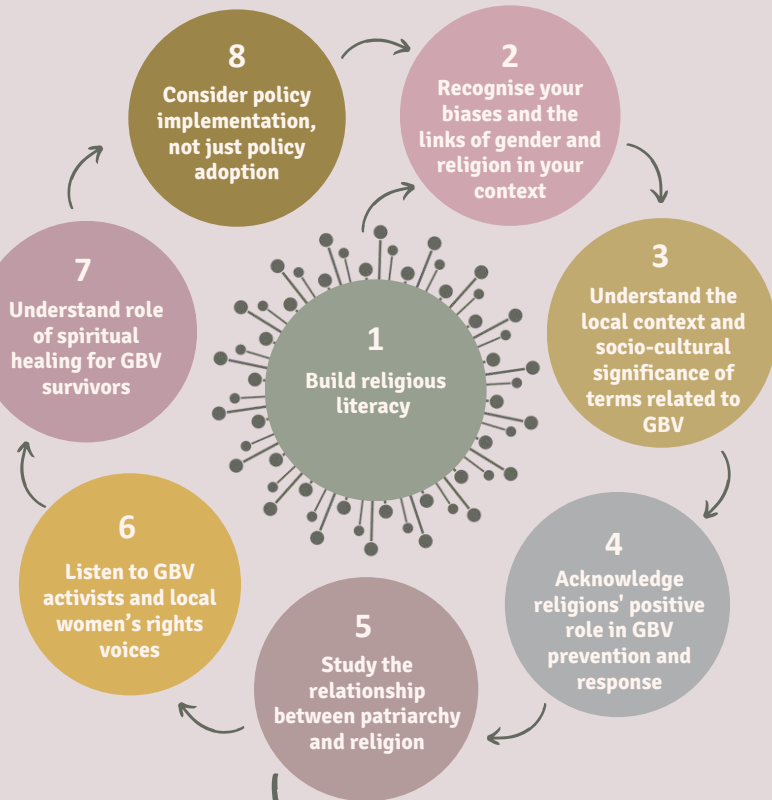


# GBV & Religion Dialogue Toolkit

This toolkit guides policymakers and faith actors through GBV discussions, outlining steps before, during, and after conversations. While pre-conversation guidelines can differ due to distinct starting points, those for during and after generally apply to both groups. The toolkit acknowledges that the roles of policymakers and faith actors can overlap, as they may share similar cultural contexts or responsibilities. The toolkit was developed by Working Group 3 of the SVRI Faith & GBV Community of Practice (2024-2025), led by Dr Nora Khalaf-Elledge and Sarah Marsso.

## BEFORE A CONVERSATION

### POLICYMAKERS



### FAITH ACTORS

Complete steps 1 and 5 of the policymakers' chart to ensure religious literacy

- 
**01. Start Locally**  
 Focus on regional and local policymakers before approaching national or international decision-makers.
- Develop a deep understanding of the local context, gather relevant statistics and actively listen to, and collaborate with GBV survivors and feminist voices.


**02. Lead with Context and Data**
- 
**03. Offer Practical Solutions**  
 Collaborate with GBV survivors, grassroots groups, and stakeholders to provide policymakers with actionable insights and evidence-based recommendations.
- Understand the roles of gatekeepers, build trust with them, keep them informed, and ensure they feel included.


**04. Engage Gatekeepers**
- 
**05. Build Alliances**  
 Identify and partner with allies, especially when engaging with national or international policymakers, to create a strong community of solidarity.
- Choose important days (e.g., International Women's Day) for advocacy actions to maximise impact.


**06. Leverage Key Dates**
- 
**07. Designate Campaigns**  
 Launch or organise around specific campaigns (e.g., 16 Days of Activism) to focus advocacy efforts and increase visibility.
- Package messages to ensure they are beneficial and relevant to both gatekeepers and policymakers.


**08. Tailor Communication**
- 
**09. Use Digital Tools**  
 Use social and digital platforms to engage policymakers and accelerate the communication process by digitalising ideas.

## IDENTIFY YOUR SOURCES OF LEGITIMACY

Gender-sensitive interpretations of religious texts, emphasising respect, equality, justice, compassion, bodily integrity, and advocating for protection and violence prevention.

Religious Teachings

Shared values

Common beliefs across cultures, religions, and communities supporting the protection of human dignity, equality, and justice.

Emotional, social, and physical impacts at individual, community, and collective levels.

Lived Experiences

Success Stories

Stories of success providing hope and evidence of effective GBV interventions, inspiring further action.

Health and medical studies providing evidence on the health impacts of GBV and supporting prevention and care strategies.

Health & Medicine

Joint Development Goals

Joint development goals and initiatives providing evidence of collaborative efforts in addressing GBV.

Frameworks and international mechanisms recognising GBV as a human rights violation and holding states accountable for protection and justice.

Human Rights

Legal Frameworks

Established laws defining, prohibiting, and mandating responses to GBV, including local health and child protection frameworks.

Intersectional feminist frameworks engaging with faith-based approaches led by or connected to local communities.

Local Women's rights Movements

Gender Equality Principles

Foundational standards advocating for equal treatment and supporting the prevention and response to GBV.



## DURING A CONVERSATION

1

### Use Local Language

Converse in the local language, if possible, to ensure understanding, cultural relevance, trust, and respect for the community's values.

2

### Listen

Practice active listening by giving your full attention to the speaker, asking clarifying questions, and responding thoughtfully to build trust, avoid miscommunication, and foster understanding.

3

### Ask Questions

Encourage open dialogue with open-ended questions, ensuring the conversation continues even after religion is invoked. Keep asking questions to deepen understanding.

4

### Practice Empathy

Be critical yet empathetic, acknowledging challenges and complex situations.

5

### Keep It Factual

Use evidence-based arguments, citing medical studies, government statistics, case studies, and project success stories. Verify the credibility of all sources.

6

### Focus on Values

Focus on value-based messaging rather than directly confronting religious texts or beliefs. Emphasise shared values, such as dignity, safety, health, and well-being.

7

### Tell Stories

Use simple, relevant, and relatable stories and case studies to demonstrate the importance of the GBV-related initiative.

8

### Refer to Shared Goals

Emphasize shared goals. Prioritise the needs of GBV survivors.

9

### Stay Solution-Oriented

Focus on practical solutions: 'how to,' not 'why not.' Distinguish between practical gender needs (immediate actions) and strategic gender needs (long-term changes).

10

### Allow For Agency

Instead of prescribing solutions, offer multiple options for collaboration, allowing others to make informed decisions.

11

### Embrace Complexity

Acknowledge and accept the complexity of GBV as both a social issue and a deeply personal matter.

12

### Sidestep Taboos

Choose language carefully (e.g., use active voice to highlight perpetrators and avoid terms like 'sex' for GBV) to ensure accurate, fact-based conversations, free from moralism, victim-blaming, or victim-shaming.

## AFTER A CONVERSATION

### • Hold Each Other Accountable

Hold decision-makers accountable by following up on promises. Mobilise communities, leverage collective action, and demonstrate how supporting the cause strengthens leaders' political credibility.



### • Build Inclusive Networks

Collaborate with diverse groups to amplify the voices of survivors and marginalised communities. Build partnerships between faith leaders, policymakers, and communities, and create networks of both women and men as GBV prevention champions.



### • Be Patient

Understand that real transformation takes time; shifting gender norms and enacting policy change is a gradual process

### • Invest in Long-Term Relationships

Maintain a long-term vision in GBV-related conversations and build strong, lasting partnerships.

