

PRACTICAL RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES



Given this background, it is extremely important to understand and mitigate the risks, and potential collateral damage, entailed in closing the gender digital divide and connecting more women and girls.

Indeed, a commonly cited reason for development practitioners and partners to omit ICT for women and girls, in designing projects or activities, is the potential risks: despite the clear benefits, planners fear that the negative consequences will potentially make the situation worse.

However, there are several different ways to mitigate these risks and consequences so that more women and girls are empowered to use mobile and the Internet, ensuring that the gender digital divide continues to close.

This tool offers seven risk mitigation strategies that USAID staff and partners can undertake, as well as suggested actions to be taken and some examples of what has been done elsewhere. Each suggested strategy has been mapped to the [ADS 205](#) domains and the [10WEEGE Principles](#).

7 RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES



Understand the context and the risks: “First, do no harm”



Raise awareness



Invest in, support, and share insights on digital products and services that mitigate risks



Collaborate with other stakeholders



Support and strengthen ICT outreach and digital literacy initiatives



Strengthen internal and partner capacity for risk mitigation and safeguarding



Support initiatives that involve (male/female/family) gatekeepers

BOX 1. WHAT ARE THE ADS 205 DOMAINS?

USAID ADS Chapter 205 ([Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle](#)) lays out the five domains that must be included in a gender analysis:

1. Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices
2. Cultural norms and beliefs
3. Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use
4. Access to and control over assets and resources
5. Patterns of power and decision-making

These five domains have been mapped to each of the seven risk mitigation strategies and the corresponding activities in this toolkit.

BOX 2. WHAT ARE THE USAID WEEGE PRINCIPLES?

The [WEEGE Principles](#) offer practical guidance for USAID Mission Directors, program and technical officers, and acquisitions professionals to ensure that WEEGE is integrated in USAID programming. They signal promising practices informed by real-life development and private-sector experiences and are compiled from an extensive consultative process.

- » **WEEGE Principle 1:** Understand the systems
- » **WEEGE Principle 2:** Amplify women's voices
- » **WEEGE Principle 3:** Be specific
- » **WEEGE Principle 4:** Engage men and boys
- » **WEEGE Principle 5:** Collaborate
- » **WEEGE Principle 6:** Establish the evidence
- » **WEEGE Principle 7:** Address gender-based violence
- » **WEEGE Principle 8:** Partner with women
- » **WEEGE Principle 9:** Walk the talk
- » **WEEGE Principle 10:** Embrace emerging innovation

Each suggested activity in this toolkit has been mapped to the [WEEGE Principles](#).

BOX 3. THE PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

The [Principles for Digital Development](#) are a set of living guidelines to help practitioners integrate best practices into any of their digital development or ICT for development initiatives. Serving as a guide for key things to consider at each phase of the project cycle, they are endorsed by many organizations working in the digital development space, including USAID. The Digital Principles are designed to support a community of practice, and the website includes a large range of resources and practical tools developed by many organizations based on their own learnings.

The principles are:

- Design with the user
- Understand the existing ecosystem
- Design for scale
- Build for sustainability
- Be data driven
- Use open standards, open data, open source, and open innovation
- Reuse and improve
- Address privacy and security
- Be collaborative
- Cultural norms and beliefs
- Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use

Although they are not explicitly related to gender, the Digital Principles align with both the seven risk mitigation strategies and the [10 WEEGE Principles](#) outlined in this technical note. They should be included in any USAID or partner initiative that has digital or ICT components.

DOCUMENTS IN THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE RISK MITIGATION TECHNICAL NOTE



HOW TO USE THIS GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE RISK MITIGATION TECHNICAL NOTE



UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS OF ICT TO WOMEN AND GIRLS



TOOL 1: PRACTICAL RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

- » STRATEGY 1: UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT AND THE RISKS: “FIRST, DO NO HARM”
- » STRATEGY 2: INVEST IN, SUPPORT, AND SHARE INSIGHTS ON DIGITAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT MITIGATE RISKS
- » STRATEGY 3: SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN ICT OUTREACH AND DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVES
- » STRATEGY 4: SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT INVOLVE (MALE/FEMALE/FAMILY) GATEKEEPERS
- » STRATEGY 5: RAISE AWARENESS
- » STRATEGY 6: COLLABORATE AND WORK WITH OTHER NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS
- » STRATEGY 7: STRENGTHEN INTERNAL AND PARTNER CAPACITY FOR RISK MITIGATION AND SAFEGUARDING



RESOURCES 1–3: KEY DOCUMENTS