

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

- attempt to ensure that women and men, and girls and boys are listening to the needs of one another? (For example, have participants represent one another in role play, have participants summarise and repeat the issues raised in discussion, etc.)
- encourage discussion of the various social factors, such as economics, politics, and social structure that put women or men more at risk for HIV/AIDS?
- encourage discussion of the biological factors that put women or men more at risk for HIV/AIDS?
- encourage discussion of how gender inequality affects HIV/AIDS prevention, transmission, treatment, and care?
- address the financial difficulties brought on by HIV/AIDS, which often disproportionately affect women and girls? (For example, laws which do not allow women to inherit land from their husbands, the need for widows to seek out new forms of income to support their families, the burden of health care costs which often become the responsibility of women, etc.)
- encourage discussion of the power imbalances between women and men and between girls and boys and how these imbalances affect the transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS? (For example, the difficulties women face in insisting that their partners use condoms, the ability to choose when and with whom to have sex, etc.)
- encourage discussion of how empowerment of women and girls could help lessen their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS? (It is crucial to include men and boys in this discussion so they can participate and support their wives, sisters, and mothers as opposed to becoming threatened by their empowerment.)
- work to eliminate the power imbalances between women and men and between girls and boys?
- address the issue of violence against women and girls?

Yes No

- provide opportunities for women and girls to become empowered through HIV/AIDS education? (For example, enhance the self-confidence of women and girls by encouraging them to attain new skills, take on more responsibilities as desired, become local leaders in health promotion, etc.)
- encourage and acknowledge the support that women and girls can provide to one another?
- encourage equal communication among participants about sexuality, sexual health, and sex practices (dry sex, anal sex, sex with commercial sex workers, etc.)?
- address the double standard that exists between women and men in relation to sexual activity? (For example, men being allowed to engage in sex outside of marriage while women are not, men being expected to have sexual experience before marriage while women are not, etc.)
- address the issue of sexual abuse (rape, incest, etc.)?
- address adolescent sexuality and the effect it may have on HIV/AIDS?
- address the importance of equal access to education for both girls and boys?
- address the reproductive and sexual health needs of children and adolescents?
- facilitate awareness in adults of the reproductive and sexual health needs of children and adolescents?
- encourage adults to address the reproductive and sexual health needs of children and adolescents?
- provide demonstrations to all participants on how to use both male and female condoms and encourage all participants to practice their use?
- encourage discussion about the possible difficulties associated with condom use experienced by both women and men?
- address how HIV/AIDS affects how women and men make reproductive choices?
- encourage the involvement of both women and men in family planning?

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](#)