

A Summary of the Desk Review: The Impact of Gender Mainstreaming and Integration on Social and Cultural Norms

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Gender mainstreaming and integration explained: Gender mainstreaming and integration are two strategies used to address gender norms, equity and equality, and empowerment as part of social and behavior change (SBC) approaches and interventions. These strategies ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into organizational activities, such as policy development; research; advocacy; legislation; resource allocation; and planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating SBC programs to affect social and cultural norms.

Why this is important: The United Nations Development Programme recognizes that promoting gender equality is necessary to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Gender is currently integrated into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); specifically, SDG 5 calls for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Development goals in all sectors will be difficult to achieve without the inclusion of women and integration of gender perspectives. As a result of the disparities between women and men, women often bear the burden of development needs and gain fewer benefits from development interventions. Women represent about half of society's human resources, yet their potential to affect change often remains unrealized due to inequality and discrimination.

Purpose of this desk review: This desk review gathers evidence on gender mainstreaming and integration approaches employed by NGOs, community-based organizations, government ministries, and other organizations seeking to incorporate gender mainstreaming and gender integration into their programming. It informs a set of lessons learned and promising practices for global development professionals on how to incorporate these elements into their programming.

What the literature shows: There were nine themes identified in the literature: building capacity for participation in governance; meaningfully engaging men and women; improving economic growth; mobilizing and engaging communities; reducing power inequalities, gender-based violence (GBV), and harmful practices; considering gender throughout the program cycle to improve outcomes; integrating gender factors into organizational practices and training; strengthening human resources for health and gender; and addressing health inequality through a gender lens. These themes encompass more than SBC, with implications on social and cultural norms; it is expected that some of the themes overlap.

What is left to do: Future research or literature reviews should look into how gender mainstreaming is conducted in diverse sectors to inform best practices, such as best practices or working in agricultural value chains. Specific criteria or standards to determine if a program or policy is gender transformative, including streamlined indicators and standards, would enable better streamlining across sectors. Programs and studies should also improve and adapt frameworks for developing gender analysis, monitoring, and evaluation tools specific to each sector. Lastly, a review of organizational policies may better inform gender mainstreaming practices for organizations that seek to integrate gender considerations into their culture and human resources.

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Summary of Findings by Theme and Highlighted Recommendations

Theme	Summary of Findings	Highlighted Recommendations
Capacity Building for Participation in Governance	As a result of systematic barriers, women are underrepresented as voters and in leadership positions globally. Women's participation in government translates to better development outcomes, but their limited capacity and unequal representation often leads to limited education and opportunities for them to run for positions in office.	The capacity of political participants, especially women, should be strengthened to encourage the integration of a social and gender perspective in governance and increase women's participation in and contribution to the legislative process, ensuring a balanced participation by men and women.
Meaningful Engagement of Men and Women	Social expectations and gender stereotyping have a direct effect on the health and well-being of men and women. Empowering women does not mean promoting women's power over men, and men must be involved as allies in SBC interventions.	SBC programs that empower women must also increase men's participation in eliminating barriers to equality. Engaging men and boys is necessary to challenge and reform gender norms; these elements are part of gender- transformative approaches that can result in sustained change.
Improving Economic Growth	Gender inequalities are costly to countries' economies and development; these inequalities undermine productivity, trade performance, and women's capacity to contribute to the global economy. Many women are discriminated against and exploited, and as a result, are underpaid, insecure, and poverty-stricken.	Promoting and shifting norms to accept workplace equality among men and women can ensure economic empowerment. Assistance programs and partnerships that facilitate women's access to business services should be promoted.
Community Mobilization and Engagement	Both men and women benefit from multi-level approaches at the personal, interpersonal, family, community, and system levels. Involving the community in gender mainstreaming and integration is highly effective in creating sustainable social and behavior change.	To achieve sustainable, normative shifts in behaviors and outcomes, communities should be mobilized to transform gender norms and behaviors. Members of the community at all levels should be considered stakeholders and co-agents of change.
Reduction in Power Inequalities, GBV, and Harmful Practices	Gender stereotyping and different expectations of what is appropriate behavior for boys and girls affects the sexual behavior of both genders. One of the major problems associated with such power and gender inequity is GBV, which is also a contributing factor to HIV epidemics.	Meaningful engagement of men in establishing gender equality requires more work; current interventions are still in their infancy. Interaction among men and women to discuss sensitive subjects, such as sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, and women's health, is key to influencing social norms regarding harmful practices.
Using Gender throughout the Program Cycle to Improve Outcomes	Gender analysis can facilitate gender mainstreaming in program design and implementation, leading to improved program outcomes as a result of integrating gender considerations.	SBC programs should conduct a gender analysis to inform program and policy development. Integrating gender throughout the program cycle ensures that a program or policy is gender transformative versus exploitative or accommodating.
Gender Integration in Organizations and Staff Training	Gender programming requires familiarity with the process of gender integration; building staff capacity and understanding of key concepts and requirements to support gender equality is a proven way to achieve high-quality project outcomes.	The first step for SBC programs is to ensure that resources are allocated for staff training in gender integration; programs need high-quality training to ensure an equal representation of women and men in the workforce.
Human Resources and Gender	Much work is required to increase gender equity in human resources. For example, although women make up a larger percent of the global health workforce, they experience disparities in recognition, pay, and promotion opportunities.	Women are still an untapped resource due to their limited mobility within organizations in various industry sectors. Documentation and dissemination of gender disparities in human resources is an important first step; legislation and policy change can then support normative shifts in current limitations, leading to meaningful and balanced involvement of women and men.
Gender and Health Inequality	Integrating gender considerations into health, including reproductive health, communicable diseases (particularly HIV), family planning, and childcare, is necessary to address gender inequality and ensure positive health outcomes for men and women. For example, assessing biological, social, and cultural differences can help in tailoring approaches and providing adequate preventive care and treatment.	Gender mainstreaming in health care should include: recognition of gender- related risk factors, collection of gender-specific data, recognition and development of a process to address socioeconomic and cultural factors causing health disparities, and provision of high-quality health care services and essential medicines for both genders.