

MAINSTREAMING GENDER:

Policy, Organizations,
Programmes & People With
Disability (PWDs)

BY THE GENDER JUSTICE
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
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ABOUT THE GENDER JUSTICE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

Gender mainstreaming is a crucial process that ensures the integration of a gender perspective across policies, organizations, programs, and among persons with disabilities (PWDs). The 1997 agreed conclusions of ECOSOC^[1] defines gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels. The objective is to develop strategies that aim to integrate the concerns and experiences of gender as an integral dimension of policy and programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation encompassing all political, economic, and societal spheres, with the goal of ensuring that inequality is not perpetuated. Ultimately, the aim is to achieve gender equity. By adopting a systematic approach to this, we can promote gender equality, challenge stereotypes, and foster inclusion at all levels.

This document draws from the learnings from a 2-day workshop hosted by the Voice-supported Community of Practice (CoP) on Gender Justice held in June 2023 at Nigeria's capital city of Abuja. It delves into the essential steps to mainstream gender at policy, organizational and program level as well as among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). It also looks at how a more equitable and inclusive world can be created through intentional and concrete actions.

The Community of Practice for Gender Justice is a coalition of Voice Grantee partners and other stakeholder NGOs working on awareness creation and ensuring favourable policy environment on gender-related issues in Nigeria. The goal of the learning-focused community is to share experiences and outcomes emerging from various gender justice interventions in different parts of the country. The activities of the CoP fall under the linking and learning component of the Voice project facilitated by Cognito and NINE. Voice Nigeria is an innovative grant funded by the Netherland Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which aims to increase participation, access and justice for marginalized groups.



[1] REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL FOR 1997 (A/52/3, 18 September 1997)

OVERVIEW OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN NIGERIA

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to ensure that the different needs and interests of women and men are taken into account in all aspects of human capital development. It aims to achieve gender equality and empower women by transforming the structures and systems that perpetuate gender discrimination and oppression. Gender mainstreaming is in line with the commitment by Nigeria to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although Nigeria has signed and ratified numerous international and regional instruments to protect human rights, achieving gender mainstreaming remains challenging due to several socio-cultural factors.



Some of these challenges are:

- **Social norms and cultural practices:**

Nigeria is a diverse country with a speculated 450 - 500 ethnic groups[2] and various religious affiliations. Many of these groups have patriarchal and conservative values that subordinate women to men and assign them stereotypical roles in the family and society. Some of the harmful practices that affect women's rights and dignity include female genital mutilation, early marriage, widowhood rites, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking[3]. These practices limit women's access to education, health, justice, and economic opportunities.

[1] REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL FOR 1997 (A/52/3, 18 September 1997)

- **Economic inequality:**

Women in Nigeria face significant barriers to economic empowerment and participation. They are often excluded from formal employment, entrepreneurship, land ownership, and financial services. They also bear the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work and household chores, which reduces their time and resources for productive activities in addition to pay disparity they face even when they partake in formal employment. According to the United Nations Development Programme, Nigerian women only earn 77 cents for every dollar that men get for the same work[4]. Women also account for most of Nigeria's unemployment and underemployment, especially in rural areas where they constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce but only 13% of the landowners.

- **Political exclusion:**

Women in Nigeria are underrepresented in decision-making positions at all levels of governance. Despite having a quota system that reserves 35% of political offices for women, the actual representation of women in elective and appointive positions is far below this target. As of 2019, women constituted only 4.5% of the members of the National Assembly, 6.7% of the ministers, 18.2% of the state commissioners, and 3.4% of the local government chairpersons[5]. The low participation of women in politics is attributed to factors such as lack of political will, inadequate funding, violence, intimidation, discrimination, and cultural stereotypes.

- **Legal and institutional gaps:**

Nigeria has a dual legal system that consists of statutory laws and customary laws. While statutory laws are generally aligned with international human rights standards, customary laws are often inconsistent and discriminate against women in matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and property rights. Moreover, there are gaps in the implementation and enforcement of existing laws and policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. For instance, even though Nigeria has not domesticated CEDAW, it has made progress with the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act which has been domesticated in 34 States[6]. There is also grossly inadequate coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming across different sectors and levels of government.



[2] Ayeomoni, M. O. 2012. *The Languages in Nigerian Socio-political Domains: Features and Functions*. Available online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n10p12>

[3] Oyewole, O. (2020). *The role of the Nigerian Bar Association in promoting human rights in Nigeria*. *Nigerian Bar Journal*, 13(1), 1-17. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/nba/article/view/254190/240179>

[4] DataPhyte. (2020, December 9). *5 gender challenges Nigerian women face*. <https://www.dataphyte.com/latest-reports/governance/5-gender-challenges-nigerian-women-face/>

[5] *It's election season in Nigeria, but where are the women?* | UN Women – Headquarters

[6] <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/563672-gender-based-violence-34-states-domesticate-nigerias-vapp-act-official.html?tztc=1>

To overcome these challenges and achieve gender mainstreaming in Nigeria, there is a need for concerted efforts by all stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector actors, media practitioners, religious leaders, traditional rulers, and community members. With determined efforts, Nigeria can overcome these challenges by challenging these norms, improving gender representation, revising discriminatory laws, and effectively implementing international commitments. The efforts include developing strategies to mainstream gender in the Nigerian policies, across organizations, development programmes and among persons with disabilities (PWDs).



MAINSTREAMING GENDER AT VARIOUS LEVELS:

POLICY, ORGANIZATIONAL, PROGRAMMES, AND AMONG PWDs

Mainstreaming Gender in Policy

Addressing gender mainstreaming requires a solid foundation of **gender-responsive policies**. It requires both integrating a gender perspective to the content of the different policies, and addressing the issue of representation of women and men in the given policy area. Both dimensions – gender representation and gender responsive content – need to be taken into consideration in all phases of the policy-making process. Establishing this foundation requires the use of specific gender mainstreaming methods and tools that can be useful at various stages of the policy cycle such as consulting with stakeholders or providing gender equality training to the actors involved, which can be useful in more than one stage. It all begins with gender analysis.

Gender analysis is an essential aspect of program planning and the integration of gender perspectives. It involves comprehending the differential impacts of issues affecting women and men, considering the policy environment, and leveraging research as well as past experiences. Effective gender analysis requires specialized expertise, adequate resources, and the use of appropriate tools. It encompasses the examination of diverse perspectives, contextual factors, key actors, institutional readiness, and differential impacts. Gender analysis should be an ongoing process that informs the design and implementation of policies, programs, and projects. Prioritizing gender analysis empowers organizations to advance gender equality and foster sustainable development. The next steps would be to integrate gender issues throughout the policy cycle, then ensure adequate resources are allocated for implementation of the policies and finally, set up accountability mechanisms to monitor progress and impact.



Steps to mainstreaming Gender at Policy level

1. **Gender Analysis:**

Conduct a comprehensive gender analysis to understand the specific needs, roles, and experiences of different genders within the policy context. This analysis will inform the development of gender-responsive policies.

2 **Integration throughout the Policy Cycle:**

Ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all stages of policy development, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Gender considerations should be reflected in policy objectives, strategies, and indicators.

3 **Resource Allocation:**

Allocate adequate resources to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming efforts. This includes financial resources, technical support, and capacity-building initiatives.

4 **Accountability Mechanisms:**

Establish mechanisms for accountability and oversight to monitor the progress and impact of gender mainstreaming. Regular reviews and evaluations will help identify gaps and refine policies for more effective outcomes





Figure 1: Dimensions of Gender Mainstreaming[7]

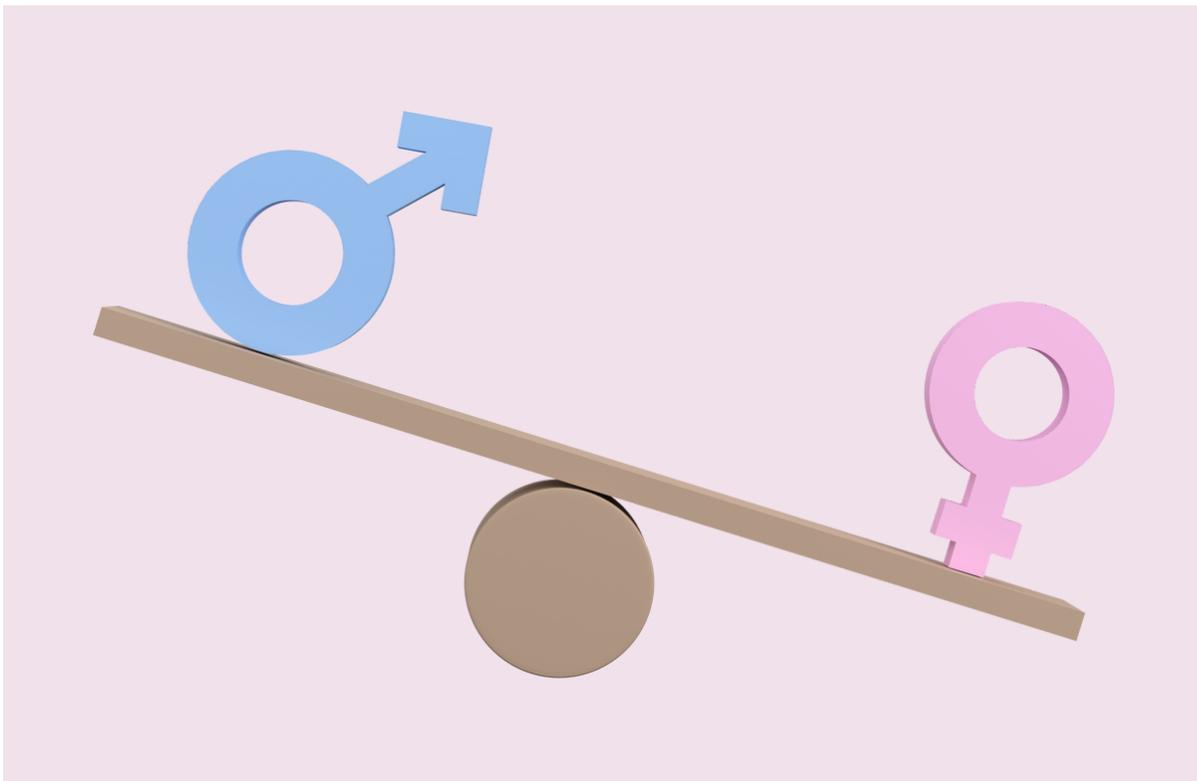
[7] <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>

Challenges affecting mainstreaming gender at policy level

There are challenges in mainstreaming gender in policy at community and national level which pose a stumbling block. Some identified challenges include the following:

- Resistance to change due to traditional beliefs and social norms
- Insufficient capacity and expertise among policymakers
- Inadequate data and evidence on gender disparities and its effects
- Lack of coordination and collaboration among stakeholders
- Institutional barriers and biases.

These challenges can be mitigated through strong leadership and political will, conducting gender analysis and research, stakeholder engagement and participation, capacity building and training, monitoring and evaluation, and raising awareness through sensitization programs. Additionally, international cooperation and support can provide valuable resources and expertise to support gender mainstreaming efforts.



Mainstreaming Gender at Organizational level

Creating gender-responsive organizations fosters an inclusive culture and supports gender equality. It aims to ensure that gender equality becomes a fundamental principle and goal in decision-making processes and activities within the organization. It begins with:

1. Leadership and Commitment:

Develop strong leadership commitment to gender equality and diversity. Encourage organizational leaders to champion gender mainstreaming initiatives, including gender analysis and budgeting, and promote a gender-responsive workplace culture.

2. Recruitment and Promotion:

Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion processes to ensure equal opportunities for all genders. Eliminate biases and barriers that hinder the advancement of women and other marginalized genders. Incorporate gender analysis into recruitment and promotion strategies to identify and address gender disparities.

3. Capacity-Building and Strengthening:

Provide training and capacity-building programs to enhance staff awareness and understanding of gender issues. These programs should address unconscious biases, promote gender sensitivity, and strengthen skills for gender mainstreaming, including gender analysis and gender budgeting. Refresher trainings should also be factored and incorporated to ensure that team members grasp gender issues and are able to advocate beyond the confines of the organization.



4. Gender Audits:

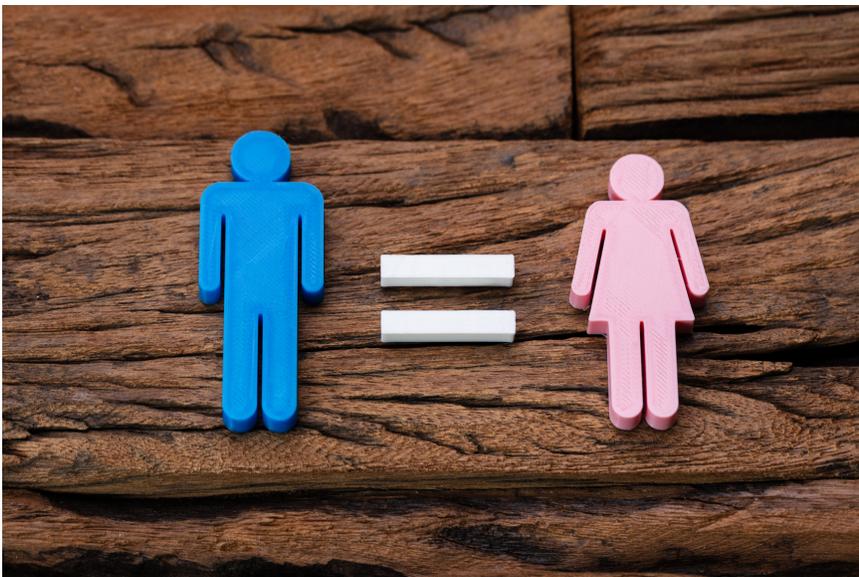
Conduct regular gender audits to assess the organization's progress in integrating gender equality principles. These audits help identify areas for improvement, measure the impact of gender mainstreaming efforts, guide strategic decision-making, and include gender budgeting to ensure equitable resource allocation.

Common challenges to expect revolve around resistance to change due to several reasons which may include:

- unconscious bias and stereotyping
- Inadequacy of knowledge and skills
- limited resources.

Mitigation strategies include:

- Comprehensive training and capacity building
- Awareness programs
- Open dialogue aimed at highlighting the benefits of gender equality
- Access to resources that enhance understanding of gender issues and equip employees with necessary skills
- Promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect
- Advocating for dedicated budgets which reflect gender sensitivities
- Leveraging partnerships and networks
- Prioritizing resource allocation to support gender-responsive policies and programs.



Mainstreaming Gender in Programmes

Integrating gender perspectives into programmes enhances their effectiveness and promotes inclusivity. As with policies, the dimensions of gender mainstreaming have to be considered throughout the development process through to implementation. Consider the following steps:

1. Gender Analysis:

Conduct a gender analysis to identify how different genders may be affected by the program and its outcomes. This analysis will inform the design and implementation of gender-responsive interventions.

2. Gender-Specific Interventions:

Develop gender-specific interventions that address the unique needs and challenges faced by different genders. These interventions should promote empowerment, equal opportunities, and access to resources.



3. Participation and Representation:

Promote the active participation and meaningful involvement of women, men, and other marginalized genders in program activities. Ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes and program design.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Incorporate gender-sensitive indicators and evaluation frameworks to monitor the impact of the program on different genders. Regular monitoring and evaluation will help identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.

Mainstreaming Gender Among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Following the definition from the ECOSOC conclusions, it is noteworthy that mainstreaming should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather a strategy to also achieve disability equality. This is critical because disability as a concept, together with disabled people, tends to remain locked in the specialist world of medicine and rehabilitation because it may be firmly imagined by most people as abnormality and functional limitation. This in turn makes a genuine human rights approach and the mainstreaming of disability virtually impossible to deliver, as policy makers and practitioners too easily default to an individualist, medical model of disability[8]. As a result, inclusion is often tokenized: making it a mere box ticking process to fulfil inclusion obligation without real effort.

Addressing the intersectionality of gender and disability is crucial for inclusive development. Consider the following steps:

1. Gender-Sensitive Disability Policies:

Ensure that gender is considered in disability policies, programs, and services. Recognize and address the specific challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

2. Intersectional Approaches:

Address intersecting forms of discrimination faced by PWDs based on their gender, disability, and other identities. Design programs and initiatives that are sensitive to their diverse experiences and needs.

3. Access to Services:

Ensure that services and support systems for PWDs are gender-responsive. Consider the unique needs and challenges faced by women and men with disabilities when designing and delivering services, such as healthcare, education, employment, and social protection.



4. Empowerment and Participation:

Promote the empowerment and meaningful participation of PWDs of all genders in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Create opportunities for their voices to be heard and their perspectives to be considered in all policies and programs not just disability related ones.

5. Data Collection and Analysis:

Collect disaggregated data on disability and gender to better understand the experiences and realities of different genders within the disabled population. This data can help inform evidence-based policies and interventions that address the specific needs of different groups.

6. Awareness and Sensitization:

Conduct awareness-raising campaigns and sensitization programs to promote understanding and acceptance of the intersectionality of gender and disability. Challenge stereotypes and promote inclusive attitudes and behaviours towards PWDs of all genders.

7. Collaboration and Partnerships:

Foster collaboration between disability organizations, gender equality advocates, and other stakeholders to promote the mainstreaming of gender among PWDs. Joint efforts can lead to more comprehensive and effective interventions that address the specific challenges faced by PWDs of different genders.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the progress of gender mainstreaming among PWDs. Regularly assess the impact of interventions and policies to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

[8] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08c5be5274a27b2001147/RedPov_gender.pdf

The Role of Communities of Practice as stakeholders in Mainstreaming Gender

Communities of Practice (CoPs) play a crucial role in mainstreaming gender in policy, organizations, programs, and among persons with disabilities (PWDs). They provide a platform for advocacy, collaborations and partnerships, linking and learning activities, knowledge sharing, and capacity strengthening approaches. This way, CoPs contribute to creating a more inclusive and gender-responsive society. By actively participating in CoPs and leveraging their collective expertise, stakeholders can drive meaningful change, dismantle gender barriers, and foster an environment where everyone can thrive.

Other Stakeholders in Gender Mainstreaming

- 1. Policy Makers and Legislators** play a crucial role in incorporating gender perspectives into policy frameworks, ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into the decision-making process.
- 2. Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies** play a key role in translating policy objectives into practical actions and programs. These agencies oversee the allocation of resources, coordinate intersectoral collaboration, and monitor the progress of gender mainstreaming initiatives.
- 3. Gender Focal Points:** Gender focal points are individuals within government agencies or organizations who are designated to lead and coordinate gender mainstreaming efforts. They serve as focal points for gender-related issues and ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into policies, programs, and activities. They collaborate with different departments and stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of gender-responsive measures.



- 4. Academia and Researchers:** Academia and researchers contribute to gender mainstreaming by conducting gender analysis, providing evidence-based research, and generating knowledge on gender-related issues. They play a critical role in identifying gaps, evaluating policy outcomes, and recommending evidence-based solutions to address gender disparities. Their research findings inform policy development and provide insights into effective gender mainstreaming strategies.
- 5. International Organizations and Donors:** International organizations and donors support gender mainstreaming efforts through funding, technical assistance (guidance and expertise), and capacity-building initiatives in implementing gender-responsive policies and programs.



- 7. Civil Servants and Administrators:** Civil servants and administrators are responsible for implementing gender-responsive policies within their respective roles and functions. They play a crucial role in fostering a gender-responsive culture within government agencies and organizations.
- 8. Gender Equality Advocates and Activists:** Gender equality advocates and activists are instrumental in raising awareness, mobilizing support, and pushing for gender-responsive policies. They engage in advocacy campaigns, lobby for policy changes, and work to challenge societal norms and stereotypes. Their efforts contribute to creating a more gender-inclusive policy environment and driving the mainstreaming of gender across various sectors.

Conclusion

Mainstreaming gender involves integrating a gender perspective at all stages of development and implementation of policies and programmes, addressing specific needs and challenges faced by different genders and vulnerable groups including PWDs. The aim is to promote, inclusiveness, equal opportunities and challenge stereotypes and biases. To mainstream gender effectively, it is crucial to conduct gender analysis to enable an evidence-based approach to integrating gender perspectives throughout policy and programme cycles and effectively cater to the dimensions of gender mainstreaming



