

# Chapter 7

---

## Gender mainstreaming guidelines

Everisto Mapedza, Bezaiet Dessalegn, Malika Abdelali-Martini and Heba Al Hariry



## Guidelines at a glance

These generic guidelines enable project designers and implementers to understand and address “the differences between and among women, men, girls and boys in terms of their relative ownership, distribution and control over resources, opportunities, constraints and power” (SIDA 2015, 2) across the project cycle. These guidelines offer an introduction to core gender concepts, and a framework for gender mainstreaming based on the project planning cycle and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency’s (SIDA’s) gender mainstreaming approach. Reference is also made to the joint FAO and SIDA gender mainstreaming approach, which was developed for a SIDA-supported project implemented in seven countries of the Near East and North Africa.

These guidelines further provide a brief section on why we need to move toward gender transformative approaches (GTAs). GTAs aim to address the root causes of gender inequality and aligns with Sweden’s feminist foreign policy approach for a gender-equal humane world. Sweden’s feminist foreign policy is a transformative agenda, which aims to change social, cultural, economic, institutional, financial and political structures. It also enhances the ability of women and girls to become influential actors who can individually and collectively exercise their rights and claim their entitlements equally with men (MFA 2019: 11).

## 7.1. Introduction

### 7.1.1 Introduction to gender – beyond women

Mainstreaming gender equality and women’s rights into the water reuse sector is central for infrastructural investment outcomes for both women and men. Socially inclusive water reuse approaches can address normative and structural barriers which result in unequal access to, use and control of water reuse interventions.

In most developing countries, women comprise the majority of the population (FAO 2011). In the case study countries of Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, women are nearly half of their respective populations at 49.47%, 49.4% and 50%, respectively (World Bank 2022).

Addressing gender equality and women’s rights and economic empowerment in development will significantly contribute toward the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNDP 2018). In the case of water reuse, gender dividends include greater impact from water investments through reaching women who would otherwise be left out. Sustainability can only be achieved when the water reuse system or model considers the requirements of both women and men in their design and operation. However, most development interventions often exclude women due to established gender-based social norms that are often biased against them.

An understanding of the core concepts of gender in development is key to appreciate the logic behind gender mainstreaming. While the word *gender* has become common jargon within the development field, it is also one of the most misunderstood. Often, it is assumed to be synonymous with *women* as most gender-related projects focus on women's issues because women tend to be more disadvantaged than men. However, *gender* refers to socially constructed identities, relationships, challenges and outcomes. Therefore, gender goes beyond *women* to embrace the entire community. It is an inclusive approach to development that sheds light on the intricate challenges faced by men, women, youth and other groups of a community.

### 7.1.2 Core concepts

These guidelines make a case for gender mainstreaming but also further demonstrate how to mainstream gender equality and women's rights into all phases of water reuse projects. Below are several core concepts in the discourse about gender in development.

**Gender** refers to socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as the norms, roles and relationships that exist between them. It does not refer to the biological differences between men and women. Gender is the value society ascribes to people based on sex, age, caste, religion and other social variables. It does not reflect one's capability and needs but is a function of the differential power dynamics. For example, in some societies it is unacceptable for women to be engaged in irrigation activities while it is the norm in others. In many societies, this is due to the night shifts of irrigation when women are not supposed to contribute. The different roles of women in these contexts are not defined by their physical ability to irrigate their fields but by the roles ascribed to them by the society they live in. For the purposes of these guidelines, the focus will largely be on women, while recognizing that gender is much broader than women.

United Nations Women defines gender as referring to the roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women (UN Women 2022). Furthermore, the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys are all important elements for consideration in this regard. Gender also refers to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through the socialization processes. They are context/time specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context and society.

As such, gender refers to the characteristics, behaviors, roles and attitudes of men and women, as well as the relationships between them as shaped by societal norms. Gender is thus culture specific and changes over time.

**Gender roles** are the 'social definition' of women and men's roles, which vary among different societies and cultures, classes and ages, and during different periods in history (FAO 2018; Mapedza 2008). For instance, women in the twenty-first century are far more active in social, economic and political affairs than they were in the eighteenth century. Irrespective of the

differences, gender continues to play an important role in defining the principles for division of labor within families, communities and in the public arena. The roles are defined by societal norms including cultural and religious norms that lay out the boundaries guiding men and women's functions and responsibilities. Gender roles are thus socially constructed and learned. They are dynamic (change over time) and are multi-faceted as they differ within and between cultures.

**Gender equality** refers to equality between men and women, with respect to their rights and in legislation and policies. Gender equality is a basic human right. It ensures equal access to, and control over, resources and services within the family and society. It is the recognition that men and women often have different needs and priorities, face different constraints, have different aspirations and contribute to development in different ways. It acknowledges that men and women are biologically different *but* must have equal mechanisms and processes to seize opportunities.

**Gender equity** means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Is a set of policy measures/special programs that are corrective; targeting women (mainly, but this could be any vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, minority communities and neglected geographies) with the aim of compensating them for the historical and social disparities that deprived them of enjoying access to equal opportunities. Measures of positive discrimination and quota system are two examples of gender equality.

**Gender-based constraints** are barriers inhibiting either men's or women's access to material, non-material resources and opportunities of any type. These can be formal laws, norms, attitudes, perceptions, values or practices (cultural, institutional, political or economic).

**Women's empowerment** consists of the process of empowering women through the facilitation of women's articulation of their needs and priorities as well as the enhancement of their active role in promoting their interests and agency.

**Agency** can be defined as the ability to make strategic choices under constraints or an unsuitable environment (Yount et al. 2020). Kabeer (1999) further points out that agency includes the processes of decision-making itself, as well as the less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception as well as manipulation.

**Gender analysis** is a methodology that explores the differences in gender roles and relations with respect to a specific target group. Gender analysis at the project level gives insight into how tasks and responsibilities are divided between household members: who does what and how it is done? Who has control over what? Who attends or contributes to which event? Who wins? Who loses? It gives information on the ways in which women's access to, and control over, resources such as land, income, inheritance and political influence relate to that of men. Ideally, gender analysis should be done before the start of a project. The analysis can

be repeated later to capture changes induced by development interventions. In other words, gender analysis refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities and the constraints they face relative to each other (Kabeer 1999). Gender analysis is facilitated through the collection of **sex disaggregated data**, which consists of data that is cross classified by sex, presenting information separately for women and men, boys and girls. Sex-disaggregated data allows for observing the differences in opportunity and achievement between men and women. An important part of valuable information is lost by assuming that men and women have the same access, ability, control over resources and roles (Doss 2013).

**Gender within intersectionality:** The lived experiences are a result of the intersection of multiple factors, which include race, class, caste, language, culture, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexuality and education (Porter 2018). Intersectionality within gender is understood as how the various dimensions of inequality further intersect to compound the inequalities and disadvantages that men and women face (Viruell-Fuentes 2012). Black feminists of the United States challenged the notion of a universal gendered experience and argued that Black women's experiences were also shaped by race and class (Collins 1998; Collins 1990; MFA 2019; Viruell-Fuentes 2012) These inequalities include race and class ethnicity, which further compound the gendered disadvantages. According to Potter (2018):

Intersectional lens helps in explaining how people experience inequality according to different – intersecting – aspects of their identity. No one, for example, is *just* poor, or *just* working class, or *just* a woman or *just* a disabled person. Each person experiences a combination of inequalities differently, and these will shape how each person responds in different situations.

**Gender transformative approaches (GTAs):** Consist of programs and interventions aiming at creating opportunities for individuals to actively challenge existing gender norms, addressing power inequities between individuals of different sexes and promoting positions of social, economic and political influence for women. Also viewed as a feminist perspective, GTAs argue that for meaningful gender changes, there has to be a change in the norms, values and the unequal power relationships that define gender roles (Kabeer 2001; Mukhopadhyay 2004; Cole et al. 2014; Mapedza et al. 2019; Kabeer 1994). GTAs argue that as long as the social structure promoting patriarchy and other inequalities are in place, gender disparities will remain. The approaches are informed by conceptual frameworks that explicitly recognize the potent influence of social relations on creating and perpetuating gender inequalities (Kabeer 1994; Locke 1999).

GTAs are much more empowering as they question the reasons that led to a specific situation. For example: Why are women doing most of the work? Why are women powerless to transform themselves? This approach challenges the social structure which defines roles and responsibilities for men and women. This approach challenges current division of labor

---

<sup>1</sup>GTAs are often viewed as a strategic gender approach as opposed to a practical gender approach that seeks to lighten the burden of women within the existing constraints. GTAs aim for gender equality as an end goal.

and challenges existing power relationships and dynamics. This approach focuses on triggering change and is linked to decision-making process and empowerment of women. It is about defining a new reality where women are much more equal than the status quo. Gender under the transformative approach entails a better understanding of the process as well as the outcome (O’Neil and Domingo 2016; Kabeer 2019). GTAs align well with SIDA’s Feminist Foreign Policy, which aims for equality between women and men.

**Gender mainstreaming** means integrating a gender equality perspective at all stages and levels of policies, programs and projects. The concept was first introduced at the 1985 World Conference on Women held in Nairobi, Kenya. It is based on the recognition that men and women have different needs, different access to and control over resources and play different roles. These roles differ from one context to the other depending on the country, region, ethnic group or other determining factors that shape and organize societies.

Gender mainstreaming offers an alternative to the traditional ways of thinking that caters to the needs of the dominant group in a society and aims to intentionally bring the gender-based constraints, inequalities and biases into the mainstream thinking. Gender mainstreaming thus broadens the scope for designing and implementing inclusive projects and programs that enhance the well-being of both women and men and creates a more socially just and sustainable society. At a global level, addressing gender in development will significantly contribute toward the attainment of the SDGs (UNDP 2018).

Gender mainstreaming further develops tailored interventions that address women-specific priorities including through equity measures. These interventions addressed through policies, plans, projects/programs need to be backed by gender-responsive targets, indicators and budgets, which need to be monitored and evaluated for the impact they make on women’s empowerment and gender equality. Further, gender mainstreaming must adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach with all relevant and related government ministries, sectors and stakeholder groups present on institutionally established multi-disciplinary mechanisms in a sustained manner. Most importantly, women and their organizations working at various levels on water reuse must be represented on these mechanisms at all stages of the policy process in leadership and decision-making roles. In particular, this must include gender-aware women and those affected by, and who are knowledgeable about, water issues and lack of appropriate reuse (as in the case of water reuse, for example).

---

## 7.2. Considering gender in water reuse

With increased demand for water resources, water reuse recycles water so that it may be used for domestic and agricultural purposes (see Chapter 2). The ongoing climate change and climate variability challenges will make the role of water reuse more important. It is strategic that gender mainstreaming is included in the water reuse opportunities.

According to the WorldBank (2019), service providers, wastewater treatment service providers need to engage diverse types of labor force, which include both men and women for efficient service provision:

To meet these challenges, water utilities need to increase their productivity and become more efficient. This will require tapping into new approaches, technologies, and solutions, as well as renewing the water workforce to meet emerging needs and move away from business as usual. By hiring, managing, and training a more diverse mix of employees, new and fresh perspectives can help shape the water utilities of the future (World Bank 2019: ix).

This would entail hiring both men and women at all levels of wastewater treatment to bring in new perspectives within the utilities. Women bring in a unique dimension in water and sanitation which is lost through the current exclusion. Women comprise about 18% of all the water and sanitation service providers. Their numbers were even lower for more technical fields (World Bank 2019). The exclusion of women in more technical fields in the water sector is a reflection of the broader exclusion of women in such technical fields (IWA 2016; Das 2017). Evidence shows that over time, there is a slow increase in the number of women working in water and sanitation utilities.

### **7.2.1. Why consider gender in water reuse?**

Gender is central for water and water reuse in terms of current roles and responsibilities of women and men, patterns of asset ownership including abilities and constraints to access, use and control resource, and differential benefits in the value chain. It is also important to consider the various institutions/actors involved and the roles and positions held by men and women in these institutions and associated value chains.

Firstly, in most developing countries women comprise nearly half of the population (FAO 2011). However, most development interventions often exclude women due to gender biases which have developed over a long period of time. Gender must be understood within water reuse for several reasons. Water reuse in agriculture offers an opportunity to make use of water several times and, in some cases, for different purposes. The purposes for reuse and the types of activities required for reuse often engage men, women or both depending on the context and existing social norms. It is thus important to understand the shifts in gender roles in line with shifts in reuse strategies and purposes, in order to respond to each need strategically. Using gender analysis tools will provide contextual information which offer an in-depth understanding of the constraints and opportunities for change, which in turn offers insight into how to effectively mainstream gender in project implementation processes and achieve set targets.

Secondly, water reuse in general, and especially in agriculture, requires strict adherence to set rules and regulations by the users of the water to ensure its safe use with minimal negative implications for humans, animals and the environment. These rules and detailed information on suggested modalities for reuse should be clearly and effectively communicated to all

men and women users. Women form a majority of the agricultural labor force in the MENA region and are largely responsible for food preparation, water collection, use and provision. However, their needs and the challenges they face are often neglected in project planning, implementation and evaluation processes. Adequate and timely access to essential information, including procedures and protocols for reuse – which is dependent upon the type of crop grown, or additional steps needed in cooking the food – will give women an opportunity to be part of the process of identifying and deciding on appropriate reuse options and be in full compliance with the rules thereby protecting themselves, their household and the environment from harm. This is even more poignant where vegetables which may be eaten raw are to be prepared. Gender mainstreaming in water reuse projects is thus very important to ensure equitable access to information.

Thirdly, water reuse for agriculture is a sensitive issue in many countries. This is partly attributed to cultural and religious concerns, and lack of information to influence people's perception on its acceptability and safety for use. The more informed the users are, the better they will be equipped to manage risks. This is especially true for women who tend to have less access to technical information. In gender mainstreaming, it is critical to consider the intersectionality of the different dimensions (culture and religion) and sources of inequality (sex, race and ethnicity) that can exacerbate existing inequalities and put certain groups of the society at a more disadvantaged position. A heightened level of awareness of these issues will help project managers and implementers understand the complexities surrounding water reuse for agriculture, on the basis of which they can design targeted activities that meet the needs of the society as a whole – including men and women and facilitate acceptability and use of this important water resource. Women who are well informed can be a force to address current social acceptance barriers toward water reuse.

---

### 7.3. Practical steps for integrating gender in water reuse

The first part of this chapter looks at opportunities for mainstreaming gender within the generic water reuse sector in the context of a project cycle. The second part looks at employment opportunities within the water and sanitation sector which builds on a World Bank (2019) study. The core idea for focus on the latter, stems from the understanding that water reuse, which depends on investments that create alternative use for different qualities of water creates new employment opportunities for men and women. This section thus explores some of the approaches to increase women's employment within the water reuse sector.

#### 7.3.1 Gender mainstreaming opportunities in the water reuse project cycle

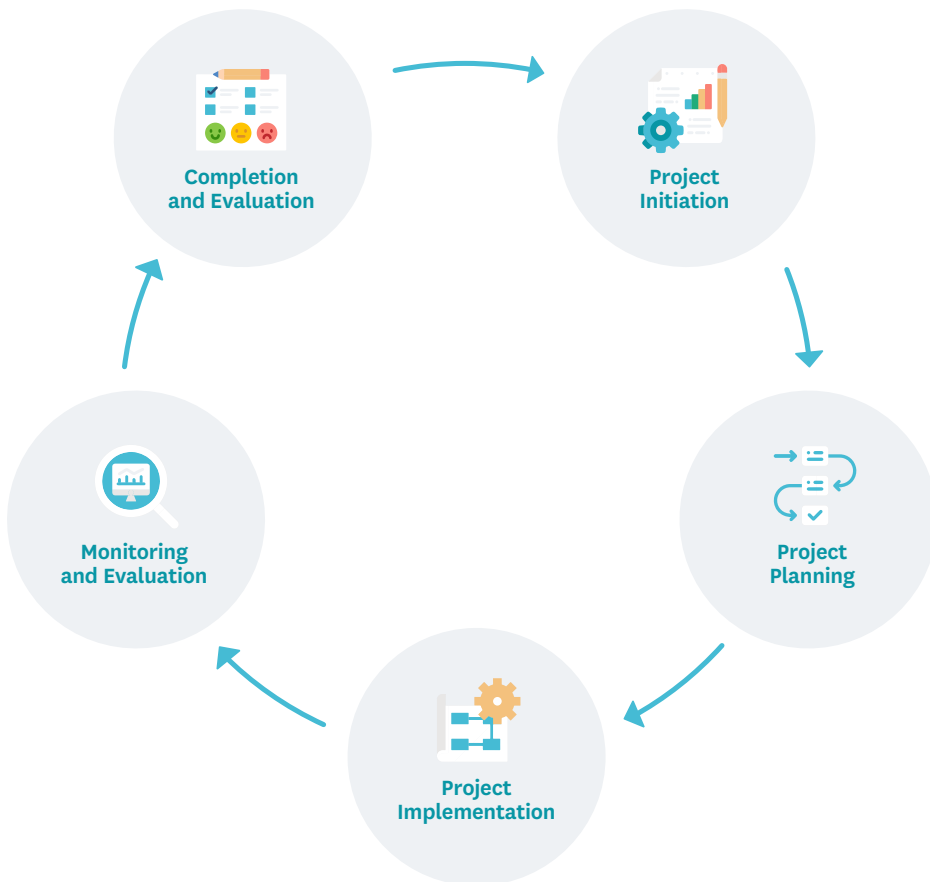
This section offers practical steps for engaging women, men and youth along the core domains of a project cycle in general, and with focus on water reuse projects in particular (Figure 7.1). Gender mainstreaming calls for the disaggregation of all data by sex, and whenever possible by age, economic status, ethnicity and other core social differentiating factors to account for differences in challenges and opportunities among different social groups.



Collecting additional data on other intersectionalities including race, class, caste, sexuality, religion, ability and physical appearance is also useful to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by different social groups. The breadth of variables to be considered should depend on the scope of the project and the context within which gender-based inequalities persist. Guidelines, in the form of leading questions, are offered to explore different opportunities to mainstream gender in each aspect of the project cycle including planning and design, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

In these guidelines, gender is assessed using four approaches presented in the form of questions (SIDA 2015), which need to be addressed by water reuse project teams:

- How are the targeted measures aiming at ensuring, or at least increasing, participation of women in different water reuse programs?
- What are the integrated measures with focus on structures and systems that systematically reduce the gender gap and empower women within the water reuse program?
- What are the policy dialogue opportunities and challenges for men and for women to participate, lead, manage and benefit from water reuse investments?
- How are gender disparities and differences included as part of the applied methodology?



**FIGURE 7.1** The project cycle in the water reuse context.

## Stage 1: Water reuse project initiation

This is a preparatory stage of data collection and gender analysis through secondary data and active participation of women and men. It aims to better understand broader socioeconomic and political context on gender equality and women's rights and in water reuse so as to best address women's priorities in relation to water reuse in ways that will begin altering power relations between men and women. This stage will also surface risks and mitigation strategies to move a transformational gender agenda.

Project managers should ask the following questions:

- What are the current roles of men, women, and youth in water reuse, i.e., who does what, which occupation, activity, and task? Where – (community spaces, water treatment plant, home)? And how – (type, method, purpose)?
- What can the project learn from the stock of knowledge that men, women and youth have accumulated over the years concerning water reuse (types, methods, benefits and purpose)?
- Are there any differences in the perception of water reuse among men, women and youth?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for reuse for men, women and youth?
- Are there any gender-based constraints that present different opportunities/challenges to men, women and youth? And are they reflected in the problem analysis and prioritization process? Note: In this case, challenges and opportunities should be conceptualized in a broad context to include human, social, economic, physical and institutional challenges and opportunities.
- It is equally important to consider the whole value chain (input-production-processing-packaging-marketing) and use a broader view to account for various actors and institutions that are involved across multiple levels of the chain.
- Will the solutions/changes proposed by the project address women's practical water reuse needs, or both practical needs/priorities and a transformational gender agenda?
- What are the anticipated risks to women's empowerment and a transformational agenda in water reuse?
- What are the mitigation strategies?
- Which groups in the internal water sector/community environment and external environment beyond water reuse sector need to be advocated with for the change the project envisages to happen?

The initiation stage is essential to establish a good understanding of the overall bio-physical, institutional, political and socio-economic conditions, including gender norms and relations to inform the project planning phase of the project. Such information could be collected through desk reviews and key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders.

This stage will also allow project managers to identify potential partners, set realistic goals, identify potential risks and mitigating solutions, and set realistic assumptions.

## Stage 2: Water reuse project planning

The planning process should:

- include consultation processes based on multi sector/stakeholder engagement approach, which ensures the active representation and participation of women and their priorities in project design;
- gauge the level of gender awareness of key institutions and include relevant activities to address gaps in awareness;
- ensure that the goals/objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities, have sufficient budget and human resources allocated to them to achieve set goals; and
- ensure that the project's theory of change reflects and pursues a transformational gender agenda.

Project managers and implementers should ask the following questions about opportunities for incorporating gender within the project cycle:

- Is the specific theory of change with related outcomes, outputs, activities, targets, indicators, budgets and suggested solutions inclusive of stakeholder consultation, and does it reflect the needs of men, women and youth?
- Are the institutions dealing with water/water reuse in relation to the project have gender sensitive corporate mandates, structures, standard operating procedures (SOPs), cultures, programs, budgets and accountability systems? Are the institutions and other stakeholders involved in the project inclusive/gender sensitive in their approach at the community, work site, household and state level (whichever is applicable)? If not, what can be done to ensure equitable delivery of goods and services?
- Has the project allocated sufficient resources to ensure that all activities addressing women's priorities and gender inequality in water reuse can be implemented as planned?
- Are the proposed solutions accessible and affordable for all groups of the community? If not, why not? And what can be done (targeted solutions) to meet the needs of minority groups or ensure equitable access and use by all? Note: The composition of marginalized groups can be different from one society to the other. While women almost always fall under this category, it is also important to keep in mind other factors for social differentiation including race, religion, ethnicity, etc. In such cases, it is advised to adopt an intersectionality approach to assess the combined effect of prevalent factors on a group's ability to access and benefit from the project.

## Stage 3: Water reuse project implementation

Within the project implementation phase, project managers and implementers should ask the following questions:

- Are the required resources available – including capacities on gender, project implementers with required skills and qualifications, enough project staff and budgets?
- Has support been provided to engender institutional mandates, SOPs, organizational structure, programs, budgets and accountability systems?

- Are relevant institutions and stakeholders effectively sensitized and engaged to provide services equitably to men, women and youth?
- Is the baseline data (quantitative and qualitative) collected for the project disaggregated by age and sex, economic status and ethnicity?
- Do efforts for community mobilization/engagement/participation and training create equal opportunities and provide measures to ensure equal access to project benefits for men, women and youth?
- Does messaging and training content reflect women's priorities, rights and gender equality in water reuse?
- Do efforts to raise awareness, provide information, demonstrate or offer short-/long-term training equitably target men, women and youth to ensure that all equitably share from the benefits of the project?
- Does the project create equal opportunities and provide measures to ensure equal access to project benefits for men, women and youth?
- Is there a fair representation of both sexes in the project implementation team? Note: This is important both from the perspective of ensuring gender balance in the workplace, representation of gender experts, and to ensure the teams' ability to reach targeted communities in culturally sensitive manner. The latter is especially important in cases where women, due to cultural or religious reasons, can only work with women.
- Are relevant institutions and stakeholders effectively sensitized and engaged to equitably provide services to men, women and youth?
- What institutional training strategies will be employed? And does it consider the required needs for all staff (i.e., men and women) at all levels? Including management to build the knowledge and skills needed to mainstream gender equality and women's rights perspectives into their water reuse work?
- Are there accountability mechanisms in place to assess performance on gender responsiveness with corrective action for transgression?
- Are there mechanisms in place for exchange of information, monitoring progress, and evaluation and addressing challenges, and is this being implemented?
- Are there mechanisms in place for adjustment in strategies and actions, and is this happening?
- Are budgets adequate for the gender equality actions and are they being disbursed in a timely manner? Note: This is very important to ensure sustainability of project outcomes.

#### Stage 4: Performance monitoring of water reuse projects

Having gender-sensitive indicators and targets as part of a project's performance monitoring system is essential to track gender-related changes over time. The indicators are useful to highlight changes or the lack thereof against set gender targets, allowing project leaders an opportunity to timely address any concerns. Such monitoring and evaluation are significant as it allows tracking of progress and provides useful information to make timely adjustments during implementation. To achieve this, project managers should consider:

- Are there sufficient gender-specific performance indicators that are disaggregated by age and sex, economic status and ethnicity that can be measured either quantitatively or qualitatively over time (percentage and numbers)?
- What are the expenditures on women's priorities and gender equality actions?  
Examples:
  - Number of participants who received short-term training (disaggregated by sex and age)
  - Number of participants who are using recommended options for safe water reuse (disaggregated by sex and age)
  - Numbers of participants whose knowledge and conceptual understanding increased with trainings. (This can be measured by doing pre- and post-training surveys).
- What are the adjustments, revisions related to challenges in implementation and budget revisions that have been made?

### Stage 5: Evaluation of water reuse projects

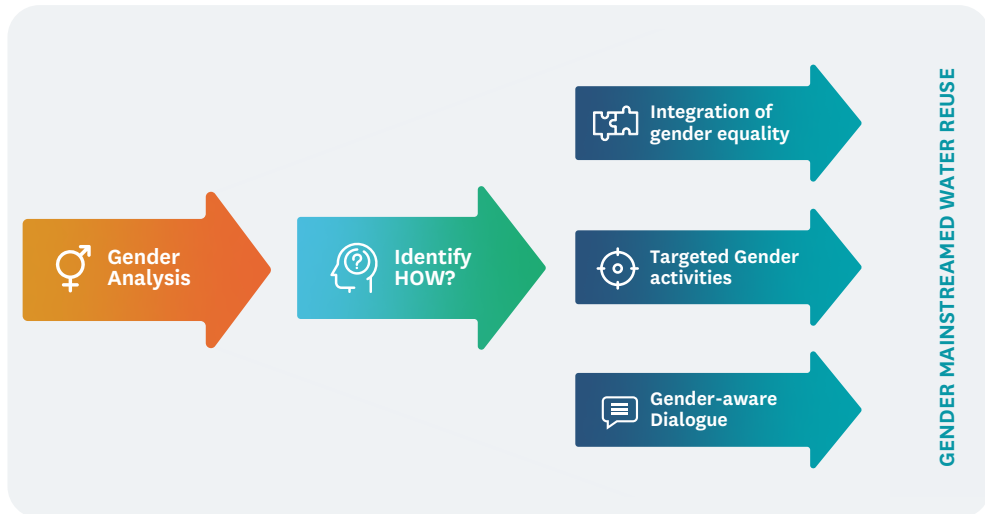
Project evaluations offer an opportunity to learn about what worked and what did not in gender mainstreaming throughout the project cycle. In addition to providing general recommendations for improvement, evaluations – when appropriately gendered – can also provide invaluable insight into gender transformations achieved as a direct result of the project.

Questions to ask during an evaluation include:

- Was there rigor in the gender analysis from preparatory stage to evaluation?
- Was there rigor in addressing women's priorities and gender equality in design phase in relation to goals/objectives, methodology and theory of change?
- How did the project benefit or meet the needs of men, women and youth (primary and secondary beneficiaries)?
- How has the project influenced or led to changes in perceptions on water reuse among men, women and youth (primary and secondary beneficiaries)?
- How has the project influenced benefits related to meeting practical needs?
- How has the project influenced structural, institutional and gender-based changes? Particularly changes in gender roles/power dynamics/decision-making and overall social norms?  
Note: The change in this case could be negative or positive. For instance, an increase in the role of women in the management and reuse of water could be positive if it results in change in status or income, or negative if it only results in increased workload.
- Are the linkages between gender related outputs, outcomes and impacts clearly specified?
- Is the project's theory of change gender sensitive?
- What are some of the lessons learned from mainstreaming gender throughout the project cycle?
- Did the project contribute to long-term behavioral change that fosters gender equality?
- What institutional training strategies were employed, and did they take into account the required needs of all staff (i.e., men and women) at all levels? (Including management to build the knowledge and skills needed to undertake the mainstreaming strategies).

### 7.3.2 Gender mainstreaming approach guide

Figure 7.2 summarizes the gender mainstreaming approaches. Gender analysis is the first step, followed by identifying how men and women are impacted which then informs the gender aware dialogue, the targeted gender activities and the integration of gender equality leading to gender mainstreamed in water reuse. Gender mainstreaming is then practically situated within a water reuse project.



**FIGURE 7.2** Gender mainstreaming in water reuse.  
SOURCE: Adapted from SIDA 2015.

## 7.4. Gendered employment opportunities

### 7.4.1 Shifting modus operandi for water utilities

Historically, water and sanitation utilities were often top-down entities that saw themselves as offering an essential service based on their expertise. The business environment is shifting with the need to see citizens as customers whose needs must be addressed. This turning upside down of the hierarchical approach entails that citizens are viewed as clients or customers who must have a say in the way the service providers are managed. Women must not only be consulted, but they need to be represented at different levels of the service providers tiers and contribute to decision-making. In other words, the service providers need to reflect the society in which they are doing their business (WorldBank 2019).

### 7.4.2 Multiple benefits from women engagement in water and sanitation utilities

While the ultimate benefit to women lies on transformative changes that create enabling environments for equality among different social group, in the interim, women can still benefit from gender-focused interventions. Through engaging women, the World Bank(2019) argues that the benefits are multiple. First, the women who are engaged benefit through employment opportunities. Second, the community gains through having representation and input of its society members. Third, the water and sanitation service providers will benefit from an

increased pool of talents with a potential of diversified inputs for more efficient and effective service provision to intended customers.

Studies have noted that including women in the design, operation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities results in positive outcomes at different levels (WorldBank 2019; GWA 2011; Hunt et al. 2018; Thompson 2017). These changes, through time, will also have a cumulative effect that shifts norms and structures that hinder women's rights.

### **7.4.3 Removing constraints for women in water and sanitation sector benefits the broader economy**

A more gender-inclusive approach within the water and sanitation sector has significant financial benefits to the nation (World Bank 2019). The inclusion of women has broader economic benefits in all sectors including the agricultural sector (FAO 2011; World Bank 2012, 2019). Excluding women in the economy costs USD 160.2 trillion of losses in human capital wealth globally (Wodon 2018). Within the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a 50% male-female work ratio is projected to result in a 6% gain in the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030 (OECD 2015).

### **7.4.4 Removing barriers discriminating women in water and sanitation providers**

There is discrimination against women employment in the water and sanitation sectors at four stages: attraction, recruitment, retention and advancement (World Bank 2019).

#### **Attraction**

Social norms shape gender roles. Certain roles are socially perceived as male or female roles. Division of labor also see women not even exploring opportunities in the employment opportunities considered male 'type' labor. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates are mainly males.

While there are initiatives to encourage female students to study science subjects, the number remains low, which already reduces their number from the available pool of science graduates. The last point contributes to the lack of role models in that most of the technical positions are occupied by males. Without role models, fewer women aspire to be in the technical fields. Some initiatives are using the few women who are in the technical fields to be mentors and also visit lower-level schools to inspire girls to aspire to technical fields.

#### **Recruitment**

Women face more barriers in the recruitment process for water and sanitation utilities. The World Bank (2019) Utility Survey over a 12-month period showed that only 20% of new hires were females. Some of the reasons for fewer women being recruited include biases in the recruitment process. The World Bank notes that even in advertisements there tends to be discriminatory language, which discourages women from applying. The study also shows that female STEM graduates were discriminated against in the hiring process. It is further noted that in some economies, women are specifically barred from being engaged in the water sector.

Positive directions would include gender-neutral advertisements and broader interview panels. Other initiatives include on-the-job training, placement programs, internships and apprenticeships, and incentives and diversity targets.

### Retention

Retention of women in water and sanitation utilities is affected by a lack of gender-sensitive policies and a discriminatory work environment. Domestic chores, which remain a burden for women, have meant that it is a much bigger challenge for women to strike a healthy work-life balance as compared with their male counterparts. While society is changing, the burden of childcare remains the responsibility of women. This has meant that men will have an edge professionally as they are less restricted by domestic chores and childcare.

Family-friendly policies are progressing especially in developed countries. For instance, organizations that offer flexible working hours for their employees tend to retain more of their women staff. However, such policies lag for the rest of the world and working hours might be used as a basis for recruitment discrimination.

Fair wages are still one of the key issues as women most often earn less than men, even in developed countries. The work environment, especially in the water and sanitation arena, was largely designed with men in mind. This makes it difficult for women who would like to join the profession.

Sexual harassment is also a major concern mainly for women. The #MeToo movement has shed light on the silent women who experience sexual harassment, which is more pronounced in male-dominated fields such as the water and sanitation sectors.

The work facilities and amenities in a number of instances are designed without considering female requirements, which may be as basic as bathroom facilities and nursing rooms for mothers with babies and toddlers.

### Advancement (gender differentiation in management)

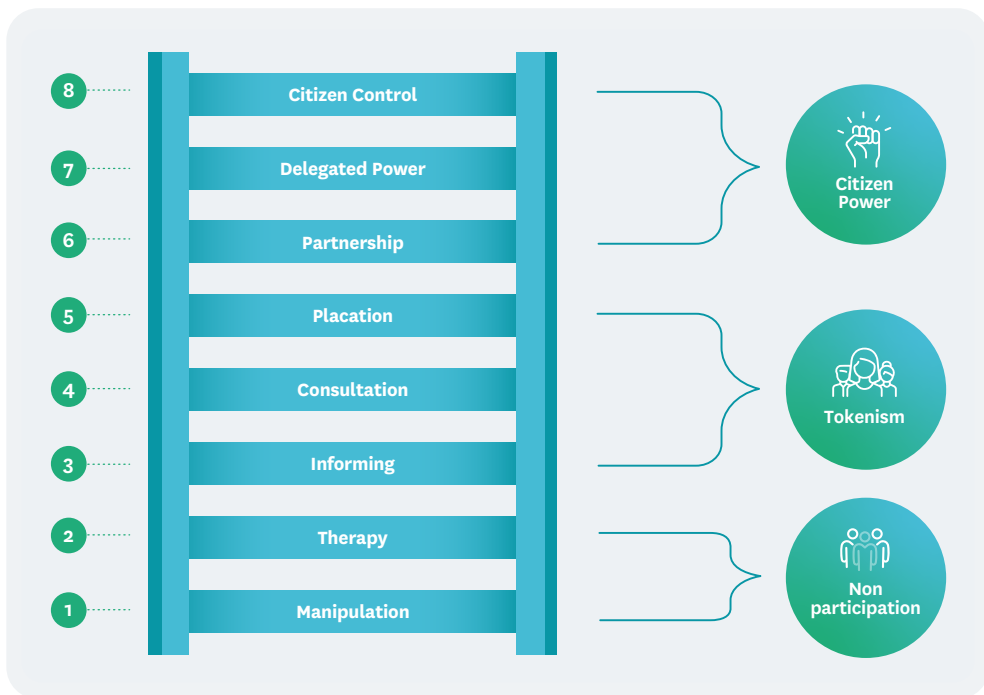
Women in water utilities do not always have the same opportunities as men to advance their career. Sometimes, training opportunities are given to men due to their perceived minimal demands on their time from child rearing and domestic chores. Mentorship for men is easily available, while women have fewer people to mentor them. Networks and opportunities are usually targeted toward men. Events and opportunities are usually available through men's clubs and events. Sometimes senior management opportunities are discussed in such settings. This suggests that women, and sometimes young men, are also excluded from such key decision-making events, often held away from the workplace and sometimes during weekends or holidays.



## 7.5. Promising approaches in water and sanitation utilities

The section below highlights the different community engagement approaches, beginning with manipulation on one hand and ending with more inclusive citizen control.

*Targeted interventions to increase female participation in water utilities.* Women need to be targeted not only as employees but in decisions made about water and sanitation and water reuse specifically. This could be viewed in the context of Arnstein's ladder of participation, moving beyond non-participation and tokenism for women to real engagement of women in water and sanitation challenges and opportunities (Arnstein 1969) (Figure 7.3). Water reuse interventions must aim for citizen control as opposed to manipulation.



**FIGURE 7.3** Arnstein's ladder of participation showing different levels of community engagement.  
SOURCE: Arnstein 1969.

*Creating an enabling environment at national and subnational levels to facilitate positive gender practices at the local level.* Several countries are signing up to the international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1979 and the SDGs, which have gender equality and women's empowerment as a key aspect. Some countries are going even further by developing domestic laws, policies and strategies. One of the key challenges in most developing countries is translating 'good' policies into action on the ground. This is mainly due to the lack of understanding and the will to change; consequently gender is often thought as side-streamed rather than mainstreamed.

*Gender norms.* While gender stereotypes are certainly being played out in the water and sanitation sector, it is important to note that such gender stereotypes result from the socialization process. Some employers and interview panels do not reflect on their ‘socialization’ process and how it is bringing gender biases into the water and sanitation sector.

There is no ‘silver bullet’ solution for gender equality in water and sanitation utilities. The utilities need to learn from each other while simultaneously tailoring solutions for their own context. Each water and sanitation utility needs to address gender equality, otherwise the inequalities will continue under a business-as-usual mode.

---

## 7.6. Conclusion

These guidelines began by developing a common understanding of ‘gender’, which is not the same as ‘women.’ Gender is understood as a socialization process that ascribes values to men, women, youth and children based on who they are rather than what they can do. For instance, some parents would avail less educational opportunities to a girl as compared to a boy in the same household. In terms of employment opportunities, women face more hurdles even if they have the same qualifications as men.

Using SIDA’s gender mainstreaming approach in the context of a project cycle, opportunities to integrate gender have been identified in the form of questions to ensure that gender reflection and action take place throughout the project cycle. Good gender mainstreaming is an important development that will positively impact men and women, as well as children, who are the citizens awaiting the benefits from socially inclusive water reuse interventions.

The guidelines further attempt to show project designers and implementers how to empower women in water reuse projects and ensure that reuse benefits everyone – men, women and youth. It is, however, important to note that gender mainstreaming is just a good start. The aim is GTAs, which strive to challenge and change norms and values while reconfiguring power relationships to enhance women’s agency, thereby promoting equality between women and men. This is the ultimate aim for development interventions including in the water reuse sector.

## References

- Arnstein, S.R. 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. *JAIP* 35: 216–224.
- Cole, S.M.; Van Koppen, B.; Puskur, R.; Estrada, N.; Declerck, F.; Baidu-Forson, J.J.; Remans, R.; Mapedza, E.; Longley, C.; Muyaule, C.; Zulu, F. 2014. *Collaborative effort to operationalize the gender transformative approach in the Barotse Floodplain*. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Program Brief.
- Collins, P.H. 1990. *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, P.H. 1998. It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. *Hypatia* 13: 62–82.
- Das, M.B. 2017. *The rising tide: A new look at water and gender*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Doss, C. 2013. *Data needs for gender analysis in agriculture*. Washington, DC: IFPRI.
- FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). 2011. *Women in agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development*. Rome: FAO.
- FAO. 2018. *FAO – SIDA Project and related TCPS gender and water management and governance in the Near East and North Africa*. Rome: FAO.
- GWA (Gender and Water Alliance). 2011. *Gender scan methodology for water utilities*. Gender and Water Alliance. Available at <http://genderandwater.org/en/gwa-products/knowledge-on-gender-and-water/gender-scan-methodology-for-water-utilities/view> (accessed on August 31, 2022)
- Hunt, V.; Lee, L.; Prince, S.; Dixon-Freyre, S. 2018. *Delivering through diversity*. USA: McKinsey & Company.
- IWA (International Water Associates). 2016. *The untapped resource: Gender and diversity in the water workforce*. London: IWA.
- Kabeer, N. 1994. *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. London: Verso.
- Kabeer, N. 1999. Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change* 30(3): 435–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>
- Kabeer, N. 2001. Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. In: Kabeer, N. (ed.) *Discussing women's empowerment: Theory and practice*. Novum Grafiska AB. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
- Kabeer, N. 2019. Randomized control trials and qualitative evaluations of a multifaceted programme for women in extreme poverty: Empirical findings and methodological reflections. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 20: 10.
- Kabeer, N.; Subrahmanian, R. 1996. *Institutions, relations and outcomes: Framework and tools for gender-aware planning*. IDS Sussex: IDS.
- Locke, C.; Okali, C. 1999. Analysing changing gender relations: Methodological challenges for gender planning. *Development in Practice* 9(3): 274–286.
- Mapedza, E.; Tilahun A.; Geheb, K.; Peden, D.; Boelee, E.; Demisse, T.S.; Van Hove, E.; Van Koppen, B. 2008. Why gender matters: Reflections from the Livestock-Water Productivity Research Project. IWMI Conference Proceedings 235163, International Water Management Institute. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: IWMI and ILRI. <https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.235163>
- Mapedza, E.A.; Giriraj, A.; Matheswaran, K.; Nhamo, L. 2019. Drought and the gendered livelihoods implications for smallholder farmers in the Southern Africa Development Community region. In: Mapedza, E.T.; Tsegai, D.; Bruntrup, M.; Mcleman, R. (eds.) *Drought challenges: Policy options for developing countries*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-814820-4.00007-9>

- MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). 2019. *Handbook: Sweden's feminist foreign policy*. Stockholm: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Mukhopadhyay, M. 2004. Mainstreaming gender or 'streaming' gender away: Feminists marooned in the development business. *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin* 35: 9.
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2015. *Why a push for gender equality makes sound economic sense*. OECD.
- O'Neil, T; Domingo, P. 2016. *Women and power: Overcoming barriers to leadership and influence*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Porter, F. 2018. *Untangling inequalities: Why power and intersectionality are essential concepts*. Available at <https://frompoverty.oxfam.org.uk/untangling-inequality-big-ideas-in-small-spaces/> (accessed January 12, 2020).
- SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). 2015. *Gender mainstreaming*. Stockholm: SIDA. 8p.
- Thompson, K.; O'Dell, K.; Syed, S.; Kemp, H. 2017. Thirsty for change: The untapped potential of women in urban water management. *Deloitte Review* 20: 154–167.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2018. *Gender equality as an accelerator for achieving the sustainable development goals*. New York, USA: UN Women and UNDP.
- UN Women. 2022. *Handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality result*. New York: UN Women.
- Viruell-Fuentes, E.A.; Miranda, P.Y.; Abdulrahim, S. 2012. More than culture: Structural racism, intersectionality theory, and immigrant health. *Social Science & Medicine* 75, 2099–2106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.12.037>
- Wodon, Q.T.; De Labrière, B. 2018. *Unrealized potential: The high cost of gender inequality in earnings*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. 2012. *World development report 2012: Gender equality and development*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/4391>
- World Bank. 2019. *Women in water utilities: Breaking barriers*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/32319>
- World Bank. 2020. Population, female (% of total population). The World Bank – Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=EG>
- Yount, K.M.; Zara, K.; Miedema, S.; Cheong, Y.F.; Naved, R.T. 2020. *The women's agency scale 61 (Was-61): A comprehensive measure of women's intrinsic, instrumental, and collective agency*. Available at SSRN: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3670180> (accessed on September 1, 2022).