



## **GENDER and INDICATORS**

### **Overview Report**

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## ACRONYMS

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ACGD	African Centre for Gender and Development
AGDI	African Gender and Development Index
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DFID	Department for International Development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEI	Gender Equity Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GGI	Gender Gap Index
GPI	Gender Poverty Index
GSA	Gender Self-Assessment
GSB	Gender-sensitive Budget
HDI	Human Development Index
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Foundation
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRC	Supporting Resources Collection
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO	World Health Organization



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Gender-sensitive measurements are critical for building the case for taking gender (in)equality seriously, for enabling better planning and actions by gender and non-gender specialists, and for holding institutions accountable to their commitments on gender. Yet measurement techniques and data remain limited and poorly utilised, making it difficult to know if efforts are on track to achieve gender equality goals and commitments. This Overview Report examines conceptual and methodological approaches to gender and measurements of change with a focus on indicators, examining current debates and good practice from the grassroots to the international levels.

### **The what and how of measurement**

While measuring is often considered to be a technical exercise, the decision to measure progress towards gender equality is political, as gender is often seen as a marginalised issue. The process of deciding what aspects of gender equality to measure is also political, usually reflecting the priorities of decision-makers rather than those of the women and men intended to benefit from the policy or programme (the 'beneficiaries'). In deciding what to measure we must first establish key objectives and goals; secondly, identify the changes that are required to achieve these goals; and thirdly decide what kinds of indicators will best enable us to measure progress towards these desired changes. The next consideration is which measurement methods to use and what kind of data to collect. The 'hard figures' produced by quantitative methods are crucial to building the case for addressing gender disparities, while qualitative methods enable a more in-depth examination of gender relations and other issues not easily 'counted'. The ideal methodology is thus a combined approach which incorporates gender-sensitive participatory techniques to help ensure that the topics of investigation are relevant to, and 'owned', by the subjects of the research.

### **Measuring gender mainstreaming**

Many development agencies have adopted a gender mainstreaming approach and yet lack procedures to monitor whether commitments at the policy level are reflected in the internal structure, procedures and culture of an organisation, and whether they are being implemented in programming practice. Internal gender audits and gender self-assessments are now used by many development organisations to assess issues such as gender equity in recruitment, flexible working hours, childcare provision and technical capacity of staff in gender issues. To assess the degree to which gender mainstreaming has been implemented in programming practice, particularly at the field level, development organisations have produced checklists or scorecards to measure adherence to gender-sensitive procedures (gender analysis, planning, resource allocation, monitoring systems).

Less common are measures of the impacts of gender mainstreaming programmes on male and female beneficiaries. These might include qualitative assessments, and checklists such as those developed by Oxfam for use with partner organisations, or sex-disaggregated beneficiary assessments.

### **Measuring the difficult to measure**

Certain aspects of gender (in)equality are particularly difficult to measure. Some are difficult to conceptualise, such as the gender dimensions of poverty or women's empowerment, while others are sensitive issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), or occur in sensitive contexts such as armed conflict.

Measuring poverty from a gendered perspective requires using a range of gender-sensitive indicators which give attention to gender power relations at both the household and societal levels. Useful approaches include 'time poverty' studies which can be used to measure women's unpaid care work, and gender-sensitive participatory poverty assessments. To effectively measure women's empowerment, combinations of multi-level and multi-dimensional indicators are needed. Many organisations are incorporating qualitative data into measurements of women's empowerment in an effort to capture these complexities. In the case of GBV, integrating modules or checklists into non-GBV-focused surveys or services has proved successful. Measurements of GBV and the gender dimensions of armed conflict must incorporate means of reducing risks for women respondents.

### **International measurements**

International and regional gender goals and indices are useful because they allow for cross-national comparisons of gender equality, and they condense complex data into clear messages about achievements and gaps in gender equality. Limitations with international indices include the notoriously unreliable nature of national-level census data, and the ongoing challenge of agreeing which elements of gender equality to measure and how best to capture these elements within a limited set of indicators.

Innovative approaches include efforts to incorporate a broader set of indicators into the Millennium Development Goal 3 on gender equality (MDG3), and review the components of composite indices such as the United Nations' Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). In turn, there is work taking place to develop new indices such as the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI), which is promising in its use of a broad range of dimensions and indicators and its combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Other important developments include the adaptation of international indicators to better represent gender equality in specific regional contexts, efforts to track donor and government commitments to

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