



Catalyzing Change:

Advancing Gender Mainstreaming in Local NGOs

June 2023



“Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building good governance.”

- Kofi Annan





“A world full of empowered women isn’t one where men are marginalized. It’s a world where everyone thrives.”

- Purnima Mane

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Who we are

Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT) Foundation is a grant-making non-profit organization established in 2016 to support local, national, and regional non-profit organizations working to address challenges and associated vulnerabilities across the African Continent. We promote broad-based participation/partnership with other institutions and donor organizations aimed at building sustainable communities and providing innovative solutions to social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Our support spans four (4) focus areas: Health, Entrepreneurship, Environment and Leadership. Since inception, we have supported over 80 organizations in piloting significant change across our focus areas.

Health



Entrepreneurship



Environment



Leadership



What we do

1. Grant-making

Our annual Grant Cycle and Changemakers Innovation Challenge are open to interventions in the following focused areas:

- Health
- Entrepreneurship
- Environment
- Leadership



3. Convening

Breakfast Dialogue

The Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT) Foundation Breakfast Dialogue is a convergence of various Public, Private, and Social Sector leaders to have insightful conversations on global social issues to explore solutions that will propel social transformation and create impact in communities.

Since inception, ACT Breakfast Dialogue has provided a multi-stakeholder platform to build relationships and leverage on core knowledge, skills, and assets to scale development efforts across the African continent.



2. Capacity Building

- Open Conversations for Sector Leaders
- The Professional Volunteer Program (PVP)
- Leadership Unwrapped
- Fellowship Programmes
- Accelerator Programmes
- Social Sector Masterclasses
- Executive Education for Social Entrepreneurs



4. Research & Policy Advocacy

Our research programme gives us unparalleled insight into what's happening in African Non-profits and what they need to succeed.

We are bringing together the evidence-base for causes we care about and building strong relationships to advocate for effective policy solutions to the challenges facing African populations.



Preface



Our intention is to bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling organizations to design and implement effective gender-transformative programmes that yield lasting impact.



On behalf of the Board and Management of Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT) Foundation, I am delighted to introduce this report, which marks an important milestone in our collective journey towards gender equality and transformative programming. As the CEO of Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT) Foundation, it gives me great pleasure to present the findings of this evidence synthesis on gender integration and mainstreaming, focusing on best practices for local NGOs in developing gender-transformative programmes.

In recent years, we have witnessed a global awakening to the urgency of addressing gender inequality and its profound impact on development outcomes. The importance of gender considerations in program design and implementation cannot be overstated. However, we have recognized a persistent gap between theory and practice, where organizations often struggle to effectively translate gender policies and strategies into tangible actions.

Local NGOs, in particular, play a crucial role in addressing the diverse and complex needs of communities. With their deep understanding of local contexts and strong ties to the people they serve, these organizations are uniquely positioned to drive meaningful change. Yet, they often face resource and capacity constraints that hinder their ability to develop and implement truly

transformative gender programmes.

This report serves as a vital resource for local NGOs and other stakeholders committed to advancing gender equality. By synthesizing global trends in gender integration and mainstreaming, and drawing upon extensive literature and case studies, we aim to provide actionable insights and practical guidance. Our intention is to bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling organizations to design and implement effective gender-transformative programmes that yield lasting impact.

Through this report, we aspire to contribute to the growing movement towards gender and empowerment. We firmly believe that gender-transformative programming not only ensures social justice and dignity for all individuals but also leads to improved development outcomes for all communities. By amplifying the voices of marginalized groups and dismantling systemic barriers, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to ACT Foundation Research team, our team of independent reviewers, and grantees who have wholeheartedly supported their knowledge, expertise, and unwavering dedication to the development of this report. Their profound commitment and passion have been instrumental in the delivery of this report.

I invite you to delve deep into the thoughtful insights and actionable recommendations unveiled in this report. Together, we can leverage the transformative potential of gender integration across all facets of program design and implementation leading to resounding impact and the development of a society that upholds equality, inclusivity, and empowerment for all.

Thank you.

Osayi Alile,
Chief Executive Officer,
ACT Foundation

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

Background

As it stands today, the stark reality is that no country in the world is on track to achieve gender equality by 2030, the set deadline for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all United Nations member states. Even bleaker is the evidence that suggests that at the current rate of progress of this Goal 5, it may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality.¹ Yet, there is overwhelming evidence that achieving gender equality is integral to all dimensions of sustainable development. It is not only considered a fundamental human right, but is also central to economic, social, and environmental sustainability.² Gender equality and the realization of other global development goals such as health, education, climate change, and eradicating poverty are inseparable. Unless progress in gender equality is accelerated, the global community will not only fail to achieve SDG 5 but will also forgo the catalytic effect that gender equality can have for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda more broadly.³

Gender equality means that women and men, boys, and girls are able to enjoy equal status and have equal entitlements and opportunities to fully realize all human rights; make choices; and access assets, services, and public goods, without

limitations imposed by legislation, policies, gender norms, and stereotypes.⁴ The SDGs make clear that development will only be sustainable if its benefits accrue equally to both women and men.⁵ Yet, huge disparities in access to opportunities and decision-making power persist for women and men.

Globally, women and girls, representing half of the world's potential, often lack economic autonomy, have less access to basic and higher education, less political representation, and are highly susceptible to domestic and sexual violence. Despite increasing investment efforts and progress in recent years, global challenges, such as the 2020 historic disruption of the pandemic and its aftermath, have caused additional setbacks. More women and girls are likely to live in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 than today, driven largely by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, and climate change.⁶

Inequality based on gender is a complex and multifaceted issue that is deeply ingrained in social, cultural, economic, and political structures.

¹ Azcona, G., Bhatt, A., Brauchle, J., Fillo, G., Min, Y., Page, H., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Progress on the sustainable development goals: the gender snapshot 2022. UN Women and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division. <https://bit.ly/gender-snapshot-2022>

² UN Women. (2014). The world survey on the role of women in development: gender Equality and sustainable development. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2014/10/world-survey-2014>

³ UN Women. (2018). Why gender equality matters across all SDGs. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2018/SDG-report-Chapter-3-Why-gender-equality-matters-across-all-SDGs-2018-en.pdf>

⁴ UN Women. (2014, November). Gender mainstreaming in development programming. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/gender-mainstreaming-issuesbrief-en-pdf.pdf>

⁵ UN Women. (2018). Turning promises into action: gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/sdg-report>

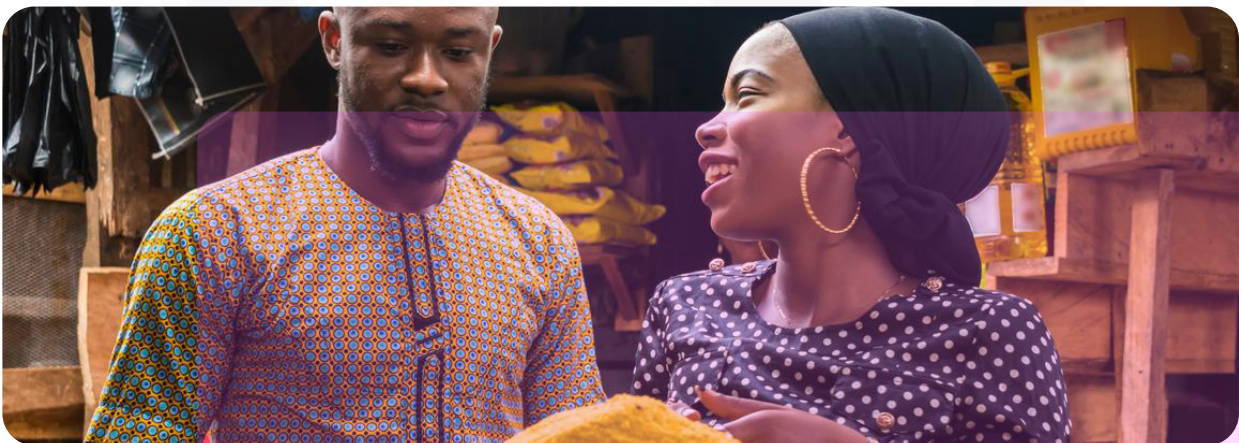
⁶ UN Women. (2022). Generation equality accountability report. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/09/generation-equality-accountability-report-2022>

Inequality based on gender is a complex and multifaceted issue that is deeply ingrained in social, cultural, economic, and political structures. It is the result of power relations that structure how societies are organized, laws are set, economies function and ideologies are shaped.⁷ For many years, advocates for equality between women and men have made gender issues a top priority on the development agenda, and discourse and strategies have evolved significantly.

Nearly three decades ago, a strategic approach for achieving gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment, known as gender mainstreaming, was adopted. Regarded as one of the most influential conferences to date, the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing identified the potential of gender mainstreaming to lead to a transformation in gender relations with positive results for gender equality.⁸

This concept emerged from the Gender and Development (GAD) approach to the advancement of women and gender equality. Despite positive results and improvements in the status of women, earlier approaches in the 1970s, such as Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD), were criticized for their failure to tackle the structural constraints to gender equality.⁹ Considered a theory of change in GAD and unlike initial efforts, gender mainstreaming recognizes that targeted interventions for women, which often operate at the margins of society, although needed, are insufficient on their own to cause significant change.¹⁰

Thus, the goal of mainstreaming gender equality is the transformation of unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women.¹¹



⁷ George, A., Amin, A., Lopes, C. A., & Ravindran, T. S. (2020). Structural determinants of gender inequality: why they matter for adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health. *BMJ*, l6985. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l6985>

⁸ Hannan, C. (2022). Handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality results. UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/02/handbook-on-gender-mainstreaming-for-gender-equality-results>

⁹ Daim, M. K. (2020). A developmental approach to gender mainstreaming. Atlas Institute for International Affairs. <https://www.internationalaffairshouse.org/a-developmental-approach-to-gender-mainstreaming/>

¹⁰ European Commission. (2005). EQUAL guide on gender mainstreaming. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/gendermain_en.pdf

¹¹ International Labour organization. (n.d.). Definition of gender mainstreaming. <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/newsite2002/about/defin.html>

Study Rationale

Through a systematic integration of a gender perspective into all policies, programmes, thematic issues, functions, and structures of an institution or organization, gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that both women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not propagated. However, opportunities to realize the full transformative potential of gender mainstreaming remain significant at the local level.

Local NGOs have been relentless in their support of women's empowerment in essentially all domains of global development. Their crucial and close interactions with communities in implementing interventions focused on women and girls have yielded considerable progress toward gender equality. However, less attention has been given to the strategic goal of gender mainstreaming, resulting in a missed opportunity to achieve substantial transformational change. This is mirrored in a study that reveals that most initiatives launched by NGOs in developing countries since the 1980s have been largely confined to services that seek to reduce oppression instead of addressing the underlying causes of gender discrimination.¹²

Gender mainstreaming goes beyond increasing women's participation, adding a "woman's component" or even a "gender equality component" into an existing activity. It means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda.¹¹ Similarly, gender mainstreaming does

not in any way preclude the need for specific targeted interventions to address women's empowerment and gender equality.⁴ It is seen as a transformative tool with a great potential for social change. Yet, many studies have revealed a lack of conceptual clarity on gender mainstreaming.¹³ Even for international development organizations, it has been well documented that the concepts, principles, methodologies, and benefits of integrating gender equality issues have not always been sufficiently understood.¹⁴ Therefore, how much more for local NGOs with far fewer resources?

Given their contextual and cultural understanding of socio-political dynamics, their access to disadvantaged populations, and their ability to influence social dynamics and transformation at the national and community levels, the need to demystify key gender equality concepts and promote gender transformative programming at the local level of NGO interventions is evident.



¹² Srivastava, L., & Austin, M.J. (2016). Women and Non-Governmental organizations in developing countries. Berkeley Mack Center. <https://mackcenter.berkeley.edu/publications/women-and-non-governmental-organizations-developing-countries>

¹³ Kelkay, A. D. (n.d.). Gender mainstreaming challenges and opportunities in government agencies in selected government offices in Fogera district, Ethiopia. Virtual Commons - Bridgewater State University. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol24/iss5/16/>

¹⁴ Guzura, T. (2017). An overview of issues and concepts in gender mainstreaming. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318990919_an_overview_of_issues_and_concepts_in_gender_mainstreaming

Research Process

Purpose And Objectives

Rising gender inequalities, exacerbated by the global crises in recent times, call for different approaches and new forms of investments. This study is intended to promote a comprehensive understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming and offer best-practice guidance on integrating gender as a cross-cutting issue within NGO programmes. It was also an attempt to help organizations get the best support and influence advocacy for increased gender mainstreaming support for the sector.

The specific objectives of this study were as follows:

- 1 Draw attention to the significance of placing gender at the core of programming in NGO work.
- 2 Promote a common and shared understanding of the principles, approaches, and methodologies of gender mainstreaming.
- 3 Provide practical guidance on how to incorporate gender into all stages of the programme cycle.
- 4 Assess the extent of gender integration in local NGOs in Nigeria.
- 5 Encourage uptake of gender transformative programming at the local level of NGO development work.

Methods

This study extensively examined the existing evidence on gender mainstreaming to provide local development actors with best practice guidance on achieving greater gender equality results in the context of their work. Employing an integrative literature review method, this report introduces key concepts and perspectives in the gender mainstreaming landscape and maps out a framework for change. We undertook a wide-ranging review of literature including academic papers, journal articles, case studies, evaluations, toolkits, and grey literature such as blogs, videos, and infographics, to produce this resource.

As part of our objectives, this report also explored the state of gender mainstreaming in local NGOs in Nigeria. Through an online survey between February and March 2023, data was collected to better understand current practices of gender mainstreaming both at the organizational and programming levels. The findings are discussed in context with each section of the report and tagged with the sub-heading, **'Survey Insights'**. The survey was disseminated via an online tool, QuestionPro, leveraging our communication platforms and the network of our partners in the space. A total of 212 completed responses were analyzed and reported only in the aggregate. All survey data was treated as confidential, other than where explicit permission had been given to share information (contact details).

This publication was additionally enriched by interviews with practitioners and experts working to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in Africa.

Definitions - Key Concepts & Terms

- ▶ **Sex:** Sex refers to the universal biological and physiological differences between females and males.
- ▶ **Gender:** Gender is a social construct built through cultural, political, and social practices that define the roles of women, girls, men, and boys (UN Women). It varies from one society to another, and at different points in history.¹⁵
- ▶ **Gender Roles:** A set of prescriptions for action and behavior allocated to women and men respectively;¹⁶ taught, learned, absorbed, and reinforced by members of society. These roles can be affected by factors such as ethnicity, class, race, age, and religion, and may vary widely within and between cultures and often evolve.¹⁷
- ▶ **Gender Relations:** The social relationships between men, women, girls, and boys which shape how power is distributed between women, men, girls, and boys and how that power translates into different positions in society.¹⁸
- ▶ **Gender Stereotypes:** The simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and roles of women and men, often used to justify gender discrimination more broadly.¹⁹
- ▶ **Gender Gap:** The gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration, or benefits.²⁰
- ▶ **Gender Equality:** Gender equality, or equality between women and men, refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.²¹

¹⁵ UNICEF. (2018, December). Gender toolkit: integrating gender in programming for every child in South Asia. <https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/gender-toolkit-integrating-gender-programming-every-child-south-asia>

¹⁶ European Institute for Gender Equality. (n.d.). Concepts and definitions. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/concepts-and-definitions>

¹⁷ Catholic Relief Services. Southern Africa guidelines for gender-responsive programming: how to address gender-based violence and integrate gender considerations into projects on agriculture & livelihoods and health & HIV. (2010). <https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/guidelines-gender-responsive-programming.pdf>

¹⁸ UNODC. (2013, June). Gender Mainstreaming in the Work of UNODC. www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/UNODC-GuidanceNote-GenderMainstreaming.pdf

¹⁹ IWGW. (n.d.). <https://www.igwg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DefinGenderRelatedTerms.pdf>

²⁰ Faramand, T., & Treleaven, E. (2012). Integrating gender in improvement activities: implementation guide. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00HTXC.pdf

²¹ UN Women Training Centre. Gender equality glossary. (n.d.). Available via: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36>

- ▶ **Gender Equity:** It refers to the process of being fair to men and women, boys, and girls in the distribution of resources, services, opportunities, and benefits, and defined by their specific needs. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages or biological makeup that prevents women and men, girls and boys from otherwise operating on a level playing field. For example, gender-equitable health provision would include not only general comprehensive health care but also a wide range of services, such as reproductive health, that are essential for the specific differing needs of women and men. In turn, gender equality means that all human beings are free to make their own choices without the limitations set by gender roles.²¹
- ▶ **Gender parity:** Gender parity is another term for the equal representation of women and men. It is a numerical concept that concerns relative equality in terms of the numbers and proportions of women and men, girls, and boys, in a given area.¹⁷ For example, the ratio of women to men in organizational leadership or higher education.
- ▶ **Gender-based discrimination:** Gender-based discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms which prevents a person from enjoying full human rights, resources, opportunities, and the right to contribute and influence.²¹
- ▶ **Empowerment:** Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity-building that leads to greater participation and decision-making power. It enables people to take control of their lives, set their own agendas, develop skills, build self-confidence, solve problems, and develop self-reliance. It involves the ability to make choices as well as to define what choices are offered.²⁰
- ▶ **Engendering:** To make the process or activity gender sensitive or gender-responsive by incorporating gender needs and interests and/or eliminating gender-discriminatory policies, strategies, and practices. To make visible the different impacts on or impact of women and men and their genders in a given context.²⁰
- ▶ **Gender Analysis:** Gender analysis is an organized approach for considering gender issues through the entire process of programme or organizational development. This requires sex-disaggregated data and ensures that development projects and programmes incorporate the roles, needs, and participation of women, men, girls, and boys.²⁶
- ▶ **Men's Engagement:** Men's engagement is a programmatic approach that involves men and boys a) as clients and beneficiaries, b) as partners and c) as agents of change, in actively promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and the transformation of inequitable definitions of masculinity.²²

²² IWGW. (n.d.). <https://www.igwg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DefinGenderRelatedTerms.pdf>

- ▶ **Gender Mainstreaming:** the process of incorporating a gender perspective into policies, strategies, programmes, project activities, administrative functions, as well as the institutional culture of an organization.²³
- ▶ **Gender Integration:** Gender Integration entails the identification and subsequent treatment of gender differences and inequalities during program/project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.²⁴

²³ Faramand, T., & Treleaven, E. (2012). Integrating gender in improvement activities: implementation guide. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00HTXC.pdf

²⁴ USAID. (n.d.). Guide to gender integration and analysis. Available via: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACP506.pdf



SECTION TWO

Why Gender?

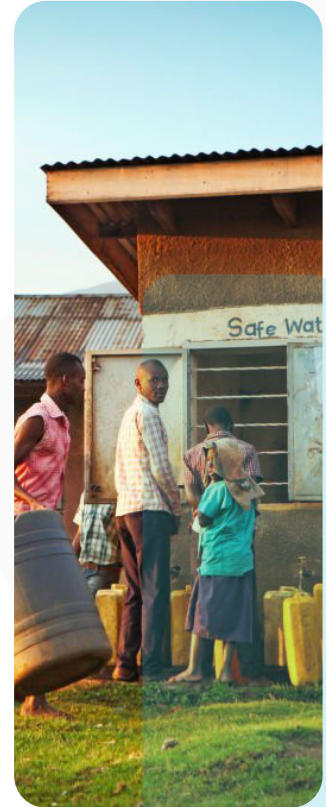
Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

The right to development, in which individuals and communities attain their highest potential, has long been threatened by rising social injustices and enormous disparities. Dignity, security, and shared prosperity have remained elusive, while intractable problems such as extreme poverty continue to gain prominence. Enshrined in the core principle of the 2030 agenda is the rallying cry to ‘leave no one behind,’ which represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, reduce inequalities, and end discrimination.²⁵ Reaching the furthest behind first is the strategic mission behind this compelling transformative promise. According to the UNDP, people are left behind when they lack the choices and capabilities that enable others to participate in or benefit from human development. The furthest behind are overwhelmingly among the world’s poorest and most marginalized people, enduring disadvantages or deprivations that limit their choices and opportunities relative to others in society.²⁶ They include and are not limited to women and girls, people living in rural areas, indigenous people, people with disabilities, migrants, youth, and older persons.

Today’s multidimensional global problems, including the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity, climate emergencies, and the refugee crises, have pushed inequalities to new heights. However, the 2022 World Inequality Report confirms that inequality is a political choice and not an inevitability. Building critical sector knowledge is therefore paramount for the development of a civil society.

Why Gender?

Gender is a pervasive issue and a powerful determinant of the power, privilege, and possibilities within the reach of people in society. Women in particular are disproportionately affected by gender-based inequalities, with severe consequences for their personal development, their children, communities, and countries. These inequalities are made worse by poverty with women bearing the most burden. According to some estimates, women constitute 70 percent of the world’s poor, and these disparities have worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Around 2.4 billion women of working age are not afforded equal economic opportunity and 178 countries maintain legal barriers that prevent their full economic participation, according to the World Bank’s Women, Business, and the Law 2022 report.



²⁵ UN Sustainable Development Group. (n.d.). Leave no one behind. <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>

²⁶ Renner, S., Bok, L., Igloi, N., & Linou, N. (2018). What does it mean to leave no one behind? UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/publications/what-does-it-mean-leave-no-one-behind>

Compared with men, women control fewer economic assets and resources, have fewer educational opportunities, have limited social capital and decision-making power, and experience widespread gender bias. Systemic and deeply rooted inequality between men and women is also reflected in gender-based violence, which takes many forms: physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional. Almost one in three women worldwide have experienced intimate partner violence and/or non-partner sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.²⁷ On the other hand, men are also affected by harmful gender norms around masculinity that commonly confer power and status to boys and young men.²⁸ They are suppressed by prevailing gender roles and are often expected to carry a significant financial burden. Men have a higher likelihood of committing suicide compared to women, and they are less inclined to seek healthcare services. This can be attributed to societal expectations that pressure them to deny their emotional struggles and maintain a facade of strength.

Harmful gender stereotypes affect everyone and can create a lifelong cycle of inequality if not addressed. Hence, gender is critical for development, as it offers a holistic approach to planning for societal progress. An understanding of how social norms and power structures impact the lives and opportunities available to men and women is necessary for designing and implementing equitable programmes and policies, thereby advancing the gender equality agenda.



Throughout my 18 years of dedicated involvement in the field of gender equality, i believe one way of working towards robust social development is to create opportunities that support everyone especially women and girls to live free from violence, abuse, and extreme discrimination. By doing so, they can unlock their true potential and personally recognize the link that connects their capacity as co-creators of new solutions to the developmental challenges of our time.

Chioma Adiele-Okpara
Gender Expert, Tanager

²⁷ World Health Organization. (2021). Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>

²⁸ Rice, S., Oliffe, J., Seidler, Z., Borschmann, R., Pirkis, J., Reavley, N., & Patton, G. (2021). Gender norms and the mental health of boys and young men. *The Lancet*, 6(8), e541-e542. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667\(21\)00138-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(21)00138-9)

Facts & Figures - Gender Statistics For Africa

Agriculture²⁹



Women are the primary producers and processors of food in Africa. Yet, more than half of the female population in sub-Saharan Africa is food insecure at moderate or severe levels.



Although African women are overrepresented in the agricultural sector, with 70% making up the labour force, their ownership of agricultural land remains much lower than that of men. Only about 30 percent of women own land on the continent, compared to 70 percent of men. Unequal land rights limit women's access to credit and are a major barrier to investments.



“Women and girls face vulnerability to environmental and social risks due to limited resources and disproportionate allocation within countries, especially in frontier markets. Allocating capital deliberately and promoting gender equality in decision-making processes is therefore crucial. Women play a critical role in development, being primarily responsible for food production, particularly in africa. So, how can we do development finance without considering the majority of the workforce? Women also face heightened risks, as they lack land and resource ownership rights, hindering their access to loans and financing for business growth. This narrative must change to prioritize gender in development finance”.

Yvonne Ofosu-Appiah -
Chief Investment Officer, Wangara green ventures

²⁹ African Development Bank. (2020, March). African gender index report, 2019. https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/africa_gender_index_report_2019_-_analytical_report.pdf

Education



Girls often face more barriers than boys in attending and completing school. Harmful social practices, such as girl child marriage, school-related violence against girls, and female genital mutilation, constitute strong impediments to girls' education. Among young women aged 20-24 years in sub-Saharan Africa, 12% were married before they were 15 years old.³⁴

Employment & Economic Participation³⁴



African women are often in more vulnerable employment than men (AGI 70.7%) - where they are less likely to have employment contracts, legal rights, or social protection, and are often not paid enough to escape poverty.



Women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work reinforces their low participation in the labour market and limits their economic empowerment. In Africa, women spend over four times more time than men on unpaid care and domestic work.

Health



Gender power imbalances constrain women's full control over decisions related to their health. In at least half of the 40 African countries for which data was available (2002-18), the husband was the main decision-maker regarding women's health care. In contrast, men are more likely to have decision-making authority over their own health care than their female counterparts.³⁰

Finance



African women are highly entrepreneurial and own one-third of small and medium enterprises. Yet, they face more operational constraints such as access to credit, limiting the profitability of their businesses and related growth opportunities.³⁰

Conflict & Violence



Women are among the first to suffer from conflict and represent a significant proportion of refugees. There are 8.2 million internally displaced women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 40% of the global total.³⁰

³⁰ SIGI. (2021). Regional report for Africa. <https://www.oecd.org/dev/sigi-2021-regional-report-for-africa-a6d95d90-en.htm>

Gender Equality Is Not Just A Women's Issue

An important semantic distinction critical to the realization of human rights and equality for all is that gender is neither a synonym for sex nor women. Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females. Gender, on the other hand, refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women.²¹ Therefore, they cannot be used interchangeably. Today's society is confronted with the misconception that gender equality is a women's issue, and this can be alluded to the common conflation of the terms gender and women in development practice. Women have long been more disadvantaged than men as they disproportionately lack access to and control over resources and opportunities. Consequently, efforts to close the equality gap have been largely targeted at women and have inadvertently led to gender equality being perceived as a women's issue. Such misunderstandings have the capacity to reinforce existing inequalities, potentially enabling resistance to change and the unintentional marginalization of men in the context of development.

Inequality is an important constraint of development and gender-based discrimination remains one of its oldest and most pervasive forms across the world. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.³¹ Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. The gender mainstreaming strategy recognizes that both men's and women's involvement are crucial for better development outcomes and transformative change.



³¹ UN Women. Gender mainstreaming - concepts and definitions. (n.d.). <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>



In my extensive experience in the banking industry, I can confidently say that almost every day during my marketing activations, I encountered men who expressed interest in women's financial offerings and questioned if similar services were available for men. While statistics indicate gender disparities for women, I have noticed that the conversation has increasingly favored women, leaving men uncertain about their position. The truth is, if we aim to achieve accelerated development in gender equality, we must involve men. Empowering women and recognizing men's role in creating a balanced society go hand in hand. Empowered women gain independence, agency, and decision-making abilities that contribute to their achievements and those of their families. Cooperation and mutual support, not competition, should drive gender equality efforts.

Ibukun Omololu - Gender & Business Expert



Intersectionality

It is widely acknowledged that discrimination does not exist independently. People embody multiple, layered social identities such as gender, age, race, class, and disability, which interact to produce intersecting disadvantages and oppressions. Hence, there has been a shift within gender mainstreaming to better elaborate and recognize that gender interacts with other forms of inequality.³² This is the concept of intersectionality and the term was coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. It acknowledges that institutional power dynamics and social structures are complicated and that people can experience multiple forms of oppression at the same time.³³ Intersectionality is being increasingly positioned as complementary and necessary to unpack the nuances of inequalities that intersect with gender at multiple scales.

A growing body of evidence reveals that women are more likely to experience tightly interwoven layers of discrimination when gender intersects with other forms of marginalization which include but not limited to race, ethnicity, social class, disability, etc. Thus, an intersectional lens is considered a value-added analytical tool in gender mainstreaming that helps to illuminate the multidimensional lived realities of women and men. Intersectionality demonstrates that one voice cannot effectively speak for the experiences of people with intersecting identities.³⁴ It considers people's overlapping identities and experiences to understand the complexity of the discrimination they face. Applying intersectionality offers the potential to leave no one behind, especially women and girls who are the furthest behind.



³² Adaptation Fund. (2022, February). A study on intersectional approaches to gender mainstreaming in adaptation-relevant interventions. <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/AF-Gender-Mainstreaming-Study-final3.pdf>

³³ The Compass for SBC. (2022, July 1). Gender and intersectionality. Available via: <https://thecompassforsbc.org/trending-topics/gender-and-intersectionality>

³⁴ Commonwealth Foundation. (2019, May). Gender and its intersectionality: guidelines for programming and engagement in governance. <https://commonwealthfoundation.com/download-file/8303/?tmstv=1684659113>



SECTION THREE

A Global Strategy – Gender Mainstreaming

A Historical Background

Widely recognized as a global strategy for achieving gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment, gender mainstreaming continues to receive increasing commitments and targets from governments and development agencies. Gender mainstreaming recognizes that gender-based inequalities are relational and cannot be thoroughly addressed by isolated initiatives or those solely focused on women. While stand-alone or specific target interventions for women is critical given the great disparities that exist in certain sectors, they are however insufficient in creating revolutionary change.

In response, the concept of gender mainstreaming was first proposed after the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi, 1985.³⁵ However, it was formally established at the Fourth International Conference on Women held in Beijing (1995) as a global strategy for realizing gender equality and empowerment of women at all levels of development.³⁶ This comprehensive, internationally embraced holistic approach aims to bring about widespread changes in laws, policies, attitudes, perceptions, and practices, redress existing inequalities, and transform the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate them.

Working Definitions

In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined gender mainstreaming as follows:

“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. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”

In 1998, the definition was further expanded, with a focus on policymaking. Developed by the Council of Europe, gender mainstreaming is regarded as:

“The (re)organization, improvement, development, and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.”

³⁵ Booth, C. N., & Bennett, C. (2002). Gender mainstreaming in the European Union. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 9(4), 430-446. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505068020090040401>

³⁶ UN Women. (2015). Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/01/beijing-declaration>

What Gender Mainstreaming is NOT.

1. It is NOT just the purview of Global Development Organizations

The concept of gender mainstreaming is often associated with and driven by international NGOs, development agencies, and governments, and continues to receive increasing commitments and targets. However, mainstreaming gender into programmes or policies is not exclusive to global development organizations. Given its full transformative potential, the implementation must also be sustained at the grassroots by local actors. With evidence suggesting that gender mainstreaming is key to high-impact and high-quality programming,³⁷ it should be a top priority for local social sector organizations in Africa.

2. It is NOT just about including women.

Gender mainstreaming does not mean adding a ‘woman’s component’ to a programme.¹¹ It means considering both women and men and the relationship that exists between them (e.g. interests, needs, experiences, and priorities) to affect the life cycle of a programme or inform policies. The presence of women does not mean that a gender mainstreaming exercise was undertaken, and it does not automatically lead to qualitative change toward gender equality in a specific policy, programme, or activity.³⁸

3. It is NOT the same as gender parity.

While gender parity is concerned with the equal representation or participation of women and men in a given area or activity, gender mainstreaming goes beyond numbers.³⁹ It is ensuring any planned action is responsive to the needs, interests, and concerns of women and men, with a view to promoting equality. However, it is important to note that equal participation of women and men at all levels creates more possibilities for discussing and addressing the different impacts of policies and programming on them.

4. It is NOT about having well-crafted statements.

A strong commitment and policy that recognizes the significance of gender mainstreaming at both the programmatic and organizational levels are laudable; however, they are insufficient if mechanisms for accountability are unavailable.

5. It is NOT only for gender experts and advisors.

While gender experts play a significant role in facilitating gender-responsive programming, it is well-documented that mainstreaming gender is the responsibility of everyone. It will only be more effective when it is an essential part of the day-to-day work of everyone and the capacity to do it exists across an organization.

³⁷ Save the Children. (2014). Gender equality program guidance and toolkit: engendering transformational change. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/gender_equality_program_toolkit_2014.pdf/

³⁸ Council of Europe. (n.d.). What is gender mainstreaming? <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>.

³⁹ Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). From concept to action: gender mainstreaming in operational activities. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/undppaper.PDF>

A Proposed Consolidated Framework

The term mainstreaming came from the objective to bring attention to gender equality into the routine processes of organizational activities, in all sectors and policy areas, and all interventions with implications for people. This mandate gave rise to the terms 'gender perspective' and 'gender lens.' Applying a gender perspective or gender lens in development activities is a way of approaching or examining an issue, and paying particular attention to the potentially different ways that women and men are or might be impacted. While gender equality is an independent global goal, gender mainstreaming recognizes gender as a cross-cutting issue that is integral to economic, social, and environmental sustainability and requires integrating a gender perspective into all aspects of programmes and policy from planning to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Yet, mainstreaming does not replace the need for focused activities to

address specific constraints and obstacles faced by women, men, or marginalized persons. Widespread evidence reveals that a complementary twin-track strategy (gender-integrated and gender-targeted approaches) has greater potential for achieving gender equality results and empowering women.⁴ Women who often experience higher levels of disparities will require targeted interventions to level the gender inequality gap. Nevertheless, such target interventions should ensure that a gender perspective is taken into consideration so that inequality is not perpetuated.

While the main purpose of this study was to promote greater gender integration in local NGOs' programmes, the growing debate and recognition of gender mainstreaming beyond programming was also considered.



The diagram below proposes a unified framework for gender mainstreaming at both the programmatic/policy and organizational levels, identified through an extensive desk review. The goal of this framework is to provide a holistic understanding of gender mainstreaming and to focus on the areas critical for effective implementation.

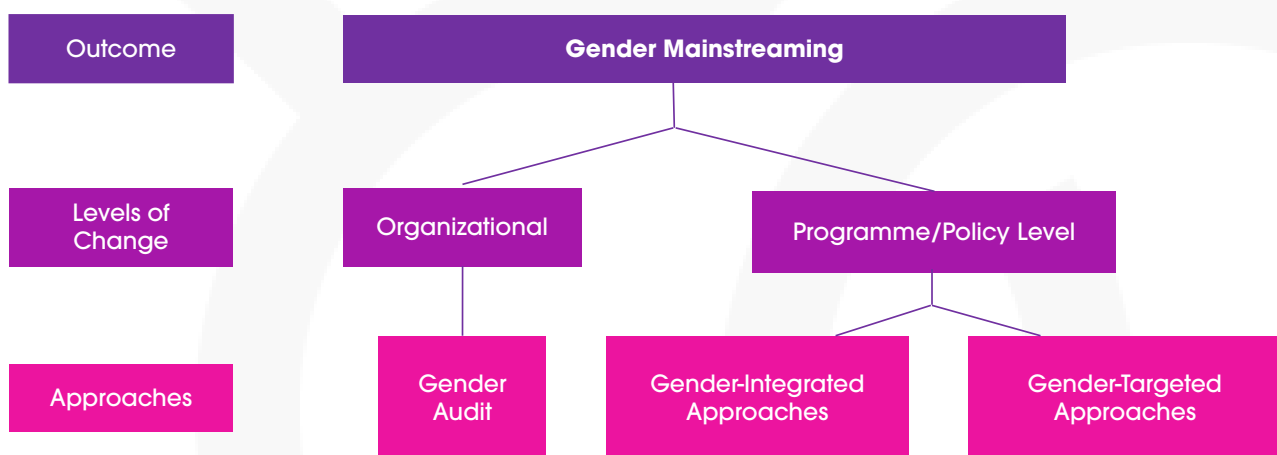


Figure 1: A Consolidated Framework for Gender Mainstreaming

Structure of this framework: Within this section, the discussion on the organizational level of change for gender mainstreaming is introduced, emphasizing its significance and presenting the gender audit approach. It further explores survey findings on the integration of gender mainstreaming in internal operations and organizational culture. The section concludes by providing an overview and emphasizing the importance of gender-targeted approaches within the programming level of change. Section 4 introduces the concept of gender analysis as the initial step for gender mainstreaming in policy and programmes. Section 5 delves deeper into examining methods and tools for gender-integrated approaches, presenting survey findings throughout the programming cycle, and highlighting the challenges organizations often face when integrating gender in programmes.

⁴⁹ UN Women. (2014, November). Gender mainstreaming in development programming. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/gender-mainstreaming-issuesbrief-en-pdf.pdf>

From The Inside Out: Gender Mainstreaming At The Organizational Level

Existing literature reveals that less attention has been paid to strategic gender considerations within the culture and structures of social sector organizations. As gender equality becomes more central in development, and gender mainstreaming gains prominence, there is the risk that organizations may neglect inequalities within their structures. The big question is whether organizations that promote gender equality in their programmes demonstrate the same commitment to their staff and their systems.

Advocates of this discourse have stated that it is no longer sufficient to reduce gender mainstreaming to programming interventions and calls on organizations to tackle power and inequalities reflexively and intentionally within their own culture and structures.⁴⁰ Like the communities they serve, organizations are being asked to reflect and introspect on issues of gender equality within their operations and culture. The 'Gender Mainstreaming from the Inside Out' approach is premised on the underlying notion that the global gender equality agenda can be better realized when organizations promote positive change from within. It suggests that pursuing gender equality internally translates to the ability to effectively design and implement gender-responsive programmes.⁴¹

Within this context, gender mainstreaming is defined as:

The process of incorporating a gender perspective into organizational policies, strategies, and administrative functions, as well as the institutional culture of an organization. This process offers an opportunity to thoroughly examine all aspects of an organization through a gender lens, enhance the organization's work from the inside out, and gauge how well the organization follows its own principles on gender.

-Population Reference Bureau (2015)

The need for expanding the interpretation of gender mainstreaming beyond programming is also reflected in the 'Minimum Standards for Mainstreaming Gender Equality,' developed by the Gender Practitioners Collaborative.⁴² Eight sets of standards were proposed, covering the areas of policy, capacity and culture, analysis, budget, data, indicators, risk management, and accountability. They offer a common framework and establish collective benchmarks for harmonizing efforts to mainstream gender equality. These standards provide the foundational steps for organizations across all sectors to define what is appropriate for their organizational and programmatic contexts.

Further Reading - [Minimum standards for mainstreaming gender equality](#)

⁴⁰ Lokot, M. (2021). From the inside out: gender mainstreaming and organizational culture within the aid sector. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.664406>

⁴¹ Gilles, K. (2015, March). Pursuing gender equality inside and out: gender mainstreaming in international development organizations. Population Reference Bureau. <https://www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/gender-mainstreaming-2015.pdf>

⁴² Gender Practitioners Collaborative. (n.d.). Minimum standards for mainstreaming gender equality. <https://genderstandards.org/standards/>

Gender Audit Within An Internal Organizational System

A gender audit or gender self-assessment is an approach that provides organizations with the opportunity for introspection on issues of culture and internal operations. It is essentially a “social audit” that considers whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming are effective and reinforce each other and whether they are being followed. A gender audit can help assess progress in key areas such as technical skills, accountability, leadership, and staff perceptions. Its results will establish a baseline measure of gender awareness and equality and clearly define the elements of an organization that require improvement.



Survey Insights

As an integral part of our research goals, we surveyed Nigeria-based local NGOs to ascertain the current state of gender mainstreaming at the organizational level. A series of statements covering key dimensions of operations and organizational culture was presented to gather the viewpoints of the participants.

My organization has a strong written policy that affirms a commitment to gender equality in culture, programmes, and operations

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

15.57%

3.77%

11.79%

30.19%

38.68%

Gender Policy: A gender equality policy is a declarative statement that gender equality is a core organizational value.⁴³ An organization that has effectively integrated gender equality into its operations will possess a robust gender policy that acknowledges gender as a fundamental component of identity and a critical aspect of diversity. Among the respondents, a significant portion (68.87%) confirmed that their organization possesses a comprehensive written policy that explicitly declares its commitment to promoting gender equality across cultural, programmatic, and operational dimensions. However, when considering the level of agreement, only 38.68% of these respondents strongly affirmed their alignment with this policy.

⁴³ International Labour Organization. (n.d.). Participatory gender audit. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_101030.pdf

Senior leadership actively supports and takes responsibility for the implementation of the gender policy

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

13.68%

2.83%

8.96%

43.40%

31.13%

- Senior Leadership :** To effectively enact the gender equality policy, senior leadership must demonstrate their support by devising mechanisms for implementation and accountability, as well as allocating resources to execute them. Based on the survey findings, a significant majority of the respondents (74.53%) recognized that senior leadership within their respective organizations actively supports and assumes responsibility for implementing the gender policy. However, it is important to note that less than half (43.40%) of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. This suggests that while there is a general acknowledgment of senior leadership's involvement, there exist varying degrees of conviction and commitment among the respondents regarding the effective implementation of the gender policy.

Gender issues are taken seriously and discussed openly by men and women in my organization

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

12.26%

4.72%

12.74%

33.96%

36.32%

- Organizational Culture -** To uphold the commitment to fostering gender equality, it is imperative for organizations to cultivate an enabling culture. There is an increasing acknowledgment that integrating gender considerations into the fabric of organizational culture can exert an influence on external programmes and outcomes. According to the survey results, a significant majority of the survey participants (70.28%) confirmed that gender-related matters are given serious consideration and openly discussed by both men and women within their organizations. Within this percentage, 36.32% expressed a strong belief in this perspective, while 33.96% agreed without indicating a strong conviction. These findings indicate a positive trend towards recognizing and fostering an inclusive environment where gender issues are prioritized. It demonstrates that a considerable number of respondents perceive their organizations as places where gender-related discussions are actively encouraged and valued. However, it is important to note that a significant portion of the respondents still fell into the category of mere agreement, indicating a potential need for further efforts to create safe spaces within organizations where gender issues are actively encouraged, valued, and given the attention they deserve.

Gender equality is evident in staff and board composition

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

12.26%

4.72%

13.21%

36.79%

33.02%

Human resource processes are gender sensitive and equitable including work practices, performance evaluations, and job recruitment.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

11.32%

5.66%

14.15%

36.32%

32.55%

- Equal Opportunities** - Facilitating equal opportunities among the staff of the organization constitutes not only a strategy for gender mainstreaming but also a legal obligation in certain climates. This encompasses the provision of gender balance in staffing patterns and the establishment of fair recruitment procedures, as well as the implementation of an unbiased performance assessment scheme devoid of gender biases. Among the respondents who participated in the survey, a significant majority (69.81%) provided clear confirmation of the existence of gender equality within the staff and board compositions of their respective organizations. However, it is noteworthy that when examining the level of agreement, the proportion of responses indicating strong agreement (33.02%) is slightly lower compared to those expressing emphatic confirmation (36.79%). This implies that while there is a general acknowledgment of gender equality in staff and board compositions, there may be variations in the level of conviction and certainty among the respondents. These findings highlight the progress made by many organizations in their commitment to gender equality by establishing a diverse and balanced representation of genders. However, they also indicate the need for further emphasis on reinforcing and solidifying this commitment through stronger expressions of agreement and unwavering support for gender equality initiatives. Such efforts can contribute to the continued advancement of equal representation and opportunities for all genders within organizational structures.

In aspects of human resources within organizations, the respondents (68.87%) largely affirmed to gender-sensitive and equitable processes, including work practices, performance evaluations, and job recruitment. However, only 32.55% expressed strong certainty in their agreement. There is therefore need for further efforts to strengthen the commitment of gender-sensitive practices, that they are consistently implemented across all levels and actively supported by all stakeholders.

Gender-Targeted Approaches

Extensive evidence has firmly established the effectiveness of a twin-track strategy in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.⁴ This approach recognizes the need to integrate gender concerns into regular processes and procedures, while also considering the strategic interests of women and men and implementing targeted interventions to address their unique constraints and challenges. A range of targeted interventions is required to achieve gender equality in areas where gender-based inequalities, discrimination, and exclusion persist due to unequal gender relations and structural and systemic factors.⁸

A gender-targeted approach refers to interventions that are specifically designed to address the distinct needs and challenges of women and men. This approach acknowledges the deep-rooted nature of gender inequalities and emphasizes the importance of tailored actions to overcome them. These actions should encompass clear, realistic, and appropriate strategies, interventions, targets, and quotas that enable the meaningful participation of women, men, girls, and boys at various levels of programme outcomes.¹⁵

The objective of gender mainstreaming through targeted activities is to bridge the historical gaps that exist between women and men in terms of empowerment, participation, and access to services. However, it is crucial to highlight that a gender-targeted approach should not reinforce or perpetuate gender stereotypes. Instead, it should be grounded in the understanding that gender is a social construct and that both women and men can be affected by gender inequalities. Efforts must be made to ensure that gender-targeted interventions promote inclusivity and do not inadvertently reinforce traditional gender roles or exacerbate existing inequalities.





SECTION FOUR

Where To Start?

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is regarded as the essential starting point for gender mainstreaming⁸ and the cornerstone of the gender integration process (see the next section on What is Gender Analysis). It involves efforts to understand if, how, and why issues affect women and men differently and unequally within a particular context or development sector and what options exist to address them.⁴ The framework of gender analysis has become a prominent tool in development practice. It is closely linked to the quality control of an intervention by ensuring that it adequately considers gender concerns throughout its planning and implementation regardless of whether the intervention explicitly targets the empowerment of women or gender equality.⁴⁵ It is well documented that a gender analysis integrated into other context assessments is the ambition of the gender mainstreaming agenda, particularly as gender equality and women's empowerment are cross-cutting issues. However, a separate gender analysis that is context specific to a sector or policy area is critical. A study reported that gender analysis is limited in the youth livelihood sector in Africa⁴⁶ and experience has revealed that gender equality contexts are seldom fully investigated and understood in analyses, resulting in development interventions that are not always adequately based on local realities and priorities.⁸

What is Gender Analysis?

Gender analysis is a systematic methodology for examining the differences in roles and norms for women and men, girls, and boys; the different levels of power they hold; their differing needs, constraints, and opportunities; and the impact of these differences in their lives.⁴⁷ It identifies disparities, investigates why such disparities exist, determines whether they are detrimental, and if so, looks at how they can be remedied.⁴⁸ Regarded as an important component of design and programming, gender analysis assesses how initiatives are likely to contribute to change, enable accountability to beneficiaries, and limit any unintended harm.⁴⁹



The purpose of conducting gender analysis is to identify the specific aspects of gender relations and inequalities that are present in a given programme context, and to examine their implications for programme design and implementation.⁵⁰ Without it, critical assumptions can be overlooked and either programmes are undermined or harm is inadvertently caused.¹⁹

⁴⁵ International Labour Organization. Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_165986.pdf

⁴⁶ Perezniето, P., Marcus, R., Maclure, M., Archer, N., & Mdee, A. (2018, January). Gender and youth livelihoods programming in Africa. Mastercard Foundation. <https://mastercardfdn.org/research/gender-and-youth-livelihoods-programming-in-africa/>

⁴⁷ Jhpiego. (n.d.). Gender analysis toolkit for health systems. <https://gender.jhpiego.org/analysistoolkit/gender-analysis/>

⁴⁸ USAID. (n.d.). Guide to gender integration and analysis. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACP506.pdf

⁴⁹ Dutta, S. (2015, November). Mainstreaming gender in mitigation and technology development and transfer interventions. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/publications/mainstreaming-gender-mitigation-and-technology>

⁵⁰ OXFAM. (2014). Quick guide to gender analysis. <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/10546/312432/1/ml-quick-guide-to-gender-analysis-300114-en.pdf>

Gender analysis seeks to answer three fundamental questions⁵¹:

1. What are the gender-based inequalities, discriminations, and rights denials in a given context? How do these issues intersect with other discrimination factors, such as age, ethnicity, disability, and class?
2. How will gender relations impact the effectiveness and sustainability of a project, activity, or result?
3. How will the proposed results affect the relative status of women and men and exacerbate or reduce inequalities?

Survey Insights

Given the substantial role of gender analysis in identifying gender norms or roles that may further perpetuate existing inequalities, we inquired with our survey participants whether they adopt a formal approach to gender analysis for every programme. Slightly more than half of the respondents (54.72%) affirmed that gender analysis actively informs the plan and design of all programmes. A quarter of the participants (25.47%) expressed uncertainty regarding the incorporation of gender analysis in their programming, whereas 19.34% definitively indicated the absence of a gender analysis process in their planning and design of interventions.

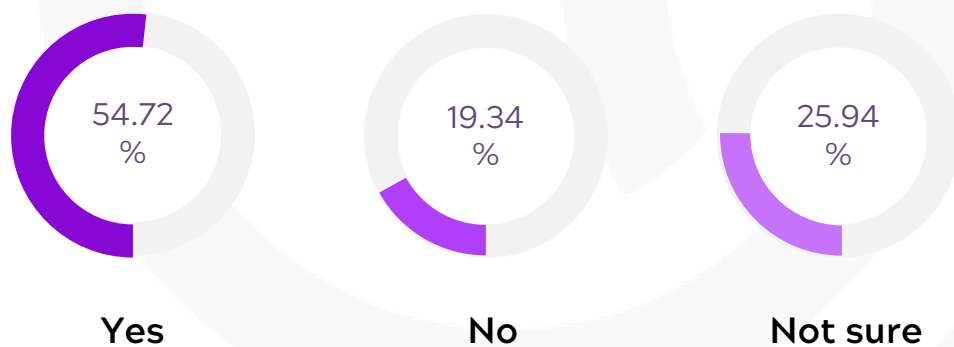


Figure 2: Does your organization conduct a formal and thorough gender analysis to inform the plan and design of every programme, project, or service?

⁴⁵ Making it count: integrating gender into climate change and disaster risk reduction: a practical how-to guide. (2015). Care International in Vietnam. <https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Making-It-Count-EN.pdf>

Why is gender analysis essential?

Gender analysis recognizes that women and men have different lived-experiences shaped by age-long, deep-rooted discriminations. Thus, different strategies may be necessary to redress inequalities and achieve equitable outcomes. Therefore, gender analysis remains is critical for the following reasons:

- To avoid making assumptions about the lives of women and men, girls, and boys, and making decisions for them.
- To understand why those differences exist and obtain a thorough understanding of an issue and/or situation, in which all groups within a population are considered.
- To understand the influence of cultural, social, political, legal, and economic structures in the lives of women and men and how it places them at a disadvantage in terms of opportunities throughout their lives.
- To make strategic decisions about the selection and resourcing of interventions.
- To ensure that women, men, boys, and girls, equitably benefit from a programme and there is equality of outcome.
- To identify and respond to the negative unintended consequences of a programme or policy.

Components of Gender Analysis

Gender analysis involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and information. A comprehensive gender analysis comprises 3 basic components:⁵²

Gender-sensitive data + **Analysis** + **Gender Perspective**

1. **Gender-sensitive data:** Collect quantitative data (numbers, percentages, ratios, etc.) and qualitative data (preferences, beliefs, values, behaviors, etc.), disaggregated both by **sex, age, and gender**.
2. **Analysis:** What does the data imply?
3. **Gender Perspective:** Data collected is reviewed to both identify and analyze the causes of the similarities and differences between women and men in the given issue area.

⁵² USAID. (n.d.). Guide to gender integration and analysis. Available via: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACP506.pdf

Sex-disaggregated data Vs. Gender Disaggregated data

All gender equality strategies, initiatives or mechanisms for measurement rely on quality data. Disaggregated data is data broken down into sub-categories such as sex and age and enable the visibility of deprivations or inequalities that may not be fully reflected in compiled or summarized data. While sex-disaggregated data is the most common form of disaggregated data in development initiatives, they are insufficient alone in revealing other different forms of inequalities experienced by women and men in a given setting.

- Sex-disaggregated data: data that is broken down by sex.
- Gender-disaggregated data: in addition to being broken down by sex, it is also produced taking into consideration the different socio-economic realities women and men face in society.

Example: A school with total enrollment of 100 children

- Sex-disaggregated data: Girls (40%) and Boys (60%)
- Gender-disaggregated data: Girls (Less likely to progress to high school) and Boys (More likely to progress to high school)

Source: Adapted from UNICEF Gender Toolkit (2017)

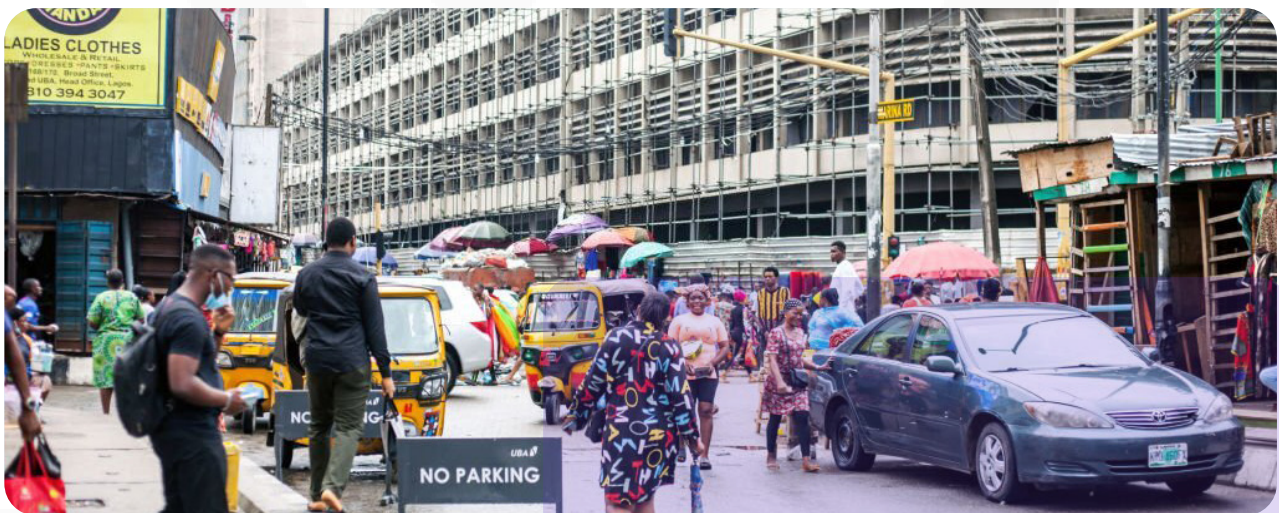
The Gender Analysis Framework

Several conceptual frameworks outline how to undertake gender analysis. These gender analysis frameworks provide structure for organizing information about gender roles and relations. They assist in raising relevant questions, analyzing information, and developing strategies to increase women's and men's representation and participation in policies, projects, and programmes.⁵³ The framework analyses specific aspects of social and cultural relations, commonly referred to as domains or dimensions. By addressing crucial questions within each domain, gender analysis framework provides understanding of a project's context on its potential impact on women and men. The domains described below are adaptable to many contexts, drawn from the USAID Six Domains Framework and Jhpiego Gender Analysis Framework.⁴⁹ Older, well-known gender analytical tools include the Harvard Analytical Framework, the Moser Gender Planning Framework, the Women's Empowerment Framework, and the Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM).

1. **Access to Assets and Resources:** This domain refers to the extent to which women and men are able to use the resources/assets necessary to be fully active and productive participants (socially, economically, and politically) in society. These include tangible assets such as land, capital, and tools as well as intangible assets such as knowledge, education, and information.
 - Access to assets: Who has access to which particular assets? What constraints do they face?

⁵³ USAID. (n.d.). Guide to gender integration and analysis. Available via: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACP506.pdf

2. **Knowledge, Beliefs, Perceptions & Norms:** Men and women have diverse beliefs, and perceive situations differently, and cultural norms often dictate how women and men behave in society. Some forms of knowledge or beliefs may be accessible to only one sex and can facilitate or limit men's and women's access to education, services, and economic opportunities.
3. **Practices and participation:** Societal norms assign or influence gender roles based on what is considered "appropriate" for men and women, and different roles are valued differently.
 - Who does what? What gender roles and responsibilities dictate the activities in which men and women participate? How do men and women engage in development activities?
4. **Institutions, Legal Rights, & Policies:** This domain focuses on the differential impact of laws, policies, and practices on men and women owing to socially prescribed behavior for men and women.⁵⁵ This can include issues such as how men and women access legal documentation, including property titles, the right to inheritance, and employment.
 - How are women and men regarded and treated by customary and formal legal codes?
5. **Balance of power and decision-making:** This is considered the domain that influences other dimensions of the framework. This domain refers to the capacity to control resources and make autonomous and independent decisions, free of coercion. It involves the capacity to make decisions over one's body and also includes the capacity to vote and run for office at all levels of government. How people are treated forms an important part of what it means to be socially marginalized and disempowered.
 - Who has control over the power to make decisions about one's body, household, community, and state? Are such decisions made freely?



⁵⁵ Land O'Lakes International Development. (2015, January). Integrating Gender Throughout a Project's Life Cycle 2.0: A Guidance Document for International Development Organizations and Practitioners. <https://www.wocan.org/resource/integrating-gender-throughout-a-projects-life-cycle-2-0/>

When to conduct a gender analysis?

As an important cross-cutting issue in all sectors, a central principle is to consider gender from the beginning of a programme or activity. Experts recommend that the gender analysis process be carried out in the initial phase to ensure that issues are defined, and interventions are planned in a gender-responsive manner.⁸ However, gender analysis can be carried out at any time and any stage of the programme or policy cycle and should be fed into implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and strategic planning for future interventions. Regardless of the stage at which gender analysis is carried out, it is most useful when applied routinely to all aspects of policy, programme, and project planning, implementation, and review (rather than as an after thought or add-on).⁶⁰

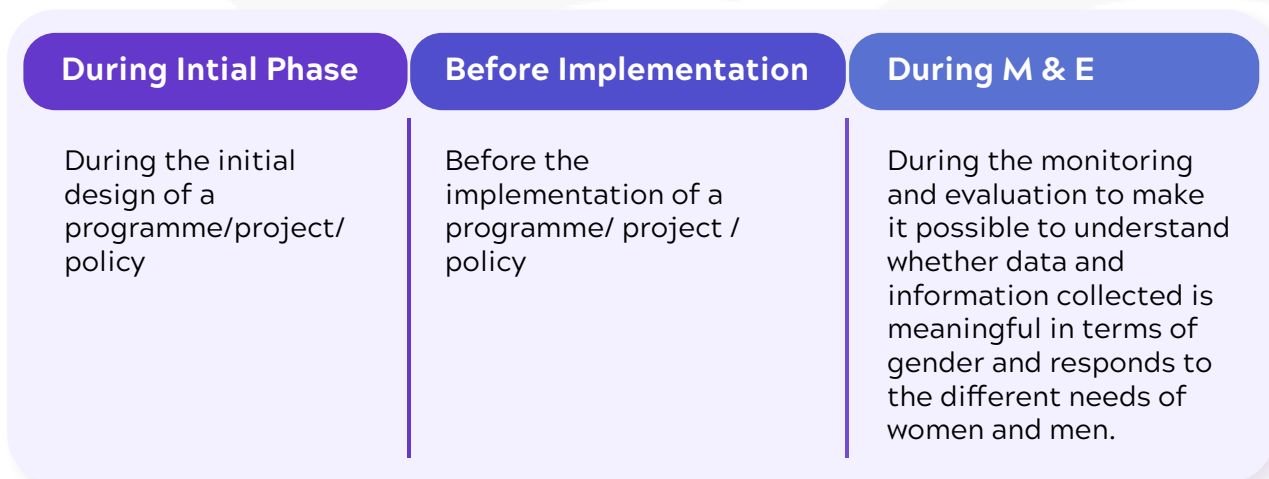


Figure 3. Adapted from European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Gender analysis. 2019.





SECTION FIVE

In Practice: Gender Integration Across The Programme Life Cycle

The fundamental premise of the gender mainstreaming strategy is not to merely include gender concerns in programmes or policies but to ensure gender considerations become a programmatic and organizational priority, embedded in routine activities, processes, and procedures. Limited attention to gender throughout the programme cycle can lead to practices that intentionally or unintentionally reinforce or take advantage of negative gender stereotypes. A growing body of evidence demonstrates that incorporating approaches to address gender inequality in policies and programmes can lead to improved social development outcomes. Despite this evidence, gender continues to be inadequately addressed across global health and development initiatives.⁵⁶ One major approach, as implied in the definition of gender mainstreaming, is to integrate a gender perspective into all stages of a programme's life cycle, thereby enhancing the visibility of the needs, priorities, and concerns of women(girls) and men (boys) and adequately addressing them.

What is Gender Integration?

Gender Integration refers to strategies applied in programme assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation to take gender norms into account and to compensate for gender-based inequalities.

- Interagency Gender Working Group - 2014

The Gender Integration Continuum (GIC)

To guide various programmes on how to integrate gender, the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) originally developed a conceptual framework known as the Gender Integration Continuum. Also regarded as the Gender Equality Continuum, the framework illustrates different levels by which programmes or policies treat gender norms and inequities in their design, implementation, and M&E and the potential consequences.

The GIC reflects a scale of progressive change toward gender equality and categorizes programmes as exploitative, accommodating, or transformative. On the far left of the spectrum, it describes an approach that either perpetuates or ignores gender inequalities and other forms of exclusion, to one that acknowledges the existence of differences, to the most advanced stage that seeks to challenge structural barriers and root causes of gender-based discrimination. This categorization of programmes or policies along the continuum is a necessary tool for designers and implementers to plan or assess for gender integration in their interventions. It brings to light important gender-related issues, which when considered, can facilitate gender transformative programming - actions and activities that are effective in addressing inequalities and constraints entrenched in negative gender roles, stereotypes, and power dynamics affecting women and men. Thus, enabling the achievement of better development outcomes and the gender equality agenda.

⁷² Rottach, E, Pappa, S, Dayal, R & Das, M. (2017). Deconstructing gender: evidence on how programmes address gender inequalities to improve health. *Development in Practice*. 27(2), pp. 168-80.

⁷³ Population Reference Bureau. (2017). The gender integration continuum training session user's guide. https://www.igwg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/17-418-GenderContTraining-2017-12-12-1633_FINAL.pdf

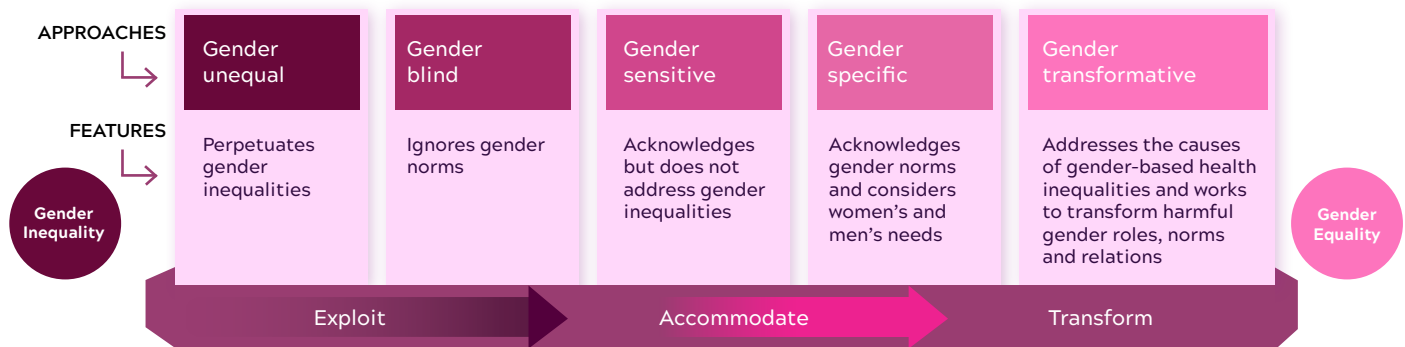


Figure 4: Gender Integration Continuum (Adapted from UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, 2020)⁵⁸

Gender Negative: Also known as **gender exploitative, gender unequal, gender harmful, or gender discriminatory**, gender negative policies and programmes intentionally or unintentionally reinforce or take advantage of existing gender inequalities and stereotypes in pursuit of project outcomes. This approach exacerbates harmful gender norms and existing imbalances in power to achieve programme objectives.

- » Perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles, and relations.
- » Privileges men (boys) over women (girls) (or vice versa)
- » Often leads to one sex enjoying more rights or opportunities than other.

Gender Blind: Gender blind programmes refer to the absence of prior consideration for how gender norms and unequal power relations affect objectives, or how objectives impact gender. Often regarded as **gender-neutral**, this approach ignores gender implications and assumes that gender roles, limiting norms, or power differentials do not influence

who participates in or benefits from a programme or policy.

- » Ignores gender norms, roles, and relations
- » Very often reinforces gender-based discrimination
- » Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for women and men, girls, and boys
- » Often constructed based on the principle of being “fair” by treating everyone the same.

Gender Aware: Also known as **gender-sensitive**, programmes that are gender-aware recognize different needs of women, men, boys, and girls and acknowledge gender power dynamics but do not necessarily address these other than to try and integrate an understanding of these dynamics within programme design.⁵⁹

- » Considering gender norms, roles, and relations
- » Does not address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles, or relations
- » Indicates gender awareness, although often no remedial action is developed

⁵⁸ UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women. (2020, January). Gender-transformative approaches in the global programme to end child marriage phase ii: a summary for practitioners. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Technical_Note_on_Gender-Transformative_Approaches_in_the_GPECM_Phase_II_A_Summary_for_Practitioners-January-2020.pdf

⁵⁹ Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change. Available via: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/admin-resource/thematic%20note%201_gender_final.pdf

Gender Responsive: Also regarded as gender accommodating or gender-specific, gender-responsive policies and programmes acknowledge gender differences and inequalities and seek to develop actions that adjust to and often compensate for them. Although this approach may result in short-term benefits and the realization of outcomes, it does not attempt to reduce gender inequality or address gender systems that contribute to differences and inequalities. However, such programmes strive to limit any harmful impacts on gender relations.

- » Considers gender norms, roles, and relations for women and men, girls, and boys, and how that affects access to and control over resources.
- » Considers women's (girls') and men's (boys') specific needs
- » Intentionally targets and benefits a specific group of women or men, girls, or boys to achieve certain policy or programme goals or meet certain needs
- » Makes it easier for women and men, girls, and boys to fulfill duties that are ascribed to them based on their gender roles

Gender Transformative: Gender Transformative approaches actively strive to address the root causes of gender-based inequalities by examining, questioning, and changing rigid gender norms and the imbalance of power between women and men as a means to promote development and gender equality objectives.

- » Strengthen positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment;
- » Challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between boys and girls and men and women
- » Promote the relative position of women, girls, and marginalized groups;
- » Transform the underlying social structures, policies, and broadly held social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.
- » Include strategies to foster progressive changes in power relationships between women and men.

“Gender-transformative approaches aim to move beyond individual self-improvement among women and toward transforming the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities.”

CARE (2015)

Gender Integration Principles²⁴

Two principles underpin the gender integration concept:

1. Under no circumstances should projects/activities adopt an exploitative approach since one of the fundamental principles of development is to “do no harm.”
2. The overall objective of gender integration is to move toward gender transformative programmes or policies, thus gradually challenging existing gender inequities and promoting positive changes in gender roles, norms, and power dynamics.

Survey Insights

As part of our survey, we were keen to understand the level of gender integration in organizational programming. Leveraging the gender continuum criteria, we asked our respondents to choose from a set of statements to rate how well their organizations are responding to gender issues. The results, while not considerably alarming, call for increased gender transformative approaches. Only 35.98% ascribed their programmes as gender transformative. 27.25% were gender-accommodating, 13.23% were gender-exploitative, 11.11% were gender-sensitive, and 12.443% were gender-blind.

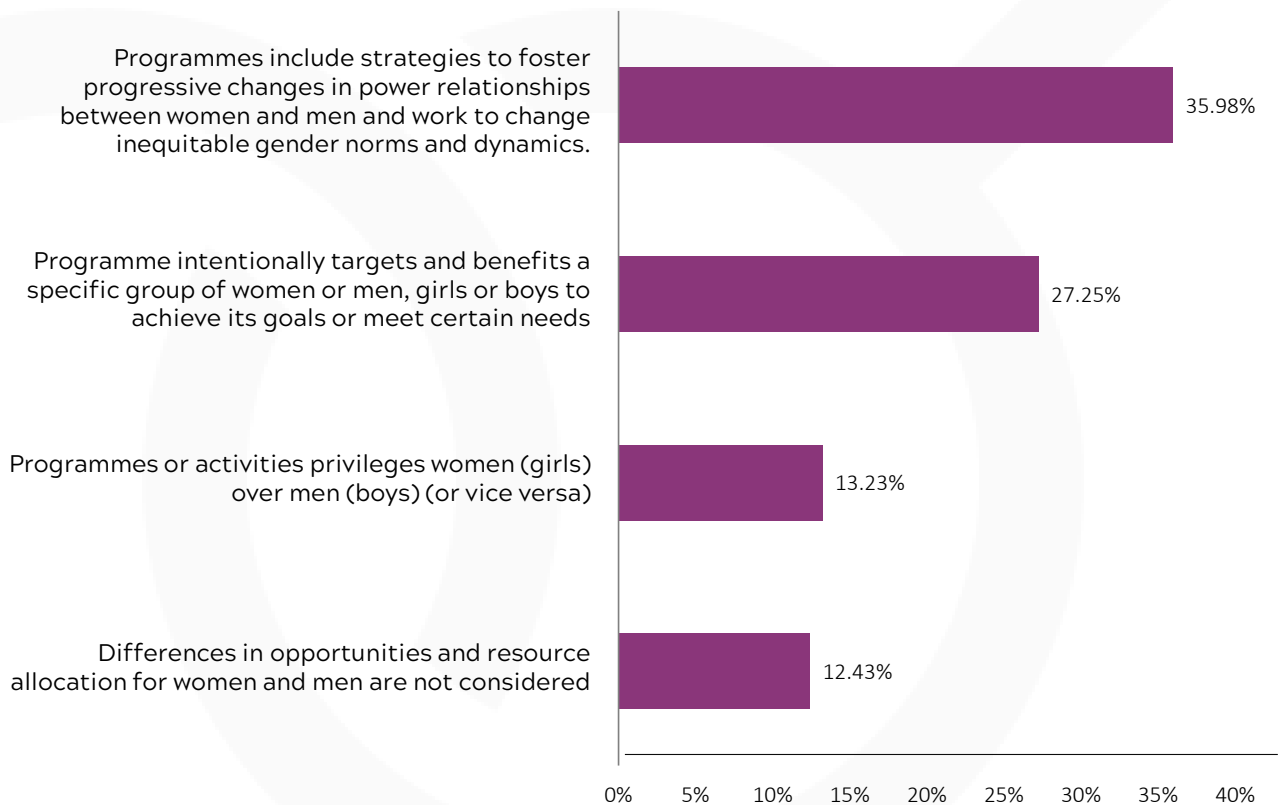


Figure 5: Given your experience, which of the following statements are applicable to programme implementation in your organization? Select all that apply.

EXPERIENCES - RESPONDING TO GENDER ISSUES



Through my work, we directly invest in businesses, although many of them are not initially prepared for investment. Men often approach us to raise funds, while we have to actively seek out and engage women-led businesses. Even when we identify potential investees among women-led businesses, they often doubt their suitability or choose to build their ventures using their own resources rather than involving external investors who could provide structure.

Upon comparing these businesses, we discovered that women were not inherently worse off than their male counterparts. Instead, they lacked confidence and had an information gap. To address this issue, we collaborated with an intermediary and accelerator that lacked a tailored program for women's businesses but had a more generalist approach without considering gender participation. We recommended they establish the female climate innovators program to prepare women-led businesses for fundraising in a way that aligned with their needs. Since implementing these changes, we have attracted a diverse group of funders and successfully included more female-led businesses in our portfolio.

- Yvonne Ofosu-Appiah - Chief Investment Officer, Wangara Green Ventures

⁷⁶ Faramand, T., & Treleaven, E. (2012). Integrating gender in improvement activities: implementation guide. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00HTXC.pdf



Technical vocational educational development in africa has been for long time predominately male-centered making the need to counter the gender-bias and gender-stereotypes in the sector. Most women do not aspire to work in these male-dominated occupations due to high entry level barriers, lack of family support and strong gender-bias stemming from discriminatory social norms and attitudes. To address this problem, i worked on a project and ensured that i deployed gender equality models and approaches to involve men, women, boys, and girls.

The project broadened the range of programs offered towards digital jobs and trade specializations with high growth potential in the labour market that are more attractive to young women by leading key activities, organised mutual-learning sessions aimed at sharing good practices for improving the attractiveness of technical vocational education and training for women and girls. The strategies increased access, completion, transition, levels, and the project communities were able to support girls and boys in the reduction of child marriage/pregnancy as well acquiring life-long skills suitable for the 21st century world of work.

- Chioma Adiele-Okpara - Gender Expert, Tanager

Gender Integration in Practice

Different organizations use different languages to describe the phases of a programme or project cycle. However, most organizations follow a similar approach to the planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation of development interventions. The programme/project cycle provides a structure in which stakeholders are consulted, and relevant data are gathered so that informed decisions can be made at key stages in the life of a project.

Survey Insights

Given the potential for high-impact and high-quality programming as a result of gender mainstreaming, we sought to determine how well organizations integrate gender into the life cycle of their programmes. A large percentage of respondents (72.64%) affirmed that gender considerations were incorporated very well (50.94%) and extremely well (21.70%) throughout the programme cycle. However, the extent to which this result is undoubtedly accurate remains important and calls for gender responsiveness evaluations in the work of local NGOs.

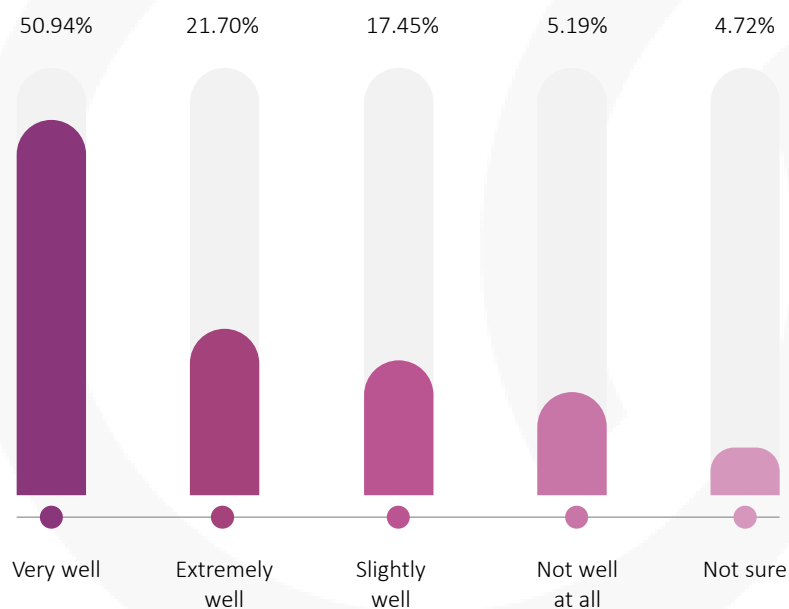


Figure 6: How well does your organization incorporate a comprehensive gender perspective into the entire programme life cycle?

As the cornerstone of gender integration, the findings of the analysis should be fed into each phase of the programme cycle. This is especially true if a gender analysis was carried out in the initial stage, otherwise, the different stages need to be linked with appropriate gender considerations and key gender questions.

Throughout the programming cycle of any planned initiative, gender concerns should be taken into consideration in all decisions and in each phase of the process as an overarching principle. The diagram below has been adapted and presents well-known elements of the programme cycle that apply to most sectors and contexts:

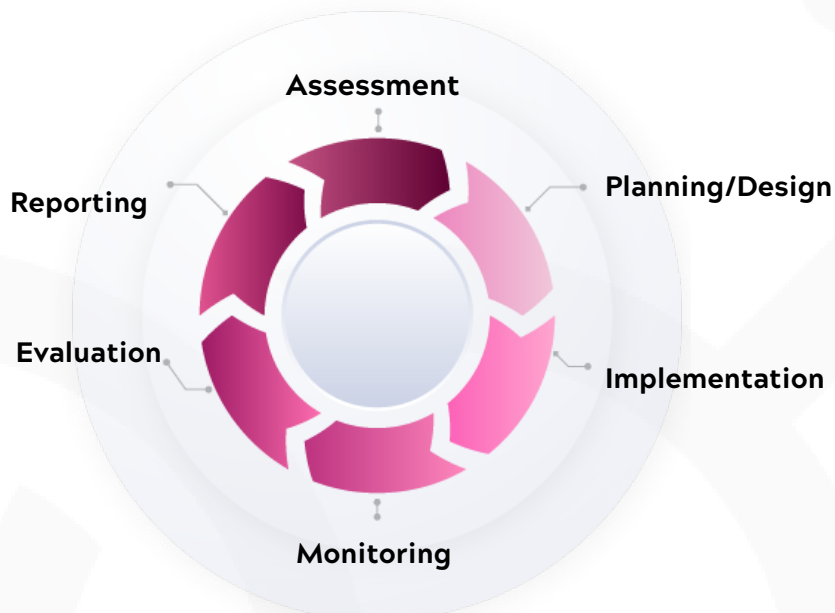


Figure 7: Gender integration in the programme life cycle.
Adapted from Measure Evaluation and United Nations Human Rights'

Stage 1 - Assessment

Research has proven that failure to include gender considerations in the first stage of the programme cycle will translate to gender biases in subsequent stages.⁶⁰ The first stage, known also as the identification or preparation stage, is aimed at understanding the problems, needs, or opportunities in a given context. Notwithstanding, most scientific literature on the subject refers to this first stage as gender analysis.⁴ While gender analysis is the starting point of gender mainstreaming,⁸ it should not substitute for other initial assessments required in any programmatic endeavor such as needs assessments, situational analysis, or problem analysis. The definition of gender analysis was further expanded to state that it should be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions and that, where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted. This is further emphasized in the UN Women handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality results. Gender mainstreaming ambition requires that all analyses in policy and practice are made gender-responsive by systematically and explicitly incorporating gender equality as a routine part of the analysis.

⁶⁰ Kabeer, N. (2010). Women's empowerment and development interventions. NewsReach. <https://www.pradan.net/sampark/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Women's-Empowerment-and-Development-Interventions-By-NAILA-KABEER.pdf>

Integrating gender at this stage involves gender-responsive needs assessment, situational analysis, or problem analysis. In the context of health, World Health Organization (WHO) reported that many needs assessment efforts are “gender-blind,” that is, they do not explore or take into account the differential risks, vulnerabilities, and barriers in access to services faced by women and men, nor do they situate these in the socio-cultural and economic realities of programme beneficiaries, such as unequal power relations, gender roles, and harmful norms and practices. ⁶¹How gender is conceptualized within a programme has implications for its outcomes, and the ideal approach is to ensure that gender concerns are presented early to ensure a follow-through at other stages. While gender equality concerns can be introduced belatedly, the cost of getting it wrong is harder to rectify further into the life of a project.



To ensure comprehensive gender integration, it is necessary to move beyond assumptions and focus on a thorough understanding of the diverse needs and interests of both women and men. This approach will lead to more effective programme design and implementation. In the programme i managed, we discovered the importance of involving family members as a support system for women’s success. It is crucial to understand the specific needs of both genders and design programmes accordingly, ensuring equal opportunities and support.

**- Oluwaseun Oshoniyi - Senior Programs Manager & Head,
Growth & Alumni Services, Fate Foundation**

⁶¹ World Health Organization. (2009). Integrating gender into HIV/AIDS programmes in the health sector: tool to improve responsiveness to women’s needs. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK143050/>

Survey Insights

As an important consideration in the initial phase of the programme cycle, we were interested in ascertaining the degree to which gender perspectives were applied in assessments. The results from the survey indicate that a significant majority of the respondents (85.84%) acknowledged the incorporation of gender-sensitive needs assessments and situational analysis within their organizations. Out of this majority, 45.75% expressed a strong agreement with this trend, while 40.09% of the respondents agreed, but without indicating a strong conviction or level of certainty.

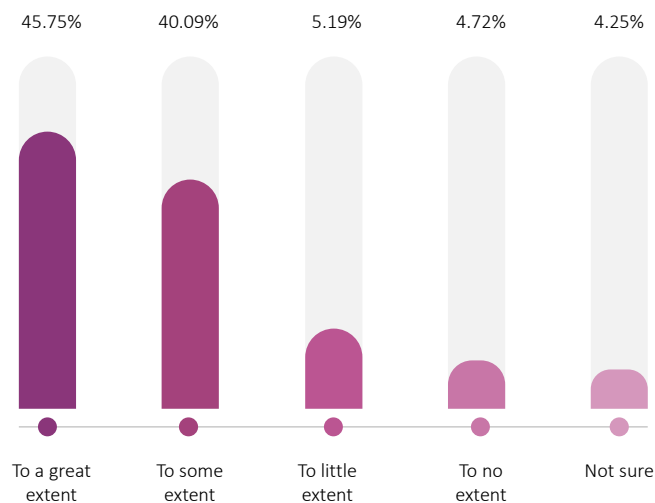


Figure 8: In the context of your work, to what extent does your organization strategically apply a gender perspective in its needs assessment/situational analysis?

Applying a gender lens in the assessment phase of the programme cycle essentially means identifying the different gender-related needs, constraints, and opportunities and understanding their implications for women and men. In turn, better-formulated programmes, and gender equality results can be realized.

Gender Considerations - Key Questions

- Does the needs assessment explore the distinct needs and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys?
- Have women (girls) and men (boys) been equally and directly consulted in identifying such needs and opportunities? (Even if the main problem identified affects one sex more than the other)

⁶² UNESCO. Developing gender-responsive programmes and projects. Available via: https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/publications/GENIA2019/19_Dec_GENIA_Toolkit_22.pdf

Stage 2 - Planning/Design

The aim of this phase can be considered in two parts. The first is to identify and involve the stakeholders critical to addressing the results of the analysis conducted in the first stage of the programme cycle. It also provides an opportunity to address gender through the objectives and activities in a way that strengthens the synergy between gender equality and programme goals. The design stage considers the main strategies for addressing gender-based constraints, stigma, discrimination, and opportunities.⁶³

Survey Insights

In a bid to gain a deeper understanding of the level of gender integration in this crucial stage, we inquired with our survey respondents about the application of gender considerations in programme planning and design. In a bid to gain a deeper understanding of the level of gender integration in this crucial stage, we inquired with our survey respondents about the application of gender considerations in programme planning and design. The vast majority (87.27%) affirmed the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including both men and women, in their strategic planning processes, albeit with varying degrees of certainty. Although we did not set out to determine gender parity in this particular instance, it is imperative to emphasize that the balanced participation of both women and men is essential for achieving improved gender outcomes.

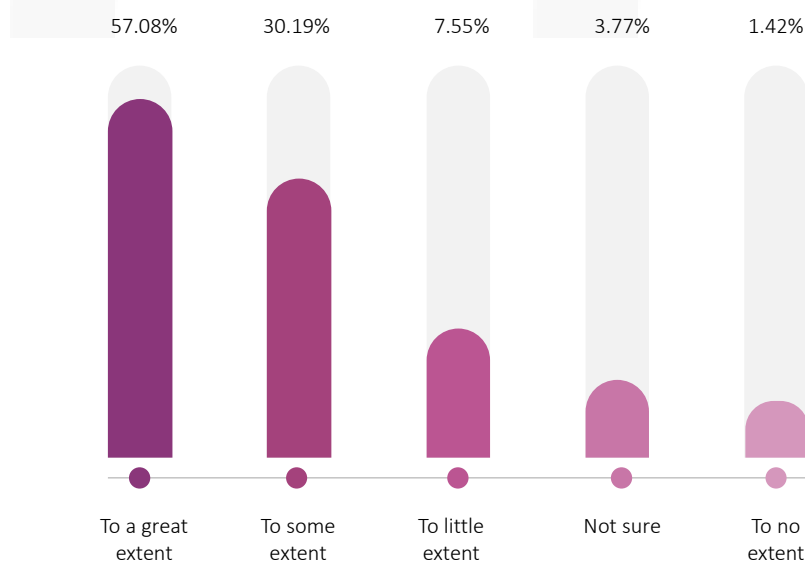


Figure 9: To what extent does your strategic planning involve a diverse range of key stakeholders, including men and women who would be directly and indirectly affected by your programme?

⁶³ Fehring, J., Iskarpatyoti, B., Adamou, B., & Levy, J., (2017, September). Integrating gender in monitoring and evaluation of health programmes: a toolkit. MEASURE Evaluation. https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/publications/ms-17-122-en/at_download/document

As part of our investigation, we were also interested in examining the level of integration of gender issues within the theory of change of interventions. While a significant portion of the respondents confirmed the inclusion of gender concerns across program objectives, activities, outputs, and outcomes, there were notable variations in the level of certainty expressed. These variations highlight the need for further improvement in incorporating gender considerations within strategic planning. Specifically, less than half of the respondents (48.11%) expressed a high degree of integration, indicating a strong commitment to addressing gender concerns. On the other hand, 33.39% of the respondents confirmed some level of integration, while 13.68% attributed a lesser extent of integration, signifying the need for additional attention in addressing gender-related inequalities across the result chain.

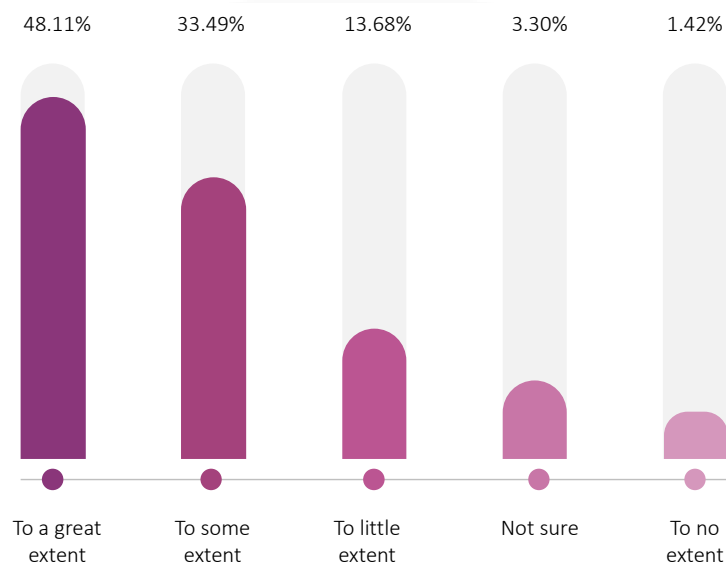


Figure 10: To what extent does your theory of change address gender-based inequities? (i.e., Your program objectives, activities, outputs, and outcomes specifically address gender issues)

Gender-responsive planning and design ensure gender equality perspectives are reflected at the strategic level (theory of change) or at the programme level (logical framework). It is recommended that gender can be incorporated into the logical framework in two main ways:

1. By engendering the objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities, and indicators (i.e., ensuring that they refer to the anticipated changes expected for both women and men or girls and boys). E.g., having an objective that aims to increase the enrolment rate of both girls and boys.
2. By including objectives, outcomes, outputs, and activities that specifically address gender issues. For example, within a WASH programme, there could be a specific objective around “menstrual hygiene management (MHM).”

Source: Adapted from UNICEF Gender Toolkit. (2017).

Gender Considerations - Key Questions

- » Are the ways in which the programme will equitably benefit women, men, girls, and boys clearly stated?
- » Have women and men equally contributed to determining the programme objectives?
- » Does the objective address the needs and concerns of both women and men?
- » Will this objective bring about improvements for women as well as men?
- » Does the choice of objective influence relations between women and men?
- » What will the results of the project be and how do they affect men and women?
- » Does the outcome address the needs and concerns of both women and men?
- » How does the outcome increase gender equality?
- » How will the product or services impact the situation with regard to women and men independently?
- » How do the expected outputs respond to women's and men's concerns and needs?
- » Are the outputs specified separately for women and men?
- » Are they consistent with the needs of the groups specified?

Stage 3 - Implementation

Implementation is the process of putting into practice a series of planned actions to achieve agreed objectives.⁶⁴ In this phase of a programme, sufficient gender knowledge and awareness within the team is essential. When this is not the case, capacity-building initiatives on how to integrate a gender perspective into core work should be planned. While including gender experts at key stages of the programme implementation may be required, it is important to note that gender equality mainstreaming is a collective, organizational, and programmatic effort and is a responsibility for all staff and across all levels. Gender equality will become an intrinsic part of an organization's structure, work, and culture when it is aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming and committed to its implementation.⁴² Additionally, approximate gender parity should be envisaged at all levels of the team and in decision-making spaces. Yet, it is crucial to note that adequate representation of women does not substitute the need to ensure gender expertise.⁶⁵ Ultimately, a gender-responsive implementation ensures diverse women and men, girls and boys have access to, and meaningfully participate in programme decision-making and activities.¹⁷

⁶⁴ World Food Programme. (2017). Gender and implementation quick guide. Available via: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/a74d60b6d1554a4884b59768e5efc9ae/download/>

⁶⁵ Save the Children. (2014). Gender equality program guidance and toolkit: engendering transformational change. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/gender_equality_program_toolkit_2014.pdf/

Survey Insights

Considering that the inclusion of a gender-competent team is one of the eight minimum standards for effectively mainstreaming gender equality,⁴³ we were determined to investigate the status of gender-related training within organizations. More than half of the respondents (63.68%) affirmed that gender integration training is an integral component of their organization's capacity-building initiatives. However, over a quarter of the respondents (36.32%) reported a lack of support for gender skills training within their respective organizations.

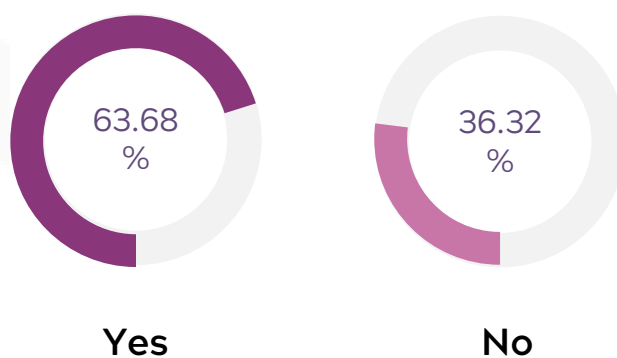


Figure 11: Is gender integration training part of your organization's capacity-building initiatives for staff?

Gender Considerations - Key Questions⁶⁶

- Are the risks, high-risk behaviors, and vulnerabilities of men and women, boys and girls in the target group being appropriately addressed?
- Does the project/programme include women and men, girls and boys who are disadvantaged?
- Are new gender issues of inequity emerging within the project?

⁶⁶ UNESCO. Developing gender-responsive programmes and projects. Available via: https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/publications/GENIA2019/19_Dec_GENIA_Toolkit_22.pdf

Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

Ensuring that gender issues are adequately integrated into the M&E components of projects is one of the most important elements of gender integration. If the evidence on whether gender inequalities and barriers were ignored or how they were addressed in projects with what effect and to what extent, are unavailable or not sufficiently detailed or systematic enough for future improvements, gender-blind programming will persist. Research revealed that evaluations and program monitoring reports in youth livelihood programmes in Africa, with the exception of a few, tend to have a limited gender focus,⁶⁷ depicting a gender-blind approach from the outset. Fortunately, considerable evidence suggests that even when a project design is gender-blind, it can be discovered and corrected through the set-up of a monitoring and evaluation plan for the project.⁶² Without a gender-integrated M&E system, programmes risk ignoring or limiting the experiences of women, or men and lose out on opportunities to learn from these experiences and enhance programme quality and scope.⁴²

Survey Insights

Since data collection is central to a strong M&E system, we sought to find out the extent of gender-responsiveness in data collection tools and methods. Among the survey participants, a significant majority (92.93%) acknowledged the integration of appropriate, safe, acceptable, and accessible data collection methodologies for both women and men during the monitoring and evaluation process. However, it is important to note that out of this majority, less than half (43.87%) strongly affirmed this integration. This indicates that while there is overall recognition of the importance of inclusive data collection methodologies, there is room for greater improvement.

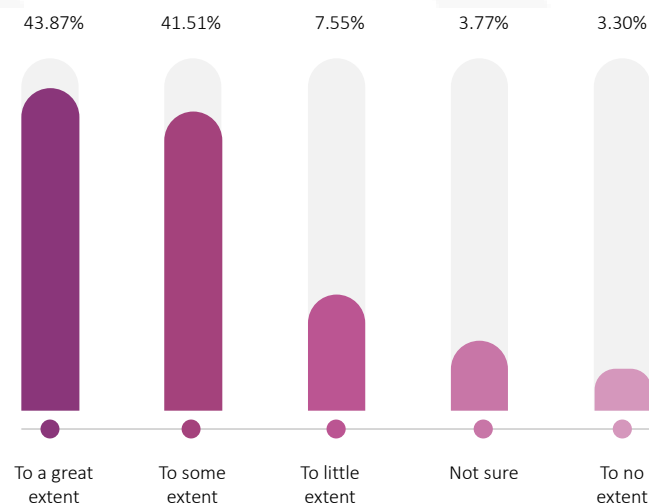


Figure 12: To what extent do your organization's M&E data collection tools and approaches incorporate gender considerations? (i.e. appropriate, safe, acceptable, and accessible data collection methodology for both women and men)

⁶⁷ Perezniето, P., Marcus, R., Maclure, M., Archer, N., & Mdee, A. (2018, January). Gender and youth livelihoods programming in Africa. Mastercard Foundation. <https://mastercardfdn.org/research/gender-and-youth-livelihoods-programming-in-africa/>

Stage 4 - Monitoring

In programme management terms, monitoring is the regular and systematic observation, documentation, and analysis of the implementation of a programme and of progress toward achieving the programme objectives.⁶⁸ In this phase, gender-sensitive monitoring provides the opportunity to understand how and why change occurs for different women, men, girls, and boys and allows gaps and difficulties to be identified and redressed.⁶⁹

Survey Insights

As a critical component in gender-responsive programming, we sought to better understand how well organizations are considering the different needs, interests, and experiences of both women and men during the planning phase for monitoring. Among the respondents, a notable majority (93.87%) indicated the inclusion of gender considerations in their monitoring plans. However, it is worth noting that out of this percentage, less than a quarter (22.17%) strongly attributed this integration to a great extent.

This suggests that while there is a general acknowledgment of the importance of incorporating gender considerations into monitoring plans, there is a need for further emphasis and commitment to fully integrating and addressing gender-related aspects in a robust and comprehensive manner. Such actions can contribute to more accurate, inclusive, and impactful monitoring outcomes that reflect the diverse needs and experiences of both women and men.

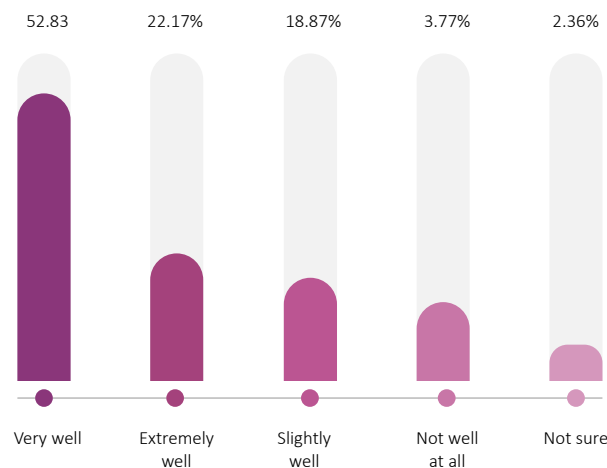


Figure 13: How well does your monitoring plan take into consideration the different needs, interests, and experiences of both women and men?

⁶⁸ World Food Programme. (2017). Gender-responsive monitoring quick guide. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/0034c1b6da454c51a8a763f0e754893a/download/>

⁶⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). What is gender mainstreaming? Available via: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

Gender Sensitive Indicators

Gender-blind design projects can be corrected by formulating gender-inclusive indicators and conducting gender-responsive evaluations.⁵⁵ An indicator is a measure of change, used to reveal the progress that is made toward achieving set objectives. Gender indicators are designed more specifically to measure change for women and men as individual social groups.⁵¹ Essentially, gender-sensitive indicators ensure progress or the lack of it is detected for women, men, girls, and boys, towards achieving gender equality.

Survey Insights

Within the framework of our objectives, our aim was to evaluate the extent to which gender indicators have been integrated into organizational programmes. Although the majority of participants acknowledged the existence of gender-sensitive indicators within their programmes, the level of assurance expressed in their responses exhibited significant variations. A minority of the participants (33.96%) attested that their program indicators comprehensively measure changes in the circumstances of women and men, as well as the dynamics of gender relations. In contrast, approximately half of the respondents (50.07%) acknowledged a partial extent of such measurement, while a significantly lower proportion (7.55%) reported a limited extent of inclusion. The observed divergence in confidence levels underscores the need for further incorporation of gender-responsive indicators in programmes.

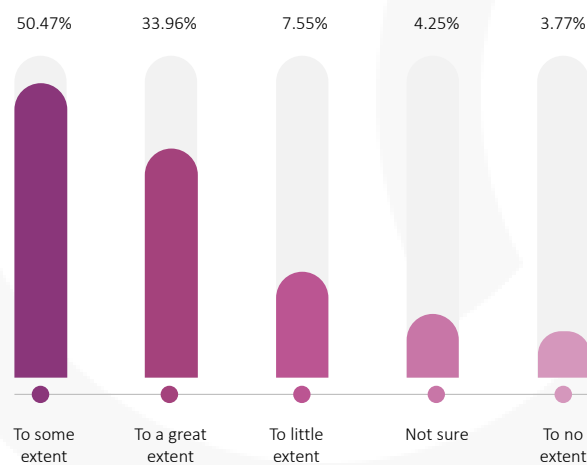


Figure 14: To what extent do your program's selected indicators measure changes in the situations of women/girls and men/boys, and gender relations?

Why are gender-sensitive indicators important?⁹⁶

- To know if we have increased women's and men's participation in and benefits from interventions, especially in areas where they have been historically under-represented.
- To know if we have reduced gender inequality (e.g., increased access) or exacerbated gender inequalities.
- To generate evidence on how attention to gender in programs contributes to more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Best Practice Guidance for Gender Sensitive Indicators

- Include at least one gender indicator at the outcome level.
- At the same time, keep gender indicators and targets to a limited number so as not to overload the project. Care must be taken, however, to not select only the ones that are easiest to collect but may be limited in terms of reflecting meaningful results on gender equality.
- When identifying gender indicators, pay attention to how they can be verified.
- Go beyond numbers and ratios. Gender-sensitive indicators should both be quantitative (sex and age disaggregated data) and qualitative (information that captures relevant norms, attitudes, and behaviors that reflect gender relations in that context). The box below further substantiates this point.

Not numbers but the substance counts – e.g. representation versus participation

Sex ratios are an insufficient indicator of gender equality. In order to measure advancements in this area, very often indicators relating to the ratio of female-to-male participation or representation are used. Equal participation and representation are supporting factors for achieving gender equality but alone are insufficient. Gender equality is more qualitative in nature and more oriented at outcomes of policies, processes, and interventions. Adequate indicators for gender equality focus on the substance and the quality of outcomes.

Representation: Female-to-male ratios in decision-making functions (parliaments, company boards, union leadership, etc.) are important indicators for women's and men's access to voice and power. However, it is not enough to simply count women and men. It is equally important to consider the actual outcomes of decisions taken by decision-making organs and their effects on gender equality.

Participation: Achieving higher participation of underrepresented or disadvantaged sex in a given activity (training course, discussion of a new policy, etc.) is always desirable. Nonetheless a project is not necessarily gender-responsive or contributing to gender equality just because a high rate of women has taken part in its activities.

Example: A 65 per cent rate of women participants in a "Start Your Business" training course does not necessarily imply that the course is tailored to the needs of women, and that women and men have benefited equally from it, nor that the participating women and men will be equally likely and successful in creating an enterprise and generating an income.

Source: ILO - Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation.

Gender Sensitive Indicators- Key Questions⁷⁰

- Do these indicators measure the gender aspects of each outcome?
- Are the indicators sex-disaggregated and compare the situation of men to women and show an aspect of their relative advantage?
- Are there sex-specific indicators to indicate an improvement in women's empowerment?

Stage 5 - Evaluation

Evaluations are regarded as instruments for learning and accountability. Gender-sensitive evaluation refers to the periodic and rigorous assessment of expected gender results in relation to specific objectives of the implementation of an ongoing or completed programme, to determine its impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and relevance.¹⁷ A good gender-responsive evaluation will examine both absolute and relative changes, to gauge not only if women's status is changing based on baseline data, but also whether their status is improving relative to men.⁶²



Survey Insights

The results of our findings as we attempted to examine how well gender is integrated into evaluations are indicative that implementing gender-responsive evaluations may pose difficulties for several reasons. Only 18.40% of the respondents strongly affirmed that gender equality outcomes are assessed extremely well. In contrast, 50% of the respondents reported integrating gender in evaluations very well, and 22.17% indicated that it was done slightly well. The relatively low percentage of respondents expressing strong agreement highlights the need for greater emphasis on ensuring comprehensive and rigorous assessments of gender equality outcomes. However, it is important to acknowledge that these findings may primarily be attributed to efforts aimed at achieving equal participation targets, especially

⁷⁰ The Commonwealth. Gender mainstreaming guidelines for project planning. Available via: https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/Gender-mainstreaming-guidelines-for-project-planning-14July2017_0.pdf

in cases where gender differences across all relevant socio-economic and political aspects were not integrated from the initial stages of programme planning.

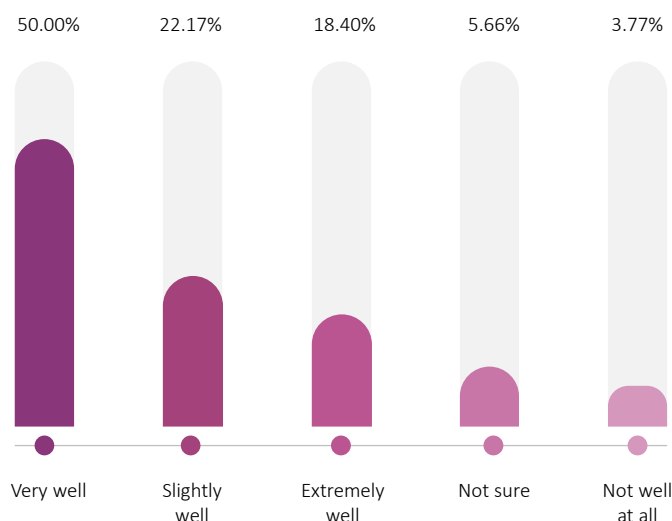


Figure 15: How well does your organization assess gender equality outcomes? (i.e. the analysis and interpretation of data collected during monitoring considers how women and men were affected by the program)

Stage 6 - Reporting

Reporting is also considered critical for accountability and learning.⁷¹ For gender-sensitive reporting, gender is integrated throughout the reporting process and involves proper documentation of the particular experiences of women(girls) and men (boys), as well as specific instances and larger systematic patterns of discrimination and oppression.⁷² The situations, actions, and results specific to women and men in an intervention should be accounted for, including the contribution to gender equality outcomes.⁷³ Gender should be integrated throughout the reporting process and in all reports. Language often reflects the means through which gender inequalities are perpetuated in culture, societal norms, attitudes, and power imbalance.⁷⁴ Yet, it can serve as a powerful tool for promoting inclusion and the equal and fair visibility of women and men. gender equality. A gender-sensitive language can help to avoid a style of writing that “erases” women and omits phrases that reaffirm and perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes.

⁷¹ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. (n.d.). How to mainstream gender in project cycle management. <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Gender/Documents/Gendernet%20Toolbox/Toolbox/Methodic/Gender%20in%20PCM.pdf>

⁷² OHCHR. (2018). Integrating a gender perspective into human rights investigations: guidance and practice. United Nations. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/integrating-gender-perspective-human-rights>

⁷³ World Food Programme. (2017). Gender & reporting quick guide. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/94953128d40b45e9ab7489ec617f57e7/download/>

⁷⁴ UNDP. (2022). Guideline for gender-sensitive language. Available via: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-10/UNDP-LY-Gender-Guidelines-2022.pdf>

Survey Insights

Gender-sensitive reporting and communication aim to dismantle stereotypes and biases by ensuring equal recognition and dignity for women and men. In our survey, we sought to investigate the efforts made by organizations and development practitioners in promoting gender equality through their reporting and communication practices. The findings revealed that a significant proportion of the respondents (74.06%) acknowledged the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches in their reporting and communication. Out of this percentage, only 38.21% strongly confirmed their active promotion of gender equality in their reporting and communication. This indicates a need for further emphasis in actively dismantling stereotypes and promoting inclusivity. By doing so, organizations can contribute to creating a more equitable narrative that recognizes the diverse experiences and contributions of both women and men.

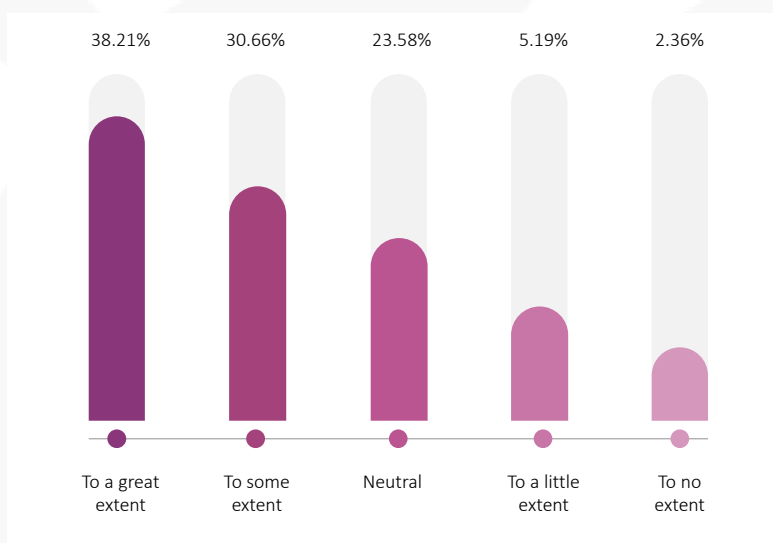


Figure 16: To what extent does your organization promote gender-sensitive reporting and communication?

Best Practice Guidance

- Use age and sex gender-disaggregated data and provide the reasons for any differences in the statistics.
- Use generic pronouns (they, there, them, etc.) and refer to women, men, girls, and boys, in their diversity.
- Do not overly rely on collective terms such as communities, society, or families as they can mask important differences in needs between men and women.
- The term Women is not synonymous with vulnerable groups. Refrain from categorizing women as vulnerable or victims. While some groups of women in specific circumstances are vulnerable, it is important to clarify and expand on such vulnerability in the given context.

Helpful Resource - 10 principles of Gender-Responsive Communication for Development.

Challenges to Gender Integration in Programming

It is widely acknowledged that progress toward gender equality results has been slow. Despite the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming on gender equality and the status of women, there have been clear challenges in commitment globally.⁸

In our efforts to identify the challenges hindering gender integration at both the programming and organizational levels, our findings revealed that inadequate financial resources for gender-related initiatives (24.42%), absence of gender analysis tools (22.08%), and lack of gender integration training for staff (19.53%) were among the primary obstacles reported by our survey respondents.

It is crucial to highlight that the limitation of financial resources should not impede efforts to integrate gender on a greater level. This report has been designed as a valuable learning product in gender mainstreaming, providing organizations with a starting point for understanding how gender can be effectively incorporated into various functional domains, ranging from Human Resources to Communications and M&E. Furthermore, the tools detailed in this report such as the gender analysis framework, gender integration continuum, and the guide to integrating gender in the programme cycle, serve as essential reference materials to support the strategic application of gender perspectives at all levels.

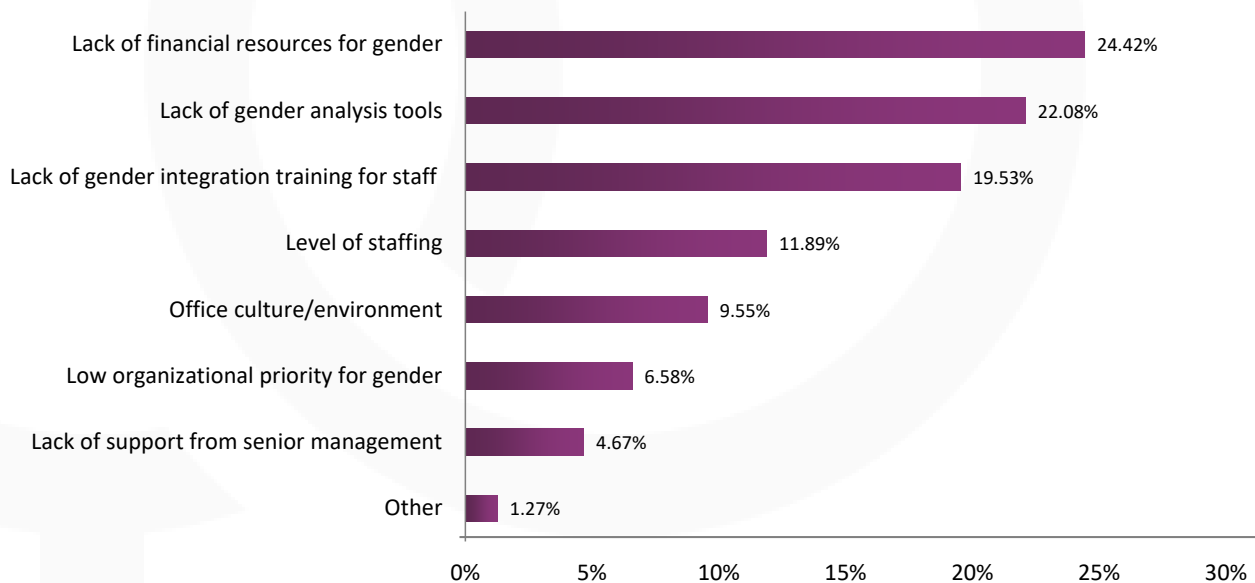


Figure 17: Which of the following represents the obstacles to a stronger integration of gender in your organization and programming? Select all that apply.



SECTION SIX

Insights from Local NGOs - ACT Foundation Grantees

Promoting Gender Integration and Mainstreaming in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of NURU Nigeria Project

Introduction

Gender integration and mainstreaming are critical aspects of development projects, ensuring that the needs, perspectives, and rights of both men and women are considered and addressed. In Northern Nigeria, Nuru Nigeria implemented projects, which aimed to restore social cohesion and promote sustainable livelihoods in communities affected by insurgent attacks. This case study examines how Nuru Nigeria integrated gender into the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of the project, and the outcomes achieved in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment.





Integrating Gender in Programme Management

Planning Phase:



Gender integration was prioritized from the outset of the Nuru Nigeria projects in Adamawa state. During the Program Planning Process (PPP), The project management team engaged with community members, including women and children, to understand their challenges and find effective solutions. Women were specifically targeted for inclusion as they were more open and shared their experiences and solutions. This ensured that women's perspectives and needs were considered in the project planning process, promoting inclusivity and gender sensitivity.

Implementation Phase:



In the implementation phase, Nuru Nigeria recognized the role of men as gatekeepers in the communities of northeastern Nigeria. Despite focusing on women, the project team engaged with male community leaders to gain entry into the communities. The team discussed their programmes with men, emphasizing the importance of supporting women in their communities. This approach ensured a holistic approach to engaging both men and women in the project, acknowledging the cultural and social dynamics at play. Nuru Nigeria also started with women as the entry point into households based on their assessment that

women were primarily engaged in agricultural production in the community. They provided groundnut seeds and other inputs to women, trained them on production improvement, and emphasized the benefits of women's empowerment. In the second year of implementation, men were involved, but their registration was tied to their spouse or any female household member to ensure continued women's participation. This approach aimed to address gender disparities and promote gender equality in the project, recognizing the importance of involving both men and women in project activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation Phase:



Gender considerations were also incorporated into the monitoring and evaluation process of the project. This implied that Nuru Nigeria conducted separate sessions for men and women during surveys to ensure that women felt comfortable sharing their feedback. This approach facilitated comprehensive feedback from both men and women, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the project's impact on gender integration and mainstreaming. Women's perspectives and experiences were given equal weight, and their voices were amplified in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Outcomes:



The Nuru Nigeria project implemented in Adamawa state had significant outcomes in terms of promoting gender equality and

women's empowerment. The project helped restore social cohesion in communities affected by insurgent attacks, encouraged women's participation in leadership roles, and fostered collaboration between men and women farmers. Women were elected into leadership positions, participated in decision-making processes, and contributed to community activities, empowering them and promoting gender equality in the project communities. The formation of farmer organizations and cooperatives brought both men and women together to work towards common goals, breaking down gender barriers and promoting gender integration and mainstreaming in the community.

Challenges and Lessons Learned:



Nuru Nigeria faced challenges in integrating gender into their project, including resistance from stakeholders in the communities due to discomfort with the term 'empowerment' (the provision of stipends and tokens to community dwellers). To overcome this challenge, the Project manager provided recommendations on how to message their approach with women as an entry point. They suspended engagements when they sensed resistance and met with stakeholders to understand their concerns. They emphasized that empowering women benefits the entire household, improved the general welfare of the families and gradually expanded their interventions. Eventually, they received positive testimonies from men in the communities during assessments, showing the success of their approach. This experience highlights the importance of addressing cultural sensitivities and finding alternative ways to message gender integration.

Conclusion:



In conclusion, the case study of Nuru Nigeria's project in Northern Nigeria demonstrates the importance of gender integration and mainstreaming in development projects. By prioritizing gender considerations in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of the project, Nuru Nigeria was able to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the communities affected by insurgent attacks. The project engaged both men and women, recognized cultural dynamics, and ensured women's inclusion in decision-making processes and leadership roles. Despite challenges and resistance, Nuru Nigeria's approach resulted in positive outcomes, including increased social cohesion, women's participation in community activities, and the formation of farmer organizations that promoted gender integration and mainstreaming. The case study underscores the significance of addressing gender disparities and promoting inclusivity in development projects, and the need to be sensitive to cultural nuances while advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.



Gender Integration and Mainstreaming in Community Health Projects – Girlsaide Initiative

Introduction

Gender integration and mainstreaming play crucial roles in fostering gender equality and empowering women within development projects, particularly in the realm of community health initiatives. Girlsaide Initiative, a non-governmental organization, is deeply committed to supporting and empowering girls, women, young people, and underserved communities. The organization focuses on providing them with information, education, healthcare, and skills that are directly relevant to their needs. By fostering human capital development, Girlsaide Initiative aims to help individuals reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society. The organization's overarching goal is to empower and support girls, women, youth, and their communities through various capacity development programmes, advocacy efforts, information dissemination, research endeavors, and educational initiatives. The ultimate objective is to equip individuals with the necessary tools to achieve economic self-sufficiency, mental and social well-being, and thrive as valuable and valued members of society.





Background:

GirlsAide Initiative is dedicated to enhancing healthcare access and improving outcomes specifically for girls and women within a community setting. Right from the planning phase, the organization prioritizes including girls and women as beneficiaries, setting measurable goals to track progress. Moreover, the organization takes into account the gender distribution in the training of healthcare workers to ensure a workforce that is diverse and inclusive. One of the key approaches of the organization is to analyze the intricate gender dynamics within households, particularly regarding the authorization for healthcare access. This analysis helps in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that women face when trying to access healthcare services. By recognizing and addressing these barriers from the very beginning, the organization emphasizes the significance of gender considerations in ensuring the effectiveness and inclusivity of their interventions.

Integrating Gender in Programme Management

The GirlsAide Initiative places great emphasis on integrating gender considerations throughout the implementation of their projects. They recognize the unique needs and perspectives of women and employ a range of strategies to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness. One important aspect of their approach is the careful timing of activities. They schedule events at convenient times for women with caregiving responsibilities, enabling them to fully participate without conflicting demands. This recognizes the importance of accommodating the multiple roles and responsibilities that women often navigate. Additionally, the organization actively seeks to incorporate diverse perspectives

by including both male and female voices in discussions on sensitive topics. This inclusive approach fosters comprehensive dialogue and decision-making, enhancing the overall outcomes of the projects. GirlsAide Initiative also addresses the specific biological needs of women, such as hunger. By providing support and resources to combat hunger, particularly for pregnant women, they ensure that participants can engage fully in the programmes without the hindrance of basic physiological concerns. Ultimately, the organization aims to create an environment where women feel comfortable sharing their experiences and needs openly. They recognize that effective communication and a supportive atmosphere are crucial for successful project implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation with a Gender lens:



The GirlsAide initiative takes a comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluating their projects with a gender lens. They track the number of girls and women reached as beneficiaries to gauge gender representation and measure progress towards gender equality. The organization also assesses authorization from male community members for women's participation, gaining insights into barriers women face in accessing healthcare services. Moreover, GirlsAide prioritizes the security and safety of female beneficiaries during program implementation. They track outcomes such as survival during pregnancy, education, career pursuits, and financial independence to assess the impact of their interventions on gender equality and women's empowerment. By integrating these practices into their monitoring and evaluation framework, GirlsAide ensures a nuanced understanding of their interventions' effectiveness in promoting gender equality and empowering

women. This approach demonstrates their commitment to creating an inclusive and safe environment that enables women to thrive in various aspects of their lives.

Addressing Gender Gaps in the community:



The project team is dedicated to addressing gender gaps in their community health project through several strategic initiatives. They prioritize the representation of females by actively involving them in their training programmes. Additionally, they engage with influential female leaders and authorities in the community, such as market women's associations, religious leaders, and traditional birth attendants. This ensures that women's voices and perspectives are heard and valued. The team also aims to challenge existing power dynamics by reducing the need for authorization from male leaders for women to access healthcare. By empowering female beneficiaries and encouraging male leaders to relinquish authority, they strive to create an environment of shared decision-making and equal participation. Financial affordability is another crucial aspect the team addresses. They provide free programmes and essential maternal kits to minimize the impact of financial constraints on female beneficiaries. This approach acknowledges the intersectionality of gender and socioeconomic factors and ensures that all women have equal access to healthcare services. By involving male leaders and raising awareness among them about their role in preventing maternal mortality, the team seeks to promote shared responsibility and understanding. They also work towards creating a gender-inclusive team to foster a culture of gender integration and mainstreaming. Overall, the team's efforts contribute to bridging gender gaps and promoting gender equality

within their community health project. By championing the representation, empowerment, and affordability of women, they strive to create sustainable change and foster social equity in healthcare.

Challenges



There have been several challenges faced in the course of integrating gender mainstreaming and a few are highlighted below.

1. **Complex Authorization Process:** The organization has brought attention to the intricate and bureaucratic authorization process that women often encounter when attempting to access healthcare services. This convoluted procedure poses a significant challenge, leading to delays and confusion, ultimately hindering women from receiving timely and essential care. Addressing this challenge is crucial to ensuring equitable and efficient healthcare services for women.
2. **Inadequate Facilities for Women:** The organization has shed light on the insufficient provision of facilities tailored to women's needs. Specifically, the lack of appropriate restroom facilities negatively impacts women's comfort and dignity. This challenge calls for urgent attention to rectify the disparity and promote environments that prioritize women's well-being and uphold their rights to suitable facilities.

Steps initiated to overcome challenges

1. **Streamlining the authorization process:** The Girlsaide team recognizes the importance of efficient and timely access to healthcare services for women.

To tackle this challenge, they have undertaken initiatives to streamline the authorization process. By simplifying procedures, reducing paperwork, and providing clear information, they aim to ensure that women can navigate the system easily and receive the care they need without unnecessary delays.

2. **Provision of separate and adequate facilities:** Addressing the issue of inadequate facilities for women is crucial for promoting their health and dignity. The Girlsaide Initiative has taken proactive steps to provide separate and adequate restroom facilities for women. By offering safe, hygienic, and dignified spaces, they are ensuring that women feel comfortable accessing healthcare services and maintaining their well-being.
3. **Incorporating gender mainstreaming from project inception:** The organization recognizes that gender mainstreaming should be an integral part of project planning and implementation, rather than an afterthought. They emphasize the importance of considering gender dynamics in all stages of a project, from its inception to evaluation. By doing so, they aim to address both male and female-specific issues, ensuring that the unique challenges faced by women are taken into account and effectively addressed.
4. **Collaboration and inclusion:** The Girlsaide Initiative believes that collaboration and inclusion are vital for successful gender mainstreaming efforts. They acknowledge the importance of involving both men and women in discussions and decisions related to gender equality. By promoting male champions for gender equality and engaging male leaders, community members, and stakeholders, they aim to expand the reach and impact of their initiatives. This collaborative approach

ensures that gender mainstreaming efforts are comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable.

5. **Adequate funding:** The organization emphasizes the necessity of adequate funding to support effective gender mainstreaming. They recognize the importance of securing funding at all levels, from research to policymaking and implementation. By allocating resources specifically for gender-related challenges and barriers, supporting gender-specific programmes, and providing necessary facilities such as nursing rooms in workplaces, they ensure that the financial support needed for meaningful change is available.

Summary of findings



The integration of gender considerations within the project is a deliberate and comprehensive process that begins during the initial planning phase. It encompasses various crucial aspects, such as establishing specific numerical targets to ensure the inclusion of girls and women as beneficiaries. Moreover, the project takes into account the gender distribution when training healthcare workers, as well as analyzes the gender dynamics within households to address potential barriers to healthcare access authorization. During the implementation phase, great care is taken to consider the unique needs and perspectives of different genders. This entails making thoughtful decisions regarding the timing of activities, ensuring the recruitment of healthcare workers is mindful of gender balance, and providing appropriate spaces for separate discussions when addressing sensitive topics. Furthermore, the project actively works towards creating an enabling environment

for women's effective participation by addressing biological needs like hunger.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, gender is a key consideration. The project tracks the number of girls and women reached as beneficiaries, assesses their level of authorization and participation, and prioritizes their safety. Additionally, the project evaluates outcomes related to gender equality and women's empowerment, aiming to make a significant contribution towards closing gender gaps within the community and target population.

However, the integration of gender into the project does not come without challenges. Issues related to authorization and the lack of adequate facilities for women pose significant hurdles. To overcome these obstacles, the project team is actively working on streamlining processes and providing separate facilities to ensure equitable access and participation.

To address gender disparities, the project employs a multi-faceted approach. This includes promoting the representation of females in training programmes, engaging with female leaders and authorities, raising awareness among men, tackling financial affordability challenges, and striving for inclusivity within the project team, encompassing both genders.

Conclusion:



In conclusion, Girlsaide Initiative has successfully integrated gender into its project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. They have taken intentional steps to address gender gaps, engaged with female beneficiaries and leaders, raising awareness

among men, and ensured the inclusivity of both genders within their team. Lessons learned include the importance of mainstreaming gender from the beginning, acknowledging the multifactorial nature of gender issues, promoting collaboration and inclusion, and ensuring adequate funding. By incorporating these lessons into their project implementation, organizations can make their gender integration efforts more impactful and sustainable.





SECTION 7

Toward Gender Transformative Change

Recommendations

Change at the Organizational Level

Policy Development and Implementation

It is crucial to develop a comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy that clearly articulates the organization's commitment to gender equality and outlines specific strategies and actions to be implemented. This policy should be endorsed and supported by top management, creating a culture of accountability, and ensuring that all staff members are aware of and trained on the policy. Furthermore, it is essential to incorporate gender considerations into existing policies, including recruitment, promotion, and performance evaluation, to foster equal opportunities and representation for both women and men throughout the organization's operations.

Leadership and Accountability

To promote a gender-responsive organizational culture, it is crucial to prioritize strong leadership commitment. Foster a culture where leaders not only serve as role models in promoting inclusive and gender-responsive practices but are also held accountable for advancing gender equality within the organization. Conduct performance evaluations that assess their efforts

in this regard and recognize their achievements. Furthermore, establish effective mechanisms for reporting and addressing gender-related grievances and complaints, creating a safe and supportive environment for all staff members.

Capacity Building and Training

To foster a gender-responsive and gender-competent organization, it is important to implement comprehensive training programs. Conduct gender sensitization and awareness training for all staff members to enhance their understanding of gender issues. Specialized training can be provided for managers and leaders on integrating gender considerations into decision-making processes, enabling them to foster inclusive and equitable workplaces. Additionally, offer technical training and capacity building programs across different departments to develop the skills and competencies required for incorporating gender into routine activities, processes, and procedures. Given the budgetary constraints, recruiting gender experts may be challenging. Yet, gender expertise at key stages of the programme implementation may be required. Organizations can create strategic partnerships to expand available expertise and leverage a diverse network of volunteer gender champions.

Work-Life Balance and Supportive Policies

A more inclusive and equitable workplace, where both men and women have equal

opportunities for work-life balance, and career advancement is essential. Embrace policies and practices that support work-life balance, including flexible working hours, parental leave, and childcare support. Secondly, address gender biases and stereotypes in recruitment and promotion processes to ensure equal opportunities. This can be achieved through unbiased hiring and promotion criteria, diverse hiring panels, and training on unconscious bias to mitigate gender-based discrimination. Lastly, establish mentorship and professional development programs employing a gender lens that can enable staff access specific guidance, support, and growth opportunities.

Communication and Awareness

Ensuring that the voices and experiences of all staff members are heard and valued is critical in shaping gender-responsive practices. Promote open and transparent communication channels that encourage discussions on gender-related issues and experiences. Additionally, establish periodic feedback mechanisms and conduct employee surveys to actively encourage staff members to contribute their ideas and perspectives on gender equality issues.

Change at the Programming Level

Normalize applying a gender lens.

In all programming sectors and contexts, such as education, health, economic empowerment, agriculture, environment, and governance, organizations should

apply a gender lens in their work, ensuring gender considerations are prioritized from the outset. This approach should be foundational across all processes, and departments, and embedded within routine activities. This practice will enable organizations to develop gender-wise programmes that are sensitive to the distinct needs and circumstances of both women and men within the target beneficiary group. Overall, organizations will be positioned to empower women, challenge harmful gender norms, and engage men and boys as allies in advancing gender equality.

Collect sex-disaggregated data and consider intersectionality.

To design effective interventions, it is essential to collect data that is disaggregated by sex. This practice enables a more nuanced analysis of gender-related patterns, revealing disparities and inequalities that may otherwise remain hidden, as well as opportunities within target populations. However, it is equally important to recognize that gender intersects with other dimensions of identity, such as age, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status. Therefore, organizations should strive to collect data that captures these intersections. This approach enhances the understanding of how different factors intersect and compound to shape individuals' experiences and needs, allowing for more targeted and inclusive interventions. For example, disaggregating data by age and sex can shed light on the specific barriers faced by young girls or elderly women.

Develop clear gender-integrated objectives and indicators.

Develop programme and project level gender-integrated objectives and indicators that maps out the anticipated changes and benefits for both women and men. When defining the objectives, it is essential to consider various aspects of gender dynamics, including power relations, social norms, and cultural practices. Indicators should measure whether the intervention is fundamentally affecting gender structures and capture various dimensions of gender equality, such as access, participation, physical mobility, self-confidence, and other relevant factors.

Ensure women and men are equally involved in participation and decision-making.

Adopt a participatory approach throughout the project's lifecycle, encompassing design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The input and perspectives of both women and men should be considered, ensuring that their unique needs and priorities are understood and effectively addressed. This involvement facilitates the development of inclusive strategies and interventions that cater to the different needs of both genders. Furthermore, it is essential to establish mechanisms that support women's decision-making, especially in contexts where they traditionally have less power and

Promote Equitable Outcomes via Gender-Responsive Budgeting

It is crucial to integrate a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process in order to advance gender equality. Gender-responsive budget initiatives serve as strategies to evaluate and modify budgetary procedures and policies, ensuring that expenditures and revenues account for the disparities and inequities between women and men. Both organizational and programme budgets should address the barriers and challenges faced by women and men that may impede their ability to fully engage and participate on an equal footing, owing to societal gender roles and norms influence.

Do No Harm

Programmes and interventions must take careful measures to ensure they do not perpetuate or worsen gender inequalities or discrimination. Safeguarding policies and mechanisms should be implemented to prevent and address any instances of GBV or exploitation that may emerge. Provide capacity-building and training opportunities to staff and partners on gender issues, sensitivity, and respectful engagement. Minimize risks by continuously monitoring unintended adverse effects such as backlash or economic exclusion.

Conclusion

It takes much more than simply including women in programmes to make progress toward women's empowerment and gender equality. While initiatives aimed at empowering women are an essential part of achieving gender equality, they only work for women's individual self-improvement, leaving unchallenged a range of deeply rooted structural and cultural constraints that feed the cycle of gender inequality. Local NGO programmes must expand beyond the scope of improving the status of women and strategically respond to structural factors that permit one of the oldest and most pervasive forms of inequality. This is the transformative agenda of gender mainstreaming. By assessing the implications for women and men for any planned action and making their concerns a fundamental part of the entire life cycle of a programme or policy, discriminatory and ingrained gender norms become visible for redress. Gender mainstreaming acknowledges that inequality based on gender is not just a women's issue but a societal issue that requires the active participation of both men and women. Its revolutionary potential seeks to dismantle the underlying causes of gender inequality which may include discriminatory legislation, policies, institutions, norms, and stereotypes about what it means to be a man or a woman, harmful masculinities, and insufficient support for women's agency and rights.

Gender is an integral component of every aspect of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of human development. Hence, the sheer importance of mainstreaming gender in all processes, activities, levels, and areas of development. Gender equality is neither the purview of women-led nor women-owned organizations and should not be relegated to isolated women empowerment initiatives. It is a human rights issue and should be integrated into all development sectors including health, agriculture, education, finance, climate, and leadership. Achieving gender equality greatly depends on concerted efforts to contribute to deeper, wider, and more lasting contributions to a just and equitable society.

This detailed knowledge product provides the avenue for an extensive and continuous reflection on the integration of gender considerations in day-to-day work activities. Practitioners are strongly encouraged to build on the approaches and tools outlined in this report to enhance the impact and effectiveness of their programming efforts. In this report, we have proposed that gender mainstreaming should occur at two levels of change - the organizational level and the programme/policy level. Gender mainstreaming should go beyond programming toward incorporating a gender perspective into organizational policies, strategies, culture, and administrative functions. Transformative changes within organizations will translate to their abilities to effectively design and implement gender-

responsive programmes. This requires continuous internal organizational learning, and strong political commitment from senior leadership, among others. At the same time, gender at the programme level should not be exclusive to gender experts and must be integrated into all aspects of development work. Taking into account gender considerations at the planning, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting stages of the programme cycle is crucial for positive gender equality results.



For NGO programmes to be gender transformative, it is crucial to continuously learn about gender issues beyond women’s empowerment. This includes examining gender-sensitive data for informed decision-making. Contextualizing gender matters is essential as it differs across regions due to cultural, policy, and societal nuances. A one-size-fits-all approach is inadequate; instead, data-driven strategies and men’s involvement should guide interventions.

Ibukun Omololu - Gender & Business Expert



ANNEX

Annex 1 - Survey Profiles

ORGANIZATION TYPE

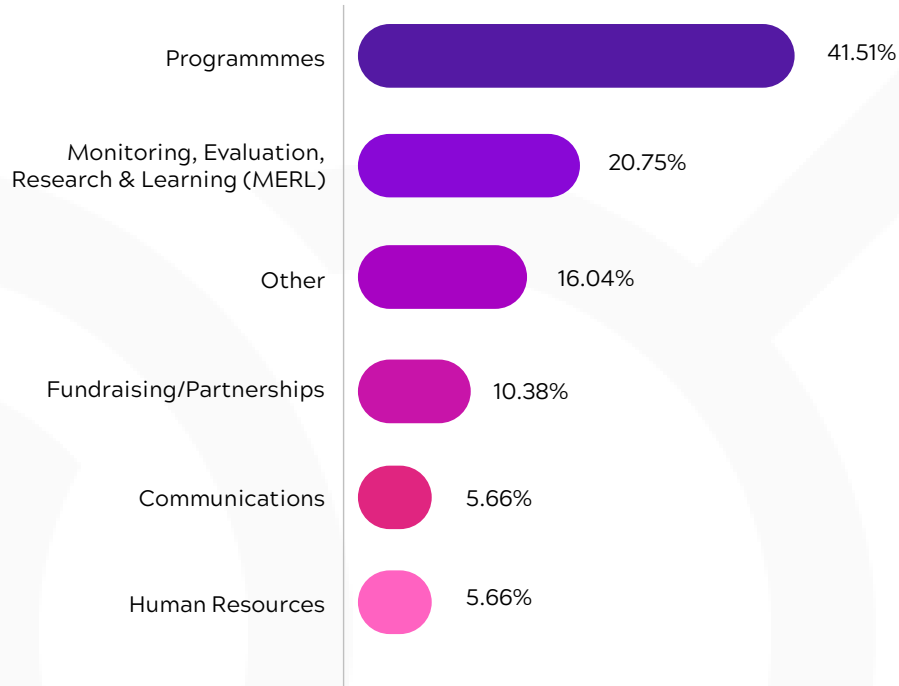
Respondents mostly identified their organizations as NGOs (35.44%), CBOs (12.45%), and women-led or women-focused organizations (11.30%).



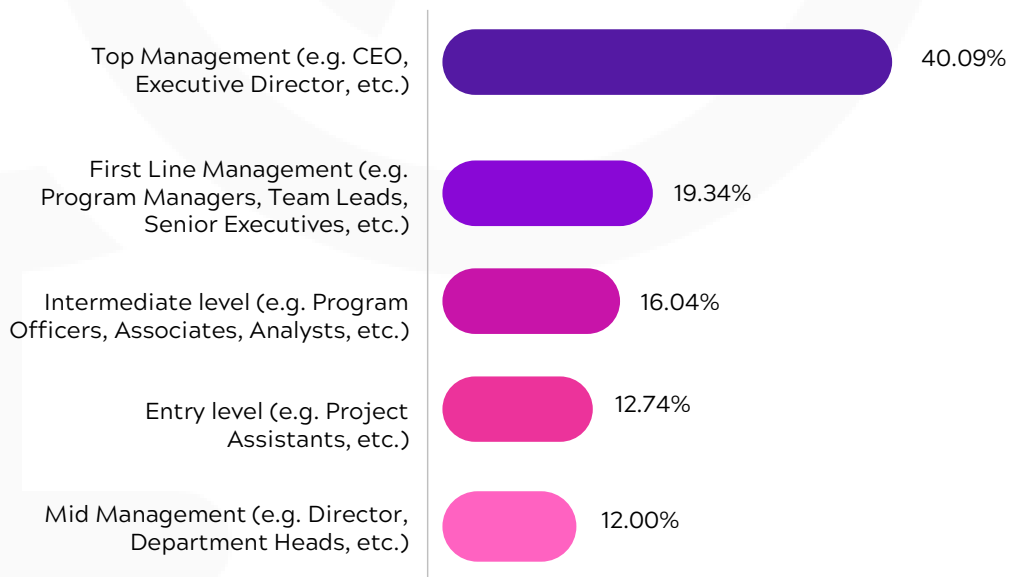
How would you best describe your organization? Select all that apply.

JOB ROLE & LEVEL

Respondents are mainly involved in core program work (41.51%) and Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (20.75%). The top management staff (40.09%) represent the majority of our survey participants.



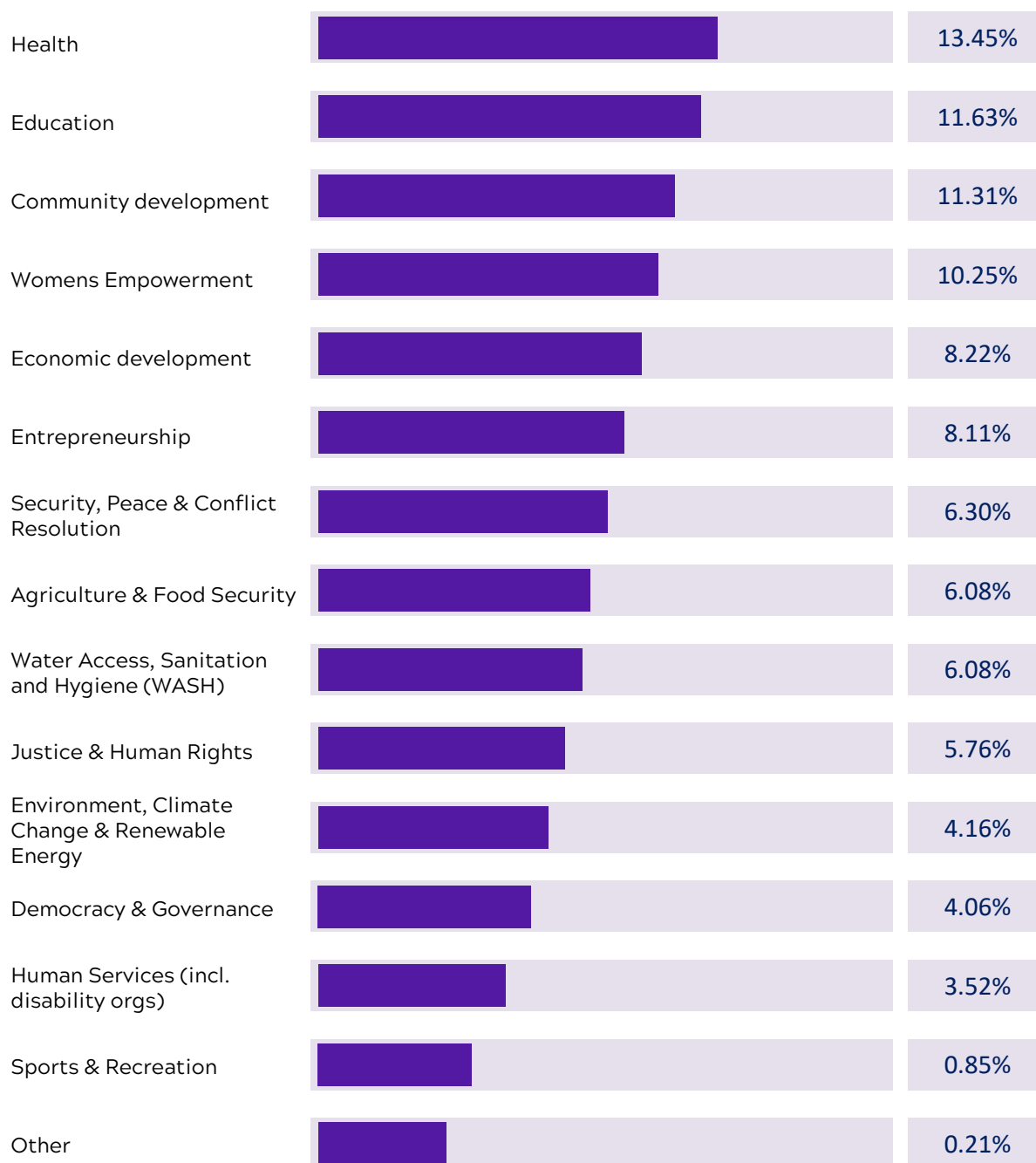
How would you best describe your organization? Select all that apply.



Which of the following categories best describes your job level?

THEMATIC FOCUS

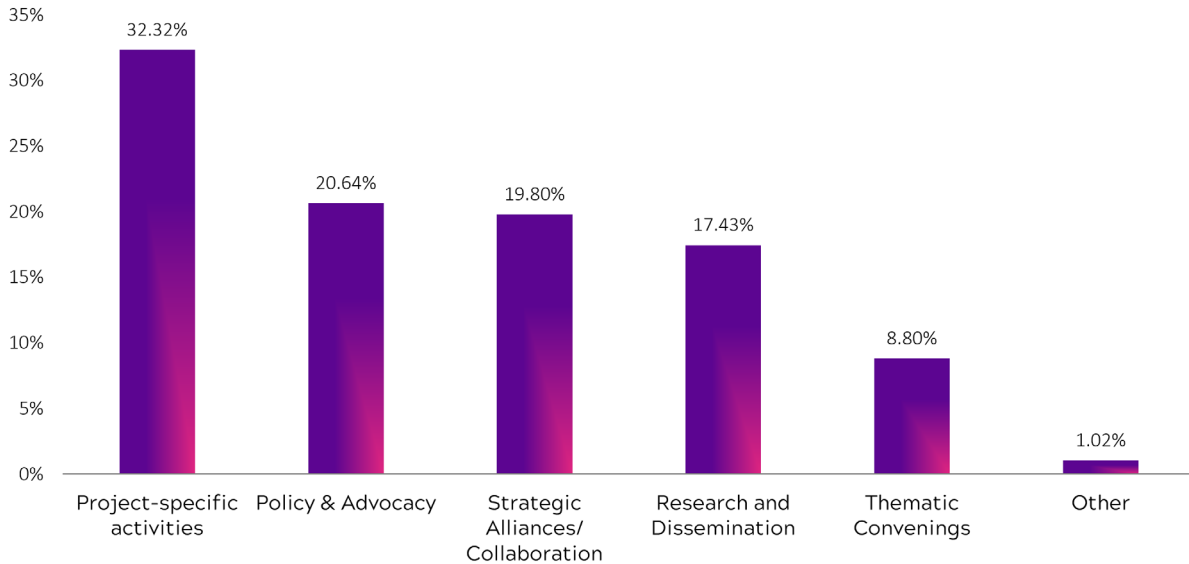
Health, education, community development, and women's empowerment represent the top 4 thematic focus of the responding organizations, with many working across multiple areas.



What best describes your organization's primary issue area? Select all that apply.

ORGANIZATIONAL /PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGY

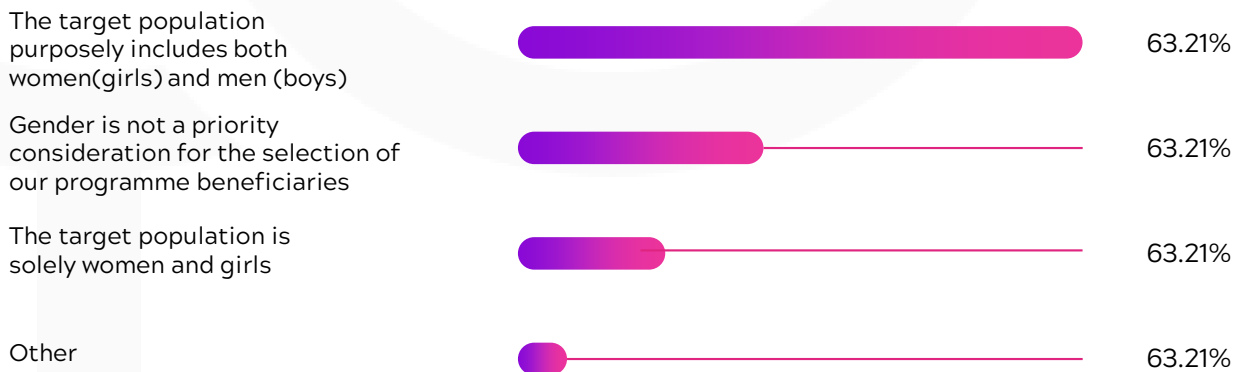
Project-specific activities (32.32%) followed by policy and advocacy (20.64%) constituted most of the development strategies deployed by responding organizations.



Check all applicable options.

TARGET POPULATION

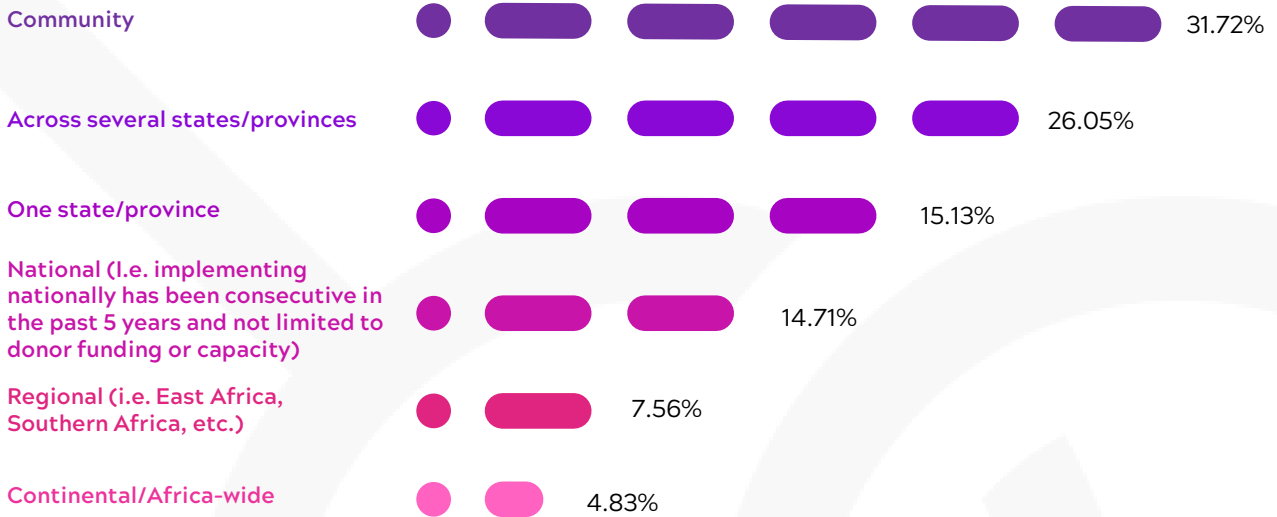
Over half of the survey participants (63.21%) reported both women, girls, men, and boys as the target population of their programmes.



Choose from the following what best describes your target population.

GEOGRAPHICAL REACH

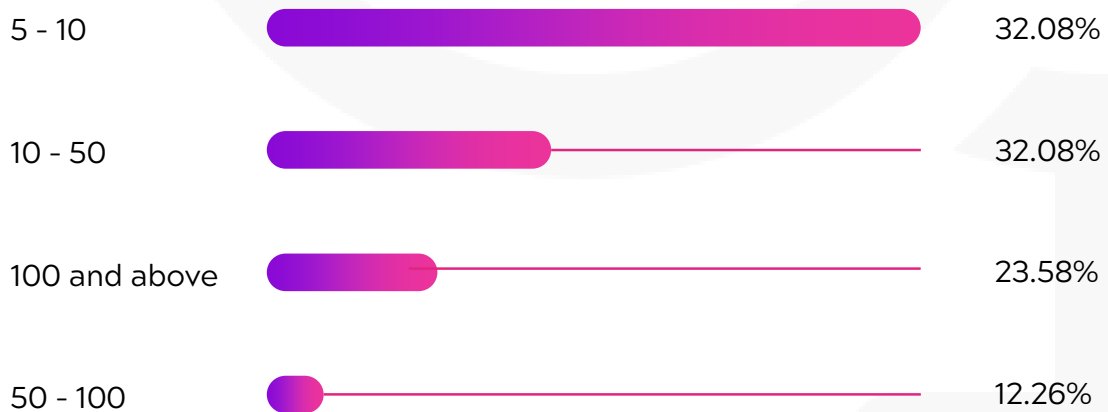
Organizations surveyed have mostly implemented programmes at the local level (31.27%) and across several states (26.05%).



Please choose where your organization has implemented its programmes. Select all that apply.

STAFF SIZE

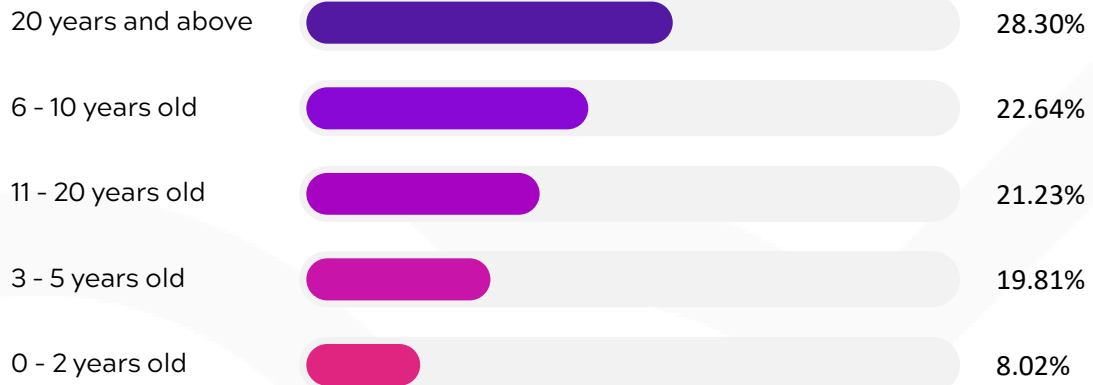
Nearly a quarter of the respondents reported a staff size of 100 and above. This can be attributed to a large volunteer workforce.



Kindly indicate the number of employees in your organization

YEARS OF OPERATION

Most of the organizations (28.30%) surveyed have been in existence for 20 years and above.



How old is your organization?

Annex 2 - Bibliography

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