



Grand Challenges Canada®  
Grands Défis Canada

## Innovation, Gender Equality and Sustained Results

### BACKGROUND BRIEF

Grand Challenges Canada, funded by the Government of Canada, is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact® in global health. Grand Challenges Canada believes that supporting gender equality, and the rights of women and girls, are important development objectives in and of themselves, and that by paying attention to gender equality, we can bolster sustained impact.

For Grand Challenges Canada, supporting greater gender equality means:

- Advancing women's equal participation with men as decision-makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies
- Supporting women and girls in the realization of their full human rights
- Reducing gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development.

Understanding and addressing the power dynamics between men and women in different contexts can highlight gaps and enhance cross-sectoral learning, to create innovations more responsive to the specific needs and priorities of men **and** women (and girls and boys).<sup>1</sup> Grand Challenges Canada believes such thoughtful approaches are more likely to seed positive and sustainable socio-economic change – addressing gender inequalities means securing better outcomes for all.

Targeted at teams funded by Grand Challenges Canada, this note outlines Grand Challenges Canada's commitment to gender equality and its expectations of teams to consider gender equality dimensions in their work. This brief also offers guidance on conducting a gender analysis and striving for gender equality results in the innovations supported.

### WHY IS GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA CONCERNED ABOUT ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY?

For Grand Challenges Canada, gender equality is about results: Grand Challenges Canada believes a focus on gender equality in the innovation space will support the achievement of better health for all.

First, understanding gender roles and inequalities is a part of good analysis. A clearer picture of the context we're working in supports better outcomes. Second, there are sound economic arguments for investing in women and girls, which improve growth and performance.

Finally, it is only right.

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<sup>1</sup> African Development Bank (2012). *Mainstreaming Gender Equality: A Road to Results or a Road to Nowhere?*

## 1. Good analysis

All societies and economies are characterized by inequalities and differences among and between women/men and boys/girls. Understanding how innovations are used and who will benefit involves understanding these factors which, in turn, will lead to innovations that are better able to meet the wants and needs of all end beneficiaries. It is important to understand inequalities between and among women and men to best achieve the results we're all after.

In general, issues of note include:

- In every society, there are gender stereotypes. Women face cultural barriers and discriminatory attitudes – when starting a business, when seeking employment, when learning a new skill, when speaking up or when walking down the street. These stereotypes influence the success of an innovation at its start and in taking innovations to sustained scale.
- Women and girls carry out the vast majority of unpaid work within their families. Women tend to be primarily responsible for childcare, food preparation, laundry, family healthcare, cleaning, etc. Women devote 1 to 3 hours more per day to housework than men; 2 to 10 times the amount of time per day to care (of children, elderly and the sick), and 1 to 4 hours less per day to market activities.<sup>2</sup>
- Women are under-represented in both political and economic decision-making. As of early 2015, only 22% of all national parliamentarians were women.<sup>3</sup>
- Violence (in multiple forms) is a daily reality for many women. Research indicates that 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence – a figure thought to be severely underreported.<sup>4</sup>
- In the paid workforce, women and men tend to work in different sectors that are based on stratified social norms. Even when women do similar work to men, they are generally paid less. Women in most countries earn, on average, only 60 to 75% of men's wages.<sup>5</sup>
- Women's businesses tend to be smaller than men's, as women face specific obstacles to business start-up and expansion because of: lack of access to collateral, credit and land; social stereotypes; lack of access to business networks and mentors. In essence, there are power differentials.
- Understanding of the “unconscious bias” of both women and men is increasing. Research documents how women and men tend to look harshly on women being assertive or demonstrating leadership skills. Surfacing and reversing these biases can help organizations build more diverse management teams.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> UN Women (2015). *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*.

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women (2014). *“Women in Politics: 2014”*.

<sup>4</sup> WHO (2013). *“Global and regional estimates of violence against women”*.

<sup>5</sup> UN Women (2015). *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*.

<sup>6</sup> Trang Chu (2014). *“How Unconscious Bias Holds Us Back.” The Guardian*.

Given these disparities and differences, it makes sense that this dimension should be part of how we understand each innovation's context, and what data are collected and analyzed, so as to better achieve the impact we're after.

## 2. Smart economics

There is a growing wave of evidence of the economic potential of investing in women and girls. The business case is clear.

- The World Bank reports that closing gender gaps can enhance economic productivity and improve development outcomes.<sup>7</sup> Company stocks perform better when there are women on the company's board.<sup>8</sup> Of Fortune 500 companies, those with more women board directors outperform those with the least by 53% (based on return on equity). Companies with no women on their boards on average underperformed relative to those with mixed boards.

*"Equality is not just the right thing to do. It's smart economics. How can an economy achieve full potential if it ignores, sidelines, or fails to invest in half its population?"<sup>9</sup>*

- Achieving greater equality between women and men is key to making progress on all development goals, including improved health outcomes, environmental sustainability and enhanced family welfare. Gender equality is a "prerequisite for the health and development of families and societies, and a driver of economic growth."<sup>10</sup>
- Goldman Sachs forecasts potential increases to GDP where women have equal access to employment and credit.<sup>11</sup> Women launching and expanding ventures around the world have an estimated collective credit gap of \$320 billion (the difference between the capital they are seeking and the credit to which they have access).<sup>12</sup>

## 3. Women's rights are human rights

Gender equality is about ensuring fairness in the enjoyment of opportunities, resources, etc., no matter one's gender. It is a right recognized by governments around the world. Acknowledging that we still have a way to go in achieving gender equality, this goal is set out in multiple global agreements, including:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has been signed by almost all countries. It defines discrimination against women and sets out the obligations of governments to end this discrimination.

<sup>7</sup> World Bank, 2011, *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development* (Washington).

<sup>8</sup> Heather Perlberg (2012). *Stocks Perform Better if Women are on Company Boards*. **Bloomberg Business**.

<sup>9</sup> Robert B. Zoellick (2011). *Op-Ed: Empowering Women Powers Nations*. World Bank.

<sup>10</sup> OECD-DAC (2013). *Gender Equality and Women's Rights in the Post-2015 Agenda: A Foundation for Sustainable Development*.

<sup>11</sup> Goldman Sachs (2014). *Giving Credit Where It Is Due*. Global Markets Institute.

<sup>12</sup> McKinsey Global Institute (2015). *How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth*.

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set global targets for 2030. This set of ambitious goals includes a commitment to achieve gender equality, and to empower girls and women. The SDGs highlight the need for gender equality, in and of itself, as well as a cross-cutting goal for better outcomes overall.

A concern for gender equality is also a strong Canadian value. It is part of our approach to human rights domestically and has been a central element in our international cooperation policies and initiatives.<sup>13</sup>

## **WHAT IS GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA LOOKING FOR IN PROPOSALS AND INNOVATION PLANS?**

Grand Challenges Canada recognizes the importance of integrating gender equality considerations into the projects it supports. All innovators who work with Grand Challenges Canada sign onto our [Policy on Gender Equality](#).

Innovators are required to collect and report sex-disaggregated data, and consider how and where gender issues are relevant in their innovations. Ideally, they will also identify opportunities to support gender equality outcomes, through advancing women's participation, supporting the realization of the rights of women and girls, as well as in reducing gender inequalities in the access to and control over resources and the benefits of development.

Appropriate action in these areas can be achieved through:

- Conducting a gender analysis
- Collection and reporting sex-disaggregated data
- A focus on achieving gender equality results
- Development of a gender equality strategy for the innovation
- Use of indicators that will track gender dimensions and gender equality results.

### **What is a gender analysis?**

A gender analysis is a rigorous approach that looks at how and why gender relations, inequalities, roles and expectations are relevant in any innovation. It asks questions about how these factors play out in a specific context, and how they might affect the success or impact of an innovation (as they relate to gender equality and achievement of results overall). It considers the relevance of issues like those outlined in the “good analysis” section above.

Gender analysis is part of good preparation and due diligence. It is crucial to ensure sustainable and equitable impact when an innovation is scaled up and sustained.

It is also important to understand how other differences interact with gender inequalities. All women are not the same, just like all men are not the same. Analysis should not be simplified into an all-women versus all-men approach.

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<sup>13</sup> Global Affairs Canada. [Canada's Commitment to Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women's Rights Internationally](#).

*Gender analysis refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities and the constraints they face relative to each other. Gender analysis provides information that recognizes that gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability and/or other status, is important in understanding the different patterns of involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures.<sup>14</sup>*

There are many different frameworks and tools for gender analysis. The analysis can be detailed or relatively simple. It should include consultation with and, ideally, the direct participation of the people who will be affected by the innovation.

In Grand Challenges Canada's case, the gender analysis should look at various dimensions and ask specific questions:

- *Gender analysis of the product or service:* Who are the target payers, users and/or end beneficiaries? How do gender issues influence the potential use and/or benefits to the end beneficiaries?

Example: If the innovation involves a new product, are there differences in how women and men will access this product (given income differences, bargaining power, differential access to technology or preferences)?

- *Gender analysis of the organization itself* (the role of women inside the organization): Is it a women-led or women-founded organization? What percentage of the management team are women? What is the staff profile? Is gender balance in its human resources on the organization's radar as an issue? Are there family-friendly policies in place?
- *Gender analysis of the innovation model and ecosystem:* Who are the partners and are there gender equality implications in how the innovation will be rolled out?

Example: If the innovation involves a franchise model, will the franchise holders be primarily women? Do women and men share business and financial risks? What are the implications for access to capital, training, social expectations, etc.?

The gender analysis asks: Who benefits from this investment? Which women? Which men? Are there gender biases and inequalities that will influence who can take advantage of (and profit from) the innovation?

The gender analysis can be conducted by members of the team, but it will usually involve support from someone who has experience and expertise working in this area. A gender analysis involves:

- *Data collection* – Generally including sex-disaggregating (or disaggregating men/women) existing data relating to beneficiaries, product users, potential employees, people who will receive training, franchise owners, volunteers, families benefiting, etc. It may also be

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<sup>14</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development – Canada (no date-website). [\*Gender Analysis\*](#).

important to disaggregate beyond just women/men and look at other diversity issues, including ethnic group, ability, sexual orientation or economic class.

- *Data analysis* – What are the differences and inequalities between women and men? Are there other important inequalities to understand (for example, relating to elderly men, women from an ethnic minority, young boys, teenaged girls with disabilities, etc.)? It is important not to assume that all women and all men are the same.
- *Literature review* – There is now considerable research on gender dimensions of issues, sectors and types of innovations. It is important to draw on past experiences and best practices.
- *Consultations with potential users and beneficiaries* – Do women and men have different priorities and perspectives on the innovation? It is important not just to innovate “for” women but also “with” women. It is often necessary to hold separate consultations or focus groups with women and/or girls. The analysis also asks who holds power and who is most likely to benefit from this new investment.
- *Consultations with gender equality specialists and women’s organizations* – There are thousands of people working on gender equality and women’s rights issues around the world – in universities, in research institutes, in United Nations organizations, in NGOs and as consultants. They can offer insights, contacts, information and analysis. Women’s organizations offer particular perspectives and insights.

The gender analysis aims to both understand the current situation and **identify opportunities** to “unlock women’s potential” and advance women’s empowerment, including economic empowerment.

It is important that these issues be investigated in the region(s) of the world where the innovation will be based, as gender issues vary from place to place.

### **What is a ‘gender equality result’?**

A result is a describable or measurable change that is derived from a cause-and-effect relationship. Gender equality results are measurable changes that **explicitly** demonstrate a reduction in gender inequality, or an improvement towards gender equality between women and men, boys and girls.

So, gender equality results should be part of the formal results framework throughout the project cycle. They have to be written down as part of any proposal (not just assumed). This ensures that they will be tracked and reported on as part of the core set of activities which, at Grand Challenges Canada, means such objectives should be considered when designing and implementing monitoring and evaluation plans, including as a component in the Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) and project milestones.

As well, gender equality results:

- Must focus on narrowing inequalities between women and men

- Cannot just be results that “involve” women or girls or target women or girls; there has to be a narrowing of inequalities or a strengthening of rights
- Are not just about funding women entrepreneurs.

### **What indicators are important?**

Indicators are used to track progress towards the expected results. Two different types of indicators are important:

- *Sex-disaggregation of basic indicators*: Indicators that track impact, participation, beneficiaries, etc., should all be disaggregated male/female. It is important to know if there are imbalances and/or an over-representation of men or women (or boys or girls).
- *Indicators to track gender equality results*: If the innovation has a specific gender equality result, then there should be indicators that will track the achievement of this result. If the project aims to benefit women, increase women’s income or build skills, then there should be specific indicators to assess the extent to which these objectives are actually being achieved.

### **What is a gender equality strategy?**

A gender equality strategy should be developed in the early stages of the innovation. It sets out the innovation’s overall approach to gender equality issues and its commitments in this area. Specifically, the gender equality strategy is a short document that outlines the key findings of the gender analysis and how they are relevant to the innovation. It outlines the gender equality results that the innovation will aim to achieve, and how these will be monitored and evaluated. It should also set out the steps that the innovation will take relating to gender equality issues. These could include specific investments, consultations with prospective clients (male/female focus groups, for example), additional research and analysis, new monitoring systems to sex-disaggregate data, training for staff, hiring technical support, consultations with women-led NGOs or businesses working in the area, etc.

A gender strategy is more than two or three sentences outlining a general approach or philosophy.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Sarah Kaplan & Jackie VanderBrug (2014). “Impact Investing: The Rise of Gender Capitalism.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Fall.

Anju Malhotra, Jennifer Schulte, Payal Patel & Patti Petesch (2009). *Innovation for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality*. International Centre for Research on Women. Global Affairs Canada. *Gender Analysis*.

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