



# UNDERSTAND CONTEXT AND RISKS: “FIRST, DO NO HARM”

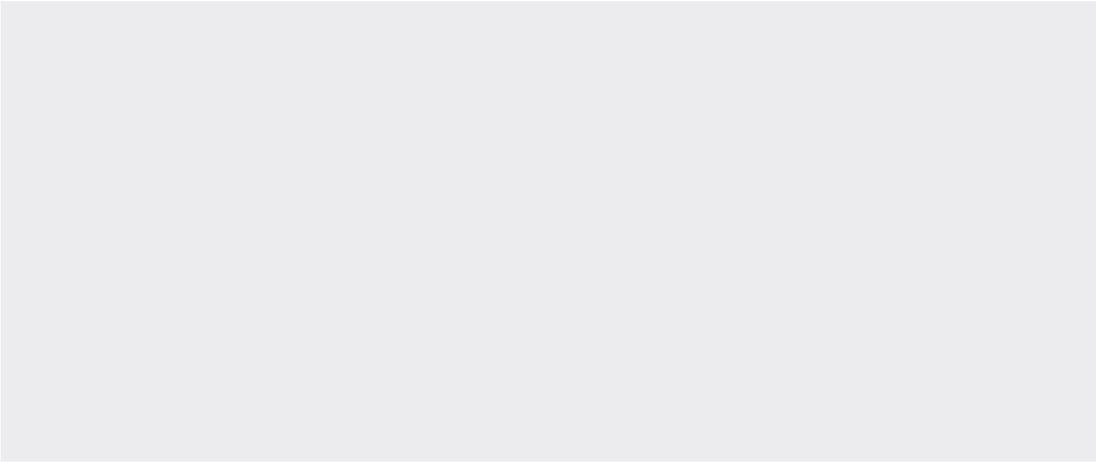
In all technological interventions, it is crucial to understand the market and the cultural context in the country or region. Being aware of the current status of women’s and girls’ access to, and use of, mobile and the Internet can help understand what needs to be done, what issues women and girls face, and how these issues will affect strategies, projects, or activities.

It is particularly important to understand the social and cultural dynamics of ICT access for women, and the risks of inadvertently promoting negative effects—such as technology-facilitated GBV or male dominance—to make sure all USAID programming follows the approach, “first, do no harm.”

**CHECKLIST FOR ACTIONS**

- Conduct preliminary research with potential beneficiaries—both male and female—ahead of launching any services or initiatives and understand (familial, local, and national) power structures and community dynamics.**

Have we conducted preliminary research with potential beneficiaries?  
 What were some key power structures and/or dynamics to be aware of?



**HOW DOES THIS LINK TO WEEGE?**

- ADS 205 Domains**
- Access and Control
  - Cultural Norms and Beliefs
  - Power and Decision-making
  - Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use

- WEEGE Principles**
- 1 – Understand the System
  - 3 – Be Specific
  - 7 – Address Gender-based Violence
  - 10 – Embrace Emerging Innovations

- **Determine the social, cultural, and gender norms and roles within the community.**

List some key social, cultural, and gender norms and roles within the community that we should be aware of.

- **Determine who the power brokers are, and if there are transitional moments when women have more (or less) influence.**

Who are the power brokers? Are there transitional moments of influence? If so, what are they?

- **Uncover core issues and fears about women's ICT use in the community: what is the root cause of the issue?**

What are some core issues and fears that we uncovered in the community? What is causing them?

- Explore whether the community has effectively addressed other gendered concerns such as child marriage, girls' education, or other gender inequities, and whether similar approaches might be applied.

Are there good examples of when the community effectively addressed other gendered concerns?  
Are there similar approaches we can apply?

- Work with women to understand not only their information needs but also their aspirations for themselves, their children, and their communities, and where the entry points for any strategy, project, or activity might be.

How have we worked with women to understand not only their information needs but also their aspirations?

- Incorporate these questions and topics into gender analyses with a WEEGE lens, done at the strategy, project, and activity levels, based on [ADS 205](#). Illustrative gender digital divide prompts and gender analysis questions can be found in the [Gender Digital Divide Gender Analysis Technical Resource](#).

How have we incorporated these questions and topics into gender analyses with a WEEGE lens?



## WEEGE IN ACTION



### Gender and ICT research toolkits

There are existing tools to help in conducting research:

USAID's Gender and ICT Survey Toolkit is designed to be practical and user-friendly to non-academics, and to be used at a community or subnational level. It includes ready-built qualitative and quantitative tools, as well as practical advice on conducting research with women and girls. The toolkit covers behavioral themes such as control, ownership, and perceptions, and has questions to explore the social and power dynamics of ICT and the risks.

Global System for Mobile Communication Association's (GSMA) Connected Women's Women and Internet Research Toolkit has qualitative and quantitative tools to help practitioners measure and understand women's Internet access and use, at the national and subnational level. It has been mapped to the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Core ICT indicators with a gender lens and is also useful as a reference point to understand gendered power dynamics of ICT.

The Alliance for Affordable Internet's Meaningful Connectivity Standard is specifically designed to set a new standard and raise the bar for meaningful Internet access and use. It moves the measurement conversation forward not by looking at how many people are online, but instead looking at the quality of connectivity through four key indicators: regular Internet access, having an appropriate device, having enough data, and having a fast enough connection. While the Meaningful Connectivity Standard is at an early stage and is still being built out, it is expected to become a research toolkit, likely to be widely adopted over time within the digital development ecosystem.

# 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