



Presentation to Ethics Committee on *Gender Mainstreaming: A Research Ethics Issue?*

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What is gender mainstreaming ?

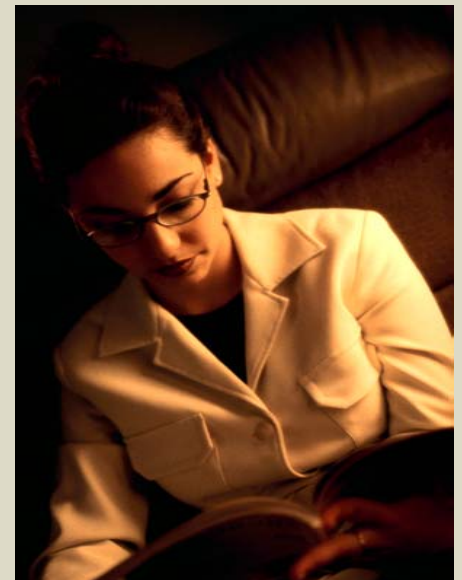
- Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for men & women of any planned action, including laws, policies, programmes or interventions
- Mainstreaming emphasises synergies between gender work & development work



Why gender mainstreaming?

“Gender mainstreaming is based on the recognition that gender equality & equity are central to national development; a human rights issue that speaks to fairness & social justice for men & women in society; a contributor to good governance in respect of people orientated participatory management & an enabling factor in current efforts of poverty alleviation”.

Commonwealth Secretariat, 1999



What is mainstreaming gender in research?

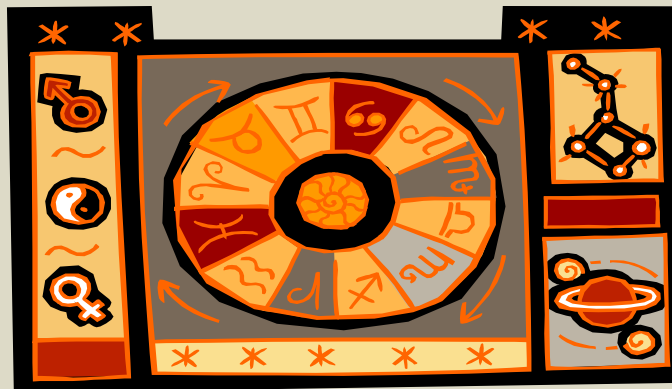
- It is about assessing the implications for women & men of the planned activity at every stage of the process
- It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns & experiences integral to the research process from conceptualisation to implementation, &
- This includes the monitoring & evaluation phase



Some key concepts in the process

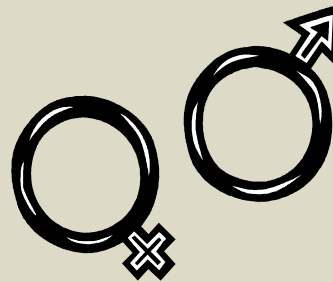
Gender Sensitivity

Refers to the perceptiveness & responsiveness concerning differences in gender roles, responsibilities, challenges & opportunities



Some key concepts in the process cont.

Gender Analysis



- A conceptual tool that uses sex & gender as an organisational principle or a way of conceptualising information
- Gender analysis is a systematic process that takes place throughout the research process, &
- It would thus be involved in the conceptualisation, data collection, analysis, monitoring & evaluation phase of a research project

Important points on Gender Sensitivity



Gender sensitivity does not necessarily mean focusing on gender as the central problem – but requires a critical consciousness through which any issue is filtered



Mainstreaming and Research issues

- As far as research is concerned, gender sensitivity implies being sensitive to the nuances of gender in any research problem, including the focus as well as the process of research



- Gender sensitivity does not necessarily refer to a specific focus on a directly gendered issue- e.g. violence against women, but means including gender component or being aware of the potential of one, in all research projects
- This includes activities such as disaggregating data for gender even when this is not the direct focus of the research project

Key questions for gender mainstreaming in research

(Think of any project to relate the question to)



What is the division of work, access to resources & access to power for men & women in the area we are researching

Key questions for gender mainstreaming in research



- What are the gender needs of men & women in this area?
- What exactly do we want to achieve in response to the short term/ practical needs & the long term/strategic needs?

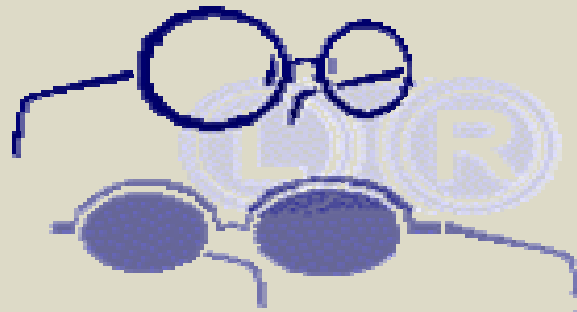
- How will the research project achieve this?



Doing research with a gender lens



Every component of research needs to be put under a gender lens (including title, language, concepts, research designs, methods, data interpretation & conclusions)





Doing research with a gender lens Cont.

Androcentricity: the adoption of an overall male perspective

Gender insensitivity: ignoring sex as a socially important variable in contexts within which it is important

Some eggs.
of **NOT** using
a gender lens

Sexual Dichotomism: treating the sexes as two entirely discrete social & biological groups, rather than as two groups with overlapping characteristics

Overgeneralisation: when a study deals with only one sex but presents itself as if it were applicable to both sexes

Double standards: when identical situations, behaviors or traits are evaluated differentially on the basis of sex. E.G. researchers should avoid the labeling the sexual behavior of an adolescent girl as 'promiscuous' while calling the equivalent behavior in a boy as 'experimental'

Sex appropriateness: descriptive terms for sex differences are used in a prescriptive manner, for e.g. labeling character traits such as compassion & sensitivity as 'feminine' & leadership ability, independence & ambition as 'masculine'. These character traits can be found in both sexes

Checklist for gender sensitive research

Sexist Title

Is the title sexist in concept or language, if the research is applicable to only one sex is it clear in the title

Sexist Language

Instead of using 'man', one can use 'people, person, subject', instead of 'he/she' can use '(s)he or s/he'. Its misleading to use generic terms in situations that deal with only one sex, e.g. to use children or youth for groups which consist of only boys or girls is misleading

Sexist Concepts

Is the research formulated from only a male/female perspective, does the research demean one sex, is the research based on premise that certain human attributes are appropriate for one sex only

Sexism in Research Design

Is the frame androcentric, test by substituting women for girl for generic terms such as individual/person, does the research affect both sexes, if so has it given adequate to both sexes, is the same research used for both females & males, if not, justify why

Sexism in methods

Has the instrument been validated on one sex only but is used for both sexes, is the sex composition of the sample adequately reported

Sexism in Data interpretation

Are implications of findings for both females & males explicitly considered, are biases in data collection process explicitly acknowledged & their implications discussed, is only sex considered, if so are the conclusions drawn in generic terms, is data collected on both sexes, if so are they analyzed by sex

Gender issues in research capacity building

- To improve gender sensitivity in research, focused capacity-building initiatives are needed, particularly at the institutional level, including policies & procedures to mainstream gender & to transform research from a gender perspective



- Ways of encouraging the greater participation of women in the design & implementation of research needs can be found, &
- Budget allocations must be provided for to allow these activities to take place

Gender issues in monitoring & evaluation of research projects

- Gender mainstreaming in research should be carefully monitored & evaluated using established gender based criteria which are built into programmes & plans from the beginning



- Personnel who are sensitive to gender issues should be assigned to planning, implementation & evaluation – this will ensure that a gender lens is used at all stages, &
- Indicators for monitoring & evaluation gender sensitivity such as linking gender mainstreaming to performance appraisal needs to be explored & developed

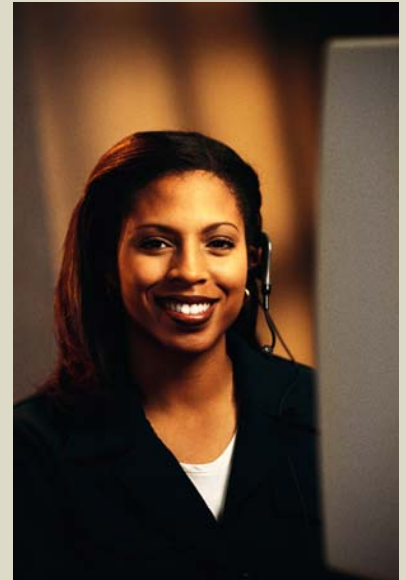
Further questions for ethical consideration



- Visibility of gender as an important axis in research work (other factors such as age, ethnicity, wealth, occupation, race, class, sexuality/sexual orientation are equally important)
- Inclusively of women not only as research subjects &/ participants but also as *initiators* of research (in other words: research drivers)
- Can researchers bridge the gender divide & have males research females?
- How can research also help ‘empower’ women?

Further questions Cont...

- How participatory is research & what empowerment outcomes are envisaged?
- What processes exist for information sharing, open processes & information dissemination?
- How are matters of the 'private' & 'public' negotiated & acknowledged in the research process?



Concluding Remarks

Mainstreaming requires a constant vigilance in viewing both the organisation & the work it does through a gendered lens- a critical lens that is always sensitive to issues of gender & its multiple intersections with other forms of power & identities



Recommendations

- Policies & interventions that address development issues & which aim to empower people should take the issue of gender seriously
- We cannot just see ‘the people’ as a homogenous group- we have to understand the different realities of men’s & women’s lives
- Mentioning women as the most important target group is not enough -a gendered analysis needs to be done to determine the impact which a project or policy will have on the live of women



Final thought

Mainstreaming gender in research cannot be the role of ‘watchdogs’ in a gender office or gender focal point – all involved must have the knowledge, skill & political will to make gender mainstreaming a reality

