



Bridging the Gaps Applying a Gender Lens

GCSP Inclusive Security Policy Brief Series

The third policy brief of this series explored why it is important to develop an inclusive mindset and take steps to overcome some of the biases we develop. In this brief we explore how numerous biases that discriminate against women in particular have become embedded in our social systems and how using a gender lens can help us to develop more gender-responsive and inclusive approaches that make the most of our diversity.

Gender = Women? No.

The term “gender” is often thought to be synonymous with that of “women”. It is not! Our gender is defined by the way in which we identify ourselves as men, women or another gender identity. Our sex is biological (male, female or intersex), whereas gender is socially constructed. Gender is not binary; it varies across cultures and over time, and includes individuals who do not identify as either men or women.¹ The concept of intersectionality² is used to explore how our experiences vary according to other aspects of our identities such as age, marital status, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or (dis)ability.

However, the male/female dynamic remains important because for centuries societies have ascribed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes to individuals that are considered to be appropriate for girls and boys, women and men, all of which are built on a landscape of unequal rights for women. Even in our language we embed gendered roles in words like “mankind”, “chairman”, “manpower”, “man-made”, etc.

In social functions that range from the right to vote to opening a bank account or being paid equally for equal work, women have not had equal rights, access to resources or equal opportunities. This has led to stereotypes, limiting beliefs and norms resulting in the kinds of gaps highlighted in the “Stats and facts” box, below.

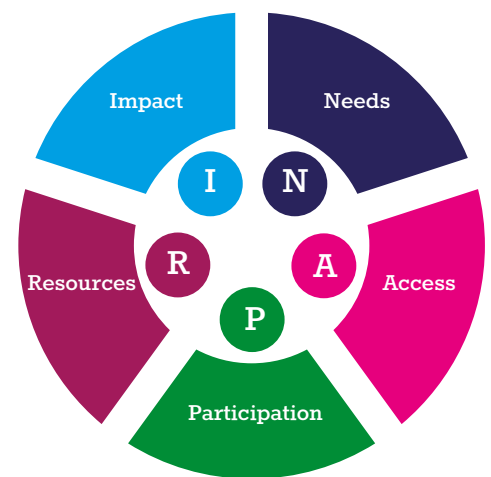
Gender blind

Although the intention may not be to explicitly discriminate against women, because men have predominantly been societies’ leaders, decision-makers, policymakers, academics and scientists, many policies and programmes have been developed in a “gender blind” way that does not incorporate the perspectives of women or non-dominant groups, or accommodate their needs. From health and sanitary needs through to community support and policing to prevent and protect women against domestic violence, gender-blind approaches are more tailored towards men, and thus perpetuate the unequal position of women in society.

Gender responsive

Overcoming this lack of gender equality involves applying a gender lens to whatever we do. The “NAPRI Wheel”, below, helps us to identify how the needs, access, participation, resources and impact of a project or programme could vary for different members of a community on the basis of their gender, and other intersecting factors. Identity alone does not make an individual vulnerable; society’s treatment of an individual does. We need to develop a nuanced understanding of how societal norms related to race, class, or sexual orientation coincide with gender and the political economy in creating discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion.

Gender Analytical Tool “The Napri Wheel”



Needs

Does the policy/practice/project meet the needs of women, men, girls and boys?

Access

Do women, men, girls and boys (employees and/or population) have access to the rights, benefits and resources afforded by the policy/practice/project?

Participation

Have women and men (within the institution and/or society/CSOs) been involved in developing, implementing, and evaluating the policy/practice/project?

Resources

Is the distribution of resources (monetary, human, natural, structural, equipment, etc...) equitable and consistent with the identified needs of women, men, girls and boys?

Impact

What is the impact of the policy/practice/project on women/men/girls and boys (employees and/or population)?

Source: Developed by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

¹R.W. Connell, “Theorising Gender”, *Sociology*, Vol.19(2), 1985, pp.260-272.

²K. Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”, *Stanford Law Review*, Vol.43, p.1241.

Case Study

The 2008 global economic recession was largely caused by the questionable activities of predominately white, cisgendered, straight men; however, it was also men of the same stereotype that were largely impacted, but from working-class rather than middle-class groups, highlighting the need for an intersectional analysis.

Applying a gender lens to the COVID-19 pandemic reveals a more nuanced understanding of its impact: a “**shadow pandemic**” has intensified violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, with France reporting a 30 per cent increase in intimate partner violence immediately after lockdown confinement measures were introduced. Furthermore, school closures and restricted health and social services have increased the number of families falling into poverty as a result of the pandemic and many women’s capacity to engage in paid work, which is related to the uneven care burden (see below).

Multiple masculinities

While a **power gap** has seen men hold the majority of influence and wealth, men do not fall into a homogeneous group and are themselves negatively impacted by gendered stereotypes and norms. When self-reliance and competition are idealised and men are pressured to achieve economic and political dominance, this can stigmatise and limit emotions that boys and men may comfortably express while elevating other emotions such as anger.⁶ Such “**masculine norms**” can be harmful to all members of society, including men who conform to restrictive norms, women who experience domination by men, and men who are not part of the dominant masculine group.

“Privilege is invisible to those who have it.”

Professor Michael Kimmel, Stony Brook University

Applying a gender lens

To apply a gender lens, we must first start with ourselves and endeavour to develop an inclusive mindset (see the GCSP’s Inclusive Security Policy Brief No. 3). Next we must:

1. **Identify the gaps:** Conduct a gendered analysis. Gather data disaggregated by gender, sex, age, ethnicity, (dis)ability, income and other relevant categories to see how policies and programmes affect people differently. Consider both quantitative and qualitative data, i.e. both numbers and perceptions.⁷
2. **Invest!** Develop knowledge and expertise and dedicate financial resources to bridge the gaps that have been identified.
3. **Redesign:** Because personal biases are embedded in our language, images and social norms, we need to create new pathways to make better, gender-responsive choices.⁸

Examples include the following:

- a. **Highlight counter-stereotypical models:** Seeing is believing!
- b. **Normalise neutral language:** Use “humankind” not “mankind”, “chairperson” not “chairman”, etc.
- c. **Use data to reframe gender-related issues and increase transparency.**
- d. **Develop processes** to incorporate **checks and balances that ensure gender equality into our decisions.**

FACTS AND STATS:

Why we should focus on gender

The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2020 predicts that it will take 99.5 years to achieve gender parity in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment across 153 countries. Examples include:

- **Economic empowerment:** 55 per cent of adult women are in the labour market, compared with 78 per cent of men.
- **Education:** Around the world, 10 per cent of girls aged 15-24 are illiterate.
- **Political:** Of the 35,127 global parliamentary seats available, only 25 per cent are occupied by women.⁹

The UN Development Programme’s 2020 Human Development Perspectives report identifies a power gap in which significant progress has been made in “basic capabilities”, but barriers remain in terms of women’s access to political leadership and higher income jobs. The **care burden**, which sees women undertaking **2.5 times the amount of unpaid care work** as men, impacts women’s capacity to engage in paid employment, as well as shaping the values, beliefs, attitudes and practices around roles in households, communities, workplaces and societies, all of which reflect gendered biases. Shifting norms is identified as a “**game changer**” for advancing gender equality globally.¹⁰

Biases have become embedded in **our technological systems**, and this will be the subject of a further policy brief on artificial intelligence and gender.

³D. Thompson, “It’s Not Just a Recession. It’s a Mancession”, The Atlantic, 9 July 2009, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2009/07/its-not-just-a-recession-its-a-mancection/20991/>>.

⁴For a definition of “intersectional”, see “Core concepts”, below.

⁵Euronews, “Domestic Violence Cases Jump 30 during Lockdown in France”, 28 March 2020, <<https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/28/domestic-violence-cases-jump-30-during-lockdown-in-france>>.

⁶R. Connell, Masculinities, Cambridge, Polity Press; Sydney, Allen & Unwin; Berkeley, University of California Press, 2nd edn., 2005.

⁷See DCAF NAPRI Wheel (above); Canada, “GBA+”, <<https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acis/index-en.html>>; ILO (International Labour Organisation), A Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators: The ILO Participatory Gender Audit Methodology, 15 August 2012, <https://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/WCMS_187411/Lang--en/index.htm>.

⁸Iris Bohnet, author of What Works: Gender Equality by Design (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2016), and Lisa Kepinski and Tinna C. Nielsen, authors of Inclusion Nudges (2013, <<https://inclusion-nudges.org>>), provide a number of ways in which we can make better gender-responsive choices.

⁹WEF (World Economic Forum), Global Gender Gap Report 2020, “Key Findings”, pp.5-6, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf>.

¹⁰UNDP (UN Development Programme), Tackling Social Norms: A Game Changer for Gender Inequalities, 2020 Human Development Perspectives, <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/gsni>>.