

## Gender Sensitivity Checklist

The aim of this checklist is to provide HIV/AIDS educators and policy makers with a tool to assess the gender sensitivity of their programmes and policies. Assessing gender sensitivity allows one to see if programmes, policies, and/or organisations are identifying and catering to the needs of all genders. Gender sensitivity is an important concept, especially in HIV/AIDS prevention. As programmes and policies become more gender-focused, the potential for effectiveness increases due to the inclusion of the needs of all participants.



This checklist can be used in the development of an HIV/AIDS programme or policy to promote the adequate inclusion of gender components. It can also be used to assess and to modify existing HIV/AIDS programmes or policies to include gender sensitivity concepts and activities. In addition, this checklist includes questions relating to the gender sensitivity of individual organisations that implement these programmes and policies. These three areas have been included in this checklist in an effort to facilitate a gender focus at all levels of HIV/AIDS prevention. Such a focus will give women, men, girls and boys greater representation in all aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention efforts.

Each item on this checklist is to be implemented, whenever possible, with the involvement of women, men, girls, and boys. Such involvement will help facilitate their inclusion in the development and implementation processes. Please adapt the items on this checklist to fit the social and cultural needs of specific participants, programmes/policies, and/or organisations.



The term "gender" is used to describe the various characteristics assigned to women and men by a given society. The term "sex" refers to biological characteristics. Gender is socially constructed, learned, and can vary from culture to culture, generation to generation, and over time due to societal changes. Gender roles reflect the behaviours and relationships that societies believe are appropriate for an individual based on his or her sex.

### Summary:



This checklist has been compiled to provide individuals involved in HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and policies with a tool to assess whether their work is sensitive to the needs of women, men, girls, and boys. The checklist can be used in the development and/or implementation of an HIV/AIDS prevention programme or policy. In addition, the checklist can be used to assess the gender sensitivity of organisations that implement such programmes and policies. The Gender Sensitivity Checklist is a component of the *UNAIDS Resource Packet on Gender & AIDS*, which includes additional modules, fact sheets and an almanac.

### Goal:



To provide HIV/AIDS educators, policy makers, and sponsoring organisations with a tool to assess the gender sensitivity of their work.



### Intended Audience:

Programme/Policy Developers

Health Educators

Sponsoring Organisation Staff Members

## Gender Sensitivity Checklist

Please take a few minutes to complete the checklist. The list can be used as a guide to provide ideas on how to enhance existing programmes/policies as well as to assess the sensitivity of programmes/policies. A response of “yes” to every item on this checklist is not needed in order to consider your programme or policy gender-sensitive. Once the checklist is completed, look over your answers to see how you might include more gender-sensitive components to enhance your programme or policy.

### Programme/Policy Development

Does your programme/policy . . .

Yes No

- encourage community members, especially women and girls, to participate in the development planning process?
- use innovative and nontraditional means to solicit the participation of community members, especially women and girls, in the development planning process? (For example, hold planning sessions where women traditionally gather, provide services to women so they can forgo their daily tasks in order to participate, etc.)
- encourage community groups, especially women’s groups, to participate in the development planning process?
- encourage people living with HIV/AIDS, especially women and girls, to participate in the development planning process?
- include all participants, especially women and girls, in the development of programme/policy goals and objectives?
- provide gender training for programme facilitators?
- include facilitators who are members of the programme target population?
- include facilitators who are comfortable with discussing gender sensitive issues?
- tailor activities to the particular economic, political, and cultural realities of participants?
- tailor activities to address the power imbalances between women and men and between girls and boys?

Yes No

- include participatory activities (group activities, role playing, brainstorming, mapping, story telling, etc.)?
- produce educational materials that promote positive representations of women, men, girls, and boys, as well as people living with HIV/AIDS?
- occur at a time and place that is convenient to all participants, especially women and girls?
- provide transportation for participants in an effort to encourage attendance?
- provide child-care for participants during programme activities?

### Programme/Policy Implementation

Does your programme/policy . . .

Yes No

- encourage community members, especially women and girls, to participate in peer education? (For example, leading segments of the workshop discussions, demonstrating condom use, etc.)
- encourage people living with HIV/AIDS, especially women and girls, to participate in the programme implementation?
- provide access to information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS to all participants equally?
- encourage discussion about socially assigned gender roles affecting women, men, adolescents, and the elderly?
- enable women and men, and girls and boys to understand one another’s needs?



## Gender Sensitivity Checklist

Yes No

- address how to avoid HIV transmission from mother to child (both before and after birth)?
- address the need to improve the quality of health services for women and girls?
- address the need to improve access to health services for women and girls (transportation, financial, etc.)?
- address the various health care changes that occur over a lifetime and how those changes affect HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention? (For example, a woman's health needs and HIV/AIDS susceptibility may change significantly as her body changes through adolescence, child-bearing years, and menopause.)
- encourage men and boys to participate equally in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts?
- encourage men and boys to help with domestic tasks as women's lives are impacted by HIV? (Greater assistance with domestic tasks may be needed if a mother, sister, or wife becomes ill, if she has to care for infected loved ones, if she has to begin to generate the family income, etc.)
- encourage men to become more involved in the care of their families?

### Organisational Structure

This section has been included to enforce the fact that not only should programmes/policies reflect gender sensitivity, but so should the organisations which implement such programmes/policies. Gender awareness throughout an implementing organisation can benefit staff as well as programme/policy participants. Staff will be more invested in the concept of gender sensitivity and will convey more successfully and convincingly the importance of gender sensitivity in their HIV/AIDS prevention work.

Does your organisation . . .

Yes No

- have stated policies that affirm a commitment to gender awareness (goals and objectives, mission statement, etc.)?

Yes No

- encourage and support participation among women and men in practices and activities? (For example, do both women and men have an opportunity to participate in discussions, to manage and develop programmes/projects, to hold advisory positions, to participate equally in planning and implementation of services, etc.)
- monitor internal practices in an effort to identify areas that are not currently gender sensitive?
- continually adapt internal practices in an effort to remain gender sensitive?
- support gender awareness among staff? (For example, provide gender sensitivity training to staff members at all levels.)
- have ideas of gender sensitivity formalised at all levels? (For example, include gender sensitive practices from entry level positions through top management level.)
- employ both women and men?
- provide women access to a variety of positions at all employment levels?
- pay women and men the same for equal work?
- support the needs of employees, both women and men, with families? (For example, provide childcare facilities, allow employees to work flexible schedules, provide leave to care for loved ones, etc.)
- provide both women and men access to training activities and extension services to facilitate professional development?

### References

- CEDPA. *Gender Equity: Concepts and Tools for Development*. Washington, DC: The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), 1996.
- de Bruyn, M., Jackson, H., Wijermars, M., Curtin Knight, V., and Berkvens, R. *Facing the Challenges of HIV/AIDS/STDs: a gender-based response*. Geneva: UNAIDS, 1998.

[back to Module Table of Contents](#)