafting committee comprising LGBTQI+ CSO representatives and other stakeholders to have substantive decision-making power (e.g., a set number of quotas with adequate decision-making power for CSOs) in shaping the outcome. Take the modality that countries such as Sweden, the Netherlands, Nigeria, and Finland have adopted in drafting NAPs. For example — CSO and governmental representatives were able to shape what goes into the NAP by drafting the content in joint committees (Bernarding & Lunz 2020).

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

When sketching out the actions for **implementing** NAPs, governments can establish formalised partnerships with LGBTQI+ organisations, especially those that can rightfully represent the lived realities of LGBTQI+ groups. For instance, the fourth Dutch NAP explicitly indicates joint government and CSO responsibility for implementing NAP 1325-IV, where each NAP partner bears its responsibility to achieve the results specified in the outcome under their organisational mandate (NAP 1325 Partnership in the Netherlands, 2020, p.11). Such joint responsibility schemes should by no means lead to expedient outsourcing to LGBTQI+ organisations as well as diminish the primary role of governments as the ultimate duty-bearer to "end and prevent violent conflict and to advance rights and social justice for politically marginalised groups." (Bernarding & Lunz 2020). To enable LGBTQI+ organisations to contribute to the achievement of the specified outcomes, governments should guarantee the provision of sufficient and relevant resources for LGBTQI+ partners and set up structures that can sustain their independence and critical inputs. One crucial aspect when implementing NAPs is funding — to ensure that the activities are implemented, it is vital to ensure sufficient dedicated budgets are in place, and the lack of these has often been an obstacle to implementation. Additionally, there should be an overall alignment of NAPs with other policies on gender equality and diversity which do not cover issues in the NAPs but are still relevant or partially overlap with NAPs, such as GBV Prevention Action Plans.

Additionally, governments should pay particular attention to addressing the issue of queer-nationalism, i.e., instrumentalising LGBTQI+ rights to justify imperialistic advances and policies (Drushel 2017) on the false assumption that other racialised cultures are inherently queerphobic.[13]

As demonstrated in **Chapter 1**, the current state of queerphobia observed across many countries in the Global South can be partially traced back to the lasting impact of historical injustices, such as colonial missionary expeditions that instituted queerphobic

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[13]This practice is often visible in women's rights and issues, see the Femonationalism knowledge box.

sentiments deep into the cultures and institutions of local communities. In the case of Western development funds being syphoned off to fund anti-gender actors in Ghana, neo-colonial structures still persist today. This is why centring an intersectional and consistent working modality that addresses all the structural causes and ensures policy coherence across the board would be key. While it is essential to provide critical resources and platforms for LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in the implementation of NAPs, governments also need to critically reflect on whether the policies are aligned both vertically and horizontally to prevent the contradictory policy outcome of funding anti-gender actors abroad, advocating for queer rights at home. It can also manifest in the contradictory practice of promoting the rights of LGBTQI+ rights within one's border while disregarding those of those more marginalised (often racialised) queer persons from abroad — for instance, the draconian application of immigration and asylum laws in a way that disproportionately harms (BIPOC) LGBTQI+ asylum seekers. Importantly, governments need to also reflect on the inherent power asymmetries critically in the implementation process between the Global North and the Global South and actively identify pathways to work towards meaningful and impactful localisation in an intersectional manner. In this regard, embedding intersectional human rights-based approaches in the implementation of NAPs can provide another pathway for enabling LGBTQI+ organisations to meaningfully shape and participate in the process. These tools often provide detailed prescriptive actions that can be readily adopted in the implementation process of NAPs.

Box: Femonationalism

The instrumentalisation of marginalised groups' rights to advance the conservative political agenda is not limited to LGBTQI+ politics. In the women's rights movement, for instance, there is a phenomenon known as "femonationalism" — the use of feminism and gender equality to justify violence against groups such as BIPOC migrants and propagate anti-immigration sentiments, usually using narratives that are based on racialised tropes and stereotypes. It shows how anti-gender and anti-LGBTQI+ actors usually deploy highly similar strategies to undermine the fundamental rights of marginalised groups, which is why there is a critical need to forge meaningful alliances (Farris, 2017).

MONITORING PHASE

In addition to drafting and implementing, LGBTQI+ organisations can play a critical role in **monitoring** and evaluating NAPs. To facilitate the process, governments should set clear indicators (e.g., SMART Indicators as shown in the box below) and specific timelines as a first step as well as establish regular, independent, civil-society-led, funded reporting mechanisms through an established entity consisting of both LGBTQI+ organisations and the government (Bernarding & Lunz 2020) (see examples of such special bodies in the box on the next page).

While monitoring and evaluating NAPs, governments must ensure that consistent preventative measures are in place to forestall potential backsliding and oppositional resistance. For instance, while monitoring and evaluation are important signposts on the overall progress, submitting NAPs to evaluations for their effectiveness must not be co-opted by anti-gender actors who could attempt to undermine the implementation process by constantly questioning the legitimacy and efficacy of NAPs. Nonetheless, regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted with sufficient due diligence to ensure that the progress can be monitored and that it is not co-opted by oppositional actors to jeopardise the Agenda. Ultimately, the effectiveness of NAPs is intrinsically linked to the respective government's implementation efforts and political will. Therefore, governments should already plan the inclusion of diverse frameworks from the development phase and establish a sound monitoring framework to empower LGBTQI+ groups and CSOs to make demands and hold governmental bodies accountable.

To summarise, formalised participatory pathways, including the aforementioned joint committee, technical task force, and M&E working group, broaden the possibility for recommendations by LGBTQI+ organisations to have an impact on NAPs. On the other hand, informal participatory channels, such as consultations, grassroots mobilisation, shadow reports and report cards, can ensure that LGBTQI+ organisations maintain the integrity of civil society space and their independence (WILPF & Rodriguez 2014, p.4). To balance these two approaches so that the independent civil society space can ensure that LGBTQI+'s perspectives and voices will have a meaningful impact on the overall NAP policy processes, informal participation must go hand in hand with inviting civil society, in general, to play a more designated role in formalised structures (Bernarding & Lunz 2020).

Box: Smart indicator

SMART Indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound indicators used in M&E.

S   M   A   R   T

Specific   **Measureable**   **Achievable**   **Relevant**   **Time-bound**

SMART indicators can help ensure that the specified indicators are clearly defined and can be used to track progress towards set goals and objectives. More information on SMART indicators and how to develop them as part of the M&E plan can be found here.

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY BOX: IRELAND AND NIGERIA

1: The Oversight Group for the third NAP in Ireland, which includes representatives from the government and CSOs, convenes once every quarter to oversee the regular and systematic review of progress on achieving the outcomes, actions, targets, and impact across all pillars. It also reviews briefings and updates from the government and CSOs on WPS developments and areas of concern/interest in WPS implementation. Although it does not explicitly include LGBTQI+ persons and organisations, it defines civil society's roles and responsibilities in the monitoring group as part of the M&E plan.

2: The Technical Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force in Nigeria include the representation of CSOs by providing participatory analysis, review, and needs assessment in the M&E plan, coupled with annual fundraising initiatives for the Peace and Security Fund, which will be used for training and empowerment projects for CSOs (WILPF & Rodriguez 2014).

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY BOX: THE THIRD NAP OF GERMANY

Issued by the Interministerial Working Group for Women, Peace and Security (IMAG), Germany's third NAP on WPS contains a set of good practices for mainstreaming intersectionality in its overall approach. It is guided by two principles: addressing the causes of gender inequality and mainstreaming WPS across the German peace and security strategy, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The NAP emphasises a gender-transformative approach, intersectionality, and compounded discrimination. It acknowledges that LGBTQI+ individuals face discrimination exacerbated by crises and recognises that they do not form a homogeneous group, with needs varying depending on context and culture. LGBTQI+ concerns are addressed as part of gender equality issues.

Regarding crisis prevention, the NAP targets eradicating discriminatory and gender-based stereotypical roles that contribute to violence and conflict. Measures include promoting a gender equality-based understanding of gender, and eliminating power imbalances, to include people of diverse sexual orientations and non-binary gender identities. Another important measure of the NAP is providing political support and resources for the work of LGBTQI+ activists, women's rights organisations, human rights defenders, and peacebuilders.

Regarding participation, the NAP aims to make structures and decision-making processes in fragile and (post-)conflict societies inclusive and gender-responsive. Measures include strengthening political involvement by women and non-binary individuals, promoting gender-responsive legislation, access to justice, and implementing and enforcing women's and LGBTI rights in fragile and (post-)conflict settings. The NAP also ensures policy coherence at national and international levels as it emphasises the protection and support of LGBTQI+ individuals within Germany and tackling sexualised and gender-based violence in conflict situations, taking into account high-risk contexts such as flight. Measures include improving protection and providing comprehensive and appropriate long-term support for survivors of sexualised and gender-based violence, including mental health and psychosocial support. To strengthen the WPS agenda, the NAP highlights Germany's commitment to opposing lapses in equal rights for women and LGBTQI+ individuals using an intersectional approach and advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights at multilateral, regional, bilateral, and national levels. The NAP also has an integral element of an interactive exchange with CSOs (Federal Foreign Office 2021).

E. TOWARDS MORE MEANINGFUL, PARTICIPATORY, AND INCLUSIVE CONSULTATION: WHAT COULD BE EXPECTED FROM THE ROLE OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

"Consultation is key: at the end of the day, it does not matter how well-meaning a process or policy may be if it is not arrived at through consultation. A community that has been so side-lined and ignored for so many years can never be truly represented unless they are given the necessary space to represent its own views, and these views are given due weight in the planning process."

(Adrian Jjuuko, LLD, Executive Director, Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF), Working Group Member June 2022).

Effective and meaningful engagement with LGBTQI+ individuals and organisations lies at the centre of rendering the implementation of the Agenda, the concomitant policy processes, and NAPs more inclusive and reflective of LGBTQI+ needs and realities. What does this mean in practice? What are some of the concrete steps and plans that governments can undertake to enable LGBTQI+ groups and organisations to participate meaningfully? Primarily based on the 'Beyond Consultation' Tool, this section delineates the concrete actions governments can take to reach these objectives (GAPS UK & Women for Women International 2020).

DEVELOPING A MEANINGFUL, INCLUSIVE AND EMPOWERING CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY:

The consultation design and process should integrate participatory methodologies grounded in local contexts and realities, as shown below. From the outset, governments should ensure that specific aims and objectives inform the engagement approach on how the participation of LGBTQI+ groups and organisations will drive the consultation process, implementation, and outcome. At the same time, governments need to be mindful of the level of openness in the consultation process in that the agenda and setup should not be too rigid to leave sufficient room for feedback from LGBTQI+ groups. In this regard, government policy practitioners must lead in fostering safer spaces (Build Up 2021) to enable LGBTQI+ organisations to exchange knowledge, build alliances, and seek solidarity. Building such spaces must take centre stage in the consultation methodology, and they need to:

1: Take account of the power dynamics as a result of disparities in time, resources, and capacities in the participation modalities (e.g., disparities in urban/rural LGBTQI+ organisations that influence their capacity to participate).

2: Centre a communally agreed code of conduct that ensures everyone's safety. Crucially, governments need to be transparent and honest to all participants on how their data will be used in a safe way (e.g., anonymise data and have clear policies on media visibility) and feedback to them, especially regarding how to address and integrate the LGBTQI+ perspectives, e.g., setting up a policy commitment document detailing the steps forward or a knowledge hub for easy and accessible information. One good practice is devoting a substantial chunk of time before the consultation process to developing a thorough and actionable code of conduct based on group consensus.

3: Foster group trust and group norms to enable LGBTQI+ participants to voice their opinions in a way that centres their agency and honesty in a safe space with capacity building/sensitisation for non-LGBTIQ+ participants on the harms of queerphobic language and other microaggressions.

4: Ensure that the overall consultation centres on pooling the lived experiences of the LGBTQI+ groups to contribute to a context-specific, relevant, and holistic understanding of the structural drivers of impacts of conflict on LGBTQI+ persons. This, in practice, translates into getting in touch with LGBTQI+ organisations beyond the typical well-known circles (e.g., those dominated by middle-class, well-educated cis-gendered and often white queer networks) and investing in making genuine efforts to make sure that those who usually fall outside such circles or who could not make it to the consultations due to various obstacles could meaningfully participate. One useful technique to identify the participants is the snowballing method, which involves talking to existing LGBTQI+ organisations active in the field who can provide key contact information and initiate referral processes (GAPS UK & Women for Women International 2020).

BUILDING EQUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

Equitable and effective partnerships with LGBTQI+ groups are indispensable for meaningfully engaging them in consultations. From the start, governments should devise the selection criteria for participating organisations to include both formalised NGOs and grassroots and unregistered LGBTQI+ groups. Equitable and effective partnerships in practice mean that LGBTQI+ organisations can collaborate closely with the governments on sketching the consultation's objectives, agenda, and outcomes. To operationalise the participatory partnership engagement, governments could consider formalising the arrangements with a memorandum of understanding (MoU) or other similar modalities, which, at the same time, allow for sufficient flexibility so that the partnership can be updated and revised to suit the expressed needs of the participating organisations. Effective and equitable partnerships also go beyond the simple time frame of a one-time-off event. Governments should regularly and proactively invite LGBTQI+ groups to attend meetings and dialogues related to and credit their contributions in policy documents and public briefings per their privacy requirements.

PROVIDING TAILORED SUPPORT AND PREPARATION:

Akin to many other communities and groups, LGBTQI+ organisations can vary significantly in terms of their capacities, priorities, needs, and expertise. As they are not a homogenous group, capacity assessments must be conducted using an intersectional methodology ahead of the consultation process to ensure the most inclusive representation possible, followed by capacity-sharing programmes such as briefings, training, and other tailored support. For example, governments can organise preparatory convenings and circulate guidance notes available in both common and minority/indigenous languages that provide detailed information for all participants to enable them to get fully acquainted with the structures, processes, and necessary bureaucratic procedures so that they can navigate the space with confidence and ease. In addition, governments should invest substantial efforts in investigating the potential barriers and ensure that LGBTQI+ organisations are adequately supported to provide their inputs throughout the consultation process, in particular concerning the structural drivers of violence against LGBTQI+ groups in the respective context and the concrete measures governments need to take to ensure that LGBTQI+'s needs, lived realities, perspectives, and priorities are duly addressed in the government's policy response to the WPS architecture.

AGENDA-SETTING:

To fully address their expressed needs and priorities, LGBTQI+ organisations must be capacitated to shape the consultation agenda throughout the process. Governments should ensure that LGBTQI+ organisations can actively shape the meeting agenda, including the possibility to add or change the key points for discussion. First, participating LGBTQI+ organisations should be given sufficient time to deliver their input. For face-to-face consultative meetings, it is recommended that LGBTQI+ organisations have six weeks at the minimum, plus thorough briefing and guidance documentation to develop their contributions, or at least three months and endorsement documents if they need a visa to be present. For online meetings, the varying level of digital literacy and internet access among LGBTQI+ organisations needs to be considered in selecting and designing the tools and platforms used for the consultation. The overall roadmap and schedule should be communicated beforehand so that LGBTQI+ organisations can plan properly and allocate sufficient resources and time to develop their inputs.

REPRESENTATION:

Governments should strive to include LGBTQI+ organisations that could represent a diverse range of LGBTQI+ people and their lived experiences in the consultation process, including but not limited to different ages, ethnicities/races, religious beliefs, SOGIESC, literacy levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, urban and rural areas, and LGBTQI+ persons living with disabilities, etc. Note that the intersectionality-based markers can vary depending on the local contexts, and not all of them apply, so governments should make necessary adjustments if needed. The selection and inclusion criteria should be fully elaborated in easily comprehensible language and rationale on which organisations are selected, why the selected participant is a legitimate representative of the voice of the affected group, and who makes these decisions in the consultative process.

A contextual intersectionality-based analysis, which can take the form of community-based meetings at multiple locations, interviews, focus group discussions, and other participatory methods, can be especially useful to identify those who tend to be excluded, erased or invisibilised as well as the barriers they face, such as those who represent the perspectives of queer women. As discussed above, governments must aim to include formalised NGOs and informal networks on the grassroots level. Accessible and viable channels should also be established simultaneously for participating LGBTQI+ organisations to voice their concerns and bring up queries regarding the consultation process if they wish to.

SAFEGUARDING:

The *Do-No-Harm* principle should inform the overall engagement approach with LGBTQI+ organisations. Participating in these spaces can entail substantial dangers and risks for many LGBTQI+ organisations in their respective contexts. It is recommended that governments develop a Safety, Security, and Ethics Protocol that takes account of the emotional impact, media visibility and coverage, personal safety, safeguarding and travel risk, coupled with corresponding responsive measures, of a diverse range of LGBTQI+ organisations, particularly those who represent the groups that face multiple and intersecting forms of marginalisation. The protocol should also provide detailed information on what free, prior and informed consent means in the consultation process and how to give and withdraw consent at any point.

The protocol should be communicated to the participating LGBTQI+ organisations before the consultation starts and allows for input from the participants on how the measures detailed in the protocol can be improved to meet the needs of participating organisations.

ACCESSIBILITY:

The aforementioned needs assessment should include a component that identifies and addresses all accessibility issues that LGBTQI+ organisations might face. After identifying the needs, governments should strive to meet the expressed needs in accessibility, including:

1: Accommodation and venues should be able to provide safe spaces, breaks, childcare, and disability needs, including facilities that enable physical access, inclusive sanitary facilities, sign language interpreters, and care workers who can provide individual assistance.

2: Remuneration should factor in the time and resources spent on the consultation process, which should be budgeted in consultation right from the start.

3: Other logistical arrangements, including translation services, visa sponsorship (three months at least), subsistence provision, and travel assistance, should also be duly addressed as an integral part of the planning and implementation process.

Ahead of the consultation sessions, governments should develop guidelines and briefing sessions for facilitators (if applicable) to use accessible language free of complex, bureaucratic, and jargonistic terms and foster spaces for LGBTQI+ organisations to ask critical questions and engage with the government.

To meet the identified needs related to accessibility, governments should strive to allocate sufficient budget in a timely, flexible, and transparent manner, ensuring that the resource planning and mobilisation can adequately support the consultation process.

# CLEAR BENEFITS AND SUSTAINABLE/ COMMITTED FUNDING:

The overall consultation process should ensure that LGBTQI+ organisations are supported to access different policy spaces and shape decision-making processes affecting their lived realities by reshaping power relations, establishing the aforementioned essential structural processes, and allocating resources.

In addition to remuneration, governments should provide a diverse array of professional capacity development opportunities and resources by using the contextual analysis method stated above to identify their expressed needs for LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in and contribute to consultations as such meaningfully.

The consultation outcomes should inform the governments of the requisite steps and activities to contribute to changing the system in the long term, including aspects related to its strategy, funding mechanisms, and policy/programme development in decision-making areas related to the WPS Architecture. Governments should also play a proactive role in facilitating collaborative and cordial relationships among LGBTQI+ organisations to build long-term strategic alliances.

Providing sufficient funds and resources is central, as limited resources often force CSOs into vicious competition. In this regard, governments can improve the funding mechanisms such as providing more flexible modality of funding schemes that would enable CSOs to effectively respond to the increasingly hostile environment full of oppositional forces, including the anti-gender actors described in **Chapter 4**, simplifying the bureaucratic requirements on reporting and application to alleviate the administrative burden, providing fora, platforms, and resources for CSOs to forge meaningful and sustainable partnerships with each other.

SUFFICIENT FUNDS AND RESOURCES ENABLES CSOS TO
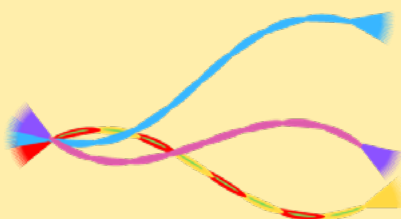
BUILD LONG-TERM STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

RESPOND TO HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT AND OPPOSITIONAL FORCES

BUILD MEANINGFUL AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

FEEDBACK AND ACTION RESULTING FROM CONTRIBUTION:

Following the conclusion of the consultation process, governments should provide clear and timely feedback on the synthesised recommendations and actions in an accessible language and format within six weeks if possible, with built-in mechanisms that allow participants to pose questions and provide feedback on the recommendations and outcome document. The feedback should also include an integral process to allow participating LGBTQI+ organisations to evaluate the level of inclusivity and accessibility related to the consultation process. The schedule and roadmap should be communicated before the consultation process starts. Regarding formally crediting the work of participating LGBTQI+ organisations, governments should exercise due diligence in seeking consent so that the participants' safety is not compromised.

LGBTQI+ organisations should actively validate and continuously shape the outcome and recommendations from the consultation. In disseminating the findings, governments should ensure that the key outcome information is communicated to all the relevant stakeholders, including debriefings, reports, and follow-up convenings accessible to the participating organisations.

After the dissemination process, governments should strive to ensure the consultation outcome is duly integrated into the decision-making process relating to the WPS Architecture and that the participating LGBTQI+ organisations are continually informed of the updates on how their contributions are shaping the policy frameworks, structures, and processes.

DATA COLLECTION AND LEARNING:

In collaboration with LGBTQI+ organisations, governments should work on collecting quality gender-disaggregated data across the SOGIESC spectrum to account for the lived experiences and needs of LGBTQI+ individuals, in particular when it comes to queer women who are often treated as straight/cis women in wars and conflict settings. Many LGBTQI+ organisations tend to have in-depth situational understanding of the contexts but lack the resources to conduct extensive research and study to generate high-quality data using a human-rights based approach. Governments should also consider providing necessary resources, finances, and networks to enable LGBTQI+ organisations to conduct more research and scoping work to understand the lived realities of LGBTQI+ groups better so that they can be better fed into the WPS Architecture. Meanwhile, it is important that the intersectionality-disaggregated data generated, along with trails of evidence, lessons learned, and findings, are properly stored and advocated in a way accessible to LGBTQI+ organisations and all other relevant stakeholders to facilitate transformative learning at all levels. Ensure that targeted and relevant training and technical, financial, and material support are in place for safe data collection and storage.

A-WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH:

When allocating budgets related to the WPS Architecture, governments should ensure that the budget is integrated in a whole-of-government manner in a sense that it is tied to and embedded in the relevant budgetary allocations over long periods (e.g., multi-year budget planning as opposed to ones that are set to yearly renewal) so that the WPS activities are not subject to cuts in funding due to annual or semi-annual budget cycles when, for instance, austerity measures are adopted.

F. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- LGBTQI+ organisations often face various obstacles in meaningfully participating in the policy processes related to the WPS Architecture, including the failure of the government to centre their expertise, the difficult and untransparent nature of these processes, the intentional exclusion of LGBTQI+ actors by governments, and absence of safe channels and spaces, etc.

- To enable LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in policy processes at the UN level meaningfully, governments should remove participation barriers and better involve LGBTQI+ organisations throughout the process by providing necessary information and resources in the monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up with existing UNSC resolutions.

- The further development of the WPS Agenda presents another opportunity to participate in policy processes at the UN level. On the one hand, CSO networks have an active role in fostering an intersectional and inclusive environment by eliminating gatekeeping practices and sharing critical resources and information. On the other hand, governments should proactively address the knowledge gaps and misconceptions about LGBTQI+ groups in the policy space and provide critical infrastructure and resources at the high-level policy fora.

- To enable LGBTQI+ organisations to participate in and shape the drafting and implementation meaningfully, M&E of NAPs, governments should hold extensive consultations with LGBTQI+ organisations during the drafting phase, establish formalised partnerships with LGBTQI+ organisations during the implementation phase, set up clear indicators, specific timelines, regular reporting mechanisms, and preventatives measures against backsliding during the M&E phase.

- Governments can play an essential role in fostering effective and meaningful engagement with LGBTQI+ organisations and individuals, which lies at the heart of implementing the Agenda, policy processes, and NAPs more inclusive and reflective of their needs, perspectives, priorities, and realities.

G. LEARNING EXERCISES

Of all the concrete, actionable strategies mentioned above, can you identify a list of ones you can readily implement and adopt in your work context?

What are some of the key barriers that you will likely encounter in adopting these strategies? How would you overcome them? What other critical resources and structural changes need to be in place?

Of all the actionable recommendations mentioned in the last section, which are most relevant to your work? Can you list the top three options you can readily adopt and implement in your work context?

1:

2:

3:

What else is missing for you to push for the change that you would like to see? Can you sketch a roadmap of short-term, medium-term, and long-term actions in the space below?

SHORT-TERM   **MEDIUM-TERM**   **LONG-TERM**

H. FURTHER READING

OutRight Action International (2020) The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and its Implications for LGBTIQ People. Available at: https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/WomenPeaceSecurity2020.pdf [Accessed 20 Apr. 2023].

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2019) 1325 Civil Society Scoring card. Available at: https://gnwp.org/1325-civil-society-scorecard/ [Accessed 20 Apr. 2023].

Intersex Human Rights Australia (2012) Forms and Data Collection. Available at: https://ihra.org.au/forms/ [Accessed 20 Apr. 2023].

Bueno-Hansen, P. (2018) 'The Emerging LGBTI Rights Challenge to Transitional Justice in Latin America', The International Journal of Transitional Justice, 12 (1), pp. 126-45. Available at: https://academic.oup.com/ijtj/article-abstract/12/1/126/4728987 [Accessed 12 June 2023].

CHAPTER 4:

LGBTQI+ rights at peril: a deep dive into anti-gender and oppositional actors, their characteristics, and narratives

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

· Identify the common characteristics, patterns, and strategies of anti-gender actors.
· Recognise the nuances and intricacies in the oppositional narratives deployed against the imperative to meaningfully include LGBTQI+ groups in the WPS Architecture and acquire evidence-based knowledge to articulate workable responses against these unfounded narratives.
· Develop an in-depth understanding of the critical need to build an intersectional and inclusive alliance to counter the anti-gender movement.
· Sketch an actionable and concrete way forward in your work context.

A. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF ANTI-GENDER ACTORS THAT UNDERMINE LGBTQI+ RIGHTS

In **Chapter 1**, we discussed how the cis-heteronormative binary way of framing gender in the WPS Agenda has a negative impact on LGBTQI+ individuals and also hinders the WPS Agenda from living up to its full transformative potential. The rising influence of anti-gender actors around the globe further entrenches these harmful gender norms[14]. To ensure that LGBTQI+ individuals and organisations are meaningfully included in the WPS Agenda, it is thus vital to better understand these anti-gender actors and which common strategies

they deploy. This chapter offers a general overview of the common characteristics of anti-gender actors that undermine LGBTQI+ (and women) rights, with the understanding that these harms can be greatly compounded during wars and conflicts.

The most common uniting trait of anti-gender actors is that they tend to seek the restriction of LGBTQI+ rights, in particular their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), sprawling across a wide spectrum of actors

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[14]CFFP published in 2021 a study on transnational anti-gender movements with a broad comparative analysis of these movements: Denkovski, D., Bernarding, N & Lunz, K. (2021). Power Over Rights: Understanding and Countering the Anti-Gender Campaigns. Available at: https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/2022/11/15/power-over-rights-understanding-and-countering-the-anti-gender-campaigns/

in various sectors, including governments, politicians, non-state actors, and trans-exclusionary radical feminists (also known as 'TERFs') and sometimes those that are within progressive movements. They are often part of transnational multi-level groups and alliances. The anti-gender movement is highly organised (while not centralised), well-funded, and interconnected globally. Situated in the context of the general shrinking of civic space, freedom, and democratic backsliding, anti-gender actors have not been mobilising against gender or the rights of women and LGBTQI+ individuals. Rather, they use these issues to reinforce or amplify their power, promoting social and political hierarchies that benefit them in the face of their perceived decline. They advance conservative ideas that aim to promote a worldview in which the rights of dominant social groups that are currently in positions of power take precedence in relation to the rights of the politically marginalised (e.g., the right to faith and religious freedom for some trumps the sexual health and reproductive rights of those marginalised including LGBTQI+ groups) (Denkovski et al. 2021).

To understand the mobilisation strategy and working modality of the anti-gender movement, it helps to look at their main conceptual tool, composition, and common strategies and tools:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK — OPPOSING "GENDER IDEOLOGY":

Originally a term coined by the Vatican, Catholic scholars, and activists in the 1990s and propagated in the public sphere since then, opposition to so-called gender ideology is based on a set of claims that radical "gender feminists" and the 'homosexual agenda' are seeking to undermine the natural order and anthropological foundation of the family and society by challenging the natural order of things (i.e., the 'natural' hierarchy between men and women and the 'abnormality' of queer sexualities and gender expressions) (Denkovski et al. 2021).

GROUP COMPOSITION:

There is a striking diversity in the range of anti-gender actors as opposed to the common misconception that they tend to fall into the same ideological matrix, i.e., they are not all right-wing actors (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). While their motivations to either lead or support anti-gender movements can vary tremendously, anti-gender actors are united by the ability to "squeeze different discourses into one big threat" and "construct "gender/gender ideology" as "an attack on at least one of the three Ns" that they purport to defend: Nature, the Nation, or Normality (Kuhar & Paternotte 2017). Broadly speaking, there are three main groups of anti-gender actors.

The old: the Catholic Church, the Russian Orthodox church, religious bodies, right-wing think tanks and institutions, many based in the United States and national governments. This group of actors tend to have established relationships with power centres worldwide by planting their representatives or surrogates in local and national administrations, securing observer status in international fora, or investing huge funds to advance their political agenda.

The new: anti-gender actors in this category are groups created in the past decade to fight against so-called gender ideology. Many of these actors assume the form of concerned parents' or citizens' initiatives which display significant overlap in visual identity, branding, and messaging worldwide. This group of anti-gender actors also includes NGOs backed by governments and other institutions promoting anti-equality messages, as well as political parties across the globe that have either been founded to block access to abortion services and SRHR for trans people by strategic litigation and smearing campaigns or jumped on the bandwagon for political leverage.

The allies: academics, politicians, corporations, journalists, and media outlets who do not have a shared identity in particular but provide a platform for or cater to anti-gender views.

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[15]As many evangelical movements are not old per se, the term old here refers to the fact that the origin of the actors in this category can usually be associated with the older, more conventional establishments as opposed to the newer ones.

COMMON STRATEGIES AND TOOLS:

The anti-gender movement deploys a variety of strategies to pursue its goals of undermining women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights, and civil society participation, as well as maintaining power hierarchies, including public opinion manipulation tactics such as astroturfing[16], disinformation campaigns, the harassment of progressive activists, state power capture either directly or through lobbying, and coordinated efforts to engage in and disrupt policy-making processes at various international fora.

There is also a notable rise in the secularisation of anti-gender narratives and their adoption of rights-based language in their engagement with legislative and legal challenges to policies aiming for equality.

Take the UN Human Rights Council, for example — throughout the 1990s and 2000s, anti-gender actors were actively engaged in disrupting policy processes (Denkovski et al. 2022) by:

1: **Relativising human rights:** capturing progressive discourse and challenging the universality of human rights by embedding relativist arguments (Cupać & Ebetürk 2020; Lewin 2021).

2: **Distorting the interpretation:** calling for a return to the false interpretation of the human rights framework as codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in turn framing the inclusion of the right to abortion and LGBTQI+ rights as being against the original intention of the drafters.[17]

3: **Making a case against imperialism:** portraying approaches to codify the protection of the human rights of women and LGBTQI+ people, historically associated with Western countries, as the few advancing cultural imperialism against the global majority, whose values, traditions, and beliefs are subjugated.

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[16]Astroturfing: "an activity intended to create the illusion of widespread grassroots mobilisation, despite having no connection to the grassroots. They often use misleading names or are deceptive about their purpose and funding" (Denkovski 2022).

[17]While not explicitly mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), it must be noted that this false way of framing distorts the original meaning and intention of the framework as the fundamental rights that LGBTQI+ individuals are entitled to are inherent to all human beings, irrespective of their nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. As stipulated in the framework, everyone should be equally entitled to their human rights without discrimination which are all interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for South-East Asia n.d.).

The most crucial strategic tool at the disposal of the anti-gender movement is funding. They are significantly better funded globally than human rights advocates, particularly those advocating for women's rights and LGBTQI+ organisations. While most of these funds stem from other anti-gender actors, governments purporting to champion progressive values on LGBTQI+ inclusion have also been found to provide substantial financial support for the anti-gender movement. A telling case in point is the recent report that shows from 2016 - 2021, at least five million (USD) of development aid from Europe and the US flowed to projects implemented by or benefiting churches in Ghana whose leaders have supported 'The Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill', which introduces harsh sentences for advocating for sexual and gender minorities rights (Provost & Sekyiamah n.d.). The interplay between development aid money and anti-gender movements is also seen in the case of Uganda, an aid-recipient country that receives one of the highest amounts of development funds, which recently introduced a new bill rooted in the British colonial law that criminalises same-sex conduct with draconian penalties including lifetime imprisonment and death sentence (Carbonaro 2023; Provost 2023).

B. COMMON UNFOUNDED NARRATIVES AGAINST CENTRING THE NEEDS, PRIORITIES, AND LIVED REALITIES OF LGBTQI+ GROUPS IN THE WPS AGENDA AND POTENTIAL RESPONSES

This section outlines some of the most common narratives propagated by both anti-gender and feminist actors who oppose the inclusion of LGBTQI+ groups in the WPS Agenda. Under each oppositional narrative, a potential response is provided to effectively debunk these often misleading and harmful claims. These responses aim to demonstrate that centring the needs, priorities, and lived experiences of LGBTQI+ groups in the WPS Agenda is, in fact, not an impossible feat. On the contrary, these perceived obstacles can be overcome with the right tools, knowledge, and strategies. Before you continue reading this guide, here is a reminder that all significant social changes usually occur in a climate of persistent resistance that does not seem ready to welcome the impending shifts. At times, strategic disruption might be necessary to bring about change instead of simply waiting and asking for change to be handed over. Thus, embracing the uncomfortable spaces and identifying the right levers and tools to use the windows of opportunities to push for transformative change is critical.

The WPS Agenda should focus on (cis-heterosexual) women instead of incorporating the rights and perspectives of LGBTQI+[18] — this narrative rests on the presumption that the WPS Agenda should focus on women and girls due to the limited scope of its mandate which explicitly focuses on women and girls. A broader inclusion of LGBTQI+ groups in the WPS Agenda will shift resources, funds, and attention from women and girls whom the WPS is mandated to protect. Certain advocates of this narrative also tend to draw lines of arguments and reasoning from the so-called TERFs, who often claim that the cis-womanhood is at threat when non-cis-gendered queer people, such as trans women, are included in spaces purportedly reserved only for women.

RESPONSE:

While it is important to acknowledge that women's rights activists have worked hard to create the space of the Agenda in which the needs and lived realities of women and girls are centred, the inclusion of rights and perspectives of the LGBTQI+ groups are not at odds with the scope of the Agenda's mandate. For one, women and girls are not one homogenous group with the same experiences in wars and conflicts, many of whom experience other forms of discrimination and marginalisation depending on their intersecting identities. As mentioned in **Chapter 1**, the WPS Agenda must follow an intersectional approach, interrogating the root causes and drivers of violence and conflicts, such as patriarchal and binary gender norms. By only focusing on women and girls, the risk increases if they are seen as a monolithic group. Moreover, such an understanding reinforces the gender binary system, risking entrenching the false and gendered stereotype that women and girls are vulnerable subjects needing more (militarised) protection instead of autonomous actors with agency who can assume many roles in conflict beyond victims. Secondly, the binary gender norms and performance are a product of patriarchy. They can aggravate existing harms, including the continuous erasure of queer women's experiences - thus falling short of the goals of the WPS Agenda even in a binary understanding. Harmful gender norms underpinned by patriarchy can harm everyone, in particular, non-cis-gendered and queer persons such as LBTQ women who suffer from Sexual Gender-based

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[18]This stance is shared not only by anti-gender actors but also by feminists working on the WPS Agenda as well.

Violence (SGBV) in conflict and humanitarian contexts and who do not receive adequate health service if their needs and lived realities are not taken into account. Focusing on cis-heterosexual women only is simply making a conscious choice of ignoring the reality that many LGBTQI+ people face disproportionate and differentiated impacts in war and conflict settings. Crucially, oppressive power structures that lie at the core of driving conflict-related violence, such as the patriarchy, would only remain intact, hampering the potential of achieving long-term and transformative change.

While the limited availability of resources is a persistent challenge faced by many CSOs and activists in the policy space, fundamental rights are not a zero-sum game. Queer people who already bear the brunt of harm should not have to wait any longer. Therefore, it is all the more important to form sustainable and strategic alliances and work towards advocating for flexible and sustainable funding sources from donors to render intersectional advocacy viable (see **Chapter 3** on how to better build alliances). Meanwhile, governments should adopt a consultative and participatory approach as well as provide critical resources such as flexible, long-term, earmarked funding when engaging with CSOs to understand where their constraints are, enabling them to participate in and shape the policy design and processes of the Agenda (see more in **Chapter 3** on how the consultative process and funding practices can look like).
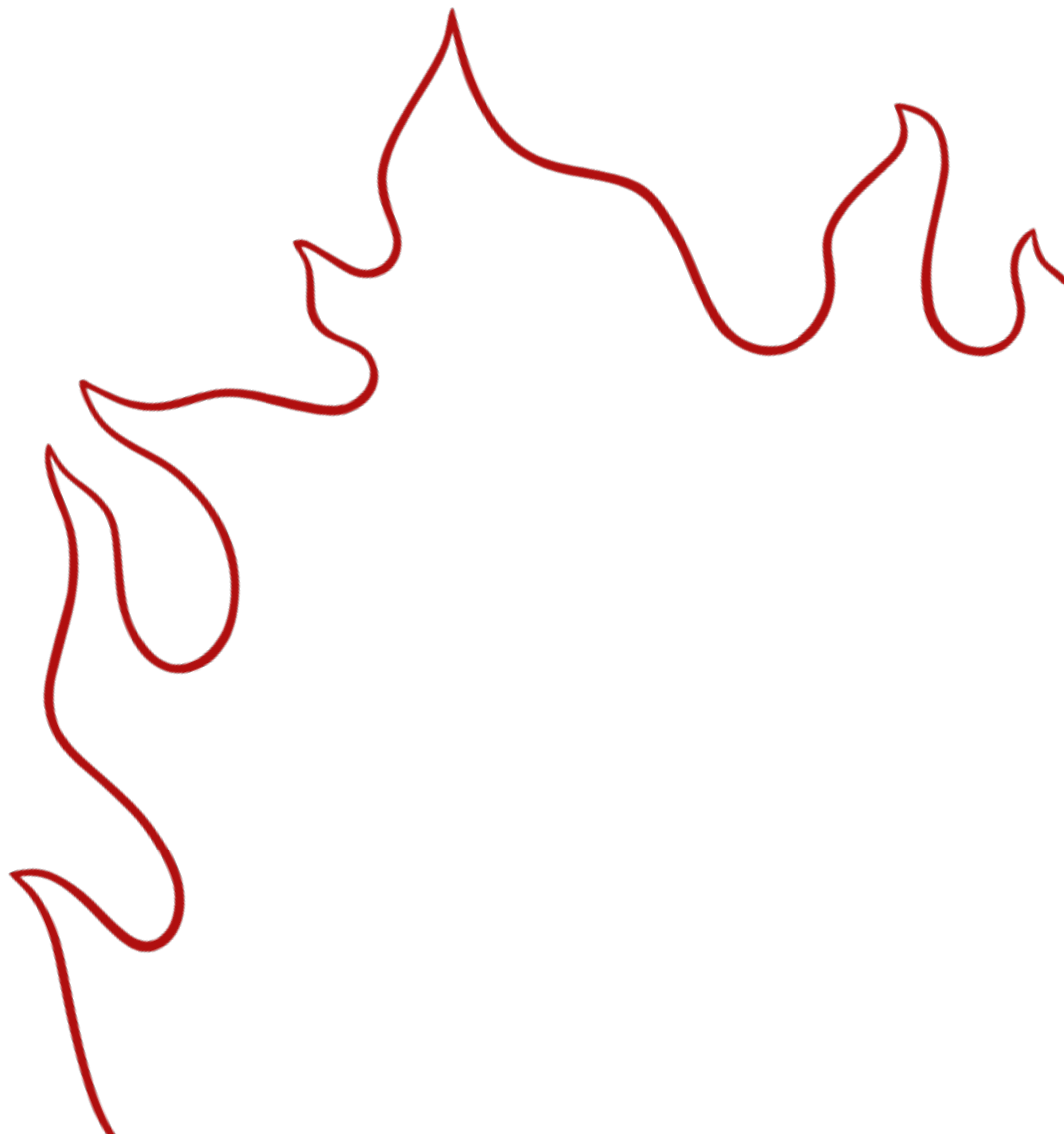
THE POLITICAL DEADLOCK NARRATIVE:

The structure of formal multilateral organisations such as the UNSC and Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as well as the current geopolitical setup, does not allow for the realisation of LGBTQI+ rights within the WPS Agenda, as anti-gender forces such as Russia, the Vatican, and the US government under Trump's Administration and other powerful lobbying powers would leverage their power to block the process in any capacity they can. It is assumed that the critical window of opportunity has passed or not yet arrived where sufficient political leverage exists, and the efforts would ultimately render futile. Pushing for the inclusion of LGBTQI+ rights in the WPS Agenda in the current international political climate will only be a waste of resources and time at best and weaken existing language in the policy framework.

RESPONSE:

Despite the restrictive political setup at the multilateral level, there have been noticeable progress and precedents in the past couple of years that could serve as a source of inspiration, e.g., the 2015 UN Secretary-General Report on Conflict-related Sexual Violence; 2016 Report on Women, Peace, and Security; Report on Conflict-related violence based on Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI) by The UN Independent Expert On Protection Against Violence And Discrimination Based On Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity: (UN IESOGI n.d.). In highly politicised environments such as the UN Security Council, manoeuvring tactics can help break the seemingly insurmountable political deadlock. These tactics can include:

1: **Strategic framing** by focusing on the responsibility of the UN Security Council to address violence in conflict, including against vulnerable minorities, e.g., 2015 first Arria-Formula meeting where the issue of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was brought up for the first time at the UN Security Council through an informal mechanism that allowed for constructive and substantive discussions among a diverse range of stakeholders on topics that would have usually been beyond the scope of UNSC meeting agendas).

2: **Issue linkage** by connecting LGBTQI+ rights to the broader human rights framework and building the case of how the body of international human rights law applies to all people regardless of their gender identity and expression and sexual orientation. For instance, bridging connections by linking these issues with actors that work on similar policy areas and priorities related to human rights, such as OHCHR, might prove particularly useful. Governments should also conduct a comprehensive review of institutional priorities and interests to locate opportunities to frame LGBTQI+ in WPS within these policy priorities in documented formats, e.g., policy frameworks, action places, strategies, and programs so that it is not relegated as a standalone marginal issue.

Importantly, preemptively not advancing the rights of LGBTQI+ in the Agenda in expectation of strong opposition is a case of anticipatory obedience and self-censorship. Pushing for changes at formalised high-level policy fora has intrinsic value through setting the agenda and disrupting political stalemate, which is conducive to paving the critical foundation for policy change in the long run. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 came from decades of ceaseless advocacy work from a network of engaged civil society organisations. Contrary to common belief, the highly formalised and hierarchical entities such as the UNSC are not completely inaccessible. There are often nested informal mechanisms, including the Arria-Formula and the UN Informal Expert Group, which have proven to drive a more inclusive interpretation of gender and inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons despite the bureaucratic barricades (see the case study example on the Arria-formula Meeting and the UN Informal Expert Group in Iraq below).

The aforementioned risks in this argument raise valid concerns about the specific risks that could arise at these high-level fora, such as the UNSC and OSCE. In certain scenarios and close consultation with LGBTQI+ rights activists, it might be necessary to look for other suitable spaces and forums for moving forward.

Foregrounding LGBTQI+ civil society inputs in policy processes and supporting their participation can serve as a considerable counterweight against power opposition. Governments should not only provide space and easy-to-administer funding schemes but also secure meaningful participatory mechanisms at the multilateral fora while making legal analysis and international jurisprudence more accessible to non-legal oriented organisations to enable broader participation of CSOs at these high-level processes (Denkovski et al. 2022). See **Chapter 4** on the concrete roles and support that governments can enact.

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY BOX: ARIA-FORMULA MEETING

Arria-Formula Meeting: using a multi-faceted international strategy, OutRight Action International, MADRE, and the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) came together to advocate for the rights of women and LGBTQI+ individuals in Iraq. With the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), these three organisations focused on the UN Security Council. It achieved its first success in March 2015 when then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's report to the Security Council on conflict-related sexual violence acknowledged the targeting of LGBTQI+ individuals in Iraq, thanks to the release of their two reports. Later, a significant step was taken in August 2015 when the UNSC held the first ever Arria-Formula meeting on LGBTQI+ violations, an informal form of meeting convened at the initiative of members of the UNSC to hear the views of those usually excluded by the setup of the Security Council. During the meeting, LGBTQI+ individuals shared personal accounts of experiencing violence inflicted by ISIS and presented concrete recommendations along with local women's rights activists. This was the first time in the Security Council's history that the experiences of LGBTQI+ people in conflict were formally or informally addressed. The meeting was attended by 13 out of the 15 members of the Security Council, including all five permanent members. The recommendations from the panel helped UN member states and representatives of UN agencies to build a case for more substantive programming for LGBTQI+ persons in times of conflict, particularly in Iraq and Syria. Shortly after the Arria-Formula meeting, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) included an independent section on attacks based on sexual orientation in its periodic report on the human rights situation in Iraq. It started collecting information on LGBTQI+-related cases for a dedicated database in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR).

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY BOX: UN INFORMAL EXPERT GROUP ON IRAQ

In 2015, the UNSC established the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace, and Security ("Expert Group") during the annual debate on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). In March 2016, participants at a women's rights convening organised by MADRE and OutRight in partnership with the local Iraqi and Kurdish women's organisations Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) and Asuda addressed the violence by ISIS against LGBTQI+ people. They compiled recommendations for submission to the Expert Group. Following the convening, representatives from OWFI and IraQueer, Iraq's first and only LGBTI rights organisation, travelled to New York to prepare for the Expert Group's review on Iraq. OutRight and MADRE organised a briefing at the Dutch mission to the UN, which several government representatives and members of the Expert Group attended. After the Expert Group's official meeting on Iraq in April 2016, they produced a report with key recommendations for the UNSC to integrate into their work in Iraq. One of the recommendations was for UNSC to call on the government of Iraq to issue a directive clarifying that Iraqi NGOs can provide services, including shelter, to survivors of GBV. The inclusion of recommendations from local Iraqi organisations, including those representing LGBTQI+ groups, demonstrates that local activists have influenced the WPS agenda and multilateral system based on their perspectives and priorities on the ground (Davis & Stern 2019).

QUEER RIGHTS ARE A WESTERN IMPERIALISTIC PROJECT NARRATIVE:

Countries and communities in the Global South will not engage with this issue as topics such as gender and LGBTQI+ are Western, ethnocentric, and imperialistic. Proponents of this narrative often claim that queer identities are a unique and harmful import from the West with imperialistic intentions to meddle with the internal affairs of states in the Global South by imposing norms that have no precedents in the local cultures. Therefore, including LGBTQI+ individuals and organisations in the WPS Agenda is seen to be in collusion with the Western imperialist expansion that continuously erodes the sovereignty and independence of the Global South.

RESPONSE:

This narrative ignores that the binary and heteronormative system has not always been the norm. While rooted in some local cultural and religious mores, such as in cases of Russia, South Caucasus, and Serbia, the virulent local opposition against LGBTQI+ rights in many countries and regions is largely a manifestation of the lasting impact of colonialism which imported these harmful and regressive gender norms from the West, which in some cases has erased the history of LGBTQI+ people predating the colonial era. As mentioned before, people with diverse SOGIESC and activists for their rights have always existed worldwide. This is why it is vital to situate SOGIESC identities and manifestations of anti-gender/anti-rights movements in the local contexts and local specificities in pushing change. LGBTQI+ individuals are not a homogenous group; each local community has varied needs and priorities depending on the context.

Meanwhile, deep-seated systemic issues can be at play that lead to various forms of discrimination. A case in point is when anti-gender campaigns were opposing same-sex marriage in France in 2012/2013, LGBTQI+ activists in Ukraine were busy fighting a copycat anti-propaganda bill endorsed by Russian proxies and right-wing Ukrainian nationalists to secure protection from the emerging violence against queer people (Gevisser 2020). Ukrainian activists had concluded that centring marriage equality as the issue would have been counterproductive as it would have been weaponised by the opposition, thus hindering the broader movement.

Admittedly, the dominant scholarship and theoretical underpinnings on queerness originate from Western work and intellectual foundation. For instance, terms such as LGBTQI+ and queerness are largely derived from English, and Western knowledge production might not always resonate in local contexts. The human rights framework as we know it is also not ahistorical, continuing to reflect patriarchal and colonial modes of
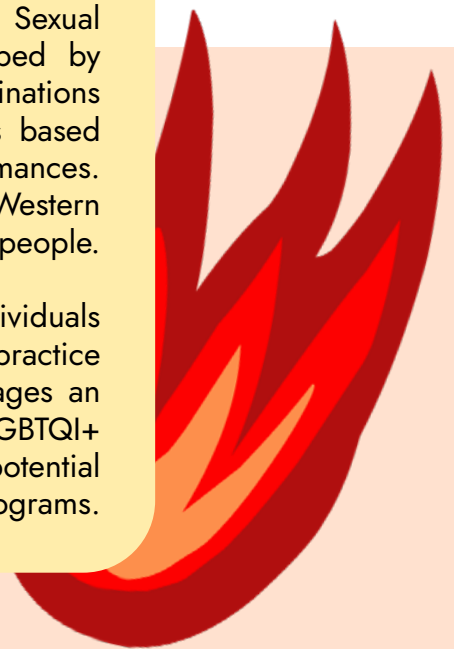
thinking (Gramer & Lynch 2018) dominated by the perspectives, interests, and privileges of heterosexual white men from the Global North. That being said, it is important to recognise that the set of fundamental rights and those concerning the rights of LGBTQI+ persons enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights and the Yogyakarta Principles are universal, indivisible, and inalienable. Reaffirming the universal principle of human rights is non-negotiable as anti-gender actors have been increasingly using the cultural relativism argument, i.e., human rights reflect the morals of Western thoughts and hence are not applicable in the local contexts to question and attack LGBTQI+ rights.

When centring the needs, perspectives, priorities, and lived realities of LGBTQI+ persons in the WPS Agenda, a critical consideration is that a top-down cookie-cutter approach comes with preconceived notions of what gender and queer identities must be avoided. At all times, it would be worth shifting the support onto local LGBTQI+ individuals and organisations in a way that respects the meaning, expression, and manifestation of queerness on their terms in the respective local context. To this end, governments should look to investing substantial efforts in advancing and protecting the rights of LGBTQI+ to centre the work of local civil society organisations, which not only have more legitimate representation of the affected groups but also bear a wealth of knowledge on their priorities, needs, and lived realities.

Box: the Sexual Practice and Gender Performance (SPGP) framework tool

One way to better include the LGBTQI+ groups in the WPS Architecture without necessarily resorting to the dominant discourses and categories on SOGIESC from the Global North is to use tools such as the Sexual Practice and Gender Performance (SPGP) framework developed by CTDC. The tool focuses on the social, cultural, and legal discriminations faced by LGBTQI+ individuals and non-normative heterosexuals based on their non-normative sexual practices and gender performances. It suggests that LGBTQI+ identity categories are often seen as Western imports, leading to societal backlashes against LGBTQI+ people.

The SPGP framework has proven effective in rallying non-LGBTQI+ individuals to seek changes in legal frameworks, promoting freedom of sexual practice and gender performance for all segments of society. It encourages an inclusive approach that does not require outing self-identified LGBTQI+ people in hostile contexts and environments. The framework also has potential applications in refugee protection, resettlement, and support programs.

The most crucial strategic tool at the disposal of the anti-gender movement is funding. They are significantly better funded globally than human rights advocates, particularly those advocating for women's rights and LGBTQI+ organisations. While most of these funds stem from other anti-gender actors, governments purporting to champion progressive values on LGBTQI+ inclusion have also been found to provide substantial financial support for the anti-gender movement. A telling case in point is the recent report that shows from 2016 - 2021, at least five million (USD) of development aid from Europe and the US flowed to projects implemented by or benefiting churches in Ghana whose leaders have supported 'The Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill', which introduces harsh sentences for advocating for sexual and gender minorities rights (Provost & Sekyiamah n.d.). The interplay between development aid money and anti-gender movements is also seen in the case of Uganda, an aid-recipient country that receives one of the highest amounts of development funds, which recently introduced a new bill rooted in the British colonial law that criminalises same-sex conduct with draconian penalties including lifetime imprisonment and death sentence (Carbonaro 2023; Provost 2023).

C. THE WAY FORWARD: A NEED TO FOSTER ALLIANCES AMONG WOMEN-LED ORGANISATIONS, PROGRESSIVE CSOS, AND LGBTQI+ GROUPS

In the previous sections of this chapter, we have learned that one of the biggest advantages of anti-gender actors is that they unite by the common goal of undermining the rights of women and LGBTQI+ groups despite the vast divergence in their political leanings, stances, and interests. Progressive CSOs, while sharing similar political stances and ideals, often tend to be divided on this front. In this context, CSOs should fully utilise the strongest leverage to build meaningful, sustainable, and effective alliances to bridge the rift. CSOs need to urgently rally efforts to identify strategic allies and develop tactics to forge sustainable and meaningful alliances, specifically framing, communicating, and tailoring engagement strategies. On the other hand, governments should also be responsible for bridging the critical gaps and providing the essential resources to build alliances.

Concretely CSOs can:

Build a shared vision and understanding of goals in intersectional advocacy. Although progressive CSOs might choose different ways to fight patriarchy, there are ample opportunities for organisations to come together to bridge the differences in intersectional advocacy. For instance, many issue areas that LGBTQ+ activists work closely on, including SRHR for queer people, are intrinsically linked to body autonomy, self-determination, and other related fundamental rights that women's rights organisations strive for. At the structural level, the root causes and drivers of inequalities and discrimination originate from the same intersecting structures, i.e., patriarchy, capitalism, racism, ableism, etc. CSOs must recognise that their focus issue areas should not be seen and addressed in silos. By building these strategic alliances in intersectional advocacy, CSOs can foster a vision and understanding of shared goals in the process, significantly amplifying the reach and efficacy of their work in an increasingly hostile environment. This can take the form of using the spaces you have access to advocate for the rights of LGBTQI+ organisations and amplify their voices without necessarily being an organisation only dedicated to the rights of queer people. Importantly, intersectional advocacy has often been misrepresented, trivialised, and dismissed as 'identity politics' by anti-gender actors who view their rights and position as being increasingly threatened. However, this is a gross misinterpretation of what intersectionality is. As explained in **Chapter 1**, intersectionality is a frame of analysis that seeks to transform marginalised groups' material and lived realities by tackling the underlying intersecting power structures. What it does not do is simply resort to tick-box exercises for minorities to only treat the symptoms of the issues without addressing their root causes. To better rally support from our allies, there are several key considerations:

1: Recognise a stronger need to be in solidarity with each other in the joint struggle. It does not mean one must become the subject expert on the issue but acknowledging that building alliances and sharing responsibilities based on one's best capacities will strengthen our voices, and our causes are more likely to prevail.

2: Communicate the message to reframe the discourse that LGBTQI+ rights are not 'special' or 'extra add-ons' for the LGBTQI+ community. Rather, it calls for long overdue fundamental rights for a group of persons traditionally excluded from the most basic provisions for leading a dignified life.

3: Effectively communicate that the fundamental rights we fight for are not a pie, meaning that the fulfilment of rights for one group does not diminish those for others.

4: Humanise the conversation by bringing in real experiences and stories of people (see **Chapter 1** on hierarchisation of knowledge).

5: Leverage a data-driven advocacy approach to show interlinkages among systems of discrimination to build long-term trust, understanding, and solidarity.

6: Identify the movable middle: when dealing with opposition, it is important to adopt a nuanced approach to differentiate the benignly ignorant actors without hostile intentions (e.g., accidental misgendering) and those with malicious intentions to harm (e.g., anti-gender actors). Through education and constructive dialogue, the former can be rallied as part of our movement instead of alienating them further. Humanising the dialogue and crafting the message can help us locate the factions from the oppositional side and rally them to join our cause.

7: Be constantly reflective and critical of the movement itself. For instance, the peace movement has been criticised for being dominated by those who are often white, middle-class, and able-bodied and ignoring historical injustices such as racism. It would be vital to open collaborative pathways and build intersectional alliances with other organisations by centring marginalised communities' lived experiences and perspectives.

Advancing the rights of women and LGBTQI+ groups in the fight against the anti-gender movement calls for an intersectional and holistic approach. For governments, this means allocating substantial human, diplomatic, and financial resources, focusing on supporting feminist civil society organisations, both financially and otherwise, to challenge the hierarchical and unjust order the anti-gender movement strives to defend.

Concretely governments can:

Facilitate the creation of spaces for dialogue and engagement: create platforms and spaces that allow civil society organisations to collaborate, share information, and build networks. Such spaces must centre the allocation of critical funding and resources as a key step to enable the participatory and inclusive space, including fair remuneration and honorarium for engagement with civil society organisations and essential infrastructure such as venue, catering, and security services. Importantly, these spaces must be accessible and safe as governments increase accountability and tackle impunity in human rights violations, putting the protection of human rights defenders and civil society organisations at the front and centre (see **Chapter 3** for how this can be done in practice). One key consideration is that this does not necessarily mean that governments should be actively present in such spaces, as CSOs might not always feel the safest and included when governmental representatives are in the room. Rather, governments should assume the responsibility of providing the aforementioned resources and strive not to intrude into the space without an explicit invitation from the CSOs.

Allocate sufficient, long-term, easy-to-administer funds to drive political change by enabling organisations to challenge power structures and shape political discourses instead of only 'treating the symptoms' of a broken system. Financially support CSOs to conduct political advocacy work that promotes LGBTQI+ and women's rights, with the understanding that political advocacy work is as important as treating both the symptoms and root causes of violence in wars and conflicts that affect LGBTQI+ people. Ensure that at least fifty percent of funds earmarked for gender equality goes to feminist grassroots and LGBTQI+ organisations and not to IOs, other governments, and local chapters of INGOs (Denkovski et al. 2021).

Support smart sanctions at multilateral fora to ensure that they do not negatively impact the funding source for CSOs you want to support. For instance, when blanket sanctions such as the cut in the EU funds were meted out to Polish municipalities that have declared themselves as LGBTQI+ free zones, pro-gender actors in the country were also faced with the quandary of decrease in funds that were already scarce in the policy space (Denkovski et al. 2021).

Encourage and support expert bodies in the multilateral system to develop more in-house capacity for intersectionality. This may also take the form of seconding gender experts to these bodies. Make use of all extrabudgetary mechanisms available, such as voluntary contributions or seconded positions, to achieve this:

1: Mainstream gender equality and human rights throughout the foreign and diplomatic service.

2: Ensure that inclusive definitions are provided to concepts such as gender equality or LGBTQI+ rights, which specify that these are not new notions in the existing framework, during negotiations and in finally agreed texts. Pre-empt the misuse of lack of clarity on language due to translation differences to oppose human rights for all by finding culturally responsive ways to do this advocacy. This can be achieved by conscious engagement with the understanding that different cultures have of gender equality.

3: As part of engaging with states 'on the fence', engage in strategic conversations with all delegations on all resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly. Make every effort to ensure that members of all regional groups are systematically consulted (Agostini 2022). This can lead to the drafting of texts that end up with a broader support base.

4: Provide and guarantee space for feminist civil society input in intergovernmental meetings and fairly compensate activists for their time and expertise as a short-term measure (Denkovski et al. 2022).

D. KEY TAKEAWAYS

🔥 United by the common goal of restricting LGBTQI+ (and women's) rights, anti-gender actors are usually transnational, multi-level, highly organised (while not centralised), well-funded, interconnected, and diverse in political and ideological leanings.

🔥 The context of shrinking civic space and democratic backsliding is essential to understanding the main motive of anti-gender actors, who instrumentalise LGBTQI+ and SRHR rights issues to reinforce and amplify their power by instituting socio-political hierarchies that benefit them in the face of their perceived decline in power.

🔥 The reasons why anti-gender actors either lead or support anti-gender movements can vary greatly due to their diverse origins. However, they often join forces in merging their opponents — those in the pro-rights movements into one main threat — gender ideology which undermines the so-called natural order, family structure, and normality.

The range of strategies and narratives deployed by anti-gender actors to pursue their goal of undermining LGBTQI+ and SRHR rights has become increasingly diverse, characterised by a rise in their co-optation and adoption of rights-based and secular language, exploitation of the lack of consensus across languages on terms such as gender, and ability to rally significantly more funding than pro-rights movements. Their narrative against the inclusion of LGBTQI+ perspectives in the Architecture (sometimes including feminists and anti-genders alike) includes that the framing of the Agenda as well as the limited resources available, the restricted setup and complex political dynamics in the UN Security Council, and the imperialistic nature of LGBTQI+ rights do not allow for focusing on LGBTQI+ issues within the Agenda. However, none of these claims holds, as the inclusion of LGBTQI+ perspectives is key to living up to the transformative potential of the Agenda.

Compared to the unity often observed in anti-gender actors despite their overt differences in political leanings, stances, and interests, pro-rights progressive actors are often divided on the front of jointly defending LGBTQI+ and SRHR rights. Therefore, there is a more critical need than ever for progressive actors to build sustainable and meaningful alliances. Meanwhile, governments can actively bridge the gaps and provide essential resources to facilitate alliance building.

E. LEARNING EXERCISES

What are some of the most prominent attributes of anti-gender movements/ actors you have witnessed in your country and work context?

Of all the actionable recommendations mentioned in the last section, which are most relevant to your work? Can you list the top three options you can readily adopt and implement in your work context?

1:

2:

3:

What else is missing for you to push for the change that you would like to see? Can you sketch a roadmap of short-term, medium-term, and long-term actions in the space below?

SHORT-TERM   **MEDIUM-TERM**   **LONG-TERM**

F. FURTHER READING

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APPENDICES

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- Eva Tabbasam, GAPS UK.

- Global Affairs Canada.

- Helena Berchtold, MOSAIC (MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration and Capacity Building).

- Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs.

- Kirthi Jayakumar, The Gender Security Project.

- Dr. Linda Helfrich, Sector Programme Human Rights, GIZ.

- Dr. Angela Langenkamp, Gender Commissioner, GIZ.

- Lucía Ramírez Bolívar, Dejusticia's Gender Research Coordinator.

- Neela Ghoshal, Outright International.

- Rosalie Fransen, Working Group Member 2022.

- Sahar Moazami, Working Group Member.

- Zeynep Pınar Erdem, MOSAIC Mena.

And all additional members and participants who wish to remain anonymous.

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