Think Out Loud

A Practical Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in Community Organisations

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About Think Out Loud

Think Out Loud is a specialist gender and development advisory company offering customised support to NGOs, governments and social enterprises working towards gender equality and women's human rights around the world.

At **Think Out Loud** we are passionate about promoting gender equality and women's rights and bring a wealth of experience from grassroots gender and development projects around the world. We know that gender awareness is the key to fostering sustainable change and achieving equitable outcomes for women and men. We believe that gender should be a central consideration across all areas of work, from the planning stage through to the design, delivery and evaluation of a project or service.

Our specialists are experienced in planning and implementing human rights based approaches in a range of areas, including women's empowerment, leadership development, ending violence against women, disaster management and sexual and reproductive health. We also provide gender-related technical advice and capacity building to organisations, governments and businesses to mainstream gender within their organisations and programs.

In 2014 we started producing a range of easy to use toolkits that share our knowledge on how to advance gender equality. In line with our commitment to make gender expertise accessible, we have provided these resources to the community for free. We are excited to launch 'A Practical Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in Community Organisations' as our first resource.

Find out more at **www.thinkoutloud.org**

About this Toolkit

This toolkit is a practical guide for mainstreaming gender in the work of community organisations.

Unequal power relations between men and women exist in all aspects of society, including governments, community organisations, businesses and other institutions. In many cases, this gender inequality can limit women's rights, choices and opportunities.

Community organisations and the people that work in them have the collective power to change this situation and create a better future for men and women. However, if they are not proactive in identifying and addressing gender inequality within their own organisation, they can end up being part of the problem, not the solution.

We wrote this toolkit because we believe that equality for women and men will only be achieved when gender becomes a critical consideration in the work of community organisations. At the same time we also recognise that many of these organisations do not have the technical capacity and resources to meet this standard.

This toolkit is a starting point for community organisations to mainstream gender into their work. It provides a straightforward and practical framework for gender mainstreaming and a clear process for applying it within an organisation. We wanted this toolkit to be accessible to a wide range of people, so we have tried to keep it simple and free from technical jargon. It assumes that the reader will have a basic understanding of the concept of gender and gender equality.

What is Gender Mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is a process of ensuring that the different needs of women and men and the goal of gender equality is included in all areas of work, including policies, programs, laws, budgets and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Gender mainstreaming involves more than just delivering programs to empower women and girls, it is about ensuring that the unique needs, perspectives and life experiences of women and men are considered across all areas of work, and the goal of gender equality is central to all activities across an organisation.

Gender mainstreaming has been endorsed by the United Nations as one of the most effective strategies for the promotion of gender equality.

Evidence has shown that gender equality will be most effectively achieved through a dual strategy of both stand-alone initiatives that promote gender equality and by integrating gender across all areas of work (gender mainstreaming).

Stand alone initiatives that promote gender equality **+** Integrating gender equality across all areas of work **=** Gender equality

Gender mainstreaming involves working through a checklist of different components and putting practical actions in place to achieve them. It requires organisations to make an honest assessment of the areas where they are performing well and where they need to do better.

To make things easier, we have identified five organisational dimensions, which are critical in effectively mainstreaming gender into community organisations.

They are: **leadership, culture, capacity, accountability and programs**.

Accountability

Culture

Leadership

Programs

Capacity

1. Leadership

Effective gender mainstreaming requires an active commitment from leaders in the organisation. This includes board/committee members and the organisation's executives (senior staff members). Leadership is at the centre of the diagram because without it, efforts to achieve gender equality will not be sustainable.

In organisations where gender mainstreaming is supported by its leadership:

✓ there is a clear strategy for advancing gender equality

✓ women are represented equally and have influence as decision makers within the organisation

✓ there is demonstrated capacity and commitment to gender equality among the organisation's leaders.

2. Accountability

Efforts to mainstream gender into organisations are wasted if organisations are not accountable for their actions and commitments. Too often, organisations make genuine attempts at gender mainstreaming, but fail to implement the systems and processes required to ensure that these efforts are effective and sustainable over time.

Organisations that demonstrate accountability for gender mainstreaming:

✓ actively seek to understand gender equality issues within the organisation

✓ allocate the financial resources required to implement the gender policy and mainstreaming strategy

✓ publically report on progress towards gender equality commitments.

3. Culture

Gender mainstreaming will be more sustainable when support for gender equality is embedded in the organisation's values, systems, policies, and procedures at every level. An organisation's culture is not always easy to quantify in exact terms.

Organisations that have a culture supportive of gender equality:

✓ provide a fair and equitable workplace for both women and men

✓ provide a safe and accessible space for women, men, boys and girls
  Note: certain women specific services (e.g. rape crisis centres, domestic violence refuges) may legitimately exclude men for safety reasons

✓ encourage staff, volunteers and members to engage in open dialogue on gender and power.

4. Capacity

An organisation must have the technical capacity necessary to undertake gender mainstreaming. This requires a consistent investment in the capacity development of staff and board/committee members, but also a contribution to broader efforts to achieve gender equality.

Organisations that have the technical capacity for gender mainstreaming:

✓ have specialist gender expertise within the organisation

✓ ensure that gender is the responsibility of all staff

✓ contribute to the gender capacity/expertise of the broader community.

5. Programs

Programs refer to the main activities of the organisation. This may be projects or programs, advocacy initiatives, training or anything else that is the core business of the organisation.

Organisations that have mainstreamed gender into their programs:

✓ design their programs and activities using a gender analysis and robust evidence, including gender disaggregated data

✓ actively involve both women and men in the design and implementation of programs and activities

✓ use a gender-sensitive framework to monitor and evaluate programs and activities.

Gender Mainstreaming Report Card

Instructions:

Most people who went to school will remember bringing home their annual report card. Whether you loved it or hated it, your report card was an important opportunity for your teacher to rate your attitude and performance across a range of areas.

In this activity, we ask you to complete a gender report card for your organisation. This process is also known as a 'gender audit'. The purpose of a gender audit is to rate your organisation's performance in gender mainstreaming against a number of objectives relating to the five organisational dimensions.

For each of the five organisational dimensions, the report card lists objectives and indicators that need to be achieved in order for your organisation to effectively mainstream gender into its work. Once your organisation has reached all of the objectives (and you have the evidence to prove it) you will be demonstrating good practice in gender mainstreaming.

Each indicator has a total number of points allocated to it, with 1 being the least important and 4 being the most important when it comes to effectively mainstreaming gender. Remember! All strategies have been selected because they play an important role in reaching the objective, however, if your organisation has limited time and resources, the scoring system can be used to help you prioritise which strategies are implemented first.

Once you have scored yourself against each objective, focus your attention on how your organisation can improve in each area. In the column titled Actions for Improvement, list one to three practical things you can do to bring your organisation closer to reaching this objective.

Make sure your actions are **SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound)**.

Example:

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The things that need to happen in order for your organisation to effectively mainstream gender into its work	The things that need to happen in order for your organisation to achieve each of the objectives	The total number of points available for each indicator	Give yourself maximum points if you have met this indicator or half points if it has been partially met	List 1-3 practical things that you can do to improve your performance in this area.

Turn over to get started!

1. Leadership

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The organisation has a clear strategy for advancing gender equality.	A stand-alone policy or strategy is in place that sets out the organisation's commitment to gender equality and strategy for gender mainstreaming.	4		
	The policy or strategy includes specific and measureable objectives.	2		
	The majority of staff are aware of the policy/ strategy and how it relates to their area of work.	2		
	The strategy is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.	2		
Women are represented equally and have influence as decision makers within the organisation.	Women make up 30% or more of all board or committee members.[1]	4		
	Women make up 30% or more of all senior executive staff within the organisation.[2]	2		
	The organisation has a specific policy or strategy for attracting and retaining women in leadership positions.	2		
	The organisation provides female staff members with specific opportunities for professional development (e.g. in mentorships, specialised training, networking).	2		

1, 2. Do not give yourself half points if you are below 30% as 30% is the minimum required for women to have influence.

1. Leadership

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
There is demonstrated capacity and commitment to gender equality among the organisation's leaders.	Gender equality is a key consideration in strategic planning sessions for organisational activities.	3		
	The majority of board/committee members have attended training on gender equality/ gender mainstreaming in the last 12 months.	3		
	The majority of senior executive staff have attended training on gender equality/gender mainstreaming in the last 12 months.	3		

Total Score for Leadership		Total Grade for Leadership

Score Range	Grade	What your grade means
27 – 34	A	Congratulations, your organisation is displaying good practice in this area. Your score indicates that your organisation's leaders are committed to advancing gender equality and demonstrate this in practice. You should now be looking to leverage this strength to drive your performance in other dimensions and implement strategies to ensure that your performance is sustainable.
20 – 26	B	This is a very good score. It indicates that your organisation is committed to gender equality, however, it also shows that there are a few areas where this commitment is not being actively demonstrated. Look closely at the areas where you scored the least points and think about what actions you can take to improve in these areas.
10 – 19	C	This is the minimum score required to positively impact gender equality within your organisation. It indicates that there is some commitment from the organisation's leaders, but it is being demonstrated in a limited way. Look closely at the areas where you scored the least points and think about what actions you can take to improve in these areas.
0 – 9	D	You have a lot of work to do in this area. This should be a priority of the organisation, as without strong leadership, other efforts at mainstreaming gender will not be effective.

2. Accountability

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The organisation's leaders actively seek to understand gender equality issues within the organisation.	An internal gender audit has been completed in the last 12 months. (Give yourself full points if you are completing one now).	4		
	All the organisation's staff were actively engaged in the process of completing the gender audit.	3		
	An action plan, with clear timeframes, was developed by senior management and/or Board members to act on the outcomes of the gender audit.	3		
The organisation's budget allocates the financial resources required to implement the gender policy/ mainstreaming strategy.	The budget provides adequate funding and resources to implement the initiatives in the gender equality/mainstreaming policy.	3		

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2. Accountability

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The organisation publically reports on progress towards gender equality commitments.	The organisation publically reports (e.g. in their Annual Report) on all gender equality commitments made in policies, strategies and action plans, and results of gender audits, highlighting the successes and areas for improvement.	3		
Total Score for Accountability				**Total Grade for Accountability**

Score Range	Grade	What your grade means
12 – 15	A	Congratulations, your organisation is displaying good practice in this area. Your score indicates that your organisation has implemented systems to ensure that you are accountable to your gender equality commitments. Strong accountability mechanisms are essential for ensuring gender mainstreaming efforts are effective and sustainable. You should now be looking at strategies for ensuring that your performance in this area is sustainable.
9 – 11	B	This is a very good score. It indicates that your organisation has implemented some strategies and processes for ensuring that you are accountable to your gender equality commitments. However, it will have also highlighted some gaps. Focus your actions on addressing these gaps to improve your performance in this area.
5 – 8	C	This is the minimum score required to positively impact gender equality within your organisation. It indicates that some steps have been taken to ensure the organisation is accountable to gender equality commitments. However, there is more work to be done to ensure that gender equality commitments are effective and sustainable.
0 – 4	D	You have a lot of work to do in this area. This should be a priority of the organisation, as gender mainstreaming goals are unlikely to be reached unless the organisation is held accountable to their commitments.

3. Culture

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The organisation provides a fair and equitable workplace for both women and men.	The organisation has specific policies and procedures in place to prevent gender based discrimination (e.g. a code of conduct or zero tolerance approach to gender based discrimination).	3		
	The organisation has specific policies and procedures in place to respond to gender based discrimination if it happens (e.g. a complaints policy or strategy for reprimanding people who discriminate against others on the basis of gender).	3		
	The organisation has specific policies in place to enable both women and men to balance work and family life (e.g. through flexible work hours, nursing breaks, provisions for child care and parental leave).	3		
	A standardised pay scale is in place to ensure men and women receive equal pay for equal work.	3		
	Staff are made aware of these policies when they are first employed with the organisation and at regular intervals throughout their employment.	2		
	Staff have claimed some of the entitlements available to them (e.g. paid parental leave) in the past or there is evidence to suggest that they are confident in claiming these entitlements if needed.	2		
The organisation provides a safe and accessible space for women, men, boys and girls.[3]	Staff and volunteers of the organisation demonstrate attitudes and behaviours that support gender equality and women's access (e.g. they support breast feeding, are friendly towards children).	4		
	The organisation's premises is physically accessible by both men and women (e.g. it is child friendly, has adequate lighting at night time). Where this is not possible, the organisation has taken steps to improve physical accessibility of its premises.	3		

3. Certain women specific services (e.g. rape crisis centres, domestic violence refuges) may legitimately exclude men for safety reasons.

3. Culture

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The organisation provides a safe and accessible space for women, men, boys and girls. [4]	The organisation's media and communications material (e.g. website, newsletter, brochures etc.) show empowering images of women and men in relatively equal numbers.	2		
Staff, volunteers and members are encouraged to engage in open dialogue on gender and power.	Senior executive staff regularly engage in critical dialogue about gender and power in the organisation and programs.	3		
	Staff and volunteers are given opportunities to contribute to these discussions about gender equality and power in the organisation and programs.	3		
	The organisation regularly contributes to public celebrations of gender equality (e.g. International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism).	2		
Total Score for Culture				**Total Grade for Culture**

Score Range	Grade	What your grade means
26 – 33	A	Congratulations, your organisation is displaying good practice in this area. Your score indicates that gender equality is embedded in the organisation's values, systems, policies and procedures. This is a key strength of your organisation, as organisations that have a culture supportive of gender equality are more supportive of other changes needed to mainstream gender. This doesn't mean that your work in this dimension is over; you should now be looking at strategies for ensuring that your performance in this area is sustainable.
20 – 25	B	This is a very good score, indicating that on the whole, the culture is supportive of gender equality. However, it also shows that there are a few gaps. Look closely at the areas where you lost points and think about what actions you can take to improve in these areas.
10 – 19	C	This is the minimum score required to positively impact gender equality within your organisation. It indicates that in some ways the culture is supportive of gender equality, but this support is not embedded across every aspect of the organisation, and therefore not enough to create a 'culture of support' for gender equality.
0 – 9	D	You have a lot of work to do in this area. This should be a priority of the organisation, as gender mainstreaming actions will be difficult to implement in an environment with a culture that does not support gender equality.

4. Certain women specific services (e.g. rape crisis centres, domestic violence refuges) may legitimately exclude men for safety reasons.

4. Capacity

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
There is specialised gender expertise within the organisation.	A gender focal point or gender specialist exists within the organisation.	4		
	The gender focal point specialist has a strong understanding of gender and gender mainstreaming.	3		
	The gender focal point/specialist has adequate time and resources to perform their role.	3		
	The gender focal point/specialist is required to report against the outcomes of the organisation's gender equality policy/strategy on a regular basis and has a direct reporting line to senior management.	2		
	The gender focal point/specialist receives regular training and professional development opportunities to ensure their knowledge of gender equality issues are up-to-date.	2		
Gender is the responsibility of all staff and this is demonstrated in practice.	Gender training was available to all staff in the last 12 months.	3		
	Gender awareness is included in the recruitment criteria and performance reviews of all staff.	2		

4. Capacity

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The organisation's staff contribute to the gender capacity/ expertise of the broader community.	Note: To achieve full points the following must have happened in the last 12 months.			
	The organisation regularly participates in networks and communities of practice relating to gender equality.	1		
	Members of the organisation have contributed to knowledge sharing on gender equality by presenting at conferences, forums and other events.	1		
	The organisation has been called on to provide training, advice and support on gender equality to other organisations.	1		
	The organisation has been asked to contribute to National efforts to achieve gender equality (e.g. by participating on advisory or expert reference groups on gender equality initiatives).	1		
	The organisation has contributed to research on gender equality by authoring or contributing to research papers, articles and/or opinion pieces of gender issues.	1		

Total Score for Capacity | | | **Total Grade for Capacity**

Score Range	Grade	What your grade means
20 – 24	A	Congratulations, your organisation is displaying good practice in this area. Your score indicates that your organisation has the technical capacity necessary to undertake gender mainstreaming and pursue its gender equality goals. You should now be looking at strategies for ensuring that your performance is sustainable.
15 – 19	B	This is a very good score. It indicates that your organisation has some technical capacity in gender mainstreaming. If you already have gender expertise within in your organisation, identify opportunities to share your skills and knowledge with other organisations.
8 – 14	C	This is the minimum score required to positively impact gender equality within your organisation. It indicates that there is some capacity in gender mainstreaming within your organisation, but it is unlikely to be sufficient to meet your needs.
0 – 7	D	You have a lot of work to do in this area. This should be a priority of the organisation, as gender mainstreaming is made easier if there is internal gender expertise.

5. Programs

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The organisation's programs and activities are designed based on a gender analysis and robust evidence, using gender disaggregated data.	The organisation has conducted a gender analysis of their programs and activities (a gender analysis examines how the program or activity will impact women and men differently).	4		
	The organisation's programs and activities are informed by robust evidence using sex-disaggregated data (data that provides information on men and women separately).	3		
Both women and men are actively involved in the design and implementation of the organisation's programs and activities.	The organisation consults closely with both women and men in the design of their programs and activities.	3		
	There are at least 30% women on the program team (*note: this may not apply in gender specific programs*).[5]	3		
	The organisation actively ensures that there are no barriers that will prevent women and men from participating in the organisation's programs and activities equally. (*note: this may not apply in the case of gender specific programs*).	3		
	Women and men are equally represented as participants in the program (*note: this may not apply in gender specific programs*).[6]	3		

5, 6. Do not give yourself half points if you are below 30% as 30% is the minimum required for women to have influence.

5. Programs

Objective	Indicator	Points	Score	Actions for Improvement
The framework used to monitor and evaluate the organisation's programs and activities is gender sensitive.	The monitoring and evaluation indicators are sex-disaggregated (they measure change for women and men separately).	3		
	The methodologies used to evaluate the program are gender sensitive (e.g. they are equally able to measure change among women and men).	3		
	The organisation consults closely with both women and men in the evaluation of their programs and activities.	3		

Total Score for Programs | | | | **Total Grade for Programs** |

Score Range	Grade	What your grade means
22 – 28	A	Congratulations, your organisation is displaying good practice in this area and gender has been effectively mainstreamed into the organisation's programs. Now you should be looking at strategies for ensuring that your performance in this area is sustainable by making sure that any new policies and programs are gender sensitive.
16 – 21	B	This is a very good score. It indicates that gender equality is a consideration in your organisation's programs but is not completely integrated. Look closely at the areas where you lost points and think about what actions you can take to improve.
8 – 15	C	This is the minimum score required to positively impact gender equality within your organisation. It indicates that some steps have been taken to mainstream gender into programs, but they are limited and inconsistent.
0 – 7	D	You have a lot of work to do in this area. This should be a priority of the organisation, as programs that have not mainstreamed gender are unlikely to respond to the needs of both women and men and risk increasing gender inequality.

What's Next?

We hope that completing this report card has made your organisation think more closely about how it can contribute to gender equality by mainstreaming gender throughout its work. This is an important first step, but there is much more to be done.

In completing this report card you will have identified many areas for improvement. You now need to take these actions and turn them into a realistic action plan with clear timeframes and measureable outcomes.

We recommend that you start by creating a 12 month action plan that sets out exactly how your organisation is going to achieve each objective, the timeframe for completion and who the main people responsible for completing it will be.

Don't feel like you need to achieve all of the actions listed straight away. If you have limited time and resources, then use the weighting system to prioritise which areas you progress first. When developing your action plan, always be **SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound)**.

Need Advice?

Think Out Loud can provide customised advice, training and support to help you achieve your goal of advancing gender equality in your organisation and community.

Services we offer include:

- Comprehensive gender audits for large organisations or complex programs
- Gender analysis of all areas of work, including programs, policies, legislation, budgets
- Development of gender equality policies and strategies
- Developing action plans for sustainable organisational change
- Gender-sensitive program design and evaluation
- Capacity building, training and one-on-one coaching in gender equality

Find out more at **www.thinkoutloud.org**

Barclay, A., Dicker, K. (2014). A Practical Guide for Gender Mainstreaming in Community Organisations. Think Out Loud. Australia.