



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

GLOSSARY ON GENDER-RELATED TERMS

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This glossary is designed to enable an understanding and consistent use of key terms you will find in the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and will come across in your gender mainstreaming efforts. The list is not exhaustive. Definitions are predominantly based on OSCE sources but in some cases incorporate those developed by other international organizations (you can find direct links to other resources below).

- **Equal opportunities** means ensuring the opportunity for full and equal participation of men and women in all aspects of political, social, cultural and economic life.

Example: Equal opportunities is when women have the same real opportunity as men to be nominated and elected as the president of a country.

- **Gender** is a term used to describe socially constructed roles for women and men. Gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. On the contrary, **sex**, identifies the biological differences between men and women. Sex roles are universal and do not change over time or across cultures.

*Example gender: A gender role is that women are expected to take care of the children and elderly and work without pay, while men are expected to work outside the home and earn money to sustain the family. Gender roles are also visible in jobs, which are considered typically female or male: nurses, kindergarten and primary teachers are predominantly female; technicians, workers in public transport, forestry or water management are predominantly male workers.
Example sex: Women can bear children, and men cannot.*

- **Gender analysis** involves the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in order to reveal any differential impact of an action on women and men, and the effects of gender roles and responsibilities. It also involves qualitative analyses that help to clarify how and why these differential roles, responsibilities and impacts have come about.

Example: Gender analysis is to look into differences in laws and traditions for women and men in inheritance rights in your country. In Kosovo there are no legal differences in inheritance between men and women, but when it comes to traditions, women in rural areas are expected to decline their share in the inherited property for the benefit of their brothers.

- A '**gender aspect**' is that dimension or component of an issue which addresses gender specifically and takes this into account.

Example: A gender aspect in media coverage would be the fact that it is noted how many women and men have participated in a public rally, and, if possible, highlight the reason for it (e.g. a high number of women participated in the rally against the new legislation on part-time

workers; 78% of part time workers are female)

- **Gender balance** refers to equal representation and participation of women and men.

Example: Gender balance should be considered when organizing training in your mission i.e. the participants list should show a balanced number of women and men, in relation to the overall gender balance of staff.

- **Gender discrimination** refers to any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms which prevents a person from enjoying full human rights.

Example: Gender discrimination is when female staff members are not given certain assignments because they are viewed less capable of performing the job or because it has traditionally been assigned to male staff members.

- **Gender equality** is the absence of discrimination on the basis of gender in opportunities, in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services. It is thus the full and equal exercise by men and women of their human rights. Gender disparities are inequalities or differences based on gender.

Example: Gender equality is when a country has the same percentage of boys and girls who enroll and finish secondary education.

- **Gender mainstreaming** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experience an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated.

Example: In considering women's and men's concerns as part of the planning, implementation and evaluation of a project on voters' education and registration you will find that women and men do not have the same needs in relation to the site, the time-schedule, the availability of public transportation, or security related issues, etc., because they have different social and private responsibilities and different levels of mobility. The project then should take in consideration the differences and adapt as necessary in order to mainstream gender issues throughout the whole project cycle.

- A '**gender perspective**' is a way of understanding how gender may be addressed or related to a particular issue, and applying this to the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs. It is the notion that problems and solutions should be examined with sensitivity to the implications of gender in mind.

Example: When planning a project relating to property rights, we will have in mind the particular situation women are facing in ownership and access to family property. We might need to have specific activities

ensuring women can enjoy these rights.

- **Gender-related objectives** are those aims of a policy, programme or activity that function particularly to promote gender equality.

Example: When revising or developing family policies regarding social benefits and support, the aim to ensure equal distribution of family responsibilities between both spouses is a gender-related objective.

- **Gender sensitivity/awareness** encompasses the ability to perceive, acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and to incorporate a gender perspective into strategies and actions.

Example: There is gender sensitivity when OSCE managers have a 'zero tolerance policy' to sexual harassment in their team, which can be a serious obstacle in the career development of female staff members.

- **Gender stereotypes**, or gender bias, are generic attitudes, opinions or roles applied to a particular gender and which function as unjustifiably fixed assumptions.

*Examples:
Women are not hired as drivers as they are generally not considered to be good drivers or because is not a typical female job.
Men are not appointed as gender focal points as they are assumed not to be interested in the role.*

- **Gender-sensitive indicators** provide information about progress in the move towards gender-equality. An indicator summarises a large amount of information in a single figure, in such a way as to show an aspect of the relative advantage or disadvantage between men and women and give an indication of change over time. Indicators differ from statistical data in that, rather than merely presenting facts, indicators involve comparison.

Example: The UNDP has developed the gender-related development index which indicates the level of gender-(in)equality (differential between women and men) with regard to life expectancy, literacy rate, schooling and GDP. The increase of female participation in decision making is also widely used as indicator in the move towards gender equality.

- **Sex-disaggregated data** is the collection and presentation of all statistics separately on women and men.

Example: The production of statistics which reflect the differential rates of unemployment, literacy etc. of women and men.

Direct link to gender related glossaries:

[International Labor Organization \(ILO\) –ABC of women workers' rights and gender equality](#)

[Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies- *Glossary*](#)

[Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\), *DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*](#)

[United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\) *Gender Mainstreaming Learning and Information pack*](#)

[United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women \(INSTRAW\)- *Glossary*](#)

[United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Office \(UNESCO\), *Gender mainstreaming framework and glossary*](#)

[World Health Organization \(WHO\)- *Glossary on Gender and Reproductive Rights*](#)