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# GENDER MAINSTREAMING

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## *What is gender mainstreaming?*

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. It is very important to remember that gender mainstreaming is not an end, but a means to achieve gender equality. The aim or goal of mainstreaming is to ensure that women can participate on an equal basis with men, have equal rights and have an equal voice and influence in the decisions that affect their lives. Gender equality does not simply mean equal numbers of women or men nor does it mean treating women and men the same.

## *The essential of Gender mainstreaming in Programmes*

1. **Sex disaggregated data** must be gathered. This reveals quantifiable differences between women and men in relation to poverty, income, education, health and participation levels, amongst others, and helps to better understand the context.
2. **A gender analysis** should inform all processes of programming. Gender analysis is about understanding the qualitative differences relating to women and men in any context. Gender analysis looks at the different roles and responsibilities of women and men, the assets available to them and their control over these (power). Such information helps appreciate the context as it affects men and women to ensure that our programming responds appropriately.
3. **Understand the political context** and individual country situations where we work. This involves knowing about laws and policies as they affect women and men (sometimes differently) as well as customary practices and norms.
4. **Both women and men must be consulted** with and their views should be heard during programmes planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure their different needs and priorities are understood and responded to. This may require talking to women and men separately to ensure all perspectives are heard.
5. **Women as well as men should be involved in the design of programmes.** This may imply actively promoting and supporting the involvement of women in planning and decision-making and ensuring that men support this
6. **Programme and project level objectives and indicators** should reflect the anticipated changes and benefits for both women and men. What gets measured gets managed.
7. The **capacity of rights-holders and duty-bearers** to mainstream gender needs to be considered during the analysis. Capacity building will be identified and put in the budget.

## *Why is gender analysis important?*

A gender analysis helps us to **understand men and women's roles** and position in society. It helps us to understand who does what and why and understand the power dynamics within the household and the wider community. This analysis of relations, roles and power can help to identify what makes someone vulnerable. A programme can then be planned accordingly to address this.

It helps to **avoid making incorrect assumptions** and ensures that we do not simply assume that all people will be able to participate in, influence or benefit equally from an intervention. It highlights how men and women may be affected by their situation differently or can contribute to improving their own situation differently. It also helps determine what constraints or barriers might exist around women and men's participation in various activities or decision making. It helps to determine how gender can potentially influence project outcomes.

A gender analysis leads to **better programming**: When we understand the context better and we know what people's different priorities, needs and capacities are; more relevant and effective programmes can be designed. Essentially, a gender analysis contributes to good programming. ***Analysis is only useful if it leads to action!***

## *Monitoring and evaluation*

Ensuring we carry out monitoring and evaluation activities in a way that takes account of gender is very important to ensure that gender issues are addressed throughout the project cycle. In order to ensure that a programme or project is addressing gender related needs and rights, indicators must be gender sensitive.

**Gender-sensitive indicators:** Gender-sensitive indicators are like all other indicators as they measure change. However, gender sensitive indicators attempt to measure change for both women and men, or measure change in gender equality issues. Gender-sensitive indicators will provide information about the status/ activity of women relative to some norm. For example, in 2019 32% of women in X community have access to and control of land, compared to 68% of men.

The indicators should be **valid, useful, and timely** and allow you to easily measure a change in a situation or condition, but they should also reveal the anticipated differences in impact for women and men, and where possible women's changed position in society due to the intervention.

They should **ensure that we are explicit about the anticipated impact** of a programme on both women and men. For example, rather than an indicator stating 'increase in income' this should state 'increase in income for men and women. This makes women and men clearly visible and ensures that we measure the change for both.

Gender-sensitive indicators require data to be **disaggregated by sex, age and other variables** and require a gender analysis of such data. Essentially, they require the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Gender issues are inextricably linked to culture, attitudes and norms. Therefore, it is important to analyze what lies beneath statistics and facts. For example, in the area of public participation, the percentage of seats held in local councils or local committees by women and men can be measured. However, such measurements do not explore underlying dynamics such as possible obstacles preventing women's

participation, or what contribution women make to political decision-making processes.

**Gender evaluation:** Like monitoring processes, there are key things to consider in relation to carrying out an evaluation:

1. Ensure that the TOR for the evaluation includes an assessment of how gender inequality was addressed within the programme. Specify that the evaluators should assess the impact on both women and men; the effectiveness and relevance to both women and men etc.
2. Use a combination of male and female evaluators where possible.
3. Ensure that at least one evaluator has gender expertise or experience.
4. Ensure that locations and timing for discussions with women and men take into account cultural issues as well as workload, busy times, childcare etc.
5. Hold separate male and female focus group discussions and interviews where appropriate to ensure all perspectives are heard.
6. Ensure that the key findings are fed back to the target groups and that findings inform the planning for the next phase of the programme.

**To ensure your evaluation is gender-sensitive,** use the [How to manage a responsive evaluation handbook](#) which include the full methodology and process.

**For further guidance on Gender mainstreaming,** please refer to UN Women publication: [Gender mainstreaming in development programming](#)