



Gender Analysis Principles and Elements



Gender equality is achieved when women and men, girls and boys, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. Equality between the sexes is a question of a fair and equitable distribution of power, influence and resources in everyday life and in society as a whole. A gender-equal society safeguards and makes use of every individual's experiences, skills and competence.

Gender mainstreaming is a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, policy or program, in all areas and all levels before any are made and throughout the whole process. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs so that both women and men benefit and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself but an approach for promoting gender equality.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis highlights the differences between and among women, men, girls and boys in terms of their relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context. Performing a gender analysis allows us to develop responses that are better suited to remedy gender-based inequalities and meet the needs of different population groups.

Gender analysis is the starting point for gender mainstreaming. Before any policy or programme intervention, making any decisions and outlining plans, a policy maker must analyze the gender equality situation in a given context and identify expected results.

Norms on gender. A gender analysis includes information on women, men, girls and boys in terms of their division of labor, roles and responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and their relative condition and position in society. It also involves looking at other norms for how gender may be expressed, including norms related to sexuality and identity.

Other social variables. A gender analysis should include social variables such as ethnicity, culture, age and social class. It may also include sexual orientation.

Quantitative and qualitative data. A gender analysis should include both quantitative (statistics) and qualitative data (analytical and relative).

Vulnerability and empowerment. A gender analysis highlights specific vulnerabilities of women and men, girls and boys. It always has an empowerment perspective, highlighting the agency and the potential for change in each group.

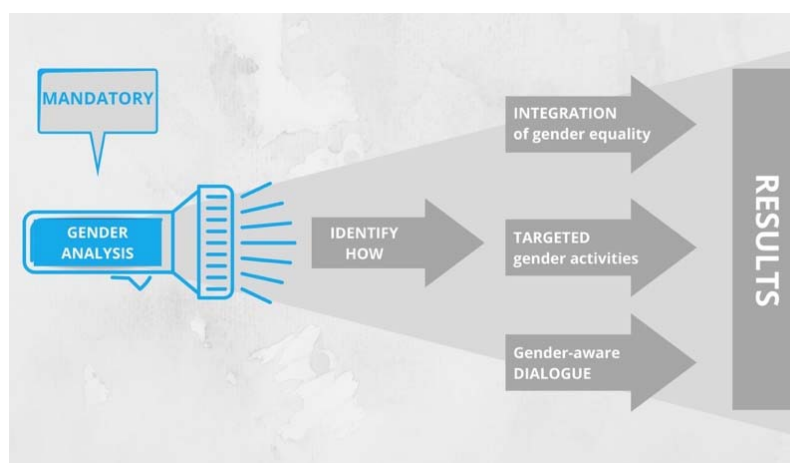
Scope and methods vary. The scope of a gender analysis can vary and be done in different ways depending on the context.

Practical and strategic needs

Practical gender needs refer to such needs that women and men have, in terms of making everyday life easier, such as access to water, better transportation, childcare facilities, etc. Addressing these will not directly challenge gender power relations but may remove important obstacles to women's economic empowerment.

Strategic gender needs refer to needs for shifts in society in terms of gender roles and relations, such as the need for a law condemning gender-based violence, equal access to credits, equality in inheritance and others. Addressing these should impact gender power relations.

Yet, sometimes the practical and strategic needs coincide, e.g., the practical need to have a place to leave the children coincides with the strategic need to get a job outside the home.





Key elements of gender analysis

Sex and gender are concepts used to make distinction between biologically given and socially constructed differences.

Sex refers to biological differences between women and men regardless of age, ethnicity or other variables. Sex disaggregated statistics are a key element in any gender analysis.

Gender refers to socially constructed differences between the sexes, norms, and cultural expectations on women/girls, men/boys; and how femininity and masculinity is defined. Gender is used when analyzing the relationship between men and women, girls and boys, in regard to their different access to power, life opportunities, vulnerabilities and different strategies for change. Gender is also used when discussing differences between different groups of women, men, boys and girls, e.g., with regards to age, ethnic background, social class, sexuality, etc. Gender norms are express in laws, customary practice, etc., which makes qualitative data central to any gender analysis.

Gender roles and responsibilities

Gender defines the roles and responsibilities what women and men, girls and boys have in a given context and culture. It defines the role in the home/household, in the school, in the workplace, in the community, in the political organization, in the government, etc.

As gender varies, such roles and responsibilities vary. In many contexts, women are expected to be the primary caregiver for the children and the elderly. However, in some cultures men take more and more responsibility in the private arena, and women do likewise on the public. In agricultural work, women may be responsible for the rice production, whereas men – for fishing. A gender analysis must highlight the differences in roles and responsibilities, to understand how men and women, girls and boys interact, what they do, can do and are expected to do.

Productive and reproductive work

Women and men have several roles related to their work.

Productive work relates to any work that generates an income. Men's productive work commonly takes place outside the sphere of the household and more commonly generates monetary income. Women's productive work commonly occurs within the household sphere and is generally less valued, and often not even taken into account.

Reproductive work relates to work in the household, raising children, cooking and cleaning. It is commonly assumed to be the responsibility of women, yet men also often perform reproductive work, for instance, taking care of machines or washing the car. Reproductive work generally does not generate any income yet has an impact on family (and societal) economy. As it is associated with the women's sphere, it is less valued than productive work and often not considered. Girls often have to take on the reproductive tasks if the mothers are to engage in productive work.

Community work relates to work and time devoted to political, religious or social work in organizations, community work or other work that both women and men engage in. Commonly, men's engagement in community work is more valued than women's engagement, and therefore considered in planning.

Access to and control over resources

Resources are means and goods, including:

- Economic (household income)
- Productive (land, equipment, tools, work, work, credit)
- Political (capability for leadership, information and organization)
- Time

Access to resources implies that women and men are able to use and benefit for specific resources (material, financial, human, social, political, etc.).

Control over resources implies that both men and women can obtain access to a resource and also make decisions about the use of that resource. For example, control over land means that women can access land (use it), own land (can be a legal titleholders) and make decisions about whether to sell or rent the land.

Benefits refer to economic, social, political, and psychological benefits derived from the utilization of resources, including the satisfaction of both practical needs (food, housing) and strategic interests (education and training, political power).

Intersectionality

Gender is a social variable, which crosscuts with other social variables such as age, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation and others. Intersectionality refers to the fact that these social variables interact, and that the individual is at the crossroads of these. For instance, a woman is never merely a woman but always has a certain ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc. An intersectional approach examines the ways in which diverse socially and culturally constructed categories interact at different levels to produce different forms of power relations and inequalities. Different forms of oppression, which may be based on issues such as ethnicity, gender, class, disability or sexual orientation do not act independently but interact and shape one another. Thus, its necessary to be very specific about which group of women or men that is referred to as the specificities vary a great deal.