Gender indicators

Tool for measuring changes in the relations between women and men in a certain policy area, a specific programme, activity, or changes in the status or situation of women and men.

Gender indicators are established to measure and compare the situation of women and men over time. Gender indicators can refer to quantitative indicators (based on statistics broken down by sex) or to qualitative indicators (based on women's and men's experiences, attitudes, opinions and feelings).
Indicators play a crucial role in the gender mainstreaming process throughout the policy cycle. Quantitative and qualitative indicators must enable ongoing monitoring and evaluation of whether the project’s gender equality objectives are being met and assessing the gender effect of project activities. If objectives are not being met, it could be essential to re-assess the project strategy and make amendments in order to ensure improvements.

Gender-sensitive indicators allow measuring changes in the relations between women and men in regards to a certain policy area, a specific programme or activity, or changes in the status or situation of women and men. As a measure of social change and the performance/effectiveness of projects, gender-sensitive indicators can be described in terms of:

- the derived quality to be reached;
- the quantity of something to be achieved;
- the target group who is affected by or benefits from the project; and,
- the time frame envisaged for the achievement of the objectives.

**Approaches to gender indicators**

**Quantitative approaches**

Quantitative methods of data collection produce quantifiable results, so they focus on issues which can be counted, such as percentages of women and men in the labour market, male and female wage rates or school enrolment rates for girls and boys. Quantitative data can show changes in gender equality over time – for example, an often used quantitative indicator is the number of girls in school compared to boys.

**Qualitative approaches**

Qualitative methodologies capture people’s experiences, opinions, attitudes and feelings – for example women’s experiences of the constraints or advantages of working in the informal sector, or men’s and women’s views on the causes and consequences of underrepresentation of women in higher positions. Often participatory methodologies such as focus group discussions and social mapping tools are used to collect data for qualitative indicators. Qualitative data can also be collected through surveys measuring perceptions and opinions.
Further readings

Check out EIGE's collection of Indicators to monitor progress towards the achievement of the goals of the BPfA

The why and how of gender-sensitive indicators. A project-level handbook