

PACC+ Gender Assessment

**Methodological Introduction to
Gender Sensitive Indicators**

What are gender sensitive indicators?

An indicator is:

- An item of data that summarises a large amount of information in a single figure
- A pointer, number, a fact or a perception
- Used to measure changes in a specific condition or situation over time
- Used in comparison to a norm
- Used to examine the results of initiatives and actions
- One of the main instruments for monitoring and evaluating development work

Gender sensitive indicators:

- Capture gender related changes in society over time
- Assess progress in achieving gender equality, by measuring change in the status of women and men over a period of time
- Are taken in time and are compared against the baseline or the situation prior to the introduction of a change or development response

Gender-sensitive indicators demonstrate how far and in what ways development programs and projects have met their gender objectives and achieved results related to gender equality. Gender-sensitive indicators measure gender-related changes in society over time.

What is the difference between gender statistics and gender sensitive indicators?

Gender statistics

- Present facts, provide factual information about the status of women

Example: 15% of young women between the ages of 15 and 24 in Nauru exercise, as opposed to 3% five years ago

Gender sensitive indicators

- Involve comparison to a norm in their interpretation
- Provides direct evidence of the status of women or men, relative to some agreed normative standard or explicit reference group

Gender- sensitive indicator: 15% of women between the ages of 15 and 24 in Nauru exercise, as compared to 5% of men in the same age group. This compares to 3% and 1% respectively five years ago

Gender sensitive indicators focus on changing gender-based imbalances and inequities in society rather than focus on women in isolation

Gender sensitive indicators are important because they:

- Highlight that boys and girls, women and men of different socio-economic groups, ethnicities, physical abilities, etc are impacted by development processes differently
- Make gender biases more visible
- Indicate changes in the status and roles of women and men over time
- Support the formulation of more effective planning and program delivery
- Help to facilitate gender mainstreaming throughout monitoring and evaluation (M&E)
- Enable planners, policy-makers, project managers to measure progress in gender equality
- Facilitate advocacy to advance greater gender equality

What are the sources of gender sensitive indicators and data?

National level data collection

- Census surveys and System of National Accounts
- Sample surveys of the population, ie. Household and Income Expenditure Surveys, Unemployment and Employment Surveys,
- Administrative records
- Special surveys such as time-use surveys

National compilations

- CEDAW Reports and NGO Shadow Reports
- Country Reports for Pacific Platform for Action

What data sources are available in your country?

Choosing gender sensitive indicators

- Should be selected for each stage of the project cycle
- Various ways indicators can be classified, for example using terms used in the logical framework analysis such as input, output, outcome and impact.
- Main focus should be on **outcome** indicators because they measure change and results

Set against objectives

Gender sensitive indicators set against clearly defined objectives which is a complex process

Two types of objectives

- 1) Results that are relatively easy to quantify (Type 1 Objective)**
- 2) Results are less easy to quantify, concern social processes, and need greater emphasis on qualitative analysis to measure them (Type 2 Objective)**

Can use both but often focus more on one or the other

Type 1 Objective

Increased awareness of climate change among women and men by 50% in the project area over a one year period

Type 2 Objective

Women and/or men in the project area are empowered so they can contribute to decision-making related to climate change

Relatively easy to measure changes in awareness in a given area

More difficult to determine whether women and men have been empowered and how they contribute more to policy-making or project design

- Type 1 Objectives are relatively straightforward and relate closely to changes in **practical needs**
- Type 2 Objectives are more complex and relate closely to changes in **strategic interests**

Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators

Quantitative indicators

- **Measures of quantity, numerical measurements of change**
Ex. The number of hours spent by girls, as compared to boys, washing clothes, preparing food, or collecting water...
- Quantitative data is needed when there is a desire to obtain broad and comparable data but can be collected at community level
- Data usually collected by formal surveys
- Usually interpreted by statistical analysis
- Generally low level of stakeholder involvement

Qualitative indicators

People's judgements, opinions and perceptions about a subject

Ex. The level of satisfaction among girls and boys in the amount of time spent washing clothes, preparing food, collecting water, etc.

Can be quantified

Ex. Number of girls and boy in a project area who feel their status has improved can be added up to provide a numerical measure of a qualitative indicator

- Qualitative data needed when a detailed assessment of a limited situation is required

Generated from participatory focus groups, attitude surveys, interviews, participant observation and sociological or anthropological fieldwork

- Often analysed descriptively

- Potentially high level of stakeholder involvement

Objective and Subjective indicators

Objective

- Quantitative indicators distanced from the events they are describing
Ex. Length of climate proof road or increased percentage of food crop production says little about the actual benefits for women or men
- May be interpreted using formal methods, results may be used to suggest changes in policy
- Distanced, expressed in terms of numbers and offer a broader and comparable macro-level understanding, often called 'hard' or 'objective'
- Quantitative indicators often receive more legitimacy as they are considered 'objective'

Subjective

- Qualitative indicators generated by informal studies
- Results often presented in a descriptive fashion rather than analysed by statistical or other formal techniques (although they can be quantified)
- Describe people's viewpoints - these types of indicators are also known as 'subjective' or 'soft'
- If properly developed and interpreted, 'subjective' gender sensitive indicators can play a significant role in identifying constraints to implementation and obstacles to gender equality, which would otherwise not be readily apparent.

Both types are complementary and equally important for effective monitoring and evaluation

Cross-validate and point out limitations or gaps in each other

Triangulation - use multiple sources of information and data

Criteria for the selection of gender sensitive indicators

- Indicators should be developed in a participatory fashion, including all stakeholders wherever possible
- Indicators must be relevant to the needs of the user, and at level that the user can understand
- All indicators should be sex-disaggregated
- Both qualitative and quantitative indicators should be used
- Indicators should be easy to use and understand
- Indicators must be clearly defined

Criteria for the selection of gender sensitive indicators (cont'd)

- The number chosen should be small
- Indicators should be technically sound
- Indicators should measure trends over time
- The ultimate focus should be on outcome indicators

Interpreting Gender Sensitive Indicators

- Only pointers - 'indicative'
- Can achieve only a certain level of analysis

Ex. An indicator will tell you how many women and men participated in decision-making about climate change adaptation but it will give you little information about the nature, degree and effects of their participation

- Do not provide information on wider social patterns
- Usually tell little about **why** gender relations have been shaped in a particular way and **how** these relations have changed
- Point to key questions rather than provide answers

Qualitative Gender Analysis

- Examines **social relations** between women and men and the **structural features of society which reinforce gender inequality and inequity**
- Helps to determine **why** a particular situation (that indicators measure) came into being and **how** this situation can be changed in future
- **Gender sensitive indicators** will tell you whether the project has succeeded or failed to meet its objectives
- **Qualitative gender analysis** will tell you **why** this result took place and whether and in what ways the result was positive and/or negative in its progress towards gender equality

Participation

- Ideally gender sensitive indicators are developed in participatory fashion (in practice this rarely happens)
- Emphasis input into the development of indicators from all stakeholders, particularly from the people that the project/policy will most directly affect
- Developing gender-sensitive indicators in a participatory fashion focuses on including people's own indicators of development (ie happiness)

- No agreed-upon method for the measurement of participation
- Most work on indicators of participation has focused on participation in groups
- Limited attention has been paid to qualitative indicators of participation

Empowerment

Most definitions stress two main areas of empowerment

- 1) A personal change in consciousness involving a movement towards control, self confidence and the right to make decisions and determine choices
- 2) Organisation aimed at social and political change

Gender sensitive indicators will differ depending on:

- The objective of empowerment (personal changes or social changes or both); and
- The selected measurement of empowerment (ie. greater self-respect, access to the benefits of economic growth or the creation of a socially and economically just community)

If a project objective is the 'empowerment of women' or 'people's empowerment' it is important to specify:

- Type of empowerment;
- Rough time-scales within which project objectives will be accomplished;
- The numbers of women and/or men to be affected; and
- The degree to which the beneficiaries will be affected.

Review of Gender Sensitive Indicators

- Indicators are not neutral tools, influenced by political values and contexts
- Gender-sensitive indicators measure gender-related changes in society over time
- Qualitative and quantitative indicators should be used together
- Objectives must be as clearly set as possible, and indicators must be closely related to engendered objectives

Review of Gender Sensitive Indicators (Cont'd)

- Indicator types correspond to each part of the project cycle. The terms used for indicators are less important than how the indicators are defined
- Base-line studies should be conducted, using data disaggregated by sex, socioeconomic and ethnic grouping and age, against which progress and results can be measured
- The most important indicators for project evaluation are gender sensitive outcome indicators
- The time-frame of objectives and indicators should be set out as clearly as possible