

Gender analysis



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What is gender analysis?

Gender analysis provides the necessary data and information to integrate a gender perspective into policies, programmes and projects. As a starting point for gender mainstreaming, gender analysis identifies the differences between and among women and men in terms of their relative position in society and the distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context. In this way, conducting a gender analysis allows for the development of interventions that address gender inequalities and meet the different needs of women and men.

Definition and purpose

The European Commission defines gender analysis as ‘the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles’ [1].

The purpose of gender analysis is to identify and address gender inequalities, by [2]:

- acknowledging differences between and among women and men, based on the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power;
- ensuring that the different needs of women and men are clearly identified and addressed at all stages of the policy cycle;
- recognising that policies, programmes and projects can have different effects on women and men;
- seeking and articulating the viewpoints of women and men and making their contribution a critical part of developing policies, programmes and projects;
- promoting women's participation and engagement in community, political and economic life;
- promoting better informed, gender-responsive and effective interventions.

Gender analysis involves acknowledging the historical and social inequalities faced by women and aims to inform the design of policies, programmes and projects to address these inequalities. This includes consideration of women's particular experiences, roles and responsibilities, and their level of access to resources and decision-making.

Why is gender analysis important?

Gender analysis provides information on the different roles of women and men at different levels in policies, programmes and projects; their respective access to and control over resources, and the material and non-material benefits of society; and their gender-specific needs, priorities and responsibilities [3].

A thorough gender analysis enables policymakers to understand gender inequalities in a given situation or sector, as it not only describes the current state of contextual situations by gender, but also explores the causes and effects of gender disparities on the target group. Looking at the underlying causes of gender inequalities and discrimination can assist in setting relevant and targeted objectives and measures to eliminate gender inequalities [4]. In this way, gender analysis contributes to the improved gender responsiveness of policies and legislation as it provides the basis for ensuring that the needs of all citizens – women and men – are adequately addressed [5].

When focused on organisations and institutions, gender analysis is also important in determining how the nature of their service delivery may affect women and men, or how institutions themselves are also 'gendered', for example, in the workplace in terms of recruitment practices, the gendered divisions of labour and women's access to decision-making positions [6]. (Read more on [Gender Audit](#)).

How does gender analysis work?

As part of the broad category of socioeconomic analysis, gender analysis starts by identifying and explaining gender inequalities in a specific context. This helps to build an understanding of different patterns of participation, involvement, behaviours and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures, and the implications of these differences.

The following are three suggested steps to take when carrying out gender analysis.

1. Collecting available data.

The first step is to collect available data and information and to identify data gaps.

- Identify relevant data to provide a picture of the gender equality situation in a given context. Draw on existing qualitative and quantitative research findings as a basis for evidence-based data.
- Ensure that data is disaggregated by sex (and other intersecting forms of discrimination, such as age, ethnicity and any other factors relevant to shedding light on intersectionality).
- Identify where further data is needed and generate additional data that captures gender issues.

2. Identifying gender differences and the underlying causes of gender inequalities.

The second step is to uncover the underlying causes of gender inequalities and seek to examine and address the cause of the problem in order to fully meet the different needs of women and men.

- Reveal and examine differences and inequalities in women's and men's lives. Without this step, 'unexpected' consequences of policies, programmes and projects can arise, which may

prompt the failure of the intervention or lead to further inequalities and discrimination. Where inequalities between women and men are found, they must be analysed in order to establish both their causes and their effects.

Include and integrate relevant gender issues, gaps and inequalities into the full problem analysis. In particular:

- assess how the gender division of labour and patterns of decision-making affect the policy, programme or project;

- assess who has access to and control over resources, assets and benefits, including programme or project benefits;

- assess the barriers and constraints on women and men participating in and benefiting equally from the policy, programme or project.

Explore the representation and participation of women and men in different policy sectors and at different levels. Specifically:

- define in what way your policy aims to respond to the needs of women and men;

- describe how the policy will affect the everyday lives of women and men or specific groups of women and men, taking intersectional inequalities into account (i.e. relating it to age, bodily ability, ethnicity, migration status, income, etc.);

- define the differences between women and men in the policy area (with regard to rights, participation and representation, access to and use of resources, social norms that affect gender roles and relations and gender-specific behaviour);

- identify gender gaps among professionals (e.g. in pay and access to senior and leadership positions) in the main institutions in the sector;

- identify the role of women in management at the local and national levels in the sector;

- where relevant, consider the governance of the institution through a gender lens, by assessing whether and how selection, appraisal, promotion and evaluation practices reflect gender stereotypes that disadvantage female employees and managers (Read more on EIGE's Gender Institutional Transformation toolkit).

3. Informing policies, programmes and projects.

Gender analysis is essential to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective through the [policy cycle](#). It is a preparatory step for the [planning stage](#) and serves to inform the development policies, programmes and projects which respond to the different needs of women and men. A rigorous gender analysis will ensure that sound and credible advice is provided and the policies, programmes and projects developed on the basis of it will have greater credibility and validity among those affected by them.

To guarantee this, improving the gender expertise of those who are to be involved in the development and implementation of gender analysis can be achieved through gender equality training, which provides participants with the relevant knowledge, skills and values (Read more on EIGE's [Gender Equality Training toolkit](#)).

Gender analysis frameworks

There are a number of different frameworks for undertaking gender analysis. They represent step-by-step tools for carrying out gender analysis, which assist in raising questions, analysing information and developing strategies to increase women's and men's representation and participation in policies, projects and programmes. These frameworks have been developed to address different aspects of gender equality and are therefore useful for different policy priorities, programmes or projects.

The following are the best known gender analysis frameworks, which are often included as tools for gender mainstreaming and linked to [gender planning frameworks](#) and [gender impact assessment frameworks](#). Some frameworks, such as the Levy framework, the capacities and vulnerabilities approach and the 4R method (described below) also address the questions of [organisational change](#).

The **Harvard Analytical Framework**, also called the Gender Roles Framework, was one of the first frameworks developed to identify and understand the differences between men and women in their participation in the economy. It is used to collect information from the community and from households. The Harvard Analytical Framework describes who does each activity, who has access to and control of resources and the influence on gender roles. To do this, the framework is made up of four interrelated components:

The 'activity' profile answers the question of 'Who does what?' for all relevant productive and reproductive tasks.

The 'access' and 'control' profiles identify the resources used in the identified tasks; define by gender who has access to these resources and control over their use; and define the benefits that result from each activity and those who have access to and control over these benefits.

The final section – 'influencing factors' – identifies factors that cause the differences in the gender roles identified in the three aforementioned profiles. Although this framework acknowledges and distinguishes women's roles and work, it does not aim to challenge

existing gender inequalities [7].

The **Moser conceptual framework** for gender analysis and planning is based on the concepts of gender roles and gender needs [8]. It distinguishes between two types of gender needs: those that relate to women's daily lives but maintain existing gender relations (practical gender needs); and those that potentially transform existing gender subordination (strategic gender needs). The Moser framework includes gender role identification (in production, reproduction and community management); gender needs assessment; disaggregating control of resources and decision-making within the household; planning for balancing the triple role; distinguishing between different aims in policy interventions; and involving women and gender-aware organisations in planning. Through this framework, Moser identifies different approaches to planning interventions, taking into consideration the degree to which they aim to simply meet practical gender needs or challenge gender inequalities by meeting strategic gender needs [9]. The Harvard and Moser frameworks have been extremely important in explaining the gender division of labour, which is one of the central dynamics of social structure that gender analysis seeks to reveal, and the differences between women's and men's productive and reproductive roles.

The **Levy conceptual framework**, known as the web of institutionalisation, moves beyond the Moser framework by addressing gender mainstreaming in institutions for development planning. Levy developed a web of 13 inter-connected elements needed for the systematic institutionalisation of gender equality in policy and planning [10].

The **capacities and vulnerabilities approach** (CVA) was developed to tackle humanitarian and disaster-preparedness issues and mainly addresses questions of organisational change. The core idea behind this approach is that people have capabilities and vulnerabilities that will determine the effect that a humanitarian crisis will have on them and how they will respond to it. This framework asserts that in planning a policy, programme or project in this area, three main dimensions should also be investigated using a gender lens, namely: physical/material capacities and vulnerabilities; social/organisational capacities and vulnerabilities; and motivational/attitudinal capacities and vulnerabilities [11].

The **social relations approach** was developed by Naila Kabeer [12], and has been used by various government departments and non-governmental organisations as a planning framework. The approach is centred on the interchange between patriarchy and social relations. Unlike the Harvard framework, it does not focus on roles, resources and activities, but instead focuses on the relations between the state, market, community and family [13].

The **gender analysis matrix framework** encourages bottom-up analysis through community participation to identify how gender differences impact on four areas: labour; time; resources; and sociocultural factors. This framework provides a community-based technique for the identification and analysis of gender differences and is applied on the level of society, the household, the community, and men and women. In doing so, it assists the community in identifying and challenging their assumptions about gender roles in a constructive manner [14].

The **4R** method provides a picture of the gender patterns that exist in organisations, their impact and a plan for remedying shortcomings. The 4R method is articulated in four steps:

- Representation – surveying gender representation in an organisation that is implementing an intervention to provide a picture of the gender distribution at all levels of the decision-making process;
- Resources – examining the allocation of resources – money, time, information, among others – between women and men;
- Realia – analysing conditions to understand the reasons for the gender distribution of representation and resource allocation;
- Realisation – formulating new objectives and measures to achieve gender equality [15].

Read more about the advantages of using gender-sensitive participatory processes

A gender participatory process is a crucial part of gender analysis frameworks and gender mainstreaming methods, this applies to every instance. By involving key decision-makers along with the groups and communities who will benefit from a policy, the transformative potential of this policy is greatly enhanced. A gender participatory process allows for the voices of underrepresented women and men to be heard and to be included in decision-making processes.

Based on women's and men's knowledge of their own local realities, this process makes it possible to identify the problems, needs and expectations of those whose lives will be directly affected by the decisions and subsequent interventions. In general, policy initiatives are more likely to succeed if they have been formulated through a participatory process, encouraging participation and engaging with diverse opinions and contributions from community members. Additionally, this process increases accountability insofar as policymakers commit to taking into account different points of view and the experiences of different groups of women [16].

Read more about gender-sensitive participatory processes on [Gender Stakeholder consultations](#).

When to carry out gender analysis

Gender analysis can be applied to different 'objects' such as single projects, entire programmes, legislation and/or policy frameworks, along with specific intervention measures within these.

Gender analysis can be carried out at any time and at any stage of the policy cycle, although there are situations that present more opportune moments, such as:

- during the initial design of a policy/programme/project (see [Gender Planning](#));
- before the implementation of a policy/programme/ project;
- during the monitoring and evaluation of a policy/ programme/project to make it possible to understand whether data and information collected is meaningful in terms of gender and responds to the different needs of women and men (see more on [Gender Monitoring](#) and [Gender Evaluation](#)).

Regardless of the stage at which gender analysis is carried out, it is most useful when it is applied routinely to all aspects of policy, programme and project planning, implementation and review (rather than as an afterthought or add-on).

Key questions

Examples of key questions to be asked when conducting gender analyses are as follows:

Who is the target (both direct and indirect) of the proposed policy, programme or project?
Women, men or both? Who will benefit, who may lose? Which women? Which men?
Have women and men who are challenged by a certain issue been consulted about its solution? How have they been involved in the development of the solution?
What specific mechanisms can be proposed to encourage and enable women to participate in the policy initiative or programme?
Who does what? What do women and men do, and where and when do these activities take place?
Who has what? Who has access to and control of resources, services and decision-making?
Does the policy, programme or project potentially challenge the existing division of tasks, responsibilities and resources among men and women?
How are activity, access and control patterns shaped by the socioeconomic context, structural factors (demographic, legal and institutional) and by cultural and religious aspects?
Where do opportunities or entry points for change exist? And how can they best be used?

Further information

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Endnotes

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