



MODULE 1: Introducing Gender Equality

Grand Challenges Canada is committed to supporting gender equality, and is proud to partner with the Government of Canada in bringing its new Feminist International Assistance Policy to life. This module introduces innovators to gender equality, provides an overview of why Grand Challenges Canada considers gender, and outlines questions to consider and steps to take when developing a gender analysis and gender strategy.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Gender: While sex refers to biological traits, gender is a set of “socially constructed characteristics of women and men - such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men.”¹

Intersectionality: The idea that a person’s experiences (including threats of discrimination) can be influenced at multiple intersecting levels; gender, race, religion, or socioeconomic status, and other characteristics alone do not make up the entirety of one’s identity, and one must consider how these factors interact with one another.

Gendered Patterns: The day-to-day life, actions, and decisions we make that are shaped by our gender and social context and inform our economic behavior.

Gender Norms: The differential standards or expectations a given culture ingrains in its constituents about how genders should behave.

Gender Lens Investing: Integrates gender considerations into financial analysis to achieve better outcomes.²

PART 1: WHY GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA CONSIDERS GENDER

Grand Challenges Canada shares the Government of Canada’s commitment to gender equality as articulated in Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy. Supporting gender equality and the rights of women and girls is an important goal in and of itself, and working towards gender equality will result in better outcomes for all.

¹ Gender, equity and human rights. World Health Organization (2017).

² The State of the Field of Gender Lens Investing. Criterion Institute (2016).

At its core, Grand Challenges Canada aims to **address disparity**. As such, it is critical to understand how innovations can have different impacts on men and women, and how race, age, sex, religion, disability, caste, and ethnicity play into the success or failure of a given intervention.

Grand Challenges Canada believes that considering gender in its work will:

- 1) Increase the effectiveness of its work, and
- 2) Strengthen the achievement of lasting development results.

If we can have a better picture of where and why disparities exist, and for whom, we can better develop effective solutions that stand the test of time.

What is Gender Analysis?

The implementation of a gender strategy starts with a **gender analysis**, an analytical tool that is used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives³.

To maximize its impact, a gender analysis should consider how a range of factors such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability might affect the success or impact of an innovation in terms of both gender equality and the achievement of other health outcomes.

At its core, a gender analysis involves asking critical questions in order to gain a better understanding of the impact of an innovation on gender equality. Some questions to consider when developing a gender analysis include, but are not limited to:

- How do gender inequalities and differences influence who participates or has access to the innovation?
- How do gender roles and inequalities influence who benefits and to what extent from the innovation?
- How do other identities and experiences intersect with gender disparities in the target population?
- Are there opportunities through the innovation to strengthen women's empowerment and/or the rights of women and girls?
- Are there opportunities to involve men and boys with the innovation in ways that lead to reduced gender disparity?
- What assumptions are we making about the status of women, and their political, economic and social situations?

These questions are complex, and must be considered in a systematic way. A gender analysis can be conducted with a focus on various aspects of an innovation:

³ Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+). Status of Women Canada (2017).

- For the product or service itself,
- For the distribution channel of the product or service,
- For the company or organization delivering the innovation, and
- For the social, economic and political ecosystem or market in which the innovation will be scaled.

Each of these analyses would involve a different set of questions. Where possible, innovators should try to consider all three aspects of their innovation.

As a way to capture the outcomes of this gender analysis, Grand Challenges Canada has developed a gender equality coding system identifying and evaluating an innovation's commitment to gender equality outcomes. The coding system (described in more detail in **Module 3**) considers how, and to what extent, gender informs the development and implementation of an innovation, the approach to take an innovation to scale, and the achievement of gender equality outcomes.

Grand Challenges Canada does not screen out innovations based solely on their gender equality codes. Rather, during its due diligence process, Grand Challenges Canada accounts for how well an organization has developed its innovation and its plans for scale in light of gender patterns and structural inequities, and uses this information to support the innovator throughout the scaling process so that a more intentional focus is placed on achieving gender equality outcomes and, ultimately, enhanced social outcomes more broadly.

PART 2: CONDUCTING A GENDER ANALYSIS

In every society, women can face cultural barriers and discriminatory attitudes – for example, when starting a business, when seeking employment, when learning a new skill, when speaking up, or when walking down the street. These stereotypes influence business start-ups, innovation processes and taking innovations to sustained scale.

Men are also affected by gender stereotypes. This can be seen in the different roles men and women tend to play in family and workplace settings.

A gender analysis for a product or innovation is intended to help innovators better understand who will use their innovation, who will benefit from their innovation, and what barriers will face clients in using and benefitting from their innovation. When conducting a gender analysis, innovators should consult both men and women, and boys and girls, to ensure that innovations are reaching clients equally and are helping to enable and support gender equality.

Some of the kinds of questions that can be asked as part of a gender analysis of an innovation are summarized below.

The Product or Service

How an innovation is designed and used can have a significant gender impact. In thinking about an innovation, consider:

- Who will use it?
- Who will benefit from the innovation, and how will they benefit? (For example: time-saving, health, status, or convenience)
- What are the gender barriers to using and benefiting from this innovation? (For example: will the innovation be affected by unequal decision-making ability within households, by violence against women, by gender stereotypes, or by the unequal division of care responsibilities inside the family)

An Innovation's Path to Scale

Gender can also have significant impacts on a product or service's path to scale and on its ultimate impact at scale. In thinking about the path to scale, consider:

- Are there additional opportunities that emerge for men or women, or girls or boys, which cannot be pursued given the current path to scale?
- Is the company or organization positioned to see these opportunities and take advantage of them?
- Have women and girls been consulted in the process of designing, producing and implementing the products or services available to them?
- As the company or organization seeks efficiencies at scale, how might these efficiencies have a different impact on men and women, or boys and girls?
- Is there a gendered dimension to growth that might affect the impact or the quality of the innovation at scale?
- Does the company or organization have the internal diversity required to attract the talent needed to scale?
- How does diversity, or lack thereof, affect the social impact of the innovation, particularly from the perspective of a gender lens investor?
- If the company or organization is seeking to scale through a base of the pyramid distribution model, such as a social franchise, have the constraints on women's ownership, control over income or participation in organizational governance structures been addressed?

Structure and Staffing

Gender can have a significant impact on how a company or organization is structured and staffed. For example, women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 percent of what men earn. This is despite the fact that when more women are working and earning on par with men, economies grow.

It has been estimated that women could increase their income globally by up to 76 percent if the employment participation gap and the wage gap between women and men were closed. This is calculated to have a global value of US\$17 trillion.

Women's businesses tend to be smaller than men's businesses, as women face specific obstacles to business start-up and expansion. Women often lack access to critical assets such as collateral, credit and land, as well as business networks and mentors. In thinking about the structure of a company or organization, consider:

- What is the gender balance of staff and employees at all levels in the company or organization?
- What kinds of roles are women taking on in the company or organization?
- If these roles differ substantially from the roles that men play within the organization, why?
- Who is responsible for making decisions?
- Does the company or organization have human resources policies that support women's participation and a work/life balance for all?

Ecosystem and Market

In many markets, gender has an impact on a client's ability to pay and in how governments allocate resources. Because of this, a gender analysis should include an evaluation of both existing and potential markets.

When scaling, this involves asking whether the scaling plan is realistic within the ecosystem or market, and recognizing that barriers like social norms, biases within funding systems, and policies and regulations that can impact the success of an innovation.

For example, consider that women are under-represented in both political and economic decision-making. As of early 2015, only 22 percent of all national parliamentarians around the world were women. As a result, issues and concerns of women may not be adequately represented, affecting whether a policy climate may be suitable for scaling.

In thinking about the ecosystem or market that an innovation is addressing, consider:

- Are there gender biases or patterns in a person's ability to pay, or in how governments allocate resources?
- How does the innovation support or challenge gendered norms of behaviour?
- Does scaling the innovation require changes to existing behavior?

PART 3: DEVELOPING A GENDER STRATEGY

An organization's gender equality strategy outlines the gender equality outcomes that the organization or innovation aims to achieve, and how these will be implemented, monitored and evaluated. It should set out the concrete steps that will be taken to ensure that gender equality issues are clearly articulated and addressed. These steps could include:

- Consultations with separate male and female clients in different development phases of the product or service, from design to distribution,

- New or improved monitoring systems (including the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data),
- Gender-sensitivity training for staff,
- Family-friendly workplace policies,
- Hiring technical support,
- Consultations with women-led NGOs or businesses working in the area,
- Equitable staff and board representation.

A gender strategy could be a stand-alone document, or it could be incorporated directly into a business plan, or a monitoring and evaluation plan. To be effective, it needs to connect to and reinforce the goals and logic of the organization, and will most likely require additional time and financial resources.

Grand Challenges Canada recognizes that many innovators and their companies or organizations do not yet have a formal gender strategy. Grand Challenges Canada seeks to encourage innovators to engage with the gender issues associated with their innovations, and to support innovators as they undertake a gender analysis.

There is no single recipe for developing a gender strategy. Each organization has to conduct a gender analysis to establish what makes sense, given their mandate, resources, structure and areas of work. There is, however, a growing consensus that an organizational approach to gender equality issues should address and include the following elements:

- A policy and vision document,
- Organizational capacity and accountability,
- Monitoring and reporting, and
- A strong commitment to gender parity.

Gender Policy/Vision

An organization should think through why they are concerned with gender equality issues, how the organization interprets and defines these issues, and what results the organization is hoping to achieve.

There could be results relating to the structure of the organization ("we will put in place measures to ensure that all activities meet minimum standards relating to gender equality", "all indicators will be sex-disaggregated") and results relating to programming ("boys and girls will have equal access and benefit from the funded intervention", "there will be an explicit focus on increasing women's access to and control over specific resources").

The policy statement does not have to be a long document, but it should be clear and concrete, and avoid taking too general of an approach. The statement should avoid jargon where possible, and explain the key terms and focus the organization is taking with the strategy.

Questions to consider in evaluating a policy document/statement include:



- Does the policy relate to the company or organization's field or sector of work?
- Is the policy concrete? (Many policies are full of vague platitudes rationalizing how gender equality is important or 'part of everything we do', which lacks substance and utility.)
- What specifically is the organization trying to achieve in considering gender?
- Does the policy cover all the issues? (The statement should not just be restricted to gender balance or counting the number of women affected, but should include an indication of how the company or organization plans to understand how its actions affect/are affected by gender inequalities/relations and the gender equality results they hope to work towards.)
- Is the policy built on current good practices, while being mindful of global norms and standards?
- Does it feature an empowering 'rights-based' approach (rather than a more paternalistic, welfare approach to women and girls)?
- Does it maximize women's roles as actors and decision-makers (rather than just consumers or victims)?

Often, gender equality policies are developed, but then there is no strategy, money or time to implement them. An organization or company needs a plan, capacity and dedicated resources to implement its gender strategy. In particular, institutional capacity is needed to understand gender equality issues and incorporate them into programming and anticipated results/outcomes.

Questions to consider when evaluating organizational capacity:

- Have resources been allocated to support the implementation of the policy?
- Is there a dedicated budget for this item? (This could include training for staff, consultations with women's organizations, and consultations with subject matter experts.)
- Will there be an in-house specialist responsible for gender analysis?
- Does everyone on staff have at least a basic understanding of the key concepts and what the organization is trying to achieve?

Ideally, someone in senior management should be responsible for ensuring that gender equality work gets done.

Questions to consider when evaluating organizational accountability include:

- Is there a champion in the management team who is responsible for ensuring that the gender equality strategy is implemented?
- Are there clearly articulated and measurable goals so that people will know when the desired results have been achieved?
- Does leadership regularly communicate that gender equality is important to the organization? How?
- Do performance evaluations and contracts incorporate metrics for the achievement of gender equality-related outcomes?

- Who are the champions, whether they are funders, board members, or organizational leaders that will challenge the organization on its strategy and accomplishment?

Reporting (both internal and external) is an important part of a company or organizations accountability structure. Ideally, reporting on gender should focus on outcomes (not just activities) and be part of the regular, main reporting that the organization/firm carries out (to Grand Challenges Canada, to clients, to other investors, etc.).

When evaluating reporting, consider:

- Is there regular, public reporting on progress of the implementation of the gender equality strategy or statement?
- If the company or organization is large, is there internal reporting from different divisions to senior management on the progress of policy implementation?
- Are there appropriate indicators to track the goals set out in the policy?
- Are all indicators disaggregated by sex (and other factors as appropriate, such as age and ethnicity)?
- Is this reporting results-based? Are there targets?
- How are indicators within the gender strategy tied to indicators of the organization's overall success and social impact?

Finally, it is important to think about staffing balance at all levels. Here, one could also look for practices that support greater gender balance (such as flexible work hours, supportive family leave policies, and sexual harassment policies).

Questions to consider when evaluating gender balance/parity inside an organization include:

- What is the gender breakdown at all levels of the organization, but especially in management roles?
- Are these statistics regularly tracked and reported?
- If women or men are under-represented, is there a strategy/plan to improve gender balance?
- Does the organization have appropriate human resources policies that support practices such as work-life balance, parental/family leave, flexible work arrangements?
- Is there a sexual harassment policy in place with clear reporting guidelines and procedures?