A Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in Various Sectors

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Abstract
Gender mainstreaming is a process for gender transformation. A process that helps us address the root causes of inequalities in our societies at different levels, from the self, through households and institutions, to the public sphere. This process ensures that women, men, boys and girls, as well as marginalized and differently enabled persons, understand who they are, their capabilities, and their rights and privileges. It is a process that ensures their concerns and knowledge are included in the development of policies, plans, legislation, as well as in the design and planning of programmes and projects. It is an approach that makes women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design/plan, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans, programs and projects in all political, economic, environmental and societal spheres so that women and men participate fairly and benefit equally from the accrued results of goods and services. Involvement of both women and men at the design and planning stage of any policies, plans, programmes and projects ensures that inequality is not perpetuated. The goal is to achieve both gender equity and equality in all development endeavours. To support gender mainstreaming processes, several tools have been developed over the years. The discussion below provides some of these tools that change professionals and institutions can utilize to achieve gender equity and equality.

Keywords: Development, gender, equality, equity, mainstreaming

Introduction

Gender mainstreaming is a process for gender transformation. It helps us address the root causes of inequalities in our societies at different levels, from the self, through households and institutions, to the public sphere. This process ensures that women, men, boys, and girls, as well as marginalized and differently enabled persons, understand who they are, their capabilities, and their rights and privileges. It ensures that their concerns and knowledge are included in the development of policies, plans, and legislation, as well as in the design and planning of programmes and projects. It is an approach that makes women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design and planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, plans, programs, and projects in all political, economic, environmental, and societal spheres, so that women and men participate fairly and benefit equally from the results of goods and services. Involving both women and men in designing and planning policies, plans, programmes, and projects helps ensure inequality is not perpetuated.

The goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve both gender equity and equality in all development endeavours. This goal is guided by basic questions such as: How can gender mainstreaming tools be applied effectively across sectors? What are the key principles for achieving gender equity in institutional settings?

To this end, several tools have been developed over the years to support gender mainstreaming processes. The discussion below outlines some of these tools that professionals and institutions can use to achieve gender equity and equality. The paper presents a set of tools a practitioner can choose from. The list is not exhaustive; however, it includes what the author considers the most important tools for change in any community setting.

Sharing Gender Experiences: Breaking the Ice

Exercise 1: The facilitator requests that the participants pair up and share the following:

- Recall the first time you realized you are a girl or a boy-what was it?
- Define your gender identity.
  - ✓ Who am I?
  - ✓ Where do I come from?
- What kind of stereotypes do you hold on to about men/women/people with different abilities?

Wearing Gender Lenses

In gender mainstreaming, one must wear the gender lenses in order to see women, men, girls, and boys in all aspects of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. Figure 1 is a pictorial portrayal of the gender mainstreaming concept.

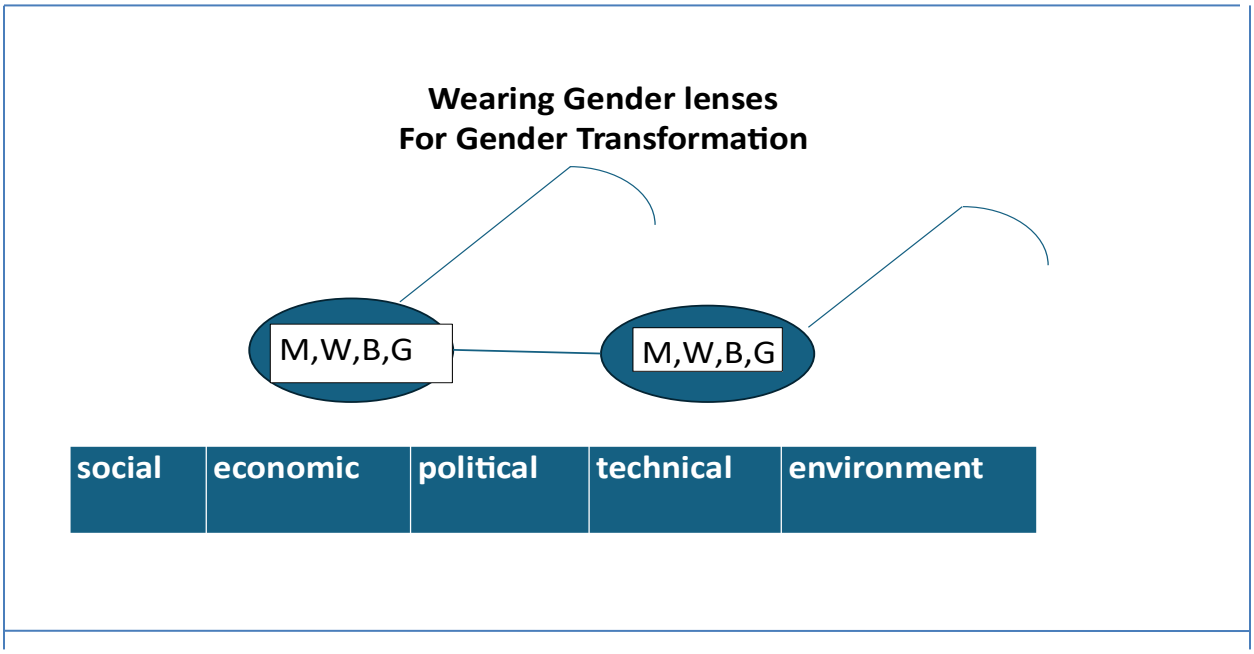


Fig. 1: Gender Lenses

Gender Transformation

Gender transformation is a prerequisite for a gender mainstreaming exercise. It is a call for all efforts to change societal norms and power dynamics to address gender inequalities and promote equality. It focuses on dismantling harmful stereotypes, practices, and structures that perpetuate gender inequalities across social structures. Its mandate is to do the following:

1. **Challenge Harmful Norms:** Gender transformative approaches aim to challenge and transform harmful gender norms, roles, and relations that perpetuate inequalities.
2. **Redistribute Power and Resources:** These approaches work towards a more equitable distribution of power, resources, and services, empowering marginalized groups and challenging existing power imbalances.
3. **Focus on Root Causes:** Gender transformation goes beyond addressing the symptoms of inequality and seeks to tackle the underlying root causes, including societal cultures, structures, policies, and systems that perpetuate gender inequality.
4. **Promote Equality:** The ultimate goal of gender transformation is to promote gender equality, where all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities, rights, and freedoms.

Gender-transformative Approach (GTA)

A gender-transformative approach (GTA) seeks to transform societies and their members from inequality to a more gender-equal society. GTA takes specific measures to change social structures, norms, and gender relations to achieve more equitable power dynamics and greater control over resources and decision-making, and to support women's empowerment. It drives the social changes needed to meet the strategic needs of men, women, boys, girls, and gender-diverse people, and shifts people's fundamental positions in society towards gender equality.

The following are examples of gender transformative actions:

1. **Challenging stereotypes and harmful beliefs:** This can include community dialogues, awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives that address gender stereotypes and promote positive gender roles.
2. **Promoting women's participation in decision-making:** Encouraging women's leadership and representation across sectors, including politics, business, and community organizations.
3. **Transforming education systems:** Ensuring that they are gender-transformative, promoting critical thinking about gender roles, and challenging harmful norms.
4. **Addressing gender-based violence:** Implementing comprehensive strategies to prevent and respond to it, including legal reforms, community-based interventions, and support services for survivors. Addressing gender inequalities is crucial to achieving sustainable development, promoting human rights, and building more just and equitable societies.

How the Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) Integrates with Tools and Principles of Gender Mainstreaming

GTA improves the tools and principles of gender mainstreaming and shifts the process from inclusion to social transformation. GTA brings structural and systemic disadvantages into the public domain for discussion, evaluation, and change. This ensures fair participation in power, agency, and institutional culture.

While gender mainstreaming focuses on systematically integrating gender perspectives into all policies, programmes, and institutions, GTA strengthens this by transforming unequal gender relations, challenging discriminatory norms, roles, and power imbalances, and driving long-term social change that, in turn, promotes equity and empowerment. It does this through participatory processes and dialogues across socioeconomic and political levels that reshape gender norms.

Table 1 provides an overview of how GTA integrates with gender mainstreaming tools and principles.

Table 1: Integration of Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) with Gender Mainstreaming Tools and Principles

Dimension	Gender Mainstreaming Tools and Principles	GTA Integration
Policy Level	Gender audits, gender action plans	Introduces transformative strategies to challenge patriarchal norms, institutional bias, and systemic disadvantages
Programme Level	Gender-disaggregated data, gender budgeting	Introduces joint decision-making, inclusive participation, and empowerment
Community Level	Awareness campaigns	Engages men, boys, and leaders to openly discuss the existing gender norms and design alternative options that eliminate harmful gender norms within the community
Outcome Level	Equal access and benefits	Focuses on structural changes and sustainable gender equality

Several projects and programmes have supported the GTA initiative to ensure the long-term sustainability of gender mainstreaming. These include:

1. The Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Project (KAPAP) (2009) resulted in increased joint ownership of productive assets such as livestock and irrigation equipment. Through the GTA approach, KAPAP transformed a gender-responsive (participation-focused) project into a gender-transformative one, changing norms, decision-making, and power dynamics, and enabling women to take more active roles in household and community decision-making.
2. The Climate Change Adaptation Strategies among small-scale farmers and pastoralists in Kenya applied GTA, which helped bring women into equal decision-making roles within the household for land-use decisions needed to improve household climate resilience strategies.

Some Gender Terminologies

Gender: A social and cultural construct that distinguishes the attributes of men and women, girls and boys, and, accordingly, refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women. Gender-based roles and other attributes therefore change over time and vary across cultural contexts. The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes, and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). This concept is useful in analysing how commonly shared practices legitimize discrepancies between the sexes.

Sex: This refers to the biological characteristics that define males and females, primarily according to their reproductive capabilities or potential. Sex is universal and (ordinarily) unchanging.

Gender Equality: A situation where men and women are seen as equal, have equal opportunities in society, enjoy equal benefits, and are treated the same under the law.

Gender Equity: This is about fairness and justice, about people receiving their worth in relation to their input and contributions. Equity measures, such as affirmative action, correct historical imbalances in development.

Gender Bias: Making decisions based on gender that favour one gender over the other, often resulting in contexts that favour men and/or boys over women and/or girls.

Gender Budgeting: A strategic approach to fiscal policy and administration that promotes gender equality by ensuring resources are allocated and used equitably and that financial allocations do not perpetuate gender inequalities. Gender budgeting integrates a gender perspective into the budget cycle, from planning and allocating funds to implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

Gender Analysis: It is a process for assessing, measuring, understanding, and documenting emerging experiential differences between women and men, as well as across other social categories within a given society. It highlights their participation in social, cultural, political, and economic life, and the differential impacts that policies, programs, projects, and services have on each socioeconomic category of a population. The main objective is to identify inequalities and address them as effectively and efficiently as possible (Chiuri et al., 2016). In this publication on mainstreaming gender in innovation platforms for agricultural value chains, the tool helps users mainstream gender within Agricultural Innovation Platforms to make agricultural value chains more equitable and effective. This is because agricultural innovations are more likely to succeed when the innovation process considers the different roles, knowledge, constraints, and priorities of women and men from planning through training and across value chain nodes. It is critical to identify which nodes different categories of actors (men, women, young women, and young men) are most likely to participate in, and to address their respective challenges, needs, and opportunities.

Gender Principles

The gender mainstreaming exercise is guided by the following principles: gender-sensitive language and images; gender-specific data collection and analysis; equal access to and use of services; equal involvement of women and men in decision-making; and equal treatment integrated across all processes. These are explained below.

1. **Gender-sensitive language and images**
   Texts that refer to or address both women and men must make both groups equally visible. This applies, among others, to forms, documents, telephone directories, intranet and internet texts, event advertising, folders, posters, and films. Pay attention to a gender-sensitive image choices when preparing public relations material.
2. **Gender-specific data collection and analysis**
   Data must be collected, analysed and presented by gender. Social dimensions, such as age, ethnicity, income and level of education should also be reflected where possible. Gender-specific analysis of the initial situation (baseline information) must provide the basis for all decisions.

3. **Equal access to and utilization of services**
   Products and services must be developed with diverse gender needs in mind so that changes can be monitored and evaluated for their different effects on men and women, boys and girls, and people in special categories (Perez, 2019).
4. **Women and men are equally involved in decision-making**
   Binding targets for a balanced gender ratio at all decision-making levels are critical to gender mainstreaming. It also means that workplaces must be structurally gendered and barrier-free where possible, for example, with gendered signage and sufficient lighting, so that People Living with Disabilities (PLWD) can access all facilities easily, and that social space for different group needs is provided, such as daycare facilities and lactation rooms for mothers.
5. **Equal treatment is integrated in all processes**
   Integrating equal treatment into all processes is a core principle of gender mainstreaming. This ensures that policies, programmes, and projects are designed, implemented, and evaluated with a gender equality objective, recognizing that women and men have different needs, are in different circumstances, and have different experiences. Gender mainstreaming must consider these differences.

Global Trends Towards Gender Mainstreaming

Sometimes both men and women participants wonder where this concern about gender equity and women's empowerment began. Therefore, the facilitator should provide a brief history of its origins and why. Understanding women's past struggles is a critical foundation for the gender mainstreaming toolkit. From Eurocentric recorded history, women at some point in time were relegated to a lower social status, and they had to fight for basic rights.

This began with women's struggle for gender equity and equality, which are the core objectives of gender mainstreaming. During the Enlightenment period (17th Century), Mary Wollstonecraft documented women's struggle in her publication *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792).* It is one of the first works advocating for women's education and equality. This laid the foundation for the first wave of feminism and subsequent waves, bringing us to where we are now, culminating in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979.

Subsequent global trends have been adopted under United Nations guidance, including the Decade for Women, the 1985 Nairobi conference, the 1995 Beijing conference a decade later, and those that followed. The Millennium Development Goals and, currently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs: SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 5, SDG 10, SDG 16), which include about five that are geared towards gender equality.

At the national level, Article 10 of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution provides for participation, human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination, and the protection of the marginalized. These values and principles cut across both the public and private sectors. Article 27 of the Constitution further clarifies the principles of 'equality' and 'freedom from discrimination.' It provides that:

1. Every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law.
2. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. Women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities, in political, economic, cultural and social spheres.

4. The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth.
5. To give full effect to the realization of the rights guaranteed under this Article, the State shall take legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programmes and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination.
6. In addition to the measures contemplated in clause (6), the State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.

In addition, the Constitution established the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) as an independent National Human Rights Institution under Article 59, making it the state's lead agency for promoting and protecting human rights, including women's rights. In this light, Kenya has several successful gender mainstreaming efforts. These include a case study on gender mainstreaming in youth groups in Nairobi County (Mayoga & Mwenda, 2024). Mayoga and Mwenda concluded that gender mainstreaming, gender training, and awareness are critical components that should be considered at the planning and design stages because they influence the performance of the project or programme. Njenga and Tanzarn (2019) concluded that gender mainstreaming is essential in the region's transport sector. This must happen throughout the project cycle, from design to monitoring and evaluation.

With this background information, participants can now be introduced to gender mainstreaming tools. There are many; however, the author has selected a few that she has found most useful in her development experiences.

Gender Mainstreaming Toolbox

The box includes several tools, and each situation may require one or more tools combined to achieve the required gender-mainstreaming results. They include:

1. Harvard analytical tools
2. Caroline Moser tool
3. Gender analysis matrix
4. Women Empowerment
5. Social relations approach
6. Caroline Moser -Practical and strategic gender needs tool

Gender Mainstreaming Tools

This section explains 6 gender mainstreaming tools.

Tool 1: Activity Profile -Who Does What, When?

The activity profile, expressed through the daily calendar, examines family members' contributions to the household's productive and reproductive chores, as well as community service (see Table 2). The facilitator asks each group to complete a daily activity log for a typical day in a typical community. The information is captured in a day's activities as seen in Table 3.

Table 2: Activity Profile

Activity	Female			Male			Time		Where done
Productive activities	**Girls**	**Adults**	**Elders**	**Boys**	**Adults**	**Elders**	**Day**	**Season**	
Livestock rearing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Night		Home and field
Crop production	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Farms
Fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Lake
Fish processing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Local markets or/ and outside
Fish mongering				✓	✓	✓	✓		Homes and beaches
Boat building				✓	✓	✓	✓		Homes and beaches
Net making				✓	✓	✓	✓		Home
Rope making			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sisal processing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Field and homes
Small business	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		Market places
Cooking	✓	✓	✓				✓		Home
Water fetching	✓	✓	✓				✓		Lake and water points
Firewood Fetching	✓	✓	✓				✓		Fields
Child care	✓	✓	✓				✓		Home

Source: Lelo et al. (2015)

Table 3: Gender Daily Calendar Mbaruk Sub-location, Nakuru County

Women Time	Activity	Men Time	Activity	Youth (boys/girls) Time	Activity
6.00 am	• Wakes up • Cleans the house • Prepares breakfast • Milks cow • Prepares children for school • Washes utensils • Fetches water • Washes children's clothes	6.00 am	• Wakes up • Makes prayer • Inspects Homestead • Takes Breakfast	6.30 am	• Wakes up and Prays
9.00 am	• Releases animals for grazing • Goes to shamba • Farm employment	7.00 am	• Distributes labour • Farm work	7.00 am	• Takes breakfast
1.00 pm	• Prepares lunch • Washes utensils	1.00 pm	• Takes lunch	8.00 am	• Goes to farm
2.30 pm	• Fetches firewood • Washes clothes	2.00 pm	• Relaxes	1.30 pm	• Takes lunch • And rests
5.00 pm	• Milks cow • Prepares supper	3.00 pm	• Farm work	2.30 pm	• Home care • chores
7.00 pm	• Enclose animals • Make supper • Wash children	6.00 pm	• Takes stock of day's activities • Recreates	4.00 pm	• Recreates
8.00 pm	• Takes supper • Helps children with school work • Tailoring and repair of clothes • Prayer	7.30 pm	• Family discussion • Takes supper	8.00 pm	• Takes supper
10.00 pm	• Retire to bed	9.00 pm	• Goes to bed	10.00 pm	• Retires to bed • Keeps security

Source: Lelo et al. (2015)

Tool 2: Access and Control Profile

The access and control profile tool enables the user to list the resources people use to meet their needs. The tool indicates who has access and who controls the means of production. In some cases, women have access, but they do not have control.

Table 4: Access and Control Profile

	Access		Control	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Resources				
Land, cash, education				
Labour,				
Equipment				
Services				
Health care, Extension				
Benefits (income, training)				

Tool 3: Practical and Strategic Gender Needs

The practical and strategic gender needs tool helps the user to identify the specific livelihood needs of men, women, boys, and girls, and which needs support empowerment and political/leadership mileage.

Table 5: Practical and Strategic Gender Needs Tool

Women's Practical Gender Needs	Women's Strategic Gender Needs	Men's Practical Gender Needs	Men's Strategic Gender Needs
Basic needs (water, food, shelter, sanitation)	Social capital	Basic needs (water, food, shelter, sanitation)	Men engagement (men for change)
Education support	Self-awareness, Attitude Behaviour Change (ABC)	Education support	Social capital
Health support	Leadership skills, Participation in decision-making	Health support	Life skills (maintain male dignity) Emotional support
Loaning facilities	Equal opportunities	Loaning facilities	Involve them in the project cycle
Reproductive health	Life skills empowerment-emotional support	Reproductive health	Attitude Behaviour Change (ABC)

Source: Modified from March et al. (1999)

Tool 4: Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM)

The objectives of the Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM) are to determine the different impacts development interventions have on women, men, households, and communities in terms of labour, time, resources, and Socio-cultural factors. The GAM also provides a community-based technique for identifying and analysing gender differences.

The tool can be used during the project planning stage to determine whether potential gender effects are desirable and consistent with the project's programme goals and objectives. Give it a (+) if the impact aligns with the project goals. Give it a (–) if the impact is contrary to the project goals.

Table 6: Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM)

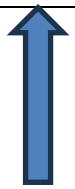
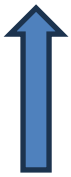
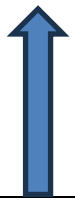
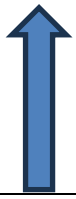
	Labour	**Time**	**Resources**	**Culture**
Women				
Men				
Household				
Community				

Tool 5: Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment enables women to take an equal place with men, participate equally in the development process, and control the factors of production on an equal basis.

Development means enabling people to take charge of their own lives and escape from poverty (Poverty is seen as stemming from oppression and exploitation). The questions asked are: What does women's empowerment and equality mean in practice? To what extent does a development intervention support empowerment?

Table 7: Levels of Women Empowerment

Levels			
5	**CONTROL** (a balance of control between men and women so that neither gender dominates)		
4	**PARTICIPATION** (Equal participation of men and women in the decision-making processes)	INCREASED EQUALITY/EQUITY	INCREASED EMPOWERMENT
3	**CONSCIENTIZATION** (conscious understanding of gender roles; rights and privileges)		
2	**ACCESS** (resources and services)		
1	**WELFARE** (basic needs met)		

Tool 6: Social Relations Approach Tool

The social relations approach tool is based on three concepts: development, social relations, and institutions. Under this tool, institutions are the most critical aspect.

1. **Development:**
   - increasing human well-being (survival, security, and autonomy)
   - the ability to make choices at personal and collective levels
2. **Social Relations:**
   - Structural relationships that create and reproduce systemic differences in the positioning of different groups of people.
   - Social relations determine,
     a. Who are we?
     b. What claims can we make - Our rights
     c. Our privileges
     d. The control we have over our own lives
     e. The control we have over others
3. **Institutional Analysis:**
   - Does the institution have gender policies?
   - Does the institution's management have the political will to genderize the institution and its systems?
   - Does the institution have the technical capacity to mainstream gender in all its operations?
   - Is the institution accountable to anyone for its gender mainstreaming performance? In Kenya, all public institutions sign performance contracts with the government, and one output is gender mainstreaming. They must account for and show how they have mainstreamed gender in their activities.

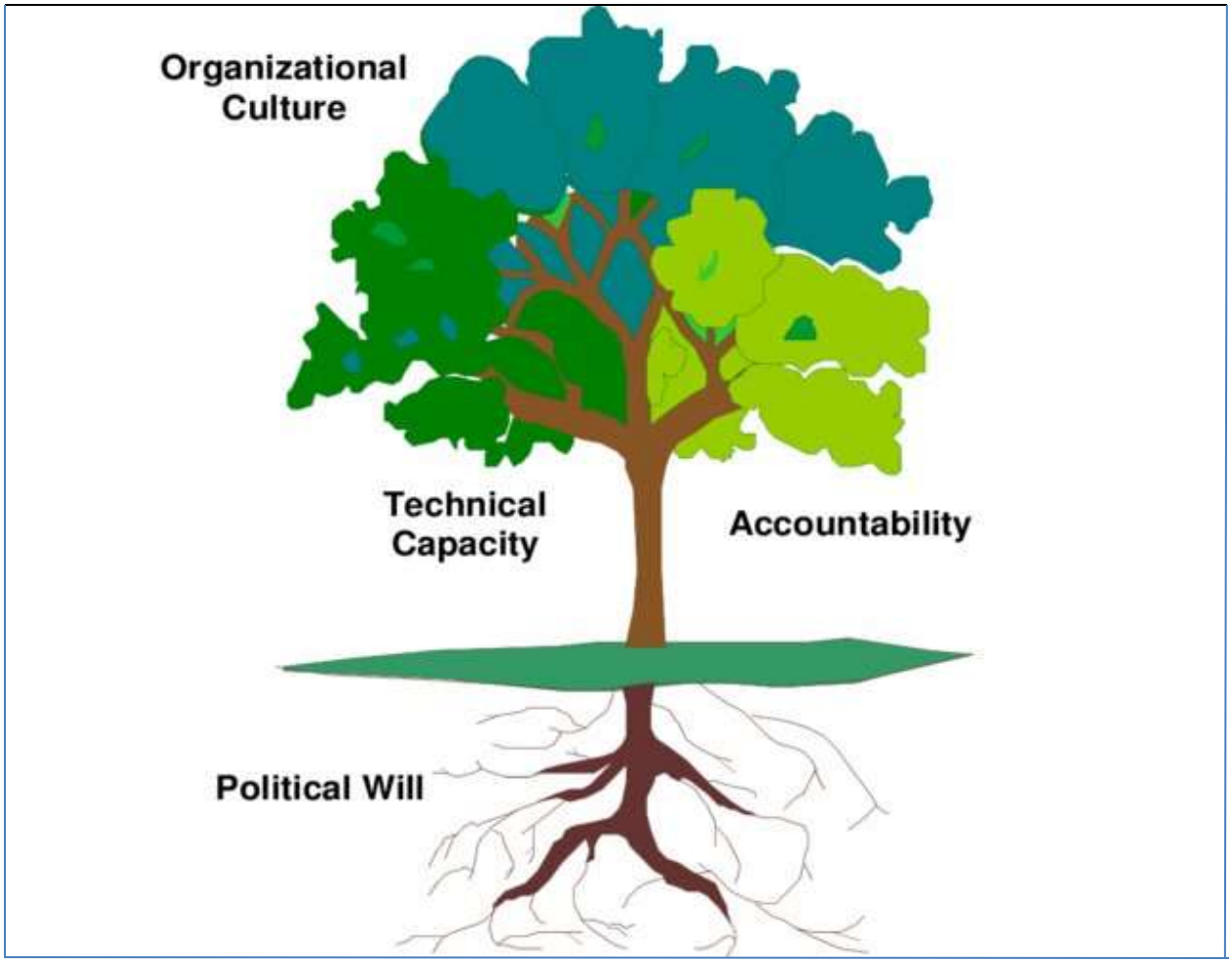


Fig.2: Institutional Analysis
Source:*https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264914198_Report_on_the_Society_for_Family_Health_Gender_Assessment/figures?lo=1 downloaded on 15th May 2025*

Table 8: A Gender Sensitive Organization

Profile/Characteristics	Institutions/Organization Status
Strong political will by the leadership	Reflects the institution's leadership conviction and commitment to gender mainstreaming across all operations.
Documented gender policies	Stated policies affirm commitment to gender equity in programmes and projects. The policies include values, principles, and a mission that guides the organization's direction in its policies, plans, projects, and programmes.
Committed senior management to gender equity and equality	Top management fully supports policies that may result in substantial changes within the organization.
Strong and highly positioned coordination machinery for gender mainstreaming	Existence of a gender office responsible for monitoring gender practices, providing gender training and giving programmatic support to the organization.
A strong gender resource base	Availability of both human and financial resources to ensure effective implementation of activities to meet gender mainstreaming objectives.
Gender sensitive personnel	Treatment of men and women that is conscious of their different needs and circumstances. Inclusive communication that addresses both men's and women's concerns equally.
Gender focused programming	• All programmes and activities are analysed from a gender perspective with attention to the participation of women and men and the impact on both. • Data is sex-disaggregated, and Gender analysis of policies, plans, programmes and projects is conducted on a routine basis, and adjustments are made to reflect the findings. • Programmes are monitored and evaluated often from a gender perspective.
Gender budgeting	Institutional budgets are gender based.
Genderized reporting systems	Fully engendered monitoring and evaluation systems.

Group Exercise

Using a scale of 1 to 10, score your institution. 10 is the highest score, and 1 is the lowest. For each characteristic, give reasons for your score.

Table 9: Institutional Score for Gender Mainstreaming

Profile/Characteristics	**Institutional Score**	**Score Justifications**
Strong Political Will		
Documented Gender policies		
Committed Senior Management to Gender Equity and Equality		
A Strong Resource Base		
Gender Sensitive Personnel		
Gender –Focused Programming		
Gender Responsive Budgets		
Genderized Reporting Mechanisms		

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