
UNIT: 4 INTEGRATING GENDER INTO POLICY MAKING PROCESS

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Gender mainstreaming, by definition, involves integrating a gender perspective and gender analysis into all stages of designing, implementing and evaluating projects, policies and programmes. Therefore, policy making is considered very much important to mainstream gender. To integrate gender into policy making process the UNDP regional centre for Europe and CIS has developed ten steps and those are discussed in this Unit.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the process of integrating gender into policy making process;
- Analyze various steps involved in the gender mainstreaming process; and
- Examine the need of integrating gender into policy making process.

4.3 GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND POLICY MAKING

Gender mainstreaming is a necessary process for achieving gender equality in the most effective and efficient manner. Gender mainstreaming relies entirely on the process of policy making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. While doing so gender mainstreaming has to follow certain steps and those 10 Steps for Gender Mainstreaming include:

1. A Mainstreaming Approach to Stakeholders: Who are the Decision-Makers?
2. Mainstreaming a Gender Agenda: What is the Issue?
3. Moving Towards Gender Equality: What is the Goal?
4. Mapping the Situation: What Information do We Have?
5. Refining the Issue: Research and Analysis
6. Formulating Policy or Project Interventions from a Gender Perspective
7. Arguing Your Case: Gender Matters!
8. Monitoring: Keeping a (Gender-Sensitive) Eye on Things
9. Evaluation: How Did We Do?
10. En-gendering Communication

In the following sections these steps are elaborated in detail.

4.4 A MAINSTREAMING APPROACH TO STAKEHOLDERS: DECISION-MAKERS

Step 1 concerns the project and policy making context. The people involved in the process, along with their values and understanding of gender issues, will significantly determine the outcome of your policy or project.

During Step 1 you should seek answers to the following three key questions:

- Who are the stakeholders? Do they include individuals or groups with a “gender perspective”? Gender mainstreaming means that “gender” stakeholders need to be identified and included throughout the policy or project cycle. Multiple stakeholders bring greater accountability and a wider variety of options to the policy-making process. It also introduces a series of “checks and balances” against competing viewpoints. Negotiating these multiple viewpoints will result in better policy-making.
- Is there gender balance in all institutions and bodies involved? If strong gender imbalance exists among stakeholders or the core policy making group, take measures to involve more of the underrepresented gender – be it men or women. This is a question of accountability and credibility.
- Where is gender expertise available? Stakeholders with gender expertise will help you identify entry points for gender mainstreaming and implement a mainstreaming approach throughout the entire project or policy-making cycle. These experts are important allies. Such expertise might be found with policy-making colleagues, academics, consultants, NGOs or community groups, or development partners. Bringing this expertise aboard is mainstreaming at its most basic level.

Box 4.1 Gender-Sensitive Stakeholder Checklist

- Have the following individuals and groups been brought into the policy or project cycle?
- Gender focal points in other ministries or departments?
- Development partners with a gender equality mandate?
- A governmental or independent economist with gender expertise?
- Male and female representatives of private sector interests?
- An umbrella organization of women’s or gender NGOs?
- Any NGOs or community groups that represent men’s gender interests?
- Relevant sectoral or “special interest” NGOs that have an interest or experience in gender issues?
- Human rights groups or advocates?
- Think tanks or policy analysts with experience and expertise in gender issues?
- Academics or researchers from university Gender Studies departments?

4.5 MAINSTREAMING A GENDER AGENDA: ISSUES

During Step 2, you should first identify the main development problem or issue at hand. This can be accomplished by answering a basic question:

- What is the subject of your project or policy-making initiative?

This subject then needs to be examined from a gender perspective, in order to discern where, why and how specific gender mainstreaming initiatives may need to be applied. The following question will help you decide what the “gender issue” is:

- Does this issue affect men and women in different ways?

Experience has shown that in many or even most cases, the issue does in fact affect men and women in different ways. In these instances, this means that the specific ways in which men and women are differently affected need to be refined (see Gender Mainstreaming Steps 4 and 5). Gender analysis is a vital part of clarifying the precise gender dimension of the issue (see Annex: Gender Analysis – A Brief Guide). The Gender Briefs in Part II can help you identify the “gender issues” of various development problems.

Step 2 is thus your first look through the “gender lens.” While at this stage you will not yet be identifying specific gender problems that require policy solutions, Step 2 should introduce an appreciation of gender-related aspects of seemingly “gender-neutral” issues.

4.6 MOVING TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY: GOALS

Once you have identified the “subject” of your project or policymaking initiative, you should discern what your goal is. You can do this by asking:

What do we want to achieve?

In Step 2, you will have identified any gender dimensions inherent in the policy issue. It is also equally important to make this gender dimension explicit in your policy goal. This can happen in two different ways, and can be identified by asking two different questions:

- Does the goal pay attention to both men and women?

The policy or project goal should address any differences between men and women and seek to redress them. If men and women have different needs, then the goal should be to meet both the

needs of women and the needs of men. If men or women are disadvantaged in the given situation, then the policy goal should seek to redress this imbalance.

These goals are thus “corrective”; they are about meeting the practical needs of both men and women.

- Does the goal include a broader commitment to improving gender equality?

The policy or project goal should also be examined in the light of gender equality more broadly. Perhaps elements of the institutions, structures or underlying principles that contextualize the issue fundamentally hinder de facto equality between men and women. If so, the goal should be broadened to address these elements as well. These goals are thus “transformative”; they are about transforming institutions and structures (social, political, economic, cultural, etc.) so that full gender equality can be more readily achieved.

These broad goals will be translated into specific targets and objectives (see Step 6), once you have refined the question (see Step 5) and are ready to develop concrete policy interventions. In Step 2 you have discerned what your policy issue is and identified potential gender dimensions of this issue. In Step 3 you have identified the overall intended goals your policy or project interventions, and ensured these are gender-sensitive.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

Note: a) Use the space given below to answer the questions.

- b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Will development issues affect men and women in different ways? Explain.

4.7 MAPPING THE SITUATION

In Step 4 “Mapping the Situation,” you must start thinking about refining both your question and your potential policy interventions. In order to do this, it is important to have an inventory of:

- what you know?
- what you don't know?
- what projects or policy interventions have already happened?
- what is currently happening?
- what other related interventions are planned?

Answering the above questions will help you focus on “filling in the gaps”, commissioning or undertaking necessary research and planning complementary initiatives rather than “reinventing the wheel”. Mapping the Situation is also a critical stage for introducing efficiency into the mainstreaming process. Three tools and exercises are suggested that will help you answer the above questions:

- 1) Mapping Exercise
- 2) Policy Review from a Gender Perspective
- 3) Legislative Review from a Gender Perspective

4.8 REFINING THE ISSUE: RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

“Mapping the Situation” (Step 4) will have underlined where specifically a gender-mainstreaming perspective is required: existing policies may need to be amended in order to include a gender perspective, or new policies may need to be developed. Step 4 should have also made clear where gaps in your current information base exist.

During Step 5, you will need to conduct or commission research that will fill in these gaps. This is absolutely crucial in order to guarantee the credibility, efficiency and effectiveness of any projects or policies you develop.

This phase involves:

- Specifying the research question
- Determining necessary inputs
- Designing and/or Commissioning the research

1) Specifying the Research Question:

The research question needs to be concrete and specific in order to be useful for policy making or project development. The most crucial factor will be understanding what output is required from the research. This is necessary in order to provide precise terms of reference for the researchers.

Box 4.2: What is the Desired Output of the Research?

Situational Analysis: If you have absolutely no data on a given subject, a situational analysis may be required. However, bear in mind that situational analyses do not provide you with concrete policy options or recommendations.

Policy Options/Recommendations: If your goal is the development of concrete policies, policy researchers and analysts should provide you with a “policy brief” that contains several options and highlights the advantages and disadvantages of each. These considerations should examine:

- efficiency (cost-benefit analysis),
- effectiveness (coverage, scope, sustainability), and
- extent to which gender issues are addressed: are needs of both men and women met? Are frameworks of gender roles and relations transformed?

2) Determining Necessary Inputs:

Research can be conducted in one of two ways:

- in-house; or
- outsourced (to individual experts, civil society groups, think tanks or commercial research firms) Your budget, technical capacity and expertise, alongside the scope of the research, are the factors which will determine which route you choose. In either case, those conducting the research must meet the following criteria:

substantive expertise concerning the sectoral or policy issue;

- gender expertise (i.e. professional and/or academic training in gender theory as pertains to public policy);
- specific technical expertise as demanded by the research question (i.e. economic modelling, population-based survey design, etc.).

The appropriate balance of these three elements is crucial for producing viable policy options. You may need to engage a team of researchers to ensure all three capacities.

3) Commissioning the Research:

Regardless of whether the research is conducted in-house or outsourced, you should refer to the following questions when evaluating any research proposals:

Box 4.3 : Checklist for Evaluating Research Proposals

- Researchers: Who will be involved in the gathering and analysis of data? Is gender balance and a gender perspective (expertise) ensured?
- Subjects: Will the situation of both genders be researched? Will data be disaggregated by gender?
- Methodology: What methodology will be used? Is it sensitive to both men's and women's particular needs? (e.g. confidentiality, sensitivity to some issues)
- Analytical Axes: Does the research include gender as a important variable in determining social processes? Are other important axes for analysis considered (ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographical location, etc.)?
- Theoretical Frameworks and Assumptions about Gender: Is the researcher familiar with baseline theories about gender inequalities? What assumptions or biases do they hold about gender roles and relations that might impact (and distort) their research findings?
- Credibility: Have steps been taken to ensure that results will be credible in the eyes of all stakeholders (both men and women) Will they have the chance to provide inputs and comments?

4.9 FORMULATING POLICY OR PROJECT INTERVENTIONS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Once you have collected and analyzed the necessary data and information, you will have to decide on the appropriate course of action to move towards the goal articulated in Step 3. Choosing the “correct” course for policy or project intervention is rarely straightforward. It involves balancing a number of crucial considerations, including:

Box 4.4: Crucial Considerations for Policy Options

- efficiency – cost-benefit analysis;
- effectiveness – the degree to which your goal will be met; and
- social justice, including gender equality – the extent to which social and historical disadvantages between different groups in society are addressed and compensated.

The economic, social, equity, community, environmental and other types of impact of each option need to be assessed. To ensure a gender perspective, a “gender impact assessment” should also be conducted for each option. This should consider the following key questions (“Gender-Based Analysis: A Guide for Policy-Making” prepared by Status of Women Canada (1998)):

Gender Impact Assessment Checklist:

- What benefit (financial, human) will the option bring to both men and women ?
- What cost (financial, human) will the option inflict on both men and women?
- How do both female and male stakeholders perceive the option in terms of its costs, benefits, acceptability and practicality?

The results of this assessment should be considered when weighing policy options. Additionally, you should consider:

- What might the wider consequences be of failing to adopt a gender-sensitive option?

After weighing these factors carefully, you will be ready to formulate your intervention. This will entail preparing the actual policy or project document.

Gender Mainstreaming Checklist for Project or Policy Documents:

- Background and Justification: Is the gender dimension highlighted in background information to the intervention? Does the justification include convincing arguments for gender mainstreaming and gender equality? (See Step 7)
- Goals: Does the goal of the proposed intervention reflect the needs of both men and women? Does the goal seek to correct gender imbalances through addressing practical needs of men and women? Does the goal seek to transform the institutions (social and other) that perpetuate gender inequality? (See Step 3)
- Target Beneficiaries: Except where interventions specifically target men or women as a corrective measure to enhance gender equality, is there gender balance within the target beneficiary group?
- Objectives: Do the intervention objectives address needs of both women and men?
- Activities: Do planned activities involve both and women? Are any additional activities needed to ensure that a gender perspective is made explicit (e.g. training in gender issues, additional research, etc.)?

- **Indicators:** Have indicators been developed to measure progress towards the fulfilment of each objective? Do these indicators measure the gender aspects of each objective? Are indicators gender disaggregated? Are targets set to guarantee a sufficient level of gender balance in activities (e.g. quotas for male and female participation)? (See Step 8)
- **Implementation:** Who will implement the planned intervention? Have these partners received gender mainstreaming training, so that a gender perspective can be sustained throughout implementation? Will both women and men participate in implementation?
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Does the monitoring and evaluation strategy include a gender perspective? Will it examine both substantive (content) and administrative (process) aspects of the intervention? (see Steps 8 and 9)
- **Risks:** Has the greater context of gender roles and relations within society been considered as a potential risk (i.e. stereotypes or structural barriers that may prevent full participation of one or the other gender)? Has the potential negative impact of the intervention been considered (e.g. potential increased burden on women or social isolation of men?)
- **Budget:** Have financial inputs been “gender-proofed” to ensure that both men and women will benefit from the planned intervention? Has the need to provide gender sensitivity training or to engage short-term gender experts been factored in to the budget?
- **Annexes:** Are any relevant research papers (or excerpts) included as annexes (particularly those that provide sound justification for your attention to gender)?
- **Communication Strategy:** Has a communication strategy been developed for informing various publics about the existence, progress and results of the project from a gender perspective? (See Step 10)

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

Note: a) Use the space given below to answer the questions.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) How should we specify a research question?

4.10 EMPHASIZING THE NEED TO ADDRESS GENDER ISSUES

One crucial aspect of gender mainstreaming involves developing arguments for gender equality. Because experience has shown that decision makers are sometimes reluctant to devote scarce resources to gender equality activities decision makers (especially those who control budgets) need to be convinced that their investment in gender equality will pay off.

Decision-makers need to be presented with arguments that highlight, concretely and precisely, why gender matters. In other words, you must illustrate what development problems gender equality contributes to solving, and what specific benefits a gender-aware perspective will bring to the government, individuals –both men and women - and the nation as whole. Well-defined arguments will increase your chances of receiving financial and moral support for any planned interventions.

Arguments for adapting a gendered approach and for promoting gender equality in all projects and policies generally fall into one of the following six categories:

- Justice and Equality
- Credibility and Accountability
- Efficiency and Sustainability (the “macro” dimension)
- Quality of Life (the “micro” dimension)
- Alliances
- Chain Reaction.

Justice and Equality Arguments: These stress the value of democratic principles and basic human rights, which demand gender equality. Justice arguments can be used to argue for equal representation and participation of both genders in various contexts, premised on the basic notion of their shared human rights. Most states are party to a variety of normative documents (for example, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and global conference documents from Beijing, Copenhagen and Cairo), all of which establish gender equality as a fundamental principle. States are obliged to fulfil these commitments, especially as many basic democratic principles articulated here reflect most states’ own constitutions.

While experience has unfortunately shown that the justice argument alone is often insufficient to convince governments to mobilize adequate resources, these arguments are nonetheless useful

for providing reference to specific mandates for gender equality and international commitments. They remind governments that they are part of an international (or regional) community that espouses shared values.

Credibility and Accountability Arguments: Credibility arguments ask decision makers to “do the math”: because women and men each make up half of the population, any data, policy or recommendation that does not recognize and address both genders equally will be ultimately flawed, and will thus have no credibility. These arguments are useful for justifying gender impact assessments (studies that examine how men and women are, will be or have been differently affected by actions or situational factors), or calling for more gender balance in decision-making processes.

Accountability arguments in particular are useful for reminding governments of their responsibility to ensure social justice and sustainable human development. In democratic states, governments must be accountable to the population and must further the interests of all its members – both men and women. A failure to address social justice or gender equality issues is also a failure of governments to be accountable to all citizens. Furthermore, many gender-sensitive interventions are not just gender exercises for their own sake – they are about holding governments accountable for their use of public funds and for the fulfillment of their political promises. Gender mainstreaming can offer concrete mechanisms for introducing a greater degree of accountability into governance.

Efficiency and Sustainability Arguments: These arguments make clear an irrefutable fact: equal inclusion of men and women in all aspects of development and society pays off for the country as a whole. Nations cannot afford to ignore the contributions and economic and social capacities of both men and women in all spheres. The development of any country that does will ultimately suffer in the medium and long term. This is an argument that addresses “macro” aspects of development – i.e. the welfare and prosperity of a nation as a whole.

These arguments are particularly effective because they address the bottom line: money. They prove that investment in gender equality will pay off for the country as a whole in the future. Global studies have been done that prove the overall efficiency arguments⁵ – these can assist you to make your argument, as will any national research you have to substantiate your case.

Closely linked to efficiency arguments are sustainability arguments. Because gender mainstreaming adopts a “human development” perspective, which has the long-term objective of

creating a socially just and sustainable society, gender mainstreaming is inextricably about ensuring sustainability as well. Furthermore, because gender mainstreaming demands a holistic approach to policy making where coordination and cooperation (both vertical and horizontal) are key, interventions are more likely to be sustainable.

Quality of Life Arguments: Increased attention to gender equality issues will improve the lives of individual men and women. In a democratic society based on principles of social justice, each individual member has the right to the best quality of life possible. Gender mainstreaming initiatives seek to further this objective. Moreover, while it is commonly recognized that women stand to benefit from increased attention to gender equality, quality of life arguments also point out the benefits to be gained by men and families as well. They stress the importance of social relationships and interdependence of social actors, claiming, for example, that if women are empowered, those closest to them stand to gain as well. On the flip-side, inequality or hardship for one gender will negatively affect other social actors as well. For example, the negative effects of depression in men or poor employment opportunities for women affect families, children and spouses as well.

Moreover, quality of life arguments are useful for promoting a gender dimension in programmes aimed at curbing social “pathologies”. For example, issues such as suicide, alcoholism, addictions and chronic stress are strongly linked to changing gender roles and relations in society and the inability of individuals to cope and adapt. The argument here therefore underlines how a gender perspective can limit these pathologies and improve the quality of life of members of society. These arguments address “micro” aspects of development and gender, i.e. the ways in which individuals within a development context are affected. However, this argument has a natural link to efficiency arguments: if individuals are happier and healthier, they will also be more productive, thus contributing to a more efficient and prosperous society.

Alliance Arguments: Alliance arguments highlight gender equality as a prerequisite for forging formal alliances or partnerships with other nations. In the context of Eastern and Central Europe, accession to the European Union is a very salient example: EU countries are mandated to implement various instruments for the promotion of gender equality, including the adoption of gender mainstreaming practices.

However, while this argument is currently very effective for calling governments to task, it is ultimately unsustainable unless coupled with concrete substantive reasons (such as efficiency

and quality of life) as to why issues of gender equality need to be addressed. Without these solid substantive arguments, alliance arguments can backfire.

Chain Reaction Arguments: Lastly, all of the above arguments are strengthened when the links between them are highlighted. Gender equality can in fact produce a “chain reaction” of benefits, just as the effects of gender inequality can be passed on from individuals to families and communities. The “chain reaction” argument highlights how sound the investment in gender equality actually is: it will bring not only short-term, localized benefits, but medium and long-term benefits that will ripple through society strengthening the nation as a whole.

At the same time, mainstreaming should also remain aware of “chain reactions” that might produce negative gender equality effects if not anticipated and dealt with in an integrated manner. For example, a “top down” mandate for family-friendly workplaces might bring backlash and even greater exposure to harassment against women in their place of work. Similarly, advancement of women may lead to greater depression and pathological behaviour among men. These risks highlight the crucial need to create complex strategies for gender mainstreaming, whereby a number of initiatives are mutually reinforcing. Thus a negative chain reaction argument can be used to convince decision-makers that mainstreaming must proceed in a strategic and holistic manner.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

Note: a) Use the space given below to answer the questions.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the use of quality of life arguments?

4.11 MONITORING GENDER SENSITIVE

Monitoring should take place at two different levels:

- Monitoring progress towards fulfilling substantive goals and objectives

- Monitoring the implementation process

Both require setting targets (goals) and developing indicators to measure progress towards meeting those targets. When monitoring progress towards substantive goals and objectives, indicators must be developed that track the delivery of specified outputs (activities) and outcomes (impact).

When monitoring the implementation process, targets and indicators must be developed that track the extent to which the process itself is gender-sensitive. Monitoring the process will:

- allow you to identify hindrances and gaps in the process that can be immediately redressed
- allow you to improve the design of future initiatives
- document obstacles to mainstreaming that can be later addressed in a wider institutional context

Questions to consider in monitoring the process might include:

- Are men and women equally participating in project decision-making?
- Are men and women treated with equal respect, as decision-makers, implementers and participants?
- Are those involved in project implementation continually motivated to maintain a gender perspective (opportunities to update their gender knowledge and skills, and discuss gender issues in a non judgmental environment)?

Gender-Sensitive Monitoring Plans

Plans for monitoring both substantive progress and the implementation process should be developed and included in the official document outlining your intervention. These plans should specify:

- who is responsible for monitoring tasks
- how other stakeholders will participate in the monitoring process
- when monitoring will take place
- what tools will be used to record observations
- what mechanisms exist to review progress (periodic appraisal or review sessions)

Gender-Sensitive Targets and Indicators

We set targets so that we can “keep our eye on the prize” – targets make our goals concrete, and therefore increase the possibility that they will be attained. Concrete targets also increase the possibility that concrete resources (human, financial) will be diverted in order to achieve those targets. Effective targets are:

- progressive but realistic
- time-bound
- measurable

Integrating a gender perspective means that effective targets are also gender sensitive: they consider the situation and needs of both women and men.

Progress towards achieving targets should be mapped with the help of specific indicators.

Effective indicators are:

- comparable longitudinally (over time) – indicators that are measured only once cannot show signs of progress or decline
- comparable with other countries, regions or target audiences
- measurable – you need to be able to quantify or categorize your results
- precise – choose indicators whereby effects of external and environmental factors, other than those you hope to measure, are minimized
- selective and representative – too many indicators are difficult to track

In programmes and policies that have been “gender mainstreamed,” all indicators should be disaggregated by sex wherever possible. This helps to identify the gender differentiated impact of our interventions.

Quantitative vs Qualitative Indicators and Sources of Data

Quantitative indicators can be defined as measures of quantity (total numbers, percentages, etc). they are useful for showing what the average outcome is, or the degree to which a goal or objective has been attained.

Common sources of data are:

- censuses
- labour-force surveys
- administrative records
- target population-based sociological surveys

Qualitative indicators can be defined as people’s judgments and perceptions about a subject. they are useful for understanding processes, but frequently do not show how typical or widespread are the views expressed.

Common sources are:

- public hearings

- focus groups
- attitude surveys and interviews
- participatory appraisals
- participant observation
- sociological and anthropological fieldwork

(Adapted from: Progress of the World's Women, Unifem 2000, which adapted it from the Canadian International Development Agency, 1996).

4.12 EVALUATION

Three levels of evaluation include:

1. Evaluation of outputs (Have objectives been met?)
2. Evaluation of outcomes (To what extent has the development goal been achieved?)
3. Evaluation of process (How were outputs and outcomes delivered?)

In order to mainstream a gender perspective, key questions to consider at all levels of evaluation include:

Evaluation criteria

- Who determines the evaluation criteria?
- What level of importance or priority is afforded to gender equality considerations?

Evaluation Actors

- Do evaluators' Terms of Reference specify the need for gender expertise?
- Are all stakeholders involved in the evaluation process?
- Who will provide inputs for evaluation data?
- Will the opinions of both men and women be considered?
- Who will be responsible for consolidating inputs and determining the validity and priority of differing opinions or observations?

Evaluation Process

- Will participatory methods be used?
- How and to whom will results of the evaluation be disseminated?
- Will both men and women stakeholders be given the opportunity to formally comment on or state their reservations about the evaluation results? To ensure the sustainability of mainstreaming efforts, consider the following:

- How does your initiative fit into the “big picture”, i.e. more comprehensive government programmes and policy frameworks? What entry points for follow-up and complementary activities does this framework offer?
- Does your evaluation include concrete recommendations for follow-up initiatives? What other entry points can be accessed to ensure this follow-up?
- Does your evaluation point to implications for other ministries or stakeholders more broadly? How will you communicate these implications? Can you propose any concrete entry points?
- Are you documenting the process and results of your initiatives in a way that will guarantee institutional memory?
- In general, how and to whom are you communicating the results of your initiatives?

4.13 ENGENDERING COMMUNICATION

While “communication” figures as the last step in this gender mainstreaming guide, communication considerations themselves need to “mainstreamed” or integrated at all phases of the project or policy cycle. Communication with other stakeholders - from civil society to your superiors – is necessary at all stages and all levels. In every case, the way in which you communicate (both pro-actively and reactively) will influence the success of your project or policy.

One of the barriers to effective gender mainstreaming is a lack of information on various levels, including:

- about the situation, from a gender perspective
- about government or organizational mandates for gender equality
- about policies and programmes targeting gender equality
- about stakeholders and efforts of other actors in promoting gender equality

Part of your role must be to design and implement effective communication strategies to help bridge this information gap for a diverse set of publics. These publics include:

- Top-level policy makers and decision-makers
- Other policy-makers
- Different groups within civil society (men, women, activists, academics, etc)
- Donors and Development Partners

Using a gender perspective when designing communication strategies should highlight the different ways in which men and women respond to different messages. Key questions you might ask during a gender analysis of communication strategies include:

- Do men and women read different publications?
- Do men and women watch or listen to different electronic media?
- Are media consumption patterns (frequency, time) different for men and women?
- Do men and women have different credibility criteria (regarding “authorities”, arguments used, etc)?
- Do men and women have different values that cause them to respond to certain messages in different ways?

4.14 SUMMING UP

Gender mainstreaming makes a gender dimension explicit in all policy sectors. Gender equality is no longer viewed as a “separate question,” but becomes a concern for all policies and programmes. Furthermore, a gender mainstreaming approach does not look at women in isolation, but looks at women and men - both as actors in the development process, and as its beneficiaries. Finally, as a comprehensive strategy, gender mainstreaming should also address the environment (corporate, office) in which policies and programmes are developed and implemented. Thus a strategy to integrate gender concerns into programming must be accompanied by a strategy to ensure that the working environment is gender-sensitive, guaranteeing equal opportunities and treatment to both men and women. Sufficient technical capacity and human resources to successfully implement gender mainstreaming must also be ensured.

4.15 GLOSSARY

Participant Observation: Participant observation refers to a form of sociological research methodology in which the researcher takes on a role in the social situation under observation. The social researcher immerses herself in the social setting under study, getting to know key

actors in that location in a role which is either covert or overt, although in practice, the researcher will often move between these two roles.

Pathological Behaviour: Pathological behaviour or feelings happen regularly, and are strong, unreasonable, and impossible to control: *a pathological hatred of women; and a pathological liar*

4.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. Experience has shown that in many or even most cases, the issue does in fact affect men and women in different ways. In these instances, this means that the specific ways in which men and women are differently affected need to be refined.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1. The research question needs to be concrete and specific in order to be useful for policy making or project development. The most crucial factor will be understanding what output is required from the research. This is necessary in order to provide precise terms of reference for the researchers.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. Quality of life arguments are useful for promoting a gender dimension in programmes aimed at curbing social “pathologies”. For example, issues such as suicide, alcoholism, addictions and chronic stress are strongly linked to changing gender roles and relations in society and the inability of individuals to cope and adapt.

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4.18 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. How to do policy review from a gender perspective?
2. Explain the different arguments adapted in a gendered approach to promote gender equity and equality.
3. What are the ways and means to engender communication?

