

Glossary of Terms Relating to Gender

Gender concepts and terminology have changed over time. These definitions are adapted and revised from a number of sources and represent current usage. The references at the end of this Glossary provide more examples of definitions.

Gender: A concept referring to the social identity and roles associated with being a man or a woman that are usually learned through early socialization and reinforced by social norms. In some countries, additional gender categories are recognized [e.g. transgender]. The constellation of characteristics linked to men and/or women may change over time and place. The concept of gender includes the recognition that the social categories of man and woman are often defined in relationship to each other. To refer to people's gender roles or categories, use the terms "man/men" and "woman/women." For example, a "woman" may be responsible (a social role) for preparing the morning meal each day.

Policy makers and development practitioners sometimes interpret "gender" as referring only to women or as a women's issue. This is incorrect, as the concept of gender encompasses everyone, affecting all opportunities and life-choices.

(Listed in alphabetical order)

Constructive men's engagement: An approach to achieving **gender equality** that consciously and constructively includes men as clients, participants, supportive partners, and agents of change.

Gender analysis: Gender analysis is a process of using socio-economic methodologies to systematically identify and interpret the consequences of gender differences, disparities, and relationships. It takes into account different roles, responsibilities, rights, services, opportunities, and resources of men and women and the legal and institutional context in which they operate to better understand human development outcomes. It examines the relative status of men and women, and the causes and consequences of inequality by collecting sex-disaggregated data and other qualitative and quantitative information on gender issues, including access to and control over assets (tangible and intangible), as well as beliefs, practices, and legal frameworks, and analyzing that data. An examination of **gender disparities**, differences, and relationships cannot be isolated from the broader social context.

In development work, gender analysis is used to identify constraints and opportunities in specific

contexts and timeframes [see gender-based constraint], and across different social and institutional locations (e.g., between partners or within primary relationships, households, the community, civil society, and government organizations and institutions). This can help to identify pathways for changing relations of power between women and men to better achieve development objectives. There are many methodologies available for conducting gender analyses.

Gender-accommodating: when project design, implementation, and evaluation approaches adjust to or compensate for gender differences, norms, and inequities by being sensitive to the different roles and identities of men and women, but in ways which do not change the status quo.

Gender aware: The recognition that gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of men and women in society.

Gender-based constraint: Restrictions on men's or women's access to resources or opportunities that are based on their gender roles or responsibilities. The term encompasses both the measurable

inequalities that are revealed by sex-disaggregated data collection and gender analysis as well as the processes that contribute to a specific condition of gender inequality.

Gender-based violence (GBV): Distinguishes violence that targets individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender identity and includes any act which results in (or is likely to result in) physical, sexual, or psychological harm. Examples of GBV include, rape, torture, mutilation, sexual slavery, forced impregnation, and murder, as well as the threat of doing any of these acts.

Gender blind: The lack of understanding by a person, policy, or institution that gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of men and women in society.

Gender disparity or Gender gap: Measurable differences in the relative conditions between men and women, especially (but not only) as they relate to the ability to engage in economic or political opportunities, e.g., illiteracy rates, level of education reached, levels of ownership of productive assets such as land or access to finance, or ability to participate in politics (see also gender equality).

Gender equality: The ability of both men and women to have equal opportunities and life chances. This may require changes in the lives of both men and women, and a comprehensive understanding of what measures should be taken to assure equality of opportunity. Since **gender roles** change over time, development programming can have an impact on gender equality, either supporting it or inhibiting it.

Gender equity: Equity involves fairness in representation, participation, and benefits afforded to men and women. It recognizes that in order to achieve equality a “leveling of the playing field” must first be done to compensate for gender gaps and the legacy of discrimination. This usually involves a focus on women, because women are typically in a disadvantaged position within society.

Gender indicators: An indicator is a measure. Gender indicators (or gender-related or gender-sensitive indicators) measure changes in specific conditions of men and women or on the level of disparity between them. The indicator may be constructed to show either an absolute measure, for example, the increase

in income of a relationship between women and men, for example, a change in women’s income as a percentage of men’s income.

The table below shows an example measuring a positive change in income for both men and women as a result of a project. Women have increased their income from 100 to 200 units, an increase of 100%. Men increased their incomes from 200 to 300 units, an increase of 50%. Women have more money than they did before the intervention and the gender gap has decreased from 50% to 33%, but the gender gap remains since women still have only 66.6% of men’s income.

	At baseline	At endline	% increase
Women’s income	100 units	200 units	100%
Men’s income	200 units	300 units	50%

Gender integration or mainstreaming: These terms tend to be used interchangeably. They both designate methods and institutional arrangements necessary for achieving **gender equality**. This involves taking account of gender implications in all programs, policies, and resource allocations, as well as addressing inequalities in organizational procedures and administrative and financial operations.

Gender responsive: Being aware of how gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of men and women in society and designing activities and policies that are structured and operate to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality. This mean ensuring that women are among the participants and beneficiaries, whether as the extension agents hired, the farmers reached, or the scientists trained. It also means ensuring that both men and women have the appropriate training and skills to understand and support women farmers, extension agents, employees, and entrepreneurs.

Gender relations: A type of social relations between men and women which are defined and reinforced by social institutions. They include the routine ways in which men and women interact with each other: in sexual relationships, friendships, workplaces, and different sectors of the economy. Gender relations are socially determined, culturally based, and historically specific. They are mediated by other

identities including ethnicity, religion, class, and age. Gender relations are shaped and reinforced by cultural, political, and economic institutions including the household, legal and governance structures, markets, and religion. Gender relations are dynamic and change over time.

Gender roles: The socially defined tasks, responsibilities, and behaviors that are considered appropriate for men and women. These are context-specific and can change over time through individual choices or as a result of social and/or political changes emerging from changed opportunities (more education, different economic environment) or times of social upheaval (during disasters, in war, and in post-conflict situations). For example, the introduction of new technology or services can alter the on-farm division of labor, shifting some tasks from women to men or vice versa.

Gender targets: Targets establish how projects measure success. Gender targets are goals that are expected to be reached either to improve women's and women's conditions relative to an earlier level OR to improve their situations relative to each other [see Gender indicators].

Gender-transformative: Where both men and women are helped as more gender-equitable relationships are promoted. A transformative approach identifies ways of engaging men and women to examine, question, and change institutions and norms that perpetuate inequalities.

Sex: The biological categories of "male" and "female" and does not change across cultures or over time.

Supplementary reading:

- Britt, C., Y. Ali, N. Jahan, and Z. Rahman Khan. 2010. Gender Assessment USAID/Bangladesh. Prepared by DevTech Systems and the Futures Group for USAID. Washington, D.C.: USAID. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS882.pdf
- International Food Policy Research Institute. 2014. Reducing the Gender Asset Gap through Agricultural Development: A Technical Resource Guide. Washington, D.C.: IFPRI. www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/gaap_techguide.pdf
- Rubin, D., C. Manfre, and K. Nichols Barrett. 2009. Promoting gender-equitable opportunities in agricultural value chains: A handbook. Washington, D.C.: USAID. Available at www.culturalpractice.com/resources/promoting-gender-equitable-opportunities-in-agricultural-value-chains-a-handbook
- USAID. 2012. Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy. Washington, D.C.: USAID. www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/GenderEqualityPolicy_0.pdf
- World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and International Fund for Agricultural Development. 2009. Gender in agriculture sourcebook. Washington, D.C.: USAID. <http://worldbank.org/genderinag>

Intersex is a term to describe people who have sexual characteristics related to both males and females.

Sex-disaggregated data: The collection of data according to physical attributes of the individual. Disaggregating data by sex (i.e., in categories of males and females) permits valid cross-country comparisons since sex categories are the same from one country to another.

Violence against Women (VAW): Any act of GBV that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty in either public or private life.

Women's (and Girl's) Empowerment: A social process which enhances women's and girls' capacity to act independently (self-determination), control assets, and make choices and decisions about all aspects of one's life. Through women's empowerment unequal power relations are transformed, and women gain greater equality with men. At the government level this includes the extension of all fundamental social, economic, and political rights to women. At the individual level, this includes processes by which women gain confidence to express and defend their rights, and greater self-esteem and control over their own lives. The participation and acceptance of men in changing their own roles and supporting change among women is essential for achieving women's empowerment (see constructive engagement of men].

