



This building block explains what gender analysis is, why it is important and introduces a series of gender analysis frameworks. These can help you to structure and carry out gender research. In particular, the Social Relations Approach and the SEAGA Approach are explained in depth. This building block will allow you to analyse the way gender relations manifest themselves at the micro, meso and macro level, and to determine how to address gender inequalities.

Who can use this building block?

Every stakeholder involved in development cooperation.

What is gender analysis?

The term 'gender' refers to the range of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that are ascribed to women and men on the basis of their sex. 'Sex' refers to the genetically determined biological and anatomical characteristics of women and men, which are manifest in their different roles in biological reproduction. 'Gender' refers to the socially determined roles and responsibilities that are attributed to women and men in a given social and cultural context, by virtue of their biological characteristics. Whereas sex differences are determined before birth and cannot be modified by environmental or cultural influences, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, and which, therefore, changes over time, within and across cultures (ITC-ILO, 2009).

The concept of gender is a powerful analytical tool: it offers a key to the understanding of social realities. Gender analysis is a systematic way to identify key issues contributing to gender inequalities so that they can be properly addressed. Gender analysis is described by the European Commission as:

'The study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles' (European Commission, 1998).

A thorough gender analysis should reflect the ways in which all other cross-cutting issues (age, environment, ethnicity, rights) also impact on women and men. For example, certain people share a combination of characteristics that may trigger discrimination. An older woman, part of a certain ethnic minority, can be more disadvantaged than a younger, educated woman from the dominant ethnic majority



group. On the basis of a thorough gender analysis it will be possible to understand current gender inequalities in a given situation or sector and to formulate certain projects or programmes in a way that they address and redress the situation (European Commission, 2009).

Gender analysis is the basis for gender mainstreaming. It determines whether besides gender mainstreaming there is a need for specific actions for women. It is based on an examination of statistics disaggregated by sex and qualitative information about the situation of men and women. An analysis of gender issues must also recognise the other diversity issues which affect all members of society, such as age, ethnicity and socioeconomic conditions, since neither women nor men form a homogeneous group (European Commission, 2009).

Different gender analysis frameworks have been developed and they all ask questions about differences between men and women in a given population. Those questions generally touch on the following aspects:

- **Roles and activities:** **Who** (women, men, girls, boys) does **what** (productive or reproductive activities, paid or unpaid)? How long does it take? Where?
- **Resources and constraints:** What resources do men and women have to work with? Who uses/owns/controls each of these resources? Who is excluded from use/ownership/control? what decisions do men and women make: in the household? in the community?
- **Benefits and incentives:** Who controls productive and reproductive activity? Who benefits from economic activity? Who receives income? Who controls income? What about non-income benefits? Do men and women have different incentives for participation in these activities?
- **Practical and strategic needs.** Practical gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical needs do not challenge, although they arise out of, gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate position in society. They are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, nutrition, health care and employment. Strategic gender needs, on the contrary, are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society. They vary according to particular contexts, related to gender divisions of labour, power and control, and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages, and women's control over their bodies. Meeting strategic needs assists women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles, thereby challenging unequal gender relations in society.

(ILO/SEAPAT, 2000)

Furthermore, a good gender analysis shows the linkages between inequalities at different societal levels; e.g., it will show how a legal system of inheritance which stipulates that women inherit nothing or a lesser amount from their parents puts women at a disadvantage in terms of economic opportunities throughout their lives.

Why is gender analysis important?

A gender analysis helps to interpret inequalities and differences, and understand better their root causes. Gender inequalities need to be identified before they can be addressed through either mainstreaming procedures or specific measures directed to women or to men (European Commission, 2009). This kind of analysis helps understand how and if gender relations and other social differences influence development



programmes. Once this information is available, it needs to be used to inform development activities ensuring that they address the existing unbalances. In doing so, development practitioners avoid building on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes, while unvoluntarily reproducing unequal power relationships in the targeted context. Tackling unequal gender relations is important from a human rights perspective, but also to guarantee the efficiency of development interventions.

See [Building Block n. 1](#) for 10 reasons to mainstream gender in development cooperation.

Some key elements of a gender analysis at different levels

Examining issues in terms of **where they are placed** (macro, meso and micro levels), is useful in determining the level or levels at which such issues should be addressed. It can help determine which elements are within the control of the individual or development institution in terms of effecting change, as well as those elements beyond the control of those carrying out the analyses.

Macro level

The Macro level relates to the national policy governing activities in the country. This includes legislation and regulations. The analysis focus on how these national policies influence activities in an institution or organisation or at field level. Other issues to think about are national agricultural policies, demographic trends, terms of trade, national educational policy, unemployment figures and trends, and public sector spending. International influences on laws and policies can also be examined.

- Have gender equality commitments have been made by the government in the context of international processes such as the Beijing process, the MDG process, or the ratification of CEDAW?
- Do national and sectoral policies reflect these commitments by their awareness of inequalities between men and women at different levels and the inclusion of means to address them?
- How do current policies, laws and regulations (voting rights, rights to inheritance and credit opportunities, rights to divorce and child custody) impact differently on women and men?
- In national-level institutions (parliament, government ministries, universities, businesses), how are decisions made? How are women represented in the system? How are decisions taken?

Meso level

At the meso level the focus is on institutions, (NGOs, development organisations), how they operate in terms of service provision and implementation, and how they influence national policy. This is where most of us work. At this level, focus is on health and education services, the role of the public and private sectors, levels of decentralisation, institutional structures, and levels of expertise in institutions.

- Do service delivery structures (e.g. all civil service structures at this level – health, education, labour, transport etc. – the police, the judiciary, etc.) reflect gender balance in their membership and management? Do women and men have equal access to employment and services? Is equal treatment in terms of pay and benefit guaranteed for men and women?
- Do private-sector businesses and institutions (including companies, banks, media, etc.) reflect gender balance in their membership and management? Do men and women have equal access to employment and services?



- Is there occupational segregation of the labour market by gender, either horizontal or vertical?

Micro level

At the micro level the focus is on women and men clients. The analysis should focus on how to identify their specific needs and priorities relating to their context, and examine the extent to which gender roles, relationships and cultural issues are key.

- What is the division of labour amongst women, men, young and old? Who normally does what? Have there been changes due to war, migration for labour, the HIV/AIDS pandemic?
- Are there gender inequalities in access to resources, including new resources, and who has control over different resources, including new resources and benefits from institutions, or development projects (or any outside interventions from the government)? Resources include non-material resources such as time, knowledge and information, and rights.
- What factors influence access to and control over resources (for example age, sex, position in an organisation, wealth, rural/urban location, education level, networks and patronage)?
- At the community level, how are decisions made about different resources and activities?
- At the household level, who makes decisions about different resources and activities?

Source: European Commission (2009), Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender in EU Development Cooperation. DG EuropAid, p. 85., ITC/ILO (2009), Training Module: Introduction to Gender Analysis and Gender-sensitive Indicators, p. 7-9.

Gender analysis frameworks provide the **conceptual structure** for your analysis: they help you to structure and carry out gender research, and to frame the content. They are supported by specific tools. Thus, they help define the focus of your research and the methods to gather information.

There are a number of different gender analysis frameworks. Each has its own focus and was developed to address different aspects of gender equality. In the sections below we will discuss the Social Relations Approach and SEAGA more extensively, and enlist briefly other gender analysis frameworks. It is important to have a general idea of how they work in order to be able to select the framework that is most appropriate for your needs.

The Social Relations Approach


The Social Relations framework for gender analysis has been developed by **Naila Kabeer** at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, UK, in collaboration with policy-makers, academics, and activists.

The framework is based upon various theoretical notions. The first one is the concept of development, considered as the process of **increasing human well being**. The second concept refers to **social relations**. According to Kabeer, social relations are structural relationships that create and reproduce systemic differences in the positioning of groups of people. Thirdly, the framework relies on **institutional analysis**. The causes of gender inequality are not confined to the micro-level (household and family), but are



reproduced across a range of institutions at all levels. Institutions are defined here as a framework of rules for achieving certain social or economic goals. They exist at macro (international community), meso (the state, the market place) and micro-level (community, household). Regarding institutions, Kabeer challenges the ideological neutrality and the independence of institutions. Institutions produce, reinforce and reproduce social difference and inequalities. In addition, institutions are connected to each other and do not operate independently; a change at the national institutional level can effect institutions at other levels.

Institutions vary across contexts and cultures, but Kabeer identifies some important common aspects that they share. They all possess the following five aspects of social relationships: **rules, resources, people, activities and power**. These dimensions are significant to the analysis of social inequality in general, and gender inequality in particular. Examining institutions on the basis of their rules, practices, people, distribution of resources, and their authority and control structures, helps you understand **who does what, who gains, who loses** (which men and which women). A fourth notion on which Kabeer builds this framework are **gender policies** and the different ways they can be categorized:

Gender Blind	Gender Neutral	Gender-Sensitive	Gender-Positive
Gender-blind policies consider men and women not to be equals. They use gender norms, roles and stereotypes that reinforce gender inequalities.	Gender-neutral policies work within the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities, and do not challenge them. They presume men and women not as equals but as being the same. In this approach gender norms, roles and relations are not affected or iterated.	Presumes men and women as equals; addresses gender norms, roles and access to resources to reach policy goals.	Presumes men and women as equals; changing gender norms, roles and access to resources is a key component of policy outcomes
			
		Gender-Transformative	
		Addresses strategic gender-needs; transforms unequal gender relations to promote shared power control over resources, decision-making and support for women's empowerment.	

Adapted from: ILO. (2010). *Gender mainstreaming in Local Economic Development Strategies – A guide*, and Goulding, K. (2013). *Gender dimension of national employment policies*. Geneva: ILO.

A fifth and last notion to this framework consists of the immediate, underlying and structural causes of gender inequalities. In this context, an analysis is carried out of the factors that cause the problems and the effects they have on the involved actors (Goulding, 2013; March, Smyth, & Mukhopadhyay, 1999).



Strengths and limitations of the Social Relations Approach

The Social Relations Approach may seem quite complicated, detailed and demanding. However, considering the complexity of the realities it encourages to analyse, it allows a deep and comprehensive understanding of gender relations.

One of the strengths of this approach is the fact that it considers different levels: the macro, meso and micro level.

It's not necessary to apply every single concept all at once. One can adapt parts of the approach to a specific context, project or wider programme.

Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA)

SEAGA was developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and is an approach to development based on an analysis of socio-economic patterns and participatory identification of women's and men's priorities. SEAGA's goal is to match what development delivers with what people need. SEAGA puts socio-economic analysis and gender analysis together. In doing so, it allows to learn about community dynamics, including the linkages among social, economic and environmental patterns. It clarifies the division of labour within a community, including divisions by gender and other social characteristics, and it facilitates understanding of resource use and control, and participation in community institutions (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2001).

Similarly to the social relations approach, SEAGA adopts an approach on three different levels: the field level, intermediate level and the macro level. The field level focuses on people, including women and men as individuals, socio-economic differences among households, and communities as a whole. The intermediate level focuses on structures, such as institutions and services, that function to operationalise the links between the macro and field levels, including communications and transportation systems, credit institutions, markets and extension, health and education services. The macro level focuses on policies and plans, both international and national, economic and social, including trade and finance policies and national development plans (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2001).

SEAGA's approach is based on three main guiding principles:

- Gender roles are key,
- Disadvantaged people are priority; and
- Participation is essential.

The Food and Agriculture Organization offers practical tools to field workers, development planners and policy makers that allow for applying SEAGA. Three handbooks have been published, one for each level of analysis:

- FAO. (2001). *Field Level Handbook. SEAGA, Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme*. Rome: FAO.
This handbook gives workers the tools to elicit the participation of men and women from local communities in the development process. A pocket document is available for workers in emergency humanitarian interventions with key analytical questions for promoting a participatory needs assessment and targeting.
- FAO. (2001). *Intermediate Level Handbook. SEAGA, Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme*. Rome: FAO.



This intermediate level handbook is designed for development planners in the public and private sectors to help them identify the links between policies and grassroots priorities and to assess their institution's organisational mechanism from a gender perspective.

- FAO. (2003). *Macro Level Handbook. SEAGA, Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme*. Rome: FAO.

SEAGA's macrolevel handbook is intended for policy and decision-makers working at the international and national levels. The handbook facilitates gender mainstreaming in programmes and policies and provides a conceptual framework, methods and tools that support participatory development planning.

The handbooks can be retrieved online:

<http://www.fao.org/gender/seaga/seaga-home/en/>

Strengths and limitations of SEAGA

The SEAGA programme is a comprehensive approach, but requires capacity-building for those wishing to implement it. Nevertheless, it allows to:

- Capture a better understanding of rural people's reality and circumstances
- Prevent discrimination and gender inequalities in the allocation of resources and services
- Contribute to the strategic planning and implementation of development interventions
- Involve rural people in development efforts
- Assist development specialists in targeting the needs of both men and women

Other Gender Analysis frameworks

Other famous gender analysis frameworks are listed below:

The Harvard Gender Roles Framework

This framework is one of the first frameworks for gender analysis. It is based on an efficiency approach, an economic case for allocating resources to women as well as men. It mainly examines women's and men's activity profiles, the differences in access and control over resources. It focuses on the roles of women and men, rather than on transformatory measures to achieve gender equality.

The Harvard framework was first designed to demonstrate that there is an economic case for allocating resources to women and to men, recognizing that gender equality provides economic benefits. It aims to help planners design more efficient projects to improve their overall productivity. This process involves mapping the work and resources of men and women in a community, and highlighting the main differences.

Strengths

- collects and organizes information about the gender division of labour;
- makes women's work visible;
- distinguishes between access and control;
- supports projects at the local level.



Weaknesses

- focuses on efficiency rather than equality;
- pays more attention to material resources than to social relationships;
- can be carried out in a non-participatory way.

(FAO, 2014)

For more information on the Harvard Framework:

Overholt, Anderson, Austin, and Cloud, 1985, *Gender Roles in Development Projects*. Kumarian Press Inc, Connecticut.

Moser Framework (Gender planning emphasising practical and strategic needs)

This framework aims to set up gender planning as a form of planning in its own right. It is based on ideas of gender equity and women's empowerment and examines women's productive, reproductive and community management roles in society. It identifies disparities in practical and strategic gender needs. It helps categorise policy responses, although not all policy responses fit neatly into these categories and some policies may contain elements of different categories. Its purpose is to support strategies to integrate gender in all types of interventions and to **compare the power relations in organizations, communities and institutions**.

It intends to help planners:

- identify the gender roles;
- assess the gender needs;
- understand the differential control of resources and decision-making within the household;
- balance the triple roles of women (i.e. productive, reproductive and community).

Strengths

- can be used for planning in different settings;
- challenges unequal gender relations;
- supports women's empowerment;
- recognizes the institutional and political resistance to transforming gender relations;
- alerts planners to the existing interrelationship between productive, reproductive and community work.

Weaknesses

- looks at separate activities rather than the interrelated activities of women and men;
- does not address other forms of inequality (e.g. race, class);
- is of limited help in practice given the strict division between practical and strategic needs.

(FAO, 2014)



More information on Moser's Framework:

Moser, C., 1993, *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*, Routledge, London.

Gender Analysis Matrix

This framework is influenced by participatory planning and community based approaches. It is based on participatory transformation of relations and analyses development at four levels of society (women, men, household, community), and four types of impact (labour, time, resources, socio-cultural factors). It is limited in its application. The GAM framework is a transformatory tool: it can initiate an analysis process by community members themselves. It encourages the community to identify and challenge constructively their own assumptions and stereotypes about gender roles. It may be used for different purposes: for example, for transformatory gender training or as a participatory planning tool.

Strengths

- designed specifically for community-based development workers;
- uses easy-to-understand categories and concepts;
- fosters 'bottom-up' analysis through community participation;
- considers gender relations between women and men, and what each category experiences separately;
- includes intangible resources;
- can be used to capture changes over time.

Weaknesses

- A good facilitator is necessary. The analysis must be repeated in order to capture changes over time.
- The GAM framework does not make explicit which women and which men are most likely to experience positive or negative impacts.
- It does not include either macro or institutional analysis.

(FAO, 2014)

More information on the Gender Analysis Matrix can be found in:

Parker R., 1993. *Another Point of View: A Manual on Gender Analysis Training for Grassroots Workers*, UNIFEM.

Women's Empowerment Framework

The women's empowerment framework has been developed by Longwe, and its goal is to achieve women's empowerment by enabling women to achieve equal control over the factors of production and participate equally in the development process. Longwe argues that poverty arises not from lack of productivity but from oppression and exploitation. She conceptualises five progressive levels of equality, arranged in hierarchical order, with each higher level denoting a higher level of empowerment. These are the basis to assess the extent of women's empowerment in any area of social or economic life. The levels of equality are: control, participation, conscientisation, access and welfare.

The Longwe framework can also be used to analyse the degree of commitment of a development organization to women's equality and empowerment.



A limitation of this framework is that it looks at the women's side of inequality, and does not address the gender roles of men.

More information on the Women's Empowerment Framework:

Longwe, S.H., 1991, *Gender awareness: the missing element in the Third World development project*, in: *Changing Perceptions: writings on gender and development*, Wallace T., and March C., eds. Oxford: Oxfam.

References and further reading

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