

Glossary

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Electoral management bodies (EMBs)

EMBs are the structures and individuals responsible for carrying out many of the activities involved in the planning and administration of elections. While a single body may be primarily responsible for most of the activities, it is also common for electoral administration tasks to be distributed across multiple bodies (ACE project no date).

Gender

‘Gender’ refers to the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in each context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken and access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context, as are other important criteria for sociocultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sexual orientation, age etc. (UN Women no date).

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situation or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between females and males and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions and that, where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women no date).

Gender balance

‘Gender balance’ refers to the participation of an approximately equal number of women and men within an activity or organisation. Examples are representation in committees, decision-making structures or staffing levels between women and men (UNDP and UN Women 2015, p.6).

Gender blindness

This term refers to the failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of men/boys and women/girls are assigned to them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts and backgrounds. Projects, programmes, policies and attitudes that are gender-blind do not consider these different roles and diverse needs. They maintain the status quo and will not help transform the unequal structure of gender relations (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women no date).

Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination is defined as: ‘Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field’ (UN 1979, Article 1).

Gender equality (equality between women and men)

This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue, but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development (UN Women no date).

Gender equity

The preferred terminology within the UN is ‘gender equality’, rather than ‘gender equity’. Gender equity denotes an element of interpretation of social

justice, usually based on tradition, custom, religion or culture, which is most often to the detriment to women. Such use of 'equity' in relation to the advancement of women has been determined to be unacceptable. During the Beijing Conference in 1995 it was agreed that the term 'equality' would be used.

This was later confirmed by the CEDAW Committee in its General Recommendation 28: 'States parties are called upon to use exclusively the concepts of equality of women and men or gender equality and not to use the concept of gender equity in implementing their obligations under the Convention. The latter concept is used in some jurisdictions to refer to fair treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities' (UN Women no date; CEDAW committee 2010).

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is the chosen approach of the UN system and international community toward realising progress on women's and girl's rights, as a subset of human rights to which the UN dedicates itself. It is not a goal or objective on its own. It is a strategy for implementing greater equality for women and girls in relation to men and boys.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women no date; OSAGI no date).

Gender norms

Gender norms are ideas about how men and women should be and act. We internalise and learn these 'rules' early in life. This sets up a lifecycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping. Put another way, gender norms are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms, within a range that defines a particular society, culture and community at that point in time (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women no date).

Gender roles

‘Gender roles’ refer to social and behavioural norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. These often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to men, women, boys and girls. Gender-specific roles are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, occurrence of conflict or disaster and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions. Like gender itself, gender roles can evolve over time, in particular through the empowerment of women and transformation of masculinities (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women no date).

Gender-sensitive

This takes into consideration the diversity of various groups of women and men, their specific activities and challenges (UN Statistical Division no date).

Gender stereotypes

A ‘gender stereotype’ is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by, or the roles that are or should be performed by, women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women’s and men’s capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans. Harmful stereotypes can be both hostile/negative (e.g. women are irrational) or seemingly benign (e.g. women are nurturing). It is, for example, based on the stereotype that women are more nurturing that child-rearing responsibilities often fall exclusively on them.

Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. Gender stereotyping is wrongful when it results in a violation or violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. An example of this is the failure to criminalise marital rape based on societal perception of women as the sexual property of men.

Compounded gender stereotypes can have a disproportionate negative impact on certain groups of women, such as women in custody and conflict with the law, women from minority or indigenous groups, women with disabilities, women from lower caste groups or with lower economic status, migrant women etc. (OHCHR no date).

Sex-disaggregated data

Sex-disaggregated data is data that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for men and women, boys and girls. Sex-disaggregated data reflect roles, real situations, and general conditions of women and men, girls and boys in every aspect of society. For instance the literacy rate, education levels, business ownership, employment, wage differences, dependants, house and land ownership, loans and credit, debts, etc. When data is not disaggregated by sex, it is more difficult to identify real and potential inequalities. Sex-disaggregated data is necessary for effective gender analysis (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women no date; UNESCO 2003).

Temporary special measures (TSMs)

These are specific targeted measures taken to accelerate the equal participation of women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. Given the legal commitment of states to produce de facto or substantive equality of women with men in a timely manner, special measures may need to be adopted to enhance women's electoral and political participation (CEDAW Committee 2004).

Violence against women in elections (VAWE)

This is any harm or threat of harm committed against women with the intent and/or impact of interfering with their free and equal participation in the electoral process during the electoral period. It includes harassment, intimidation, physical harm or coercion, threats and financial pressures, and it may be committed in the home or other private spaces, or in public spaces. These acts may be directed at women in any of their roles as electoral stakeholders (e.g. as voters, media actors, political actors, state actors, community leaders or electoral officials) (IFES 2016).

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