

What is GBA?

What is Gender-based Analysis (GBA)?

GBA is a tool to assist in systematically integrating gender considerations into the policy, planning and decision-making processes. It corresponds to a broader understanding of gender equality using various competencies and skills to involve both women and men in building society and preparing for the future.

- Involved in the administration or implementation of governmental or non-governmental interventions.
- Participating in governmental or non-governmental interventions.
- Involved in developing policy or in research that guides governmental or non-governmental interventions, at any level.

What is gender mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is a dual approach that implies the reorganization, improvement, development and evaluation of all policy processes for the purpose of incorporating a gender equality perspective into all policies, at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making. By bringing gender equality issues into the mainstream, we can make sure that the gender component is considered in the widest possible variety of sectors, such as work, taxation, transport and immigration.

Who does GBA?

Individuals who participate in developing policies, programs and projects are doing GBA. Including gender expertise in the policy process helps policy makers become more gender-aware and encourages them to incorporate that awareness into their work. Most often, people who do GBA are:

- Involved in the planning and design of governmental or non-governmental interventions.

Why do GBA?

GBA makes good policy sense. It puts people at the heart of policy-making. It leads to better government by involving both women and men and makes full use of human resources. GBA makes gender equality issues visible in the mainstream of society, taking into account the full diversity of women and men. GBA also contributes to the redress of past and systemic discrimination and contributes to more efficient policies.

In addition, GBA responds to provisions in legal documents such as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and various international obligations and commitments.

What are the assumptions behind GBA?

GBA is based on the following assumptions and values:

- Constructive partnerships are needed between women and men.
- Every action, policy, program, project and socio-economic trend affects women and men differently.

- Gender equality does not mean that women become the same as men.
- Women must participate equally as agents of change in economic, social and political processes.
- Specific measures must be designed to eliminate gender inequalities.
- Women's empowerment is a key to success in this process.
- Men and boys can also be negatively affected by actions, policies, programs, projects and socio-economic trends.

Why use GBA?

The Beijing *Platform for Action* signed at the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women states that:

“The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are matters of human rights and conditions for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women’s issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just, and developed society. Empowerment of women and gender equality are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental security among all peoples.”

Canada has tabled a federal action plan stating that Canada will work towards the goals outlined in the *Platform for Action*. GBA is one tool that Canada has adopted to achieve these goals.

Measuring the differences between women and men gives us the information we need to figure out why these differences exist. We can then work on developing ways to remove or

reduce these differences. We have also learned from past experience that:

- You can never assume that women and men will benefit equally from any given action, policy, program, or socio-economic trend.
- Most actions, policies, programs, projects or socio-economic trends do not have the same impact on women and men.
- Women and men often have different priorities and perspectives.
- To achieve gender equality, we need to integrate gender equality measures into all policies and programs from the design stage onwards. Otherwise, our policies and programs may inadvertently increase inequality between women and men and make their socio-economic situations worse. If you conduct a Gender-based Analysis at the beginning of any process, it will reveal the key gender issues you need to consider. You can then develop plans to overcome existing imbalances and avoid adding to future problems.

How to do a GBA

The first step for any GBA is to collect information that is sex-disaggregated. The most basic GBA you can do is to count the number of women and men involved in any activity. If there is a significant difference, then you can ask why. The answers that the women and men involved give you will often also provide the basic information you need to figure out the changes that you need to make.

You may also want to ask in what ways and at what levels do women and men participate in a particular program. For example, are most of the women working as volunteers while most of the men are being paid for their work? A slightly more in-depth analysis would lead you to the reasons for this situation and thus to ways to change it.

Other key questions that you will need to ask include:

- Does this policy/program/trend improve the well-being of women/men?
- What resources does a person need to benefit from this policy/program/trend? Do women and men have equal access to the resources needed to benefit?
- What is the level and type/quality of women's and men's participation in the policy/program/trend? Has this changed over time?
- Who controls the decision-making processes related to this policy/program/trend?
- Who controls/owns the resources related to this policy/program/trend?
- Does this policy/program/trend have any unexpected negative impacts on women and/or men?
- Does this policy/program/trend benefit men more than women (or vice versa)? If so, why?

Once you have collected this basic data and analyzed the differences between women and men, you can adapt your original design or develop programs to promote change. You can also use GBA to monitor or evaluate the impact of a policy, program or trend. There are many different types of GBA tools and many different ways you can use them. Indeed, Gender-based Analysis is a highly adaptable tool that you can use to work towards positive social and economic change.