

nsrp

NIGERIA STABILITY
AND RECONCILIATION
PROGRAMME

Guidance on Mainstreaming Conflict Sensitivity, Gender and Social Inclusion in Research

The Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) supports interventions to reduce violent conflict in Nigeria and its impact on the most vulnerable groups. NSRP works in four inter-related programming areas (security and governance, economic and natural resources, women and girls and research, media and advocacy). It supports peace initiatives at the national level and in eight target states (Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Rivers and Yobe) across four zones worst affected by violence (Middle Belt, Niger Delta, North East and North West).

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Introduction

The fields of development and peacebuilding stress the importance of evidence-based interventions. Research is a key tool for gathering the data needed to develop and influence design and implementation of programming. However, it involves interacting with social, political and economic dynamics of the context and this interaction is not automatically positive or neutral in its impact. Researchers are increasingly trying to ensure conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion analyses and approaches inform all steps of the research process with this in mind. This is important not only to 'do no harm' but also to 'do more good.'

However, in many cases, researchers can struggle not to be merely being tokenistic in this effort. Understanding of how to translate from principles into practice, particularly through a combined approach, is limited. Studies lack awareness of the dynamics of power and conflict as a result: between and within communities and social groups and between men, women, boys and girls. Without reflecting these insights into the process, research can not only inherently harm people and communities but findings and recommendations will be less reflective of realities and thereby less meaningful.

This guide builds on existing ethical standards, which integrate elements of conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion, albeit without taking a sustained approach.¹ Against the background of existing traditions and based on experience from NSRP, this guidance document is aimed at helping persons involved in commissioning, planning and conducting research to think through ways to integrate conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion analyses and approaches at every phase of the research cycle.

The guide consists of two parts:

- A matrix with questions to answer for each stage of the research process.
- A narrative that explains the steps, shares lessons from NSRP research studies and gives illustrative examples from the Nigerian context.

¹Examples include United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF) Version 2.0 June 2012. Published by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); World Bank Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group, Nairobi, Kenya; M. Marsh, *Research Toolkit for Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Survivors and their Children Born of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Qualitative and Action Oriented Research with a Focus on Survivors who Conceive and Bear Children as a Result of Sexual Violence in Conflict* (UNICEF, 2013), WHO, *Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence Against Women*, (WHO, 2001), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview*, (United Nations, 2002). Not all of these are focused on research specifically. They all take different approaches and seldom integrate understandings of gender, social inclusion and conflict sensitivity.

Conceptual Clarification

Conflict sensitivity is based on the assumption that interventions influence conflict dynamics positively or negatively. Key principles of conflict sensitivity are that actors should ensure processes are transparent, participatory and inclusiveness of actors, issues and perceptions. They should be impartial in relation to actors and issues, respect people's ownership of the conflict and take accountability for their actions. Conflict sensitivity involves the following steps:

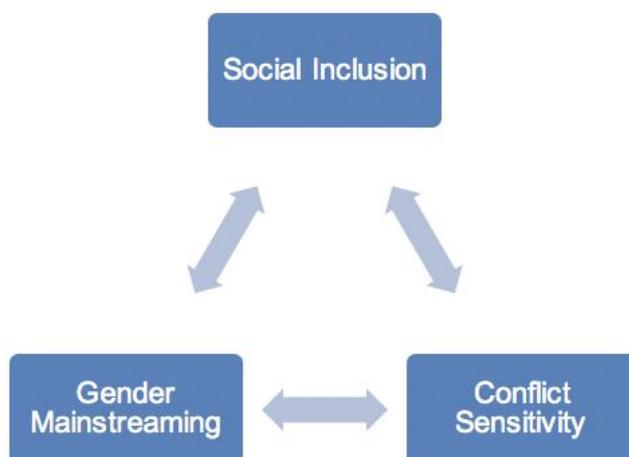
- 1) Understand the conflict context by conducting regular and up to date conflict analysis.
- 2) Understand the mutual interaction between the intervention and context by conducting impact assessments of intended and unintended consequences.
- 3) Act in a way to minimise negative impact and maximise positive impact by adjusting the intervention and adapting presence.

Gender analysis is based on the understanding that women and men are raised to see different roles, behaviour and attributes as appropriate, affecting how they think, are valued and relate and their access to power and resources. Gender intersects with factors such as ethnicity, origin, religion, age and location. To transform gender relations, researchers need to make the concerns and experiences of girls, women, boys and men integral to their studies and analysis. Key steps to attain this are:

- 1) Analyse how gender roles and stereotypes impact issues under consideration and the differential impact of the issue on girls, women, boys and men.
- 2) Ensure meaningful participation of women who are often marginalised and overlooked.
- 3) Design and implement research to transform unequal gendered power relations

Social inclusion principle is based on the need to reverse the systematic exclusion of groups from social, political and economic activities and institutions that lead to inability to access resources, participate in society or assert rights. Markers often used to discriminate include race, sex, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) status, indigene/ settler status and class. Being socially inclusive requires researchers to:

- 1) Analyse which groups are socially excluded in a community and the nature of exclusion to ensure this analysis informs design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- 2) Address barriers to meaningful participation.
- 3) Put in place strategies to reach particularly marginalised and excluded groups and developing standalone programming or interventions to support their inclusion.



Conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion are mutually reinforcing and constitutive. For example, conflict sensitivity requires actors to be socially inclusive and integrate analysis of ways gender norms drive conflict and the different impacts of conflict on women and men.

There are many examples of research studies that have not taken these approaches, although often understood in terms of the “unethical” nature of their studies. If participants were harmed in the research and not compensated, or if participants are at greater risk of exploitation as a result of being in the research, the study is considered “unethical” yet these concepts are conflict and gender insensitive. According to the 2007 World Health Organization Report on “Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies,” gender insensitivity in a conflict context did harm to women respondents to an assessment on sexual violence as the data collecting agencies did not coordinate their efforts, and “over assessed” the women, forcing them to relive their trauma repeatedly.² By not being aware of potential impact of research on conflict dynamics, studies can exacerbate existing tensions, sometimes with grave consequences. Also by not understanding that the default context is predominantly men’s experiences and developing strategies for a balanced approach to offset this, research will be skew towards men’s realities. Finally, by not including socially excluded groups in research (conceptually and as participants), findings reflect perceptions of those with relative power.

If research is not sensitive to conflict, gender and social exclusion policy and programming based on research will not be well grounded in existing social realities and will be perpetuating conflict, inequality and marginalisation. Being conflict sensitive, mainstreaming gender and being socially inclusive is not only key to ethical research it also improves the validity and reliability of research findings.

Integrating Conflict Sensitivity, Gender and Social Inclusion in Research

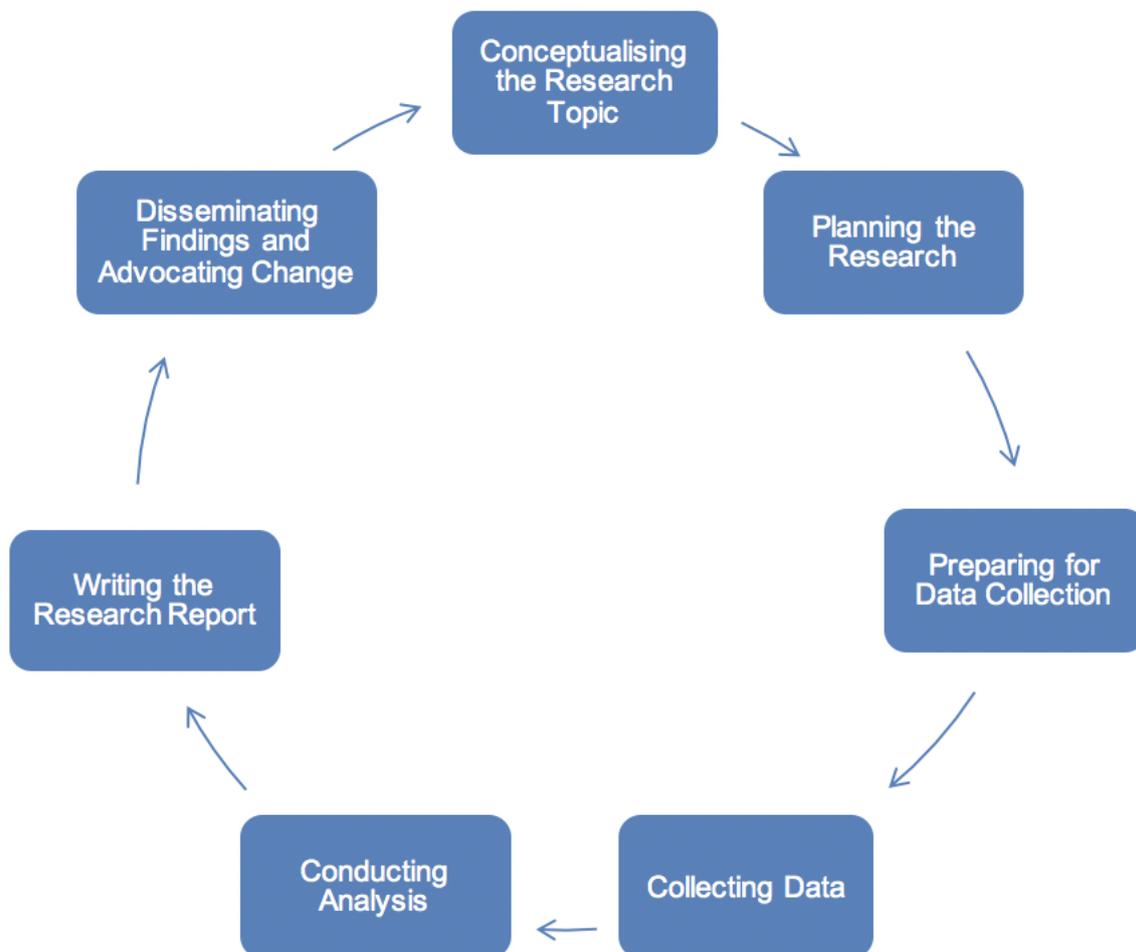
There are three approaches of conducting research in relation to context, namely: *context-neutral*, *context-aware*, and *context-sensitive*.³

In the first approach, *conflict-neutral*, researchers attempt to remain ‘context-neutral,’ ‘objective’ or ‘external’ to the context. As shown in Figure 1 below, they see the context as what they are operating within, but do not take into account how their research will interact with that context. The main challenge of this approach is that any initiative or intervention, research included, conducted in a conflict-affected area will interact with that conflict. Therefore, such interactions will have consequences that may have positive or negative effects on that conflict. The context-neutral stance simply ignores the ‘situatedness’ of the research itself in the context but it does not mean this denial will not still impact the research project process and/or outcome.

² WHO ETHICAL AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHING, DOCUMENTING AND MONITORING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES, 2007. http://www.who.int/gender/documents/OMS_Ethics&Safety10Aug07.pdf

³ Adapted from Chapter 1 on defining the context versus conflict, and the importance of conflict sensitivity in *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peace building: tools for peace and conflict impact assessment* <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/>

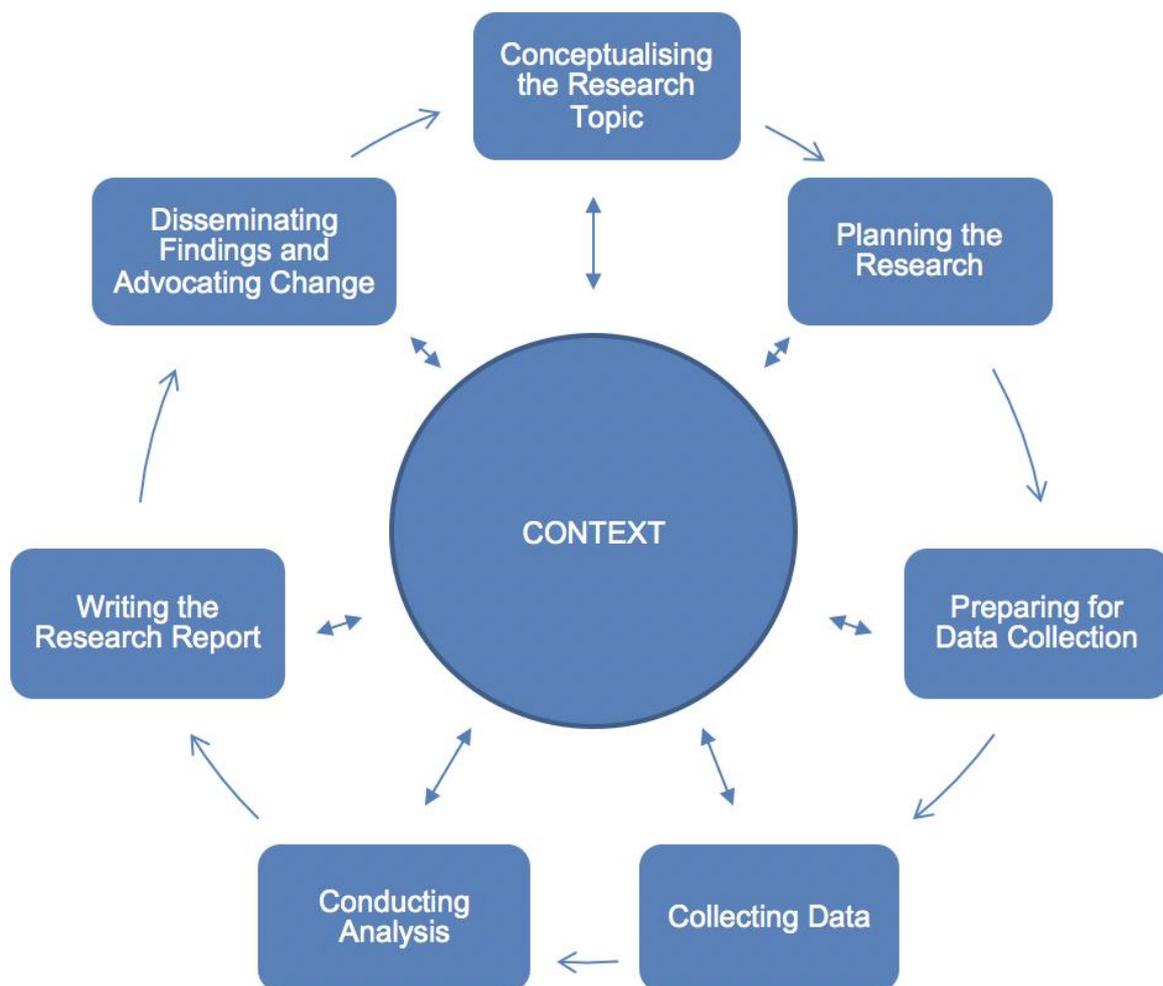
Figure 1: The Conflict and Gender-Neutral Research Effort



Conversely, researchers can also try to integrate conflict sensitivity, gender and/ or social inclusion aspects into research using a *context-aware* approach. This means that there is an ‘awareness’ that the research is not happening in isolation of the context, but that the integration of context into the research process is done using a piecemeal approach. For example, they may engage with community leaders as entry points, but do not conduct analysis to know which community leaders to serve as “representative” of the community itself. Or they include some women participants, yet do not account for gender power dynamics among women and arrange for all women as a monolithic group. These tend to ad hoc efforts to engage with the context, and the overarching research cycle remains virtually unchanged.

It is our position that these principles require a fundamental shift in approach and research process that applies to the entire research cycle as Figure 2 below demonstrates. A *context-sensitive* research effort requires a deep understanding of the context through analysis, awareness of the potential positive and negative interaction of the research process with the context, and preparation to make adjustments to the research process should conflict inadvertently occur. If research is done with this approach, we consider it to be conflict sensitive, gender sensitive and socially inclusive.

Figure 2: The Conflict Sensitive, Gender Transformatory and Socially Inclusive Research Effort



Every research process has a cycle that includes 7 core steps; conceptualizing the research topic, planning the research, preparing for data collection, data collection, conducting data analysis, research report writing, and dissemination of research report findings. Each of these core aspects of research has a process, and therefore, the following section presents one possibility for a programme, organizations or actor to make the shift from a *context-neutral* or *context-aware* approach to a *context-sensitive* approach when conducting research.

1) Conceptualising the Research Topic

The most imperative step of conducting research is choosing a research topic. The ideas about what should be researched is important to begin the process of research. However, a recognition that the context that we will be conducting this research in has conflict dynamics is an important awareness to have when conceptualizing the research topic. This section will discuss how to “understand the context,” how to understand the ways in which gender is playing a role in society, how marginalize groups are interacting with the context, how women, men, boys, girls, people living with disabilities, etc. can meaningfully participate in

the research effort and how to assure that research questions do not have inherent bias. All of these aspects are important to discuss within a context-sensitive approach. This section will discuss these issues in more detail with clear examples of how it has been done over the course of NSRP.

What do we know about conflict dynamics in the contexts in which we are working?

Researchers should carry out a rapid assessment based on existing literature to understand key areas of conflict in communities to be studied and underlying grievances. The research team should consider the conflict dynamics of research locations and look ahead to what they are likely to be at the proposed time of data collection. This analysis should form a baseline assessment that is updated as research progresses.

Some key questions to ask oneself in this assessment are:

Profile

- What is the political, economic and socio-cultural context?
- What are the emerging political, economic and social issues?

Causes

- What are the structural causes of conflict?
- What new factors contribute to prolonging conflict dynamics?

Actors

- Who are the main actors?
- What are their interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships?

Dynamics

- What are the windows of opportunity?
- What are the current conflict trends?

What do we know about the ways gender influences the issue under discussion?

Researchers should reflect on the different ways the issue being examined affect women, men, boys and girls. Women and men are socialised into playing different roles or can play the same role in different ways. Experiences vary based on gender and other identities and social markers including age, class, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, location and religion.⁴ The research team should resist assumptions and generalisations. Preliminary investigation should seek to uncover what is really happening and integrate this understanding into research conceptualisation and development of research questions. There are many assumptions made about the roles men, women, boys and girls play which are based on stereotypes of men as active and women as passive. Although this may be the way women and men have been socialised, stereotypes often do not translate into reality. For example, some reports of conflict between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria describe women corralling cows to prevent them from escaping, allowing men to kill cattle in retaliatory attacks, showing both women and men play active roles in violence.

Linked to the above questions of roles and impacts, the research team should reflect on ways gender norms and stereotypes themselves affect or drive what happens. For example, when it comes to conflict, there is small but growing evidence of ways masculinities (what it means to be a man) can drive conflict and violence.⁵ Frustration at inability to provide bride

⁴For example, women with disabilities face discrimination due to gender *and* disability and are more likely to experience violence, find it difficult to escape and be marginalised from decision-making: G. Jerry, P. Pam, C. Nnanna and C. Nagarajan, *What Violence Means to Us: Women with Disabilities Speak*, (Inclusive Friends/ NSRP, 2015).

⁵For recent research on Nigeria, please see C. Nagarajan, *Masculinities, Conflict and Violence*, (NSRP and V4C, 2016).

price and be the breadwinner where 'being a man' requires this can lead young men to see violence as the only way of 'proving' manhood⁶ and achieving power and status.⁷

When doing investigative work in these three areas (gendered impacts, gendered roles and gendered drivers), researchers should list what they know, do not know, what interventions have already happened and are happening and any relevant research, policy and legislation.

Which groups in the community studied are socially excluded and marginalised? What is the nature of their exclusion?

Social exclusion is highly context specific and varies across time and space. For example, an ethno-linguistic group may be socially excluded in one area of a country where they are minoritised and be the ones in power in another where they are in the majority. Social exclusion may be created where none existed before, for example, by a new government administration through laws, policies and practices to consciously marginalise a particular group of people. At this stage of research, the research team needs to analyse the nature of social exclusion in the areas to be studied, understanding who is socially excluded and how this affects their lives.

Inclusive Friends and NSRP recently published *What Violence Means to Us: Women with Disabilities Speak*. Here, women with disabilities conceptualised and conducted the study with technical and financial assistance from NSRP. This arrangement meant women with disabilities led the research process. The women with whom they spoke were more willing and able to talk with 'women like them' which improved the quality of research findings. It also ensured that change started before the report was written, with women with disabilities gaining the confidence and skills to conduct research and being seen differently by the communities concerned.

How will research be useful for research participants and communities? How will they be meaningfully involved in research?

These considerations are important for three reasons. Firstly, from the point of view of research ethics, it is important to ensure the research process is not extractive. Secondly, successful research depends on participants being willing to engage with researchers. Our experience has uncovered many cases of research fatigue affecting participants' willingness to talk with researchers. Many times, respondents complain that they have taken part in many research studies before and have seen no changes in their lives and community. These dynamics have led to accompanying difficulties in data collection. Finally, involving participants and communities meaningfully in research also ensures they have ownership and means the influencing process starts from the research process itself.

Do proposed research questions reveal bias?

The research team should reflect on common assumptions that are normalised but actually take a one sided or biased view of the situation. For example, mainstream public, political and media narratives when it comes to farmer/ pastoralist relationships in Nigeria tends to tilt in favour of farmers and apportioning blame to pastoralists alone. This bias is so normalised and prevalent that it can be easy to internalise. Researchers need to undertake a process of mindful reflection to eradicate unconscious bias.

⁶P. Francis, *Some Thoughts on Youth Livelihoods in Post Conflict Situations: Marginality, Trauma and Employment*, (World Bank, 2008).

⁷G. Barker and C. Ricardo, *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in sub Saharan Africa*, (World Bank, 2005).

In what way do research questions reflect the preliminary gender and social exclusion analysis conducted?

Research questions should be formulated in such a way that they seek to uncover the truth of realities experienced by both women and men, including those of socially excluded groups identified. While conceptualising the research topic, researchers should ensure preliminary discussions analyse how women, men and socially excluded groups experience the issue in different ways. Their literature review should attempt to uncover these dynamics. If there is little research available in the particular geographical area, findings from similar contexts can be used to extrapolate and inform questions asked to those with more knowledge of the context. This analysis should inform research conceptualisation and development of research questions, which should also be aimed at filling gaps in knowledge that exist.

As part of a substantial research project on radicalisation, de-radicalisation and counter radicalisation in Northern Nigeria, NSRP commissioned a standalone research paper examining women's participation in radicalised groups in Northern Nigeria, recognising the lack of evidence that exists here.

NSRP does not use the term 'Boko Haram,' a label assigned to the group by the media, usage of which has become widespread. Not only does this term perpetuate particular stereotypes of the group that reduces complexity to a simplistic message, but it is deeply resented by members of the group itself. NSRP rather uses the nearest to a neutral term that exists. This is the original name of the group: Jama'atu Ahli Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (which can be translated as 'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad') with the acronym JAS as a shorthand.

What guidelines will this research use when it comes to language?⁸

Conflict sensitivity principles imply that judgemental words, such as 'brutal,' 'religious fanatics' or 'trustworthy' should not be used to describe events and social or political groups, unless a source is being quoted. Such terms tell us what the writer thinks but little about the people described. Words need to be used that describe people and events as accurately as possible, so readers can make their own judgements on the basis of the evidence. The research team should also call groups by the name they call themselves rather than one ascribed to them by others.

Language used should not criminalise or scapegoat all those belonging to a particular ethnic group. It should also not assume that men are the norm. Doing so serves to

reinforce the male image of these communities in the reader's minds and perpetuate the exclusion of women from analysis. Researchers should also make sure that particular terms that may have become normal usage but are aimed to ridicule and marginalise groups of people are not used. For example, they should refrain from using terms such as 'crippled' or 'mentally retarded' to describe people with difficulties in mobility or with mental and intellectual disabilities. Indeed, given what language is appropriate to use for people with

The use of 'suspected Fulani herdsmen' in reports of community attacks conflates Fulani people with criminal activities, often with little to no evidence of the ethnicity of perpetrators. It also reinforces a male view of these communities. NSRP uses the term 'pastoralists' instead in its work.

⁸This section draws heavily on the NSRP HouseStyle Guide for research and publications.

disabilities varies, the team should consult people with disabilities themselves to ensure the terms the study will use are the most appropriate for the particular context.

2) Planning the Research

When planning research, it is important to consider a number of elements from staffing researchers to executing timelines for completing the work. Context-sensitive research planning asks the researcher to consider the socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, religious, etc breakdown of a particular context in order to assure that the research tools and methods will be appropriate for each particular locality. These considerations will also assure that the “representativeness” of our sample is accurate and that in the process of collecting data, you do not create conditions to leave communities feeling vulnerable or at risk as a result of participating in your research project. This section will discuss these issues in more detail with clear examples of how it has been done over the course of NSRP.

Does the research team have the right mix of personnel, skills and experience required?

Researchers should have substantive gender and social inclusion expertise and prior knowledge of geographical areas. A balance of these elements is required across the research team. If researchers have any prior relationship with study participants or are from a group linked to one of the actors or a party to the conflict, the team should assess how likely this is to affect response and conflict dynamics and what mitigation measures should be put in place.

There should be a balance between women and men on the team, as lead and junior researchers. An exception can be made if the study is looking specifically at topics that women may be reluctant to discuss certain issues, for example violence against women and girls, with male researchers, or issues of masculinity where men may be more responsive to male researchers. Whether researchers come from the excluded groups previously identified needs to be noted and additional support required planned. For example, checks may be needed to ensure access for researchers with disabilities. Strategies to ensure their safety and security if they are members of groups which have a history of being targeted, attacked and killed need to be put in place.

NSRP worked with the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and Pastoral Resolve (PARE) to conduct research on rural banditry in Nigeria. Given Pastoral Resolve aims to promote the interest and well-being of pastoralists, and the research study was examining issues pertinent to farmer/pastoralist conflict, the lines of responsibility were delineated during inception workshops. CDD and PARE researchers made up separate teams on this basis then came together to conduct analysis.

NSRP's *Masculinities, Conflict and Violence in Nigeria* study ensured one out of three FGDs in each location and half of all key informant interviews were with women in order to discover women's views on masculinities.. The *What Violence Means to Us: Women with Disabilities Speak* study had FGDs with male caregivers as well as with women with and without disabilities. Men facilitated these FGDs as the team felt male caregivers may not be as open with women researchers.

How will you ensure that participants will be as representative of the research communities as possible and that their participation will be meaningful?

Ensuring women and men equally contribute as participants and are able to give honest responses during interaction is important. This means having equal numbers of men and women participants in most studies. For studies examining particular phenomena relating to being a man or woman, there may

be a case for having more male or female participants. For example, studies on violence against women and girls or on masculinities may choose to sample more women and girls or men and boys respectively. However, given gender is relational, there should be some representation from all genders among research participants in order to see perceptions and attitudes.

NSRP has found women only and men only focus group discussions (FGDs) led by women and men researchers respectively useful. Mixed discussions are often dominated by male voices and women often may not feel comfortable speaking frankly in front of men. Depending on the topic, men may also not feel comfortable being honest around women. In addition to ensuring gender balance in respondents, the research team should specifically seek to engage individuals or groups with a gender perspective so this informs findings. For example, researchers can speak with gender focal points in ministries, community-based women's groups and academics from university Gender Studies departments.

These considerations are important not only when thinking about gender but also to ensure socially excluded groups are truly included in research. Here, in addition to including people from excluded groups as research participants, researchers need to speak with those with relevant analysis and expertise such as disability rights organisations, community youth groups or networks of women living with HIV. Ensuring a critical mass here is important, as demonstrated by the box below.

In the *Masculinities, Conflict and Violence in Nigeria* study, the research team ensured people with disabilities were in FGDs and conducted 1 interview with a key informant representing a disability rights organisation in each state. This proved rather tokenistic in reality and did not show how dominant notions of masculinities and disabilities intersect. This result contrasts with research NSRP conducted on the impact of government youth employment and empowerment programmes on women. Here, separate FGDs of young women with disabilities provided rich data and ensured the final report was informed by analysis of the intersections of gender, youth and disabilities.

Do research tools integrate gender and social exclusion analysis? Are they conflict sensitive?

The initial analysis around conflict, gender and social exclusion conducted during the conceptualisation phase needs to inform research questions and translate into development of tools. Areas likely to be contentious or likely to cause or exacerbate must be treated with caution. NSRP has also found the use of appreciative inquiry methodology helpful to ensure both meaningful responses and conflict sensitivity.⁹

In the *Masculinities, Conflict and Violence in Nigeria* study, FGDs started by encouraging participants to reflect on what about their communities made them glad they lived there and ended with what they could do to help make their communities peaceful. In this way, although participants spent a lot of the time in FGDs talking about the difficulties of their lives, including experiences of conflict and violence, this discussion was book-ended by more positive reflections. Facilitators also used hypothetical stories of young men and women involved in violence. This technique elicited perceptions and attitudes of violence without asking for direct reflection on experiences.

⁹This approach focuses on the positive, valuing what currently exists and envisioning what might be. One way research ensured this was to start and end focus groups discussions and interviews by asking respondents to reflect on different positive aspects of their lives and communities.

Similarly, analysis around gender and social exclusion should inform development of research tools. These tools should ask specific questions on or have exercises aimed at discovering how women, men, boys and girls experience the issue at hand differently, how gender norms and stereotypes contribute to the issue and the roles they play.

Questions should also be asked as to the roles of and impact on socially excluded groups and how the phenomenon of social exclusion contributes to the issue. For example, research tools may have specific sections catered to collecting information on social exclusion and/ or one can disburse the questions throughout the research tool under each section. Steps need to be taken to ensure this translates to data collection, analysis and writing of the report. These steps will be further discussed below.

What are the mitigation strategies the research team will use to mitigate potentially negative impact on conflict dynamics and increase positive impacts?

Initial analysis should be conducted here as to the conflict dynamics of research locations, the likely interaction of the research with these and what mitigation strategies need to be put in place. The next stage of the research cycle needs to expand on this further. Examples are provided below.

3) Preparing for Data Collection

When preparing for data collection, context-sensitive research asks researchers to consider the ways in which conflict dynamics and gender relationships currently manifest within the areas in which they will be conducting research. Considerations of data collection should be discussed prior to the research team starting the process and that process will enable the team to discuss conflict and gender dynamics that they anticipate to emerge in the data collection process and to plan adjustment strategies should the need arise during collection. This section will discuss these issues in more detail with clear examples of how it has been done over the course of NSRP.

How will the inception workshop with researchers incorporate conflict sensitivity, mainstream gender and ensure social inclusion?

The planning workshop with the research team offers opportunities to revisit and deepen previous analysis. Sessions on conflict, gender and social exclusion analysis should be planned for the start of the workshop, with information here informing further discussion, including around community entry and revision of tools.

How will sampling be inclusive and representative?

The research team needs to decide and agree how many participants will be in the study, the important characteristics of the sample and how participants will be selected. Researchers should also ensure decisions previously taken as to ensure balanced and meaningful participation of women and men, including those from groups who are socially excluded, are implemented in sampling.

In the *Masculinities, Conflict and Violence in Nigeria* study, researchers analysed conflict dynamics per research state, considered potential interactions between conflict dynamics and the research and agreed mitigation strategies. For example, they discussed the risk of conflict between supporters of opposing political parties in FGDs given data collection was scheduled in the weeks after contentious elections. The schedule was revised to allow time to play out this conflict and discuss how to manage this. The team also discussed gender dynamics in research locations and what this meant for the research. Both conflict and gender sessions ensured that social exclusion analysis was an integral part of the analysis conducted, looking at the ways social exclusion operates in the locations under examination. These gender, conflict sensitivity and social exclusion lenses also informed revision of research tools with questions and exercises removed or revised accordingly.

Researchers should reflect on potential conflict dynamics among participants and how this should affect sampling. For example, having members of 'vigilante' or community security militias may influence whether other participants are able to speak freely, worsen conflict dynamics or reinforce violent forms of masculinity. Researchers need to also agree if anyone else will be present besides participants and researchers in FGDs and interviews. In some cases, the presence of others such as chaperones and interpreters may be necessary to ensure the comfort of other

participants. However, researchers should consider the likely effect of this on response. For example, women may be less likely to disclose experience of abuse if family members are present.

What is the method of approach?

Researchers need to agree how they will approach participants and decide if this needs adjusting with gender, conflict sensitivity and social exclusion dynamics in mind. They need to put in place a process for tracking the numbers of people who refused to participate or dropped out and their reasons for doing so. They need to factor in considerations for drop out into the design of the research study. They also need to agree how approaches will be adapted for disparities between participants, for example for participants without telephones, internet or transportation.

What steps will researchers take to ensure the setting of data collection will be inclusive?

The research team needs to agree where they will collect data. As part of this decision-making process, they need to consider whether settings chosen are inclusive. Locations may be ethnically and politically sensitive to minority and under-represented groups. Members of religious and ethnic groups may feel unsafe going to areas of 'the other side.' Women and girls may not be allowed in certain locations or face stigma for being there. For example, women may not be allowed to be in the village square in certain communities or there may be perceptions that women go to hotels for extramarital sex.

Locations also need to be accessible to people with disabilities in terms of physical access. NSRP has found this consideration to be particularly tricky given the lack of awareness around disability in Nigeria at large and the absence of accessible venues. The programme is currently in the process of auditing venues to develop a list of places accessible to people with disabilities. At the very least, if no venues are found to be accessible, researchers need to conduct an assessment as to what barriers and challenges the venue will throw up and strategies to mitigate these before the location is used.

4) Collecting Data

Building on the previous two sections, when collecting data using a context-sensitive approach, it is imperative that monitoring systems are in place for the team to ensure that they are doing “no harm” to the context throughout data collection implementation. The process of conducting interviews and focus or natural group discussions requires an overt and active commitment to being conflict and gender sensitive in order to assess in real time whether the research is doing harm. This section will discuss these issues in more detail with clear examples of how it has been done over the course of NSRP.

What are the monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure continued conflict sensitivity and mainstreaming of gender and social exclusion?

The NSRP experience has been that constant checks are needed as agreements made in preparatory stages may not be carried through in data collection. For example, lead researchers can be charged with ensuring teams implemented decisions previously made with a feedback process in place between data collectors to ensure the process went as planned. The conflict dynamics may suddenly change. The research team needs to put in place mechanisms to keep aware of changing conflict dynamics and accordingly adapt. Researchers may wish to monitor the conflict situation immediately before and during data collection. They may decide to delay or stagger data collection to ensure safety and security of researchers or if asking questions about conflict may worsen dynamics when the situation is particularly tense.

How will researchers ensure they implement plans around inclusivity of participation?

Researchers should consider practical steps to ensure women and other socially excluded groups participate in data collection and that they will reach out to ensure their involvement. They should put in place mitigation measures around potential risks to them for their participation due to norms around gendered, age, ethnic, religious and other hierarchies. They need to take particular efforts to assure the participation of people with disabilities. In addition to ensuring the location is accessible as mentioned above, researchers may need to make provision for a sign language interpreter or translation of document in Braille. Researchers should also check exercises planned to ensure that all present can take part, for example by thinking whether they require movement, vision or hearing.

How will researchers carry out interviews and discussions?

Researchers should record the duration of interviews and focus groups and consider whether it is realistic to expect people with many responsibilities to be able to spend this amount of time on participating in research. Interviews, survey administration and focus groups should be set for times that all participants are likely to be free, recognising for example, that women and men may be particularly busy with their tasks and duties at certain times. They should record whether repeat interviews were carried out and how many. They should decide whether they will use audio or visual recording to collect data, being aware that some participants may not be happy to be filmed, particularly if discussing sensitive topics. They should take field notes on a regular basis after interviews and FGDs. Mechanisms to ensure the security and anonymity of data collected, as well as the anonymity of participants and researchers if needed should be agreed and discussed. This last consideration is particularly important for groups marginalised or challenging power, for example human rights and peace activists or women who have experienced sexual violence from armed groups.

5) Conducting Analysis

After data has been collected, the coding and analysing the data should also have a context-sensitive approach which includes considerations of conflict and gender sensitivity and social inclusion. Specifically, focusing on sex-disaggregated data and coding this appropriately throughout the analytical process of the research is imperative to capture any nuances in the context in relation to men, women, boys, girls, etc. This section will discuss these issues in more detail with clear examples of how it has been done over the course of NSRP.

What is the process for coding and analysing data?

Researchers should put steps in place to ensure reflection and integration of gender and social exclusion informs coding and analysis. Early NSRP experience was that findings were lost during analysis and writing even when research tools integrated gender and social exclusion and were implemented as envisaged. At minimum, all data needs to be gender disaggregated as will be discussed below. Analysis should have particular focus on differences between what women and men say and what socially excluded groups are saying. The awareness of gender, social exclusion and conflict dynamics that informed the entire research process to date should help researchers put findings into context.

How will data be disaggregated?

Analysis should facilitate a more in-depth understanding of the differential impacts, perceptions, roles and behaviour of women and men. A key way of doing this is to ensure all figures in statistical analysis are disaggregated by gender and to analyse and discuss any differences. Given gender relations interact with other identity markers, disaggregation should also be done by different variables such as age, class, ethnicity and religion. In this way, analysis should also seek to get deepen understanding of social exclusion by disaggregating the responses of those groups who have been identified as socially excluded and analysing their responses, including any differences between these and those of groups that do not experience social exclusion.

NSRP administers an Annual Perception Survey, which, among other areas, looks at community members' perceptions of trust and access to state and non-state institutions. Gender disaggregation showed women tended to have much lower levels of trust and access to these institutions. Without disaggregating by gender, NSRP would have remained unaware of this difference between women and men and would not have adjusted its interventions accordingly.

6) Writing the Report

When writing the report using a context-sensitive approach, it is important for the research team to include the ways in which the research itself was conducted in a conflict and gender sensitive manner, but also include a section in the research report itself on the ways these considerations also played out in the context itself. This section will discuss these issues in more detail with clear examples of how it has been done over the course of NSRP.

Does the research report include a section on context that discusses conflict, gender and social exclusion dynamics?

Researchers should reflect analysis during conceptualisation and preparation in the introduction to the research report. This analysis should be up to date, and talk about what

the situation was at the time of data collection, highlighting any relevant nuances at community level, so the reader can place findings in context and interpret accordingly.

How will the research report ensure the voice of participants comes through?

The use of quotations from participants, with relevant markers of age, gender, location and occupation, is an excellent way to illustrate key themes and findings. If these markers are likely to lead to the participant being identified and anonymity is important, they should be removed. This also ensures consistency between data and findings.

What steps are in place to ensure reflection and integration of conflict sensitivity, gender and social exclusion translates to validation of the report?

Validation processes are important to ensure findings reflect the realities of research participants and to ensure that key stakeholders are and feel part of the process. In addition to ensuring findings are 'correct', validation workshops are an important part of the advocacy process. With this in mind, care needs to be taken to think through the conflict dynamics around the actors present in the room and facilitate proceedings accordingly. Workshops should aim to have equal numbers of women and men present as speakers and participants, to present findings and respond to information presented. Research participants should be invited to validation workshops, with specific focus on enabling the meaningful participation of members of groups that are socially excluded. Researchers should take care that their presentations particularly highlight findings around gender and social exclusion dynamics.

What steps are in place to ensure reflection and integration of conflict sensitivity, gender and social exclusion translates to writing of the report?

The lesson learned from research commissioned by NSRP is that while the research process may be good in terms of integrating and actioning these analyses, that this might not translate into the final written report. In order to mitigate this, there needs to be standalone sections with in-depth discussion of findings around gender and social exclusion as well as efforts taken to ensure that all sections of the report reflect gender and social exclusion analyses. For example, in addition to discussing the different impacts of rural banditry on women and men and the roles they play, a research report should also talk about the gendered nature of changes in animal husbandry techniques and transhumance patterns.

Researchers should also institute a mechanism for checking the report takes an unbiased position grounded in facts discovered. This is particularly important where variance exists between the positions of different groups such as ethnic, religious and geographical groups. Researchers should conduct final checks to ensure language used throughout the report is in line with the guidelines agreed at the start of the research process. An audit for conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion should be conducted, preferably by someone external to the research process but with knowledge of the context.

Do recommendations developed reflect the views and realities of all?

Some questions to consider are listed below:

- Which benefits will implementing each recommendation bring to both women and men? What costs will they inflict on men and women? Do they seek to correct gender imbalances through addressing practical needs of both men and women? Would they transform institutions that perpetuate gender inequality and/ or social exclusion? What are the consequences of failing to adopt recommendations that are gender/ social inclusion sensitive?

- How will different stakeholders perceive each recommendation (women, men, different communities, those with power and influence)? In what way does advocating for implementation impact power dynamics? What measures will be put in place to mitigate likelihood of exacerbating conflict dynamics?
- Would recommendations serve to further stigmatise, blame and/ or marginalise an already socially excluded group? How can recommendations be framed to ensure broader social inclusion?

7) Disseminating Finding and Advocating Change

When disseminating analytical findings using a context-sensitive approach, it is important to recognize and acknowledge the conflict and gender dynamics in a particular context to assure that there is representation in participants. It is also important to consider advocacy strategies which include conflict and gender sensitive considerations. This section will discuss these issues in more detail with clear examples of how it has been done over the course of NSRP.

What steps are in place to ensure reflection and integration of conflict sensitivity, gender and social exclusion translates to developing an advocacy strategy?

A dissemination, influencing and advocacy strategy should address the needs of all those in society, particularly those from excluded groups. The strategy for monitoring and evaluation of influencing work needs to include a gender perspective examining both substantive content and administrative process aspects of interventions. Indicators developed to assess progress towards fulfillment of recommendations need to be gender disaggregated as well as measure the gender aspects.

Recommendations and findings around gender and social exclusion should be given equal priority in dissemination, advocacy and influencing work rather than side-lined. The greater context of gender roles and relations with powerful and socially excluded groups needs to be considered as a potential risk i.e. stereotypes or structural barriers that may prevent full participation. Mitigation strategies should be put in place. The potential negative impact of the intervention needs to be considered e.g. increased burden on women, social isolation of men, exacerbating conflict dynamics. Steps should be put in place to increase positive impact and decrease negative ones.

During development of a strategy, the team should consider whether those who will implement recommendations have analysis and experience on gender and social inclusion. If not, they should discuss any prospect of training to rectify this.

What steps are in place to ensure reflection and integration of conflict sensitivity, gender and social exclusion translates to dissemination of the report?

Dissemination activities need to involve equal numbers of women and men present as speakers and participants, to present findings and respond to information presented, reflecting balance in research team and participants. As far as possible, voices from communities/research participants should be

The What Violence Means to Us: Women with Disabilities Speak study took particular care to highlight voices of women with disabilities in validation and dissemination by inviting a number of research participants, screening a video where they explained their realities and encouraging them to present and speak during discussions. This not only amplified their voices but meant they felt ownership of the research and involved them in advocating change.

present explaining their realities. Conflict dynamics around actors present in the room at dissemination events need to be considered and proceedings facilitated accordingly.

What steps are in place to ensure reflection and integration of conflict sensitivity, gender and social exclusion translates to developing programming?

Research should inform development of new programming and refining or changing existing programming. If research is conducted in a way that conflict sensitive, gender sensitive and socially inclusive in both process and content, this provides a solid foundation to ensure programming also follows these approaches. However, effort may be needed to ensure this takes place in practice. Some ways in which this can be done include ensuring the gender and social exclusion aspects of research findings are reflected in problem analysis for proposals, specific sessions are organised for programme teams to debrief and discuss these aspects and implications for programming and lessons learned from research processes on ensuring conflict sensitivity are shared to inform programmatic approaches.

Conclusion

This guidance paper has provided evidence for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion in research. NSRP has illustrated the ways in which a context-sensitive research cycle can occur. Specifically, we discussed the differences between a context-blind research cycle and a context-sensitive research cycle, and considerations for programmes adopting a context-sensitive approach should adopt at each of the seven phases of the research cycle: conceptualizing the research topic, planning the research, preparing for data collection, data collection, conducting data analysis, research report writing, and dissemination of research report findings. It has highlighted the risks and likely challenges to policy and practice where research is insensitive to contexts of conflicts, gender and social exclusion. Such policies and practices are likely to produce results that perpetuate inequalities and undermine human security.