

Skills Systems

Tools to integrate gender considerations in Skills programmes

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This tool provides guidance on how to consider and incorporate gender connected and sensitive aspects when developing skills relating programmes in TVET context. It was developed as part of the research “[Developing Skills programming through a gender lens](#)”.

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Tools to integrate gender considerations in skills programmes

1. Gender Analysis Guidance: Assessing how gender shapes access to skills and employability initiatives

This framework draws on [DFID's Gender and Social Exclusion Analysis frameworks](#).

ANALYSIS AREAS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	INTERSECTIONALITY (age, religion, sexuality, ethnic group, disability, domicile (urban/rural) and socio-economic status)	RATIONALE	STAKEHOLDERS (how can you work with them and what are the potential blockages and challenges?)
1.Laws, policies, regulations, institutional practices (Rules)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there national laws relating to: gender equality? women's ownership of land, property and inheritance? violence against women? pay equality? working conditions? • Is there legislation that affects women's labour force participation or access to financial markets and services? • Are there policies that promote women's access to skills development and economic opportunities? • To what extent is legislation implemented? • Are men and women able to access justice? • How do laws and policies actually influence reality? • What is the relative importance and influence of customary and formal law? 	<p>Are there laws which recognise the additional barriers to gender equality posed by intersecting social identities? Are there laws which promote discrimination towards particular communities? What are the laws and norms that affect the rights of divorced or widowed women? Do people with protected characteristics have access to justice?</p>	<p>Understanding these dynamics can help implementers to design programs that either will advocate for legal change or make the current system more effective.</p>	<p>Policymakers, local legal institutions, NGOs.</p> <p>Judges, police, government officials and civil servants, local legal institutions and NGOs, women and girls.</p> <p>Traditional and community leaders, religious leaders, elders, women and girls, men and boys.</p>

<p>2.Cultural norms and beliefs (Rules)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the cultural norms and beliefs regarding men and women? For example, regarding the occupational trades, sectors and levels of seniority deemed acceptable for women and men? Regarding access to informal and formal apprenticeships? Regarding mobility of girls and women? • What are the relevant norms and beliefs about girls' and women's roles as wives and mothers and boys' and men's roles as husbands and fathers? • What are the relevant norms and beliefs about masculinity and femininity and gendered violence? • How do norms on gender roles affect beliefs regarding skills participation, attainment and progression of boys and girls and women and men? • What cultural and traditional practices prevent boys, girls, women and men from participating in certain skills development activities? 	<p>What are the cultural norms and beliefs about intersecting social identities e.g. race, age, sexuality, disability? What are the norms for older younger, married, unmarried women? What are the norms for women in urban & rural settings? Are some groups of women stigmatised or deemed undeserving? How do these norms affect people's participation in different activities?</p>	<p>Identifying norm-related barriers to participation and progression can help implementers design more effective programmes that improve access to, and quality of, skills programmes.</p> <p>In places where gender discrimination is deeply entrenched in customs or traditions, understanding how may help enable implementers to identify culturally appropriate solutions and key stakeholders to become involved in efforts to improve gender equality.</p>	<p>Traditional and community leaders, elders, parents, women and girls, men and boys, women's, men's and community organisations.</p> <p>Media.</p>
<p>3.Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use (Activities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much time do girls and women spend on unpaid domestic work (including collecting water & fuel) and care work compared to boys and men? • How much time do girls and women spend on unpaid agricultural work compared to boys and men? 	<p>What are the roles and responsibilities of boys, girls, men and women with intersecting social identities? Of those in urban and rural communities? Of younger and older men and women?</p>	<p>Using a gender lens to explore differences in roles, responsibilities, and time will enable implementers to understand how these issues relate to participation, and how the timing, flexibility and structure of programmes can be better designed to</p>	<p>Women and girls, men and boys.</p> <p>Traditional and community leaders, elders, parents, women and girls, men and boys, women's, men's and</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of community work are girls and women engaged in compared to boys and men? • How do gender roles, responsibilities, and available time differ between girls, boys, women and men? • How do these differences impact on ability to engage in skills development? 		accommodate those who might be at risk of being excluded.	community organisations. Media.
4. Access to and control over assets and resources (People)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does gender affect whether men and women own, have access to, and have the capacity to use productive resources (such as land, income, social benefits, public services, and technology)? • How does gender affect whether men and women have the information and support necessary to access and benefit from skills and employment and entrepreneurship activities? • Which girls, boys, women and men face social isolation? Do they lack access to resources and the power and knowledge to control those resources? • How do differences in women's and men's access to, and control over, assets impact on their ability to access and benefit from skills initiatives? • How does gender affect women and men's access to employment (in the formal, informal, agricultural, industrial and service sectors and in both public and private sectors)? 	Do boys, girls, men and women with protected characteristics have access to resources and the information necessary to be an active and productive participant in society? Do they face social isolation?	Exploring these imbalances will enable implementers to design programmes that increase people's access to resources and information.	Women and girls, men and boys, employment services, skills development providers.

<p>5. Patterns of power and decision-making (Power)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who, within the family or community, makes decisions about what training, employment or entrepreneurship activities men, women, boys and girls participate in? • What kind of power and decision-making do different family members exert within the household? Which community and religious leaders influence decisions? • Do power and decision-making dynamics within households promote gender-based violence and exploitation for girls? 	<p>How do age, religion, sexuality, ethnic group, disability, domicile (urban/rural) and socio-economic status influence these decisions?</p>	<p>Implementers can use this information to target programmes to empower girls, boys, men and women to make these key life decisions.</p>	<p>Traditional and community leaders, religious leaders, elders, parents, women and girls, men and boys.</p>
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2. Checklist: Addressing gender equality in skills initiatives

Question	Tip	Current position	Further action
DESIGN			
<p>Do you/your team understand what gender equality means and why it is important to skills and employability work? Do you understand how skills initiatives can promote gender equality and can inadvertently reinforce inequalities? Do you understand how gender equality can be promoted when working with single-sex and mixed groups of trainees, trainers and leaders?</p>	<p>Familiarise yourself with some of the explanatory material in the gender equality toolkit and consider running a session with your team on gender using activities 1.1. – 1.5.</p>		

<p>Have you conducted a gender analysis of the regional context/target group of women? Is this something you or your team can do? Does this explain the different considerations for women and men accessing and graduating from skills initiatives? Does this explain the different considerations for women and men progressing to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities? Does this highlight underlying gender assumptions and perceptions that shape expectations and roles of men and women?</p>	<p>Incorporate gender analysis from the outset. Bring in a gender adviser or ensure that whoever is conducting the analysis knows how to incorporate gender. The more specific the analysis is to your target group of women, the more useful it will be, given that the different expectations, ascribed roles, access to information and resources and autonomy available to women is highly shaped by, for example, age, urban or rural setting, marriage status, education level, ethnicity, ability/disability and local economic opportunities. Link with local women's organisations and gender experts, who often provide a valuable resource of local intelligence.</p>		
<p>Is the programme or project which you are designing responding to the gender considerations identified in the analysis? Have you identified potential consequences for your initiative and ways to address these?</p>	<p>Identify the consequences for your initiative of the identified gender issues and identify potential solutions, e.g. consequences may be that women are less likely to meet selection criteria (as trainees or leaders) or be allowed to attend; are less able to meet costs; are more likely to drop-out; are less able to fit in with project timings; are subjected to training content and environment that limits their horizons; are less likely to be offered work experience or job opportunities and are less confident in their abilities. You may find it useful to transfer findings of your gender analysis into a problem tree, as shown in the toolkit.</p> <p>It is unlikely that you will be able to address all the issues yet, so prioritise those most significant to the success of your initiative, consider how partners can address issues beyond your remit and note and monitor the impact of the problems not yet addressed.</p>		
<p>Is there evidence of gender imbalance/inequality in the context in which you want to deliver the programme? Do activities take into account any barriers that</p>	<p>Think about specific actions that you may be able to design to redress some of these imbalances or inequalities e.g. strengthen disaggregated-data collection systems; highlight the business benefits for politicians and employers to train women; have</p>		

<p>prevent women/girls and men/boys from participating? Do activities take into account any factors that may hinder the development of a positive learning environment for women/men? Could the initiative inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes and/or inequality?</p>	<p>interventions specifically targetting men or women; include targets for women/men's participation as trainees and trainers; provide scholarships and stipends for women; train leaders and training providers in how to create an inclusive learning environment; offer safe transport, accommodation and childcare; provide mobile training units; develop outreach and social marketing activities to attract women to STEM courses; revise training delivery times; include gender equality and gender stereotyping issues in course/seminar/leadership programme content; use diverse training methods; develop pathways for women to access informal apprenticeships, work experience, employment and business markets; review promotional materials to ensure they promote gender equality and challenge stereotyping; link with local women's organisations to reach women and showcase women and men's successes.</p>		
<p>Have you engaged with your target group (men/women/boys/girls) as part of the design process? Have women's organisations been consulted?</p>	<p>Design questionnaires or run focus groups to discuss the issues with your target group, to identify needs and priorities and plan appropriate interventions.</p>		
<p>Is there a risk of a backlash? Do activities need to be added to mitigate this risk? (e.g. to protect those who face a backlash or to change discriminatory attitudes). Is there a risk of reinforcing gender inequality?</p>	<p>Undertake a risk assessment to determine the potential risks to participants, and think about how you can prevent or respond to these. Examples of risks: an all-male mechanics apprenticeship course may reinforce notions that such work is unsuitable for women; inclusion of a sole woman on a male-dominated course may place her at risk and may lead to her facing hostility from within her family or community; an all-male leadership programme may reinforce the notion that men are natural leaders and limit the range of topics and leadership styles discussed; an all-female crafts course, in an already-saturated local market, may reinforce stereotypes and limit women's earning potential; an all male programme, focusing on under-achievement, that does not address underlying stereotypes that</p>		

	<p>shape men's choices and behaviours is unlikely to create sustainable change.</p> <p>Examples of responses: Undertaking work with local community leaders to demonstrate the benefits of women working in non-traditional areas; linking with community groups to demonstrate strategies to provide a safe environment for all trainees; implementing a zero tolerance to harassment policy; including soft skills that build confidence, resilience and negotiation abilities; assessing suitability of training providers; linking with employers to ensure routes for women to benefit from economic opportunities.</p>		
Will the programme go beyond equal participation, be transformative and help to challenge and change some of the cultural norms and attitudes which underpin gender inequality?	Design a Theory of Change to help identify the outcomes and impacts you want to achieve through your programme activities (see page 65 of the Gender Toolkit for inspiration!). This should link closely to the evidence you aim to gather to identify the difference your programme has made (see monitoring and evaluation section).		
PLANNING			
Does the design and planning include those who will participate in the programme? Are men and women part of the decision-making process?	Consider how you might make the process participatory. Think about doing a survey and/or creating spaces for dialogue by holding a focus group with men or women who will be impacted by the programme to ensure that it meets their needs.		
Is the language and imagery you are using gender sensitive? Does it reinforce any gender stereotypes e.g. pictures of men in manual jobs, women undertaking care roles, men in trainer/leadership roles?	Consider the language and imagery you are using to design and promote your programme. Discuss this with colleagues from Brand and Design, Digital and Communications to make sure that this is accessible, understandable, inclusive and challenging gender stereotypes.		
IMPLEMENTATION			

<p>Will the partners you choose to work with support a gender sensitive and transformative approach? How can you ensure this?</p>	<p>Undertake a partner appraisal. Talk to locally based colleagues or organisations about local recommended partners and undertake a partner appraisal. Make sure that references to gender equality are included in the tender and contracting documents and are part of the selection process.</p> <p>To counter potential resistance from partners, identify ways to demonstrate the benefits to training providers, employers and policy makers of promoting gender equality, such as increasing recruitment, addressing skills shortages, reaching the best talent, meeting government targets, increasing GDP, increasing retention and attainment of men and women, increasing the diversity of leadership and meeting legal duties.</p> <p>Share examples of women and men successfully doing diverse roles and initiatives that have achieved this.</p> <p>Offer support and training to partners on how they can promote gender equality and take steps to meet gender targets and any other requirements e.g. creating a gender-inclusive training environment, convincing employers of the benefits of recruiting women, creating a curriculum that includes relevant soft skills and confidence-building.</p>		
<p>Is the team responsible for delivering the programme or project gender balanced/aware/sensitive/transformative? Are female and male skills advisers used? Who is making the decisions?</p>	<p>Build the knowledge and understanding of your team. Offer training, team workshops, mentoring/shadowing opportunities with colleagues and local women's organisations. Familiarise yourself with examples of barriers faced by women and examples of good practice and with the British Council's EDI resources on gender to make sure that the internal processes are aligned to what the programme is trying to achieve.</p> <p>Consider using female trainers and taking positive action to ensure a diverse pool of female and male skills advisers.</p>		
<p>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</p>			

<p>Is data disaggregated by sex to identify differences between women/girls and men/boys? Is data disaggregated to identify differences at each stage of enrolment, graduation and placement of trainees?</p>	<p>Make use of the new data collection mechanism on SAP, which is now disaggregated by sex. Look at how you can incorporate questions on participants' gender into feedback tools e.g. questionnaires, surveys etc.</p>		
<p>Do we have indicators to measure the quantity and quality of (women's) participation as well as changes in attitudes and perceptions?</p> <p>To what extent does the programme benefit women compared to men?</p> <p>To what extent does the programme reduce occupational segregation?</p>	<p>Devise indicators which are closely linked to your Theory of Change to measure the kind of transformational change you wish to see. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - numbers of women and men who enrol, graduate, gain work experience and gain employment; numbers of women and men who increase their income; a comparison of the average increase in income of male and female graduates; the proportion of leaders who are women; proportion of seminar participants who are female; proportion of programme staff who accessed gender equality training and proportion of programme spending allocated to women and men. - increase in confidence and soft skills; changes in training facilities to promote inclusion such as introduction of sexual harassment policies; introduction of separate washrooms; childcare provision; changes to increase gender-inclusivity of training content; changes in attitudes, to occupational segregation; creation of materials that challenge gender-stereotyping; increase in women and men in non-traditional sectors; increase in female trainers/leaders; women's access to new trading markets; new policies/legislation that promote women's access to skills development and employment. 		
<p>How will we know whether programme is having a positive impact?</p>	<p>Monitor early results closely to determine whether the programme is impacting upon gender inequalities. If the results demonstrate little change to gender imbalances or inequalities (or even that these have been exacerbated) think about changes you can make to the programme to address this e.g. gender specific actions, targeted resourcing. Remember that some</p>		

	<p>changes, especially those linked to cultural norms, will take a long time.</p> <p>Share the lessons you have learned with others through producing individual and organisational case studies that demonstrate impact: how the programme was delivered, how challenges were overcome and lessons learned.</p>		
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3. Tips for integrating gender considerations into skills programmes

1. Promote and influence policies and strategies that promote gender equality in skills development:

- Strengthen data collection to develop gender baselines and ensure systematic disaggregation by sex of all relevant indicators across all goals and targets.
- Labour market analysis considers gender considerations.
- Identify women's contribution to GDP from paid and unpaid work.
- Government makes links between national skills development policies and gender equality policies; and includes gender targets in skills strategies.
- Include a ring-fenced budget for gender mainstreaming; consider use of stipends, grants and scholarships for women.
- Review discriminatory laws that impact on women's economic activity e.g. land ownership / inheritance.
- Government includes gender targets when giving government contracts e.g. construction projects.
- Tax relief for organisations who achieve gender targets.
- Tax benefits for women starting up businesses.
- Government communicates their commitment to gender equality and increases visibility of women e.g. include women as key speakers at conferences; include women in key skills posts.
- Government convenes seminars of policy advisers, industry and skills providers that share good practice in promoting gender equality.
- Sector skills councils include gender equality in their terms of references; take action to include women in key positions.
- Share examples of positive impacts of gender equality.

2. Demonstrate the need for, and benefits of, promoting gender equality

- Make this as specific as possible to the particular sector, locality and target audience e.g. ministers, employers, mothers, fathers, community members.
- For companies: to tackle skills gaps; increase numbers of trainees; benefit from a broader range of perspectives; get the best talent; enhance reputation.
- For ministers: to increase GDP, tackle poverty and promote social development.
- For women: to increase income and contribute towards empowerment.
- For families: to increase income and contribute towards health and education outcomes.

3. Consider sustainability – both for individual trainees and training institutions

- Ensure that the skills and support provided are sufficient and relevant to enable women to access employment or business opportunities.
- Identify how women can be enabled to access high-value markets and sectors.
- Ensure that the programme is viable long-term e.g. through employers contributing to costs; graduates repaying fees once employed.

4. Build partnerships

- Engage with women's, men's and community organisations, local gender experts and delivery partners, to develop local ownership and address barriers faced by women.
- Collaborate across sectors, for example by jointly delivering targeted skills development / society projects that develop skills and wider outcomes.
- Include requirements and measurable deliverables to promote gender equality in partner agreements.
- Provide capacity building / shared learning to support partners to achieve gender equality targets / outcomes.
- Link with ministers / influencers to effect policy reform and exert leverage where needed e.g. access to finance.

5. Build industry links

- Ensure fit with local economic opportunities.
- Explore pathways for women and share examples of female role models succeeding in similar industries.
- Build links early with potential employers and networks and promote benefits of engaging women.
- Involve employers in course design and assessment.
- Identify job placement opportunities for women.
- Listen to employers concerns and strategies to address these.

3. Consider gender equality challenges and solutions in programme design

- Undertake a gender analysis to understand the local context e.g. local policies, norms, activities, decision-making and access to resources that will shape women's and men's opportunities for economic activity.
- Identify the reasons for women's under-representation e.g. lack of access to information and advice; cultural norms; women's lack of self-belief; men's/family/community resistance; training providers' lack of belief in women's capability; training providers' lack of capacity to recruit and train women; belief in gender occupational segregation.
- Undertake a training needs analysis.
- Identify actions to address barriers and include these in programme design and implementation strategies.
- Identify gender sensitive output and outcome indicators e.g. numbers of women and men being recruited, trained, employed; number of women and men trainers and leaders; reduction in occupational segregation; change in gender attitudes and behaviours of skills providers and employers; more gender-inclusive training curricula, environments and materials; new gender-inclusive policies.

- Consider gender in risk assessments. What are the risks of not taking action to include women (e.g. increasing gender inequality)? What are the risks of taking steps to include women (e.g. women face resistance in the home; women have a double burden of 'home work' and paid work)?
- Include costs of promoting gender equality in budget planning.

4. Proactively target women

- Actively involve family members, particularly in non-traditional courses when women are highly dependent on their families for financial and moral support.
- Ensure women have information about the benefits of, and means of access to, skills training e.g. community-based events where women and families meet trainers, employers and female role models; examples of women who have gained work and greater income through skills training.
- Target recruitment e.g. through women's groups, community networks and NGOs, female role models.
- Undertake social marketing to demonstrate benefits of women's involvement in skills training.
- Identify selection criteria to ensure women selected can benefit from the programme.

5. Translate gender considerations from programme design into implementation

Address barriers:

- Undertake a training needs analysis.
- Take steps to overcome identified barriers, such as:
 - Provide separate washrooms, childcare, safe transport, accommodation or mobile training units.
 - Identify an affordable fee-payment system.
 - Assess training curricula; ensure safe and healthy facilities and conducive learning environments e.g. women's washrooms; child care; language and images used; zero tolerance to sexual harassment; ability of trainers to promote gender-inclusive learning environment.
 - Avoid training lone women to enable peer support and counter isolation.
 - Use tailored delivery methods e.g. making use of radio, IT.
 - Consider pre-vocational training for those with limited education/literacy.
- Take positive action to recruit female trainers, programme staff and advisers e.g. targeted recruitment that specifically encourages applications from women.
- Capacity-build trainers to promote gender equality e.g. through training; providing guidance materials.
- Develop mechanisms to gain feedback from female and male trainees and re-shape delivery.

Include a range of skills and measures:

- Include technical, employability and life skills support; for enterprise programmes, address access to finance, networks and markets.
- Include theoretical and practical learning.
- Use interactive methods that foster communication and negotiation, and that enable women and men to assume leadership positions.
- Include gender awareness in both mixed and single sex courses that builds understanding and behaviours that promote gender equality.

5. Institutional responsibility

- Allocate a budget for promoting gender equality e.g. for training of staff, adapting facilities, evaluation.
- Include a requirement to promote gender equality in partner briefs, and staff and consultant person specifications/responsibilities.
- Develop the capacity of staff to promote gender equality through training, coaching, and gender advice.
- Provide and test practical gender equality guidance and resources.
- Develop systems to share good practice in promoting gender equality and challenge gender stereotyping.

5. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Ensure systematic disaggregation by sex of all qualitative and quantitative data and relevant indicators across all goals and targets. Where relevant, indicators should also be disaggregated by age, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics.
- Identify and measure progress against gender-specific output indicators.
- Analyse data to identify what is working, and review practice accordingly.
- Include analysis of gender-specific outcomes and processes in programme reports.
- Track graduates progress.
- Conduct longer-term evaluation.

7. Internal organisational culture

- Review staff composition with respect to gender and identify any actions to address under-representation of female or male staff or advisers.
- Review organisational culture: how men and women relate to each other; dominant attitudes and what behaviours are rewarded.
- Review organisational policies e.g. flexible working; addressing the gender pay gap.
- Enhance ways in which leaders communicate and demonstrate commitment to gender equality.