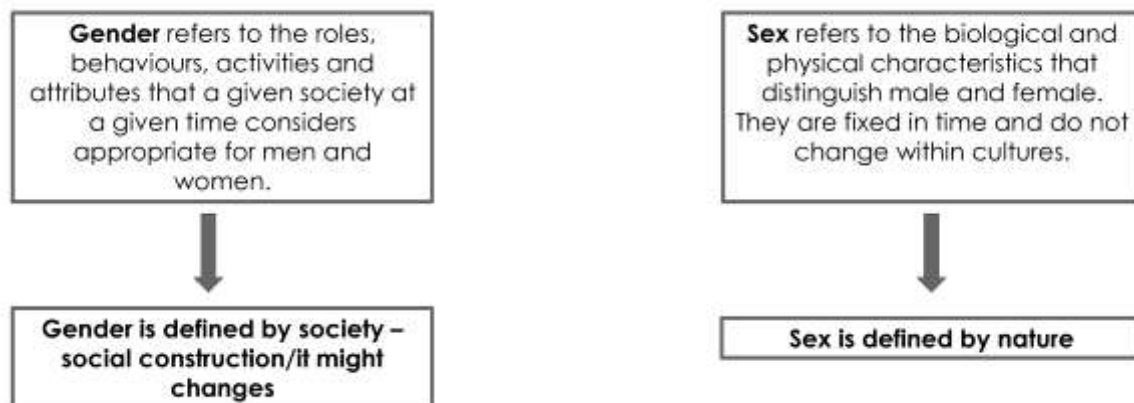# WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

Gender equality

Gender equality between women and men has often been perceived as a cross cutting issue related to the empowerment of women and the reduction of discrimination against them. This is true, but not enough, since gender equality is much more than that.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Basic gender concepts

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women.

Gender is defined by society – social construction/it might changes

Sex refers to the biological and physical characteristics that distinguish male and female. They are fixed in time and do not change within cultures.

Sex is defined by nature

Gender roles

Gender roles refer to social and behavioural norms that, within a specific culture, are widely accepted as socially appropriate for people of a specific sex. They usually determine the responsibilities and tasks traditionally assigned to men, women, boys and girls. Indeed, gender roles in society dictate how we are expected to act, speak, dress according to our sex.

Gender Discrimination is defined as: "Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

Multiple Discrimination: A person may experience discrimination or be treated less favourably on the basis of on more than one ground of discrimination, but each type of discrimination occurs in separate occasions.

What is gender mainstreaming?

"Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination."

Why is Gender Mainstreaming Important in many projects?

For example, a project targeting NEETs youth (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) needs to respond to specific issues: NEETs are a heterogeneous and vulnerable group, but certain categories face higher risks of exclusion, such as: young women, especially mothers or caregivers. ethnic minorities. people with disabilities.

Gender Gap: Young women (e.g.NEETs) face specific obstacles related to stereotypes, lack of support services (e.g., childcare), and discrimination.

The project must address these specific barriers:

- **Equal Inclusion:** Ensure that both women and men have equal access to the opportunities offered by the project.

- **Removing Barriers:** Identify and remove specific barriers preventing young women from accessing training and employment.

- **Creating an Inclusive Environment:** Promote a gender-equal culture among partners, companies, and trainers involved in the project.

Phases of Gender Mainstreaming Implementation

1. **Initial Gender Analysis:**

    1. Collect sex-disaggregated data.

    2. Identify the specific barriers faced by young women NEETs.

2. **Planning:**

    1. Design specific activities to address gender needs.

    2. Include support measures for women caregivers.

3. **Implementation:**

    1. Engage companies that promote gender equality.

    2. Provide specific training on gender stereotypes and biases.

4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

    1. Measure outcomes through a gender lens.

    2. Apply corrective measures if disparities emerge.

Pivotal role of communication

Communication and language have a pivotal role in promoting gender equality, as they intervene to change attitudes and norms that create and reinforce discrimination.

When designing a project, a campaign, an advocacy action or communication material, make sure to use a sensitive language that promote diversity, ensure equal representation of women and men (boys and girls) and, especially when talking about women and girls, avoid patronizing sentences.

For instance, saying "girls should be educated about their rights" or "women have to be informed on what to do in case of domestic violence" make it seem like it is their fault.

Communication programmes are very effective means to enhance and promote a change.

Principles and guidelines for a gender sensitive communication

- ➢ Make sure to challenge and not to reinforce gender stereotypes
- ➢ Avoid using exclusionary forms in language
- ➢ Promote equality through no gendered words
- ➢ Avoid gender stereotypes in video and images communication

Stereotypical images for men

NON Stereotypical images for men

Stereotypical images for women

NON Stereotypical images for women

Tools for mainstreaming gender into development projects

To mainstream gender into development projects means to ensure that gender considerations are included in all the phases of a project or programme. Women and men do have different needs, roles, responsibilities, as well as different grounds of discrimination and vulnerabilities. A gender mainstreaming approach to projects aims to ensure that such differences are acknowledged and reflected in the intervention.

Every action taken within a policy, programme or project might affect women and men distinctly.

Gender mainstreaming in youth policies

Gender mainstreaming in youth policies refers to the systematic integration of a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs aimed at young people. It ensures that youth policies address the needs and concerns of both young men and young women, promoting equality and preventing the perpetuation of gender inequalities.

Key aspects of gender mainstreaming in youth policies:

Transformative Approach:
It aims to change societal norms, power structures, and attitudes towards gender roles that can negatively impact youth.

Inclusive and Proactive:
It actively involves young people in the policy-making process, ensuring their voices and perspectives are heard.

Focus on Equality:
It promotes equitable access to opportunities, resources, and services for all young people, regardless of gender.

Cross-Cutting Issue:
It recognizes that gender is a transversal issue that affects all areas of youth policy, including education, employment, health, and social participation.

Data Collection and Analysis:
It requires the collection and analysis of gender-specific data to understand the unique challenges and needs of young people.

Targeted Interventions:

It includes targeted interventions to support the empowerment of girls and young women, addressing gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination.

Benefits of gender mainstreaming in youth policies:

More effective policies:
By considering the needs of both genders, policies become more relevant and effective in addressing the specific challenges faced by young people.

Improved outcomes:
Gender mainstreaming can lead to better educational attainment, employment opportunities, and overall well-being for both young men and young women.

Social and economic empowerment:
By promoting gender equality, gender mainstreaming contributes to the social and economic empowerment of youth, which in turn benefits society as a whole.

Reduced gender-based violence:
Addressing gender roles and stereotypes can help reduce gender-based violence and promote a safer environment for all young people.

Examples of gender mainstreaming in youth policies:

Education:
Ensuring equal access to quality education for all young people, regardless of gender, and addressing gender-based violence in schools.

Employment:
Promoting equal employment opportunities for young women and men, addressing gender stereotypes in the workplace, and ensuring safe working conditions.

Health:
Providing access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for all young people, regardless of gender, and addressing gender-based violence and other health disparities.

Social Participation:
Promoting youth participation in political and decision-making processes, ensuring equal representation of young women and men, and addressing gender stereotypes in political and social life

Gender mainstreaming is **a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns** and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

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