

GNWP Conflict and Gender Sensitive Do-No-Harm Policy

Adopted by the Board on 04 May 2020

The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) adheres to the principle of “Do No Harm” by carefully analyzing and regularly monitoring the intended and unintended impacts of programs and advocacy at the local, national, regional and global levels, including in conflict-affected communities. GNWP proactively takes action to prevent and respond to any unintended consequences of its work. GNWP is committed to ensuring that its programs and advocacy do not inadvertently cause harm to people nor undermine the feminist values and human rights framework that underpin its work.

GNWP holds itself accountable for enacting behavior consistent with this principle amongst its Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), staff, interns, volunteers, and consultants.

Definition of Do No Harm Principle

The “Do No Harm” Principle is widely used among peacebuilding, humanitarian and development organizations in order to improve their accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness.¹ It requires organizations to tailor their programs to the specific context of conflict, in which they are implemented. It supports accountability by requiring rapid institutional response to any unintentional consequences caused by programs, and by encouraging local voices and priorities in programming. It cultivates organizational efficiency by helping program implementation teams to foresee and prevent unintended harm of activities.

Conflict Sensitivity

GNWP ensures conflict sensitivity in its projects and programs to avoid any risk of escalating conflict or insecurity through its actions by adopting the following measures:

- **Cultural and Context-Specificity** – GNWP recognizes that each context is unique, and therefore the design of each project is informed by local culture, power relations and conflict dynamics. All GNWP projects and programs are developed, implemented and monitored in equal partnership with local women’s rights organizations and other civil society groups in order to ensure their cultural and context-specificity. Our approaches to program implementation are always consultative rather than prescriptive, and aim to adequately respond to the problems faced by local populations. GNWP pro-actively engages cultural leaders in its activities, to make sure they are not culture-blind. At the same time, GNWP strives to amplify and elevate the voices of those who have historically been marginalized – including women, youth, LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) persons, indigenous people, ethnic, racial and religious minorities.
- **Analytical and Reflective Methodologies** – GNWP conducts participatory context and conflict analysis that allows its local partners and other key stakeholders to provide feedback on the assumptions and framework underlying GNWP programs and activities

¹ “Do No Harm: A Brief Introduction from CDA”. CDA Collaborative. Practical Learning for International Action. <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Do-No-Harm-A-Brief-Introduction-from-CDA.pdf>. Accessed 04-28-2020

in a particular operating context. Each GNWP activity starts with a context and conflict analysis, led by the local stakeholders. The management and staff of GNWP are trained to analyze social, cultural, political and economic contexts particularly, peace and security, and humanitarian situations. This allows for the effective operationalization of the context and conflict analysis, improved awareness of the potential or actual impacts of programs on conflict dynamics and peacebuilding, and the design of non-divisive programs which contribute to inclusive and sustainable peace, and gender equality.

- **Risk Assessments** – The conflict and context analysis also allows GNWP to identify potential threats and ensure that its activities do not aggravate the conflict, or put its local partners or anyone at risk. GNWP’s CEO, Program Coordinators, and Officers are trained to conduct risk assessments in coordination with local partners before the implementation of program and project activities. Country and project-specific risk assessments are regularly updated on an annual basis as a minimum.
- **Equal Representation and Participation** – In selecting community stakeholders in conflict-affected areas, GNWP works closely with its local partners to consult with grassroots civil society and local authorities and leaders to ensure that no crucial group is under-represented. In all programs, GNWP ensures a balance between different ethnic, religious, political, and other historically marginalized groups. GNWP and its local partners define clear rules for the meetings, to guarantee mutual respect. While striving to be as inclusive as possible, GNWP makes sure to create safe spaces, where women and girls can speak freely without fear of backlash from male participants.
- **Protection of Personnel and Project/Program Participants** – GNWP and its local partners closely monitor the security situation in the areas where programs and projects are implemented in order to prevent risking the safety and security of personnel, project and program partners. Before each stage of project implementation, GNWP and its local partners review the security risks and prepare contingency plans in order to respond appropriately.

Gender Sensitivity

GNWP recognizes the applicability of the “Do No Harm” principle to the gendered impact of conflict. Organizations that work for women’s empowerment often encounter hostility, threats, and violence in response to their efforts. Women who advocate for the defense of women’s rights in conflict settings and humanitarian emergencies are at risk of being targeted for retaliation, including sexual and gender-based violence, as a means of discouraging such civic engagement.

GNWP accepts that its programs and projects will affect stakeholder relationships within conflict affected communities. Therefore, GNWP pays close attention to gender dynamics impacted by project/program development and implementation. GNWP staff conducts regular gender analysis as a part of the design and implementation of a project/program through which the following questions are answered²:

² Questions sourced from “Do No Harm and Gender: A Guidance Note”. Garred, Michelle, Charlotte Booth, and Kiely Barnard-Webster, with major contributions from Nicole Goddard, Ola Saleh, Muzdha Azeez, and Katarina Carlberg. Cambridge, Massachusetts. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2018. <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Do-No-Harm-and-Gender-A-Guidance-Note.pdf>. Accessed 04-28-2020

- In what ways is this project/program relevant to needs and priorities of women, men, LGBTQIA+ persons, and other historically marginalized groups, including from an intersectional perspective?
- Could this project/program exacerbate gender inequalities, cultural, political and social disharmony and power imbalances?
- Who participates in decision-making processes about the details of this project/program? Who is excluded and why?
- How is this project/program affecting the status or perception of women, men LGBTQIA+ persons, and other historically marginalized groups?

GNWP also recognizes that different identities or characteristics – such as sex, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, ethnic identity and refugee status, may intersect, resulting in multiple layers of discrimination and threats faced by different groups.

GNWP and its local partners engage local authorities, religious leaders, youth and male gender equality allies in project/program implementation to mobilize their support for gender equality, human rights, women's rights, peace and security and lower the risk of violence against women and girl participants.

GNWP and its partners carefully tailor information shared about its projects and programs, taking into account the cultural, political, and social sensitivities of each target audience. Before publicly sharing information about program achievements and advocacy campaigns on social media and other media outlets, all content is carefully discussed with local project partners to mitigate the risk of backlash and protect project/program partners and participants' safety.

Policy Implementation

GNWP will ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons and institutions that are involved in the work of the organization. It will be included in the organization's Operations Manual. All new Board of Directors, officers, staff members, interns, volunteers and consultants will be informed of the content of this policy.

GNWP will review this policy annually; update and revise if necessary and conduct training for everyone involved in the governance, management and operations of GNWP if deemed necessary.

It is the responsibility of every Program Coordinator and Program Officer to ensure that everyone involved in the work of GNWP including donors, national and local project partners are aware of this policy.

Reporting Procedure

Anyone who is subject to unintended harm as a result of a GNWP project/program should, if possible, inform the Program Coordinator or Officer responsible for implementation of the negative impact. The Program Coordinator or Program Officer who initially receive the complaint will refer the matter to the CEO to initiate a formal investigation. The CEO may deal with the matter herself/himself, or refer the matter to the Board of Directors, who in turn may designate a Board Member or other GNWP officer/s or a third party to carry out an investigation. The person/s carrying out the investigation will:

- Immediately record the dates, times and facts of the incident(s);

- Ascertain the views of the complainant as to what outcome they want;
- Ensure that the complainant understands the organization's procedures for dealing with the complaint;
- Produce a report detailing the investigations, findings and any recommendations for the improvement of project/program implementation;
- Follow up to ensure that the recommendations are implemented and that the complainant is satisfied with the outcome;
- Keep a record of all actions taken and apply them to program implementation in other countries if relevant;
- Ensure that all the records concerning the matter are kept confidential; and
- Ensure that the process is done as quickly as possible and in any event within 7 days after the complaint was made.

Monitoring and Evaluation

GNWP recognizes the importance of monitoring this Do No Harm Policy and will ensure that it anonymously collects statistics and data as to how it is used and whether or not it is effective. The Program Coordinator or Program Officer designated as first responder to cases of unintended harm in program implementation will report on compliance with this policy, including the number of incidents, how they were dealt with, and any recommendations made once a year. As a result of this report, GNWP will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and make any changes needed.