



GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

A PRIMER FOR FRESH APPROACHES
AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This primer was produced by Lucero Quiroga (Senior Gender Equality Consultant) in collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Gender Equality Team- Sarah Hendriks (Director, Gender Equality) and Jennifer McCleary-Sills (Senior Program Officer, Gender Equality). Sarah Henry (Executive Director, Global Center for Gender Equality at Stanford University) provided additional technical guidance. Background research was conducted, and an initial draft was prepared by the Iris Group's Mary Beth Hastings, with technical input from Hannah Taukobong and Mary Kincaid (Iris Group).



Sanitation Champions seated (Left to Right) Mr. Rajesh Thapa and Ms. Roshni Limboo as the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS), Government of India, launched a short film series on the Swachh Bharat people's movement titled, 'An Open Mind', in honour of sanitation champions across the country who are driving positive behaviour change in their communities by helping eliminate open defecation and adopt safe sanitation practices.
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I. A BRIEF HISTORY

Gender mainstreaming is the process of integrating a gender lens into all aspects of an organization's strategies and initiatives, and into its culture, systems and operations.

It is a strategy for making the needs and interests of all genders an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any planned action or procedure, so that everyone has the opportunity to benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender mainstreaming requires building both capacity and accountability across an organization. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality for all.

This primer outlines key concepts, the motivations for and lessons learned from gender mainstreaming efforts, and an overview of how the Gender Equality team will partner with Program Strategy Teams (PSTs) and operational teams to transform the foundation into a gender-intentional institution.

It has been over 20 years since international organizations, governments, donors and UN agencies began to “mainstream” gender by adopting gender policies, hiring specialized staff, and designing programs with the intention of addressing gender inequality. Mandated by the United Nations [1995 Beijing Platform for Action](#), this strategy was a departure from previous approaches to how gender was addressed by development institutions.

Prior to gender mainstreaming, the focus was solely on integrating women, whose economic contributions were not widely recognized, into development processes. This strategy had the dual aim of increasing their access to resources and benefits and increasing their contributions to economic growth. This approach is often referred to as “women in development” or WID. It paid little attention to the underlying inequalities that primarily disadvantaged women, including unpaid work, time poverty, and other barriers to agency and empowerment. Interventions developed under this approach were often on the margins of mainstream development initiatives, limited in scope, and under-resourced.¹ Broader system failures and constraints that inhibit women's successful inclusion into markets and sector-specific systems, such as agricultural or sanitation value chains, were not considered. A typical example of a WID project is a small-scale income generation project that teaches women how to raise and sell pigs or chickens with no consideration to how gender dynamics might be affected by increased income.

In contrast, gender mainstreaming brought a greater focus on how the social relations of gender, and the underlying power dynamics, differentially affect men and women's participation in and benefit from development. This framing is referred to as "gender and development" or GAD. As a result, mainstreaming into programs increasingly took a dual-track approach: applying a gender lens across program sectors, plus targeted work to advance women and girls' empowerment.² As the field evolved further, the strategy of engaging men and boys became better defined, backed by evidence on the influence of constructive male engagement to advance gender equality. An example of a GAD project is a family planning program that targets the improvement of the quality of women-friendly services while at the same time addressing the barriers women face to accessing care, including objections and limitations imposed by male partners.

Gender mainstreaming called for a fundamental shift in how institutions prioritize and invest their resources, so that a gender perspective could be integrated across all aspects of their work- from programs to internal policies and structures. Central to this shift has been a rejection of isolated interventions in favor of organization-wide change processes and of integration in all sectoral interventions.

Simultaneously mainstreaming gender into programs (commonly referred to as "gender integration") and transforming internal processes and culture to better reflect institutional commitment to gender equality is a complex undertaking. This complexity contributed to setbacks for early adopter institutions. For example, an organization would build a gender policy, develop gender tools, or even create a gender department—but when decisions were made about programs and budgets, gender equality priorities remained absent or sidelined. As a result, mainstreaming processes often failed to transform internal culture and power dynamics and were challenged to go beyond ticking boxes and counting the numbers of women reached by a program.³

These early challenges were instrumental in shaping the field's understanding about what it takes to effectively mainstream gender. Organizations began to accept the importance of examining internal culture and fostering gender-intentional policies and practices to amplify the impact of integrating a gender lens into programmatic work. Applying these lessons has supported international organizations' progress on gender equality measures within their institutions and in their programs, including: increased gender awareness among staff, and program beneficiaries demonstrating more shared decision-making between men and women.⁴

Such experiences show that, at its best, gender mainstreaming can be creative and catalytic, making space for critical reflection, amplifying an organization's impact and generating a shared sense of purpose and mission.

II. WHY DOES IT MAKE SENSE FOR THE FOUNDATION TO MAINSTREAM GENDER?

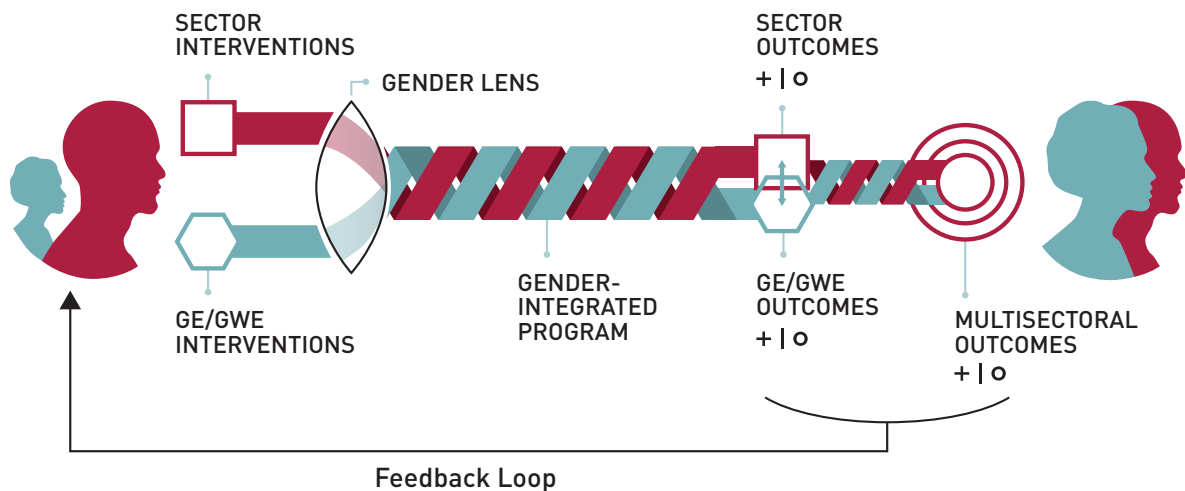
“Put simply, we cannot achieve our goals unless we systematically address gender inequalities and meet the specific needs of women and girls in the countries where we work.”

Melinda Gates⁵

As Melinda articulated in a 2014 commentary in *Science*, systematically integrating a gender lens into our work is fundamental to achieving the foundation’s audacious development goals. It’s become increasingly clear that we can’t achieve our goals if half- or more- of the world’s population continues to be left behind, and their potential and talent continue to go untapped.

- **All lives have equal value.** The foundation’s core belief that all lives have equal value drives our commitment to addressing inequality. But after nearly two decades working to improve the lives of the world’s poorest men, women and children, an undeniable truth emerged: at the core of every problem that our Program Strategy Teams (PST) aim to solve, from poverty to disease, are the undervalued but powerful lives of women and girls. Applying a gender lens to our investments ensures that their lives, unique challenges, and enormous contributions are not invisible, and that our work tangibly reflects the belief that all lives have equal value.
- **It’s simply development done right.** Gender mainstreaming involves asking the same questions that we should delve into as development professionals, but with an eye on gender-based differences: Who is most affected by the problem we’re targeting? Who will likely benefit from this investment? Who may be left out? Once we apply a gender lens to these questions, we will also be able to answer: What is the gendered context in which the problem exists? How might the investment impact women and men differently? What are the relevant gender gaps affecting this problem? What can our investments do to address these gender gaps? For example, women may have unequal access to a variety of productive inputs, and they can also have unequal returns on those inputs.⁶ The World Bank estimates that if women farmers had the same access to productive resources as men—including capital, technology, and training—total agricultural output would rise, and the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million.⁷ By systematically using gender analysis, we can understand gaps among intended beneficiaries, apply this knowledge to our solutions, and accelerate our results.
- **It is a win-win scenario.** PST investments can address gender inequality as a way of improving PST outcomes. At the same time, they can be leveraged to improve gender equality outcomes. These goals do not need to be in competition with one another and can, in fact, lead to improved and mutually reinforcing outcomes in both dimensions, as illustrated in the figure over the page. However, gender integration must be intentional in order for this synergistic effect to occur. There is a large and growing body of evidence indicating that increasing the share of household income in women’s hands can boost human capital investment in the household.⁸ And, we still have a lot to learn to fully untap this potential. Intentionally integrating gender equality goals in PST outcomes can contribute to these positive changes for women and girls globally. At the same time, this work provides new insights needed to better understand the drivers of gender equality and its links to sector specific outcomes.

Figure 1. Creating Synergy between sector and gender equality interventions



GE/GWE: Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's Empowerment

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- **Do no harm.** Without an analysis of how policies, practices and programs affect people differently based on gender, well-intentioned investments can end up causing serious problems for the intended beneficiaries, especially women, girls, and other marginalized populations. For example, studies across diverse geographies have documented that women are vulnerable to gender based violence (GBV) while urinating or defecating in the open, walking to public toilets, and using sanitation facilities.⁹ Evidence also shows that women's and girls' sanitation decisions and practices are often determined by perceptions of safety and fear of GBV.¹⁰ By systematically asking the right questions, project designers can understand the gendered context that underlies a problem, such as access to safe sanitation, and avoid inadvertently reinforcing gender inequality or increasing harmful practices, for example by putting in place safety and privacy measures in community toilets. We can help partners recognize risks and plan for and mitigate gender-related negative consequences.
- **Momentum requires sustained commitment.** Global consensus about the central role of gender equality in economic and social development compelled the leaders of 193 nations to pledge to end gender inequality in all its forms, and to weave this commitment as an underlying engine for progress across the Sustainable Development Goals.¹¹ Global leaders understand the urgency of addressing gender gaps, and are starting to put real money behind these commitments:¹² funding for women's economic empowerment by OECD – Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members more than doubled between 2007 and 2013.¹³ However, while aid budgets have increased, they are being increasingly stretched to cover a wider set of needs, especially short-term crises. In this context, current investment in gender equality outcomes is insufficient. For example, although in 2016-17 \$44.8 billion (38% of all DAC members' bilateral allocable aid) coded gender equality and women's empowerment as a significant or principal objective, just 4% of this subset of investments targeted gender equality as the principal objective of the funding.¹⁴ By embracing gender mainstreaming, PSTs can put the full force of our considerable resources and expertise behind this global effort.

The GE Team's Gender Integration and Innovation Initiative has developed an approach to mainstreaming gender in PSTs that recognizes the benefits for institutions, program participants and global development outcomes.

III. OUR APPROACH TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PSTS

Since 2016, gender mainstreaming in PSTs has focused on gender integration, i.e. the adoption of a gender lens across bodies of work to accelerate progress toward sectoral goals. The foundation's approach builds upon past lessons to allow for a tailored approach to integrating gender across teams. In partnership with the GE team, each PST co-designs a gender integration journey that responds to the specific needs and objectives of the PST. Each journey includes opportunities for capacity building, as well as the development of metrics, a learning agenda, and a shared definition of what success will look like for that PST. This process also produces a series of tools, including case studies, evidence reviews, a gender integration guide, and a gender equality lexicon. These partnerships are driving innovation and learning on the intersection between gender equality and sectoral outcomes, pushing new thinking, and testing and scaling new approaches.

Building on and learning from the success of pilot gender integration journeys (or “Deep Dives”) with the WSH, FSP and AgDev teams, the GE team has refined its approach and has a streamlined model that:

- **Is supported by consistent, vocal leadership**

We have learned that, no matter how dedicated program staff are to integrating gender into their work, the role of leadership is key to advancing results. A comprehensive study on gender mainstreaming across 29 OECD donor institutions, identified the key ingredient in increasing commitment to gender equality to be supportive senior leadership. This study concluded that gender equality champions are most effective when they are at the highest levels, supported by gender equality specialists in senior roles.¹⁵

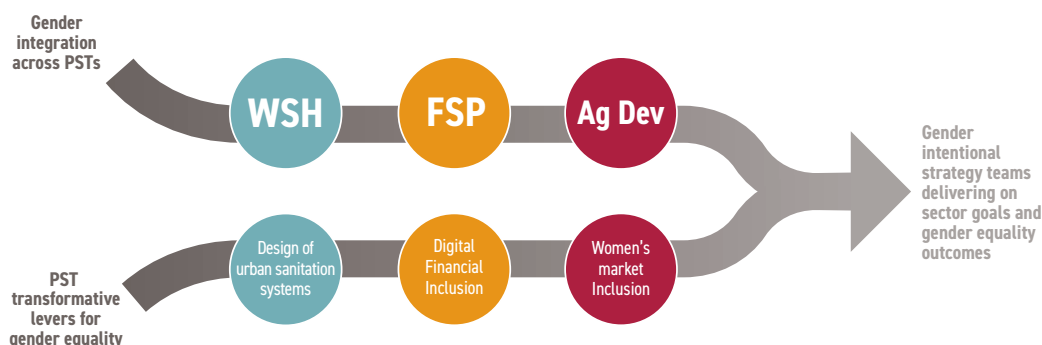
What we are doing & learning: While the foundation's work on gender equality has advanced steadily because of Melinda's visibility and leadership in this space, continued progress has been possible through the commitment from executives and leaders across the foundation. In June 2018, the GGO Leadership Team set four bold goals for the division, one of which is to demonstrate GGO as a model for effective gender mainstreaming for the foundation and the field. This goal will be a north star for the GE team and the division as a whole in the coming years.

- **Supports teams to use a dual-track approach**

Advancing gender equality and bringing about change in women and girls' lives requires a 'dual-track' approach. Such an approach builds on the complementarity between integrating gender in sectoral investments and targeting specific gender gaps. This means adopting both gender mainstreaming tracks, for example by building staff capacity to conduct gender analysis, as well as investing in targeted interventions to close specific gender gaps and/or to promote women's empowerment.¹⁶ According to UN Women, institutions that use multiple approaches can be more strategic in their investments, as this is the best way to achieve sustainable society-wide change.¹⁷

This figure below illustrates examples of our dual-track approach.

Examples of our Dual Track Approach of Gender Integration at BMGF



What we are doing & learning: Getting the proportionality 'right' is not easy, and each team will need to determine what the appropriate balance is between targeted investments and a portfolio-wide integration effort to maximize their sector and gender-focused goals. PSTs are already grappling with these questions, and this will become even more critical as teams begin to change the way they approach their investments. For example, the WSH team has moved away from thinking about investments in menstrual hygiene management (a good example of targeted work) as the only work that needs to integrate a gender lens, to identifying ways in which gender matters across the sanitation value chain. This has prompted new considerations, such as by considering how an exclusive focus on in-home toilets might inadvertently reinforce the idea that women should stay in the home.

- **Establishes clear goals and measurement systems to track results**

Gender mainstreaming efforts have often focused only on measuring changes in systems, investments, and tools and not on the field-level impacts of such change. Consequently, there are critical information gaps on how mainstreaming efforts changes the lives of project participants, and whether gender gaps are closing as a result of gender integration. Individuals and teams need clarity on how integrating gender into their work will contribute to their team's goals and to the organization's overarching mission. For example, when the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) updated its institutional strategy in 2015, it adopted gender equality and diversity as one of the three priority cross-cutting areas, ensuring that indicators on gender-related results would be included in high-level development effectiveness and corporate reporting to the Board and the public.¹⁸ Conversely, lack of clarity on the shared benefits of gender mainstreaming can result in teams giving only lip service to gender equality, with no substance behind it.

What we are doing & learning: The foundation's Gender Equality strategy sets the organizational vision for investing in gender equality and women and girls' empowerment. It provides clarity on the interconnectedness of integrating gender across specific teams' portfolios with targeted investments on women and girls' economic empowerment. Some of our PSTs have already committed to developing gender-intentional strategies that link the achievement of targeted sectoral goals to the successful closing of identified gender gaps and/or the empowerment of women and girls. Portfolio and investment-level results frameworks will capture progress on gender equality outcomes. The GE team is developing a Gender Integration Scorecard that will track overall progress toward organizational change on gender integration, including leadership visibility and engagement on this issue and structural changes within and across teams.

Our ambition is to support results-based measurement systems that track external changes on the ground, alongside internal changes across teams. Some teams, such as FSP, already have a specific goal and clear metrics focused on closing the gender gap in access and use of digital financial services. Likewise, Ag Dev is building out a dashboard of gender metrics that will track change at the project, country and portfolio levels. Increasingly, teams are aiming to document the added impact of gender intentional and gender transformative investments, such as by evaluating changes in women's decision-making power or ownership and use of digital accounts. The Gender Integration Scorecard will also be used in part to assess whether teams are applying a gender lens in their investments and to what extent.

- **Provides clear guidance on how to identify and address key gender gaps**

Too often, integration efforts have not been successful, and gender equality results have been fragmented.¹⁹ Core to this problem has been the lack of focus on which specific gender gaps are instrumental in blocking achievement of outcomes. Without this focus, institutions may fail to address key gender gaps. For example, a recent assessment of IDB's gender policy showed some progress in advancing targets for gender mainstreaming, but more than half of IDB's projects did not have a clear methodology for identifying gender gaps or a systematic approach to bridge those gaps.²⁰ This illustrates that even a policy that provides clear direction and metrics needs to be complemented by tools and guidance for how to identify and address key gaps.

What we are doing & learning: Through a deep research-driven process, PSTs are learning how to identify specific gender gaps, develop related metrics, and anticipate gender-related barriers and facilitators of intended outcomes. For example, FSP has identified women's low level of account ownership as a significant barrier to achieving PST goals around digital financial inclusion. As a result, the team has developed a learning agenda, commissioned an evidence review, and has committed one of three portfolio-wide goals on closing this gender gap. FSP is also a critical partner in the new Women's Economic Empowerment strategy launched by the GE Team in March 2018, and has made ambitious targets of reaching 63 million women with digital financial services in the next four years. We will aim to cross-pollinate results and align opportunities across PST sectors where possible.

- **Keeps an eye on women and girls' empowerment**

In the countries where we work, gender inequality disproportionately affects women and girls. However, ensuring that they benefit equally from development will not by itself improve their standing in society. We have learned that many programs that aim to benefit women and girls do not ultimately empower them, and may, in fact, reinforce their lack of power. A focus on empowerment requires a shift away from seeing women and girls as beneficiaries to viewing them as active agents of change. For example, the USAID and CARE SHOUHARDO project in Bangladesh has been singled out for its promising practices in women's economic empowerment.

The project included women's empowerment as a high-level objective, instead of an afterthought or add-on. It had explicit interventions and metrics to capture compelling results on women's decision-making, freedom of movement, and freedom from patriarchal beliefs, as well as women's cash income, stunting, and participation in collectives. Evaluations showed that of all of the different interventions implemented, the women's empowerment interventions had significantly more reduced levels of stunting than interventions with fewer empowerment interventions.²¹

What we are doing & learning: We have developed a conceptual model of women and girls' empowerment that draws on decades of thought, program work, evidence, and learning by academics, activists, implementers, and women and girls in the communities in which we work. The model is complemented by a guidance note on measuring empowerment. PSTs on the integration journey have already learned that effectively working to strengthen women and girls' empowerment is an important component of the distinction between gender intentional and gender transformative investments.

- **Builds an internal community of practice that supports ongoing learning**

Gender integration fails when no one feels that it is their responsibility or that they have the skills, knowledge and confidence to apply gender analysis and other gender programming tools to their work. Gender training, combined with other complementary capacity building methods has been an effective strategy to build confidence and ownership across teams.²² Organizations have also benefited from creating a network of staff champions embedded in every team. For example, the UN University has identified the need for “change agents” who rally support, hold colleagues accountable and provide insight and ideas.²³ Similarly, UN Women advocates for gender focal points with sectoral expertise to support non-gender specialists in integrating gender in interventions.²⁴

What we are doing & learning: PST gender integration journeys are based on a tailored action-learning approach that meets PSTs where they are at, so that teams can build their skills to design and assess gender-intentional and transformative programs. We have developed a phased capacity building program and accompanying suite of practical tools for application. We are also working with PST to build core teams of gender champions, and to develop other capacity building methods including, coaching sessions, expert convenings and speaker series.

- **Responds to and reflects organizational culture**

We have learned that there is no one-size-fits-all gender mainstreaming approach. It must be an intentional process, and must address the organization’s culture, including underlying norms, decision-making processes and potential exclusionary practices. Team members’ own values and attitudes are also relevant to gender mainstreaming as these can affect all aspects of institutional change processes and program design and implementation. For example, the ICRW and CARE ISOFI project worked to address the attitudes and values held by staff as a barrier to effective gender mainstreaming. They found that using change theory to create a nonjudgmental space for dialogue on gender and sexuality had a positive impact both on project content and organizational culture.²⁵

What we are doing & learning: The starting point of our capacity building sessions emphasizes the importance of our own experiences and often unconscious bias in providing a lens through which we view our investments as well as our roles and contributions to the foundation. While the work of the GE team focuses on integrating a gender lens to our investments, we recognize the critical importance of ensuring that our foundation lives out our collective values. Thus, we are also working closely with the People, Organization & Potential (POP) team to ensure consistency and coherence between our work promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, and to share tools and offer engagement opportunities to staff.

- **Responds to local partners**

Gender mainstreaming is more effective and sustainable when it includes close partnerships with local organizations that understand their environment and can continue to drive progress forward in the future. Many of the foundation’s partners have deep experience integrating gender across their programs that predates our own commitment to gender equality. Local groups that are committed to gender equality can help identify optimal entry points, potential pitfalls, and the needs and perspectives of women and girls and their aspirations for change. Partners who lack a rigorous approach to gender equality can be encouraged to build a sustainable commitment to gender equality through capacity building and targeted investments. For example, in their discussions with gender experts, Gender at Work has found that a close connection with local partners enables large development institutions to more accurately see what is and is not working to advance gender equality. By listening to the experience of local partners, donors can facilitate transformative processes “which allow individuals and groups to have more freedom and variety in the way they behave.”²⁶

What we are doing & learning: Together with PSTs, we are refining tools that Program Officers can use in discussions with partners at the investment design phase. These job aids that include the foundation's Gender Integration Suite are intended to support POs in asking fundamental questions of their partners about the design of the intended investment to ensure that relevant gender gaps and inequalities are identified and informed choices can be made about whether and how to prioritize addressing these. The GE team is also engaging with key partners in concert with PST colleagues by providing technical guidance on design choices, and identifying skilled gender experts to act as reviewers and investment consultants. In September 2017, the GE team worked with the WSH team to offer a daylong gender integration training to partners in India. The demand created from these points of engagement confirms that our partners are eager to learn about and commit to addressing gender inequalities in their work.

- **Incorporates incentives and accountability**

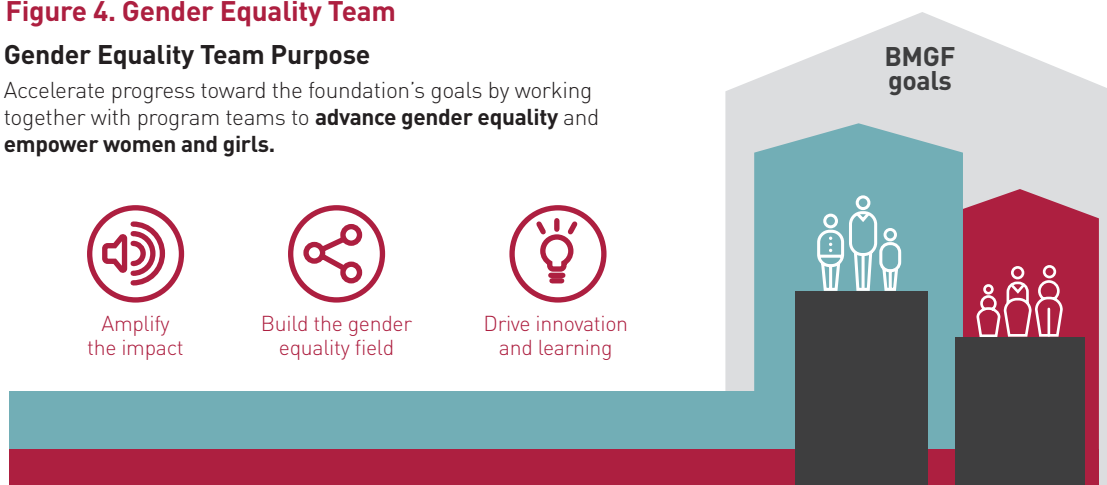
An organization-wide approach to gender works best when accountability frameworks balance incentives – such as recognition for creative and effective gender integration strategies or special funding streams for innovative work – and accountability measures – like including performance on gender in staff appraisal. For example, the African Development Bank found that incorporating gender equality in performance reviews, terms of reference, and job descriptions has greatly contributed to gender mainstreaming by sending “a clear signal about what is expected of staff,” and communicating that management will be judged on their commitment to gender equality as well. An approach that seeks to bring about change across an organization also benefits from building responsibility for success across different areas, not only a gender equality team. For example, gender mainstreaming at the Inter-American Development Bank is embedded in the core functions of different parts of the Bank. From the Executive Vice President (EVP) on down, each Vice Presidency, Department and Division sets annual targets for gender mainstreaming and measures progress. This creates incentives for each area of the Bank to take actions for gender mainstreaming. Progress towards meeting the targets is reviewed by the Bank's powerful Office of Strategic Planning and Development Effectiveness (SPD) as part of the process of country strategy and project approval, business and budget planning and reporting, which ensures that mainstreaming is serious and measurable. In addition, the Bank's Safeguards Unit is tasked with ensuring that projects assess and avoid potential harms, and an independent Inspection Panel conducts investigations of any projects against which claims of harms have been made.

What we are doing & learning: While the metrics and reporting measures described above bring a clear focus on accountability for delivering on the promises of gender mainstreaming across the foundation, we know that sustained success will be out of reach without incentives for staff. In 2015, the Co-Chairs released a one-time \$10 million Internal Gender Challenge Fund (IGCF) to spark creativity and action on the foundation's gender journey. The IGCF was a catalytic fund designed to stimulate learning and identify promising practices, to deepen measurement approaches that could support the foundation to track change toward gender equality and to stimulate new partnerships within and outside of the foundation. The IGCF, fueled by Melinda's leadership, has catalyzed staff from many teams to build their knowledge and commitment to gender equality. The dedicated budget resources for experimentation in learning and measurement proved a powerful incentive. As the foundation continues on this gender journey, the GE team is learning from our partner PSTs about the incentives that will best promote innovation and commitment to gender equality.

Figure 4. Gender Equality Team

Gender Equality Team Purpose

Accelerate progress toward the foundation's goals by working together with program teams to **advance gender equality** and **empower women and girls**.



By joining forces with key PSTs to leverage the engagement and commitment of leadership, the GE team is ensuring that the foundation will take great strides toward becoming a gender-intentional institution. We will know we've achieved this success when we can show that these partnerships are accelerating progress toward the foundation's development goals and contributing to progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

By supporting PSTs to be intentional about addressing strategic gender gaps, we will enhance the catalytic potential of our investments. As we continue to learn from the experience of our pioneering PSTs, we will refine the foundation's approach to gender integration so that it can serve as a learning opportunity and public good for the development field. There is already high demand for such an approach that can truly disrupt dominant paradigms for problem solving that too often do not consider how gender inequality and the subordination of women and girls stifle innovation and scaling in every sector of our work. We believe that the foundation is well placed to meet this challenge, and that now is the time for us to demonstrate the transformative power of gender mainstreaming on our mission.



IV. FAQs ABOUT GENDER INTEGRATION IN PROGRAMS

Since introducing gender integration and PST Deep Dives in 2016, staff around the foundation have raised a number of important questions about what this means for our work and our priorities. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions:

Is it all about women and girls? What about boys and men?

Good gender programming looks at the potential differential impact on both women and men. Gender is relational and structural, so we must work with men and boys because targeting only women and girls alone won't necessarily change relationships or structures. Examining how cultural definitions of masculinity can contribute to risks for men and boys is also important on its own.²⁷ A study conducted in eight countries found that equitable attitudes among men contributed significantly to equitable practices, such as sharing of unpaid work in the home and not committing acts of gender-based violence.²⁸

And what about other forms of inequality? Does gender integration help address those?

Absolutely. As mentioned above, WID efforts focused on adding women to development and post-Beijing GAD efforts emphasized gender dynamics and power relations at the core of gender analysis and integration. In 2018, gender integration applies an intersectional lens.²⁹ This approach requires a gender analysis to ask not just "are people being left behind because of gender?", but "which people are being left behind most? How does gender intersect with race, ethnicity, caste, social class, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and religion to determine exclusion?" This approach uses gender as a primary analytical lens but necessarily explores how the interaction of gender with other social markers amplifies people's individual constraints and opportunities. Rather than defining men and women as homogenous groups, an intersectional approach acknowledges and works to understand the differences within and among groups of men and women and gender non-conforming individuals, and how these differences create unequal opportunities and access to resources. For example, cultural norms about gender have everything to do with how sexual and gender minorities are treated, driving up their vulnerability to discrimination and violence. Therefore, transforming gender norms is a shared foundation of gender equality and of respect to the rights of all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people. Gender analysis can help uncover these norms. It's especially important that those implementing programs understand gender as a continuum rather than a binary category to avoid perpetuating inequalities that lead to exclusion.³⁰

Aren't programs for women and girls gender integrated by their very nature?

Because they have been an underserved population for so long, it's important to focus on women and girls to shift the gender dynamics that drive gaps in development outcomes. Some programs, such as family planning tend to target women and girls largely for biological reasons. But that doesn't mean that they have applied a gender lens. Gender integration makes sure that we understand all the barriers related to gender that affect our programs, and address gender consistently. Evidence shows that gender integration in FP and MNCH programs leads to better health outcomes in these sectors.³¹ And while we know that better access to family planning and maternal health can have some effects on women's quality of life, just because a program targets women, doesn't necessarily mean that it leads to major shifts in gender inequalities.³² For example, it's important to look at how gender norms, roles and responsibilities affect whether women can get the FP method they prefer, whether they are treated well by providers, and whether they are at risk when using FP because of coercion or violence from partners.³³

Do we have the resources we need for gender integration?

Gender integration requires appropriate staff time and institutional resources to flourish. Many institutions have adopted ambitious gender mainstreaming strategies, only to see them fail due to lack of resources. For example, in an evaluation of its gender equality strategy, the European Commission found that insufficient human and financial resources hampered support for gender mainstreaming in the Directorate Generals.³⁴ Similarly, while UNFPA's Country Offices are expected to work on gender, there is no guidance for office directors in setting budget allocation, percent of staff with gender expertise, or how much time staff should dedicate to this work.³⁵ At the foundation, having PST staff with the mandate to prioritize gender integration will determine our ability to deliver a foundation-wide integration strategy. To date, only two PSTs have dedicated gender specialists- Ag Dev and FSP, each with different staffing models for gender integration. Members of the WSH, FSP and AgDev Gender Core Teams largely engage in this work on the margins of their regular assignments, and gender champions across the foundation participate in events and promote gender intentional investments as resources allow. The GE team is working within these constraints to optimize a cross-foundation approach to gender integration, recognizing that tradeoffs will need to be made and some teams prioritized over others to achieve meaningful impact.

But some of the problems are so big! What good does gender integration do if local gender norms sanction harmful and/or discriminatory practices?

It's certainly an uphill battle – but development practitioners have found many creative ways to shift gender norms, even in places where it seemed impossible.³⁶ There is an extensive body of literature on the lessons learned from these experiences, which highlights that gender norms tend to shift for endogenous reasons, so we should not assume that they are intractable. The foundation is funding the Overseas Development Institute to curate Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (ALIGN), an initiative for developing and sharing innovations and new knowledge about how to effectively challenge and change harmful gender norms.

Is gender integration an imposition of Western understanding of gender on other cultures?

Women's organizations around the world have been actively involved in advocating for more attention to gender in the programming paid for by international donors. These groups have played a vital role in securing gains on gender and development through direct advocacy, engagement with international conferences and the UN, and work to ensure that donors see gender as integrally relevant to their projects. By building the capacity of our staff to integrate a gender lens across their investments, we are enabling them to ask better questions about the gendered realities of the contexts in which we work. This allows us to learn from our partners and to support them with the time and resources required to identify and tackle the specific gender barriers they face, and the freedom to define an approach that fits their context. We are complementing these efforts with direct support to women's organizations and movements in our priority geographies. These grassroots movements are a powerful way for women to define their own agendas and drive change that improves their health, opportunities, and societies.

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