

Minka Peace and Resilience Instrument

Gender & Conflicts - Position Paper

Committed to the implementation of France's 2021-2025 "Women, Peace and Security" national action plan, the AFD sets itself the objective **of supporting the defence of the rights of women and children in crisis and conflict contexts, and to fight all forms of violence, including gender-based violence (GBV)**. To this end, it will seek to adopt a transformative approach to gender and conflict, based on a dual strategy: i) systematically considering the specific needs of women, children (girls/boys) and people vulnerable to crisis and conflict in the projects it funds, and ii) supporting initiatives that strengthen the empowerment of women and girls in such contexts. This note outlines these commitments and their implementation modalities.

I. WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN CRISIS CONTEXTS: A PRIORITY OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY

While women and girls are the primary victims of armed conflict, they are often excluded from the crisis prevention, management, and resolution processes:

- **According to the UN, 70% of the civilian casualties in contemporary armed conflicts are women and children¹;**
- **A vast majority of forced displaced people are women and children²** (70% on average, 90% in Sudan³), resulting in an increase in negative coping mechanisms (early and forced marriage, school dropout, survival prostitution, etc.);
- **However, only 7% of peace agreement signatories are women⁴.**

In its [resolution 1325](#) "Women, Peace and Security" of 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council recognized for the first time the disproportionate impact of crises and armed conflicts on women and girls. It also emphasizes that upholding women's rights, ensuring their protection, and facilitating their full participation in decision-making processes are effective means of preventing conflict and promoting sustainable peace.

France, which has been strongly committed to this agenda as part of its **feminist diplomacy**, has adopted three successive **national action plans (NAP) on "Women, Peace and Security"**. It signed the **Pact on Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action (FPS-AH)** at the 2021 Generation Equality Forum, and should make the rights of women and girls in crisis contexts one of the five priorities of its future international gender equality strategy (2024). In accordance with the recommendations of the High Council for Equality, the [3rd NAP «Women, Peace and Security» for the period 2021-2025 makes the AFD and the Minka Instrument a major player in its implementation⁵](#).

Gender and conflict issues are also at the intersection of two priorities of the 2021LOPDSI: equality between women and men and crisis management. The law also sets a target of 85% of official development assistance (ODA) with gender equality as main or significant objective (DAC 2/DAC 1), with 20% dedicated to a primary gender objective by 2025.

Since 2017, the AFD and the Minka Peace and Resilience Instrument have contributed directly to this dual objective. Nearly 120 projects **with a primary or significant objective in favor of** gender equality have been financed in crisis areas, for a total amount of **more than one billion euros**. These figures show that France and the AFD are committed considerable resources to the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda.

¹ [Armed conflict and women - UN Security Council Resolution 1325: 10 years of existence | United Nations](#)

² [Global Trends Report 2022 | UNHCR](#)

³ [Document - UNHCR Protection Brief – Sudan – June 2023](#)

⁴ [Facts and figures: Women, peace and security | Our work | UN Women \(unwomen.org\)](#)

⁵ The AFD is thus accountable for 3 main indicators: 50% of Minka projects contributing to gender equality, including 20% of CAD2; number and volume of projects.

Between 2021 and 2023, **more than 95% of Minka projects contributed to gender equality, 21% with a primary objective. The Minka Instrument therefore exceeds the objectives set by LOPDSI, reaching 100% of projects in 2022 and 97% in 2023**, establishing Minka as a pioneer instrument within the AFD and the French mechanism for addressing gender and GBV in contexts of chronic crises.

Some emblematic projects:

- CTD1222 “PROGESAN” (IRC - 6.5 MEUR): project supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as fight against GBV in refugee reception areas in Chad, through support to 20 health centers and improved access to healthcare for 550 000 people, including 220 000 refugees.
- CCF1196 “NENGO” (Pierre Fabre, Panzi & Mukwege Foundations - 11.4 MEUR): establishment of a holistic care center (medical, psychological, legal, and socio-economic support) for GBV survivors in Bangui (Central African Republic), serving over 7 600 women.
- CZZ2361 “MEDIASAHÉL - POUR ELLES” (CFI - 1.5 MEUR): support to about 100 women journalists and 36 local media outlets to enhance the representation and roles of women in the media, particularly regarding peace and security issues.
- Crisis & Conflict Call for proposals “WOMEN FOR PEACE AND SECURITY” (11.5 MEUR): projects anchored in the AFD Support Fund for Feminist Organizations⁶, supporting more than 150 local feminist CSOs engaged in implementing the “Women, Peace and Security” agenda in West Africa, Central Africa and the Middle East (implementing partners: Equipop, Fonds pour les Femmes congolaises, Euromed Feminist Initiative).

The AFD is engaged on these priorities with public, intergovernmental and civil society actors. Between 2021 and 2023, the AFD supported government institutions (in Senegal, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Togo), international organizations (WFP, UNICEF, WHO) and some 30 international NGOs and 40 national CSOs.

II. MAKE THE MINKA INSTRUMENT A LEADING ACTOR OF THE “WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY” AGENDA

Fully involved in shaping France’s new international gender equality strategy, **the AFD intends to contribute to France’s 2021-2025 national action plan «Women, Peace and Security»**. Its objectives include supporting women in defending their rights in crisis areas, promoting children's rights, and combating all forms of violence, particularly GBV.

To achieve this, the AFD will continue to invest in the four pillars of the NAP⁷:

- i) **Prevent GBV and promote the rights of women and children** (including girls and teenagers) in crisis and conflict contexts;
- ii) **Protect women and children (girls/boys)** from the consequences of crises and conflicts, particularly against violence, including by fighting impunity;
- iii) **Promote women’s participation of** in crisis and conflict prevention, management, and resolution mechanisms, as well as in humanitarian and development project implementation;

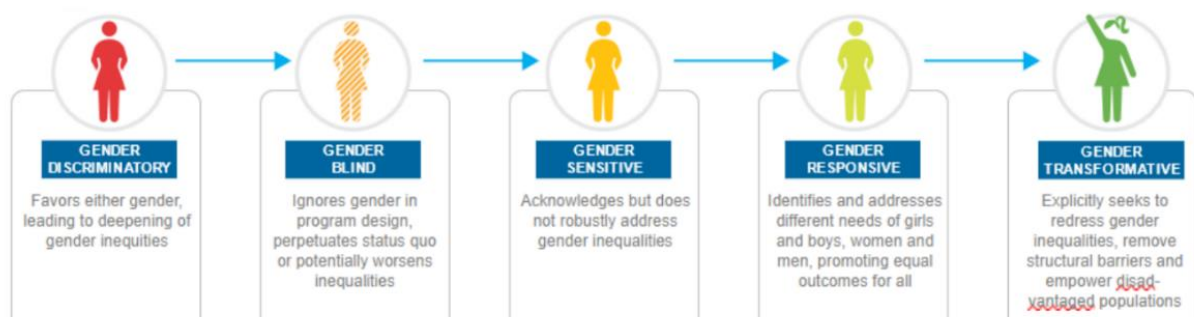
⁶ [Support Fund for Feminist Organizations | AFD - Agence Française de Développement](#)

⁷ Addressing the specific vulnerabilities of men and boys in conflict contexts (recruitment into armed groups, forced labour, migration, etc.) is part of a gender approach. However, it should be borne in mind that in these contexts, the situation of women and girls is generally overlooked by actors in the response due to persistent structural inequalities (lack of representativeness, HR issues, etc.). In this context, the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” agenda remains important and relevant.

- iv) **Promote** the “Women, Peace and Security” agenda in order to improve awareness, ownership and implementation in France and abroad.

The AFD will seek to adopt a **transformative approach to gender and conflict, addressing key drivers of inequality and challenging harmful power dynamics** (violence, discrimination, etc.).⁸ The AFD’s and Minka Instrument strategy, at both strategic and programmatic levels, are twofold:

- 1) **Systematically take into account the specific needs and interests of women, children (girls/boys) and vulnerable people in crises and conflicts contexts within the AFD’s strategies, programming and projects** in crisis and conflict areas⁹. It is about building projects that meet the basic needs of people vulnerable to crises and conflicts (food security and livelihoods, access to water, healthcare and education services, etc.), and that are as gender-responsive as possible (see diagram below). Projects will systematically need to ensure that they meet the minimum “do no harm” (NPN) standard, ensuring that activities do not reinforce inequalities (including gender inequality, but also between socio-cultural groups), or fuel the conflict and violence dynamics (especially against women or children).



- 2) **Support initiatives that strengthen women’s empowerment (economic, social, civic and/or political) in crisis and conflict contexts.** It means to support women’s socio-economic resilience and their power to act and decide in times of crisis, but also to identify opportunities generated by changes in social norms (e.g. more women heads of households, new gender division of labor and responsibilities, girls' schooling in some forced displacement camps, etc.)

Specifically, this **may involve dedicated programs or projects** (e.g. sexual and reproductive health and rights, female entrepreneurship, strengthening local CSOs), **a specific objective or component within a project** (e.g. prevention and control of GBV, community engagement of [WLiE type](#)), or specific activities in a more conventional project (e.g. [AVEC](#)¹⁰, functional literacy, safe spaces like [Girl Shine](#) etc.). If the main implementing partner does not have the mandate or capacity to address these issues, partnerships with specialized actors, including local associations, may be considered. Bridges with other projects can also be explored (e.g. referencing GBV victims to other projects or structures). Lastly, multi-sector approaches¹¹ will be encouraged to address the multi-dimensional challenges faced by women and girls in crisis and conflict contexts (e.g. holistic response to GBV-type like in the

⁸ Whether they are of gender, origin, age, religion or otherwise.

⁹ When appropriate and as far as possible, carry out an initial gender analysis during the project preparation phase, and foster ownership of gender issues by the partner and its teams, as factors of success. Some assessments and training can be carried out at the start of the project, provided that dedicated resources are devoted to it, and that the project has sufficient flexibility to take into account and adapt to the recommendations.

¹⁰ Village savings and credit associations.

¹¹ In the CAR for example, a partnership between a vocational training project (CCF1216 and the NENGO project (CCF1196) allows victims of GBV identified by the IECD to be referred to the NENGO project (CCF1196) for support. Conversely, the partnership allows the NENGO project to benefit from the support of the IECD in the design of economic reintegration activities.

[NENGO](#) project; safe spaces for adolescent girls that incorporate literacy, life skills, DSSR activities, etc.).

As a reminder, there is no hierarchy between these two levels: not all Minka projects are intended to follow a transformative approach, but it is the combination of DAC 1 and DAC 2 gender-related operations that reflects the AFD's transformative ambition. However, this strategy requires strong managerial support (training, political dialogue, programming). It also requires the setting of clear and ambitious quantitative targets: our results indicate that **the AFD could commit to reaching 85% of DAC 1/DAC 2 projects, including 20% of DAC 2, in line with the objectives formulated by 2021 French Act on development and international solidarity policy and programming ([LOPDSI](#))**.

In order to be fully operational, this strategy involves three key areas of focus:

- i. **Reaffirm the importance of localization**, by mobilizing actors and key agents of change (public institutions and civil society) in order to adapt to local contexts and customs, and foster sustainability. To achieve this, one can rely on the network of feminist CSOs supported through various channels like the Support Fund for Women's Organizations Support Fund (FSOF). It can also be interesting to work with national institutions in preparing and implementing their "Women, Peace and Security" NAP;
- ii. **Enhance men's involvement in projects** addressing women's participation and protection issues, via a Do No Harm approach¹², **while working on the social masculinity construction** to deconstruct gender stereotypes that aggravate violations of women's rights (schools of husbands, role models, sharing of domestic tasks, awareness of non-violence, training of educational staff, etc.).
- iii. **Lastly, taking concrete actions in favor of women's and children's rights requires a long-term commitment**, and finding ways and means to sustain our action despite political or security developments (principle of "stay engaged"). Differentiating between humanitarian and development actions proves particularly inadequate in this regard. Efforts should therefore be made to strengthen synergies across various France instruments.

¹² The role of men in projects must be considered with regard to intra-family and intra-community gender dynamics, taking into account a threefold issue (i) to avoid and mitigate risks of backlash or tensions related to the project (do not harm), (ii) to include men as agents of change (inclusion of men as allies), (iii) not diverting limited resources for women and girls (eviction effect). The relevance of men's involvement in projects will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the project and context, and can take various forms: awareness raising, inclusion as beneficiaries, etc.

See for example: [Scoping study: Masculinities, Violence, and Peace \(swisspeace.ch\)](#)