

Quick Guide to Gender Analysis



What is gender analysis?

We all live and work in societies that are permeated by gender differences and gender inequalities, which shape the way that decisions get made, resources get allocated, and people interact with the world. A gender analysis explores the relationships of women and men in society, and the unequal power in those relationships. It brings inequalities to the surface and to the attention of people who can make a difference.

One of Oxfam's corporate priorities is to address gender inequality through every aspect of our work ('gender mainstreaming'). Conducting a gender analysis is the first stage in this process: it allows us to understand how poverty affects men, women, boys and girls differently, and the differences between poor men's and women's needs and concerns. Once we have this information, we can identify what our gender equality goals should be and design our work in a manner that is sensitive to and reflects the different experiences and needs of women and men.

This is important, first of all, because more women than men suffer from poverty, so it is **a question of justice**, or basic rights; and secondly, being aware of the distinct needs and concerns of men and women, and acting on this awareness, means that we can **address poverty more effectively**. If we fail to base our work on gender analysis and just assume that our work will benefit men and women equally, we will reflect and probably reinforce the imbalances that exist.

What information should a good gender analysis provide?

The purpose of conducting a gender analysis is to identify the specific aspects of gender relations and inequalities that are present in your programme context, and to examine their implications for programme design and implementation. It should explore the following areas:

- The differences in the lives of poor men and women;
- The barriers that unequal gender relations present to women's development;
- The status of women and their ability to exercise their human rights;
- The different skills, capacities and aspirations of women and men;
- The division of labour: men's and women's different activities, and their access to and control of resources.

What does gender analysis involve?

There are some basic things that you can do to highlight gender concerns in any analysis you do:

- Disaggregate and analyse the data you collect by sex;
- Actively involve women, men, girls and boys in data collection, to ensure that different opinions are heard;
- Identify existing sources of information and analysis (e.g. women's groups, past evaluations);
- Include gender analysis in terms of reference, and ensure researchers have the necessary skills.

Some basic questions to ask:

- Who has power?
- Who owns/controls resources?
- Who takes the decisions?
 - Who sets the agenda?
- Who gains, and who loses?
- Which men, and which women?

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Using a gender analysis framework will guide you in gathering information and designing programmes which promote gender equality. The Oxfam book *A Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks* gives information on a number of well-known frameworks, and examples of how they have been used. Bear in mind that frameworks should be adapted to take account of cultural and other differences. Also, be sure to allow adequate resources, including time, skills, and preparation. If you are unsure about doing it yourself, ask your regional gender adviser or a local gender specialist for advice.

A case study from Vietnam

A gender analysis of the sustainable natural resource management project in Vietnam revealed, amongst other things, the high proportion of poor, female-headed households in the project area, and the discrimination women face in accessing services and resources. The project will lobby government to properly implement a recent law to issue joint land use certificates, in both the husband's and wife's names. This will give women greater control over household assets, usually controlled by men, and give them better access to credit.

What happens next?

Conducting a gender analysis is a means to a much bigger end: that of devising and implementing programmes which take the needs and perspectives of both women and men into account, which do not exclude or harm women, and which will help redress some of the existing gender imbalances. Gender analysis will help to *plan* the work that can be done to confront women's subordination, but afterwards the work must still be done! Following the analysis, you must ensure that your objectives and strategies address the gender issues you have identified, and continue to monitor the impact of our work on gender relations throughout the programme cycle.

Tools and resources

- *A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks*, C. March, I. Smyth, & M. Mukhopadhyay, Oxfam GB, 1999: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/a-guide-to-gender-analysis-frameworks-115397>
- *Gender in Practice: A Tool-kit for SDC and its Partners*, SDC, 2003 – a set of information sheets to provide guidance on integrating gender at each stage of the programme cycle. Sheet 3 is on gender analysis. Download at <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=9533> or request a free copy of the toolkit from info@deza.admin.ch. Available in English, German, French, Spanish and Russian.
- *See Both Sides: A Practical Guide to Gender Analysis for Quality Service Delivery*, K. Richardson, Oxfam GB, 2004: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/see-both-sides-a-practical-guide-to-gender-analysis-for-quality-service-delivery-115524>
- *Learning & Information Pack: Gender Analysis*, UNDP, Gender in Development Programme, January 2001: See particularly: Resource 3a: Gender Analysis – What to Do; Resource 3b: Gender Analysis – What to Ask; and Resource 16: Information that a Good Gender Analysis Should Provide: <https://karl.oxfam.org.uk/communities/gender-mainstreaming-in-oxfam-gb/files/undp-genderanalysis-toolkit.pdf>
- *Gender Equity Building Blocks: Analysis*, CARE, 2002 – an 8-page guide to gender analysis, including a discussion of useful tools to use in different situations, and case studies from CARE's programmes: http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/toolkit/Gender_equity.pdf

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please go to www.oxfam.org.uk/policyandpractice

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