

Gender Audit Tool

A Guide for Identifying Gaps in Gender Responsive Policies and Practices at the Work Place



A) About the Gender Audit Tool

This gender audit tool was compiled and edited by Akina Mama wa Afrika with support from Hivos to guide the process of identifying critical gaps in gender responsive s policy and practice on flower farms. The tool is an output of the Women@Work Campaign, an initiative by Hivos that seeks to propel decent working conditions for women who earn their living in global production chains most notably flowers, fruits and vegetables grown for export. The Campaign's main advocacy areas include; fair income (living wage); security in the work place (dealing with issues of sexual harassment); good labour conditions (contracts, social protections systems); compliance with international safety standards; freedom to organize; and women's leadership. Through the Women Leadership Project, Akina Mama wa Afrika contributes to the campaign through building the capacity of women workers to participate in critical decision making spaces to demand and influence changes in policy and practice to enable them enjoy their economic and social rights both at the workplace and in the wider economy. The project is implemented in partnership with Uganda Workers' Education Association (UWEA) in Uganda, The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) in Kenya, and Rwanda Women's Network and Rwanda Workers' Trade Union Confederation (CESTRAR) in Rwanda.

Why conducting a gender audit is important for gender mainstreaming.

The European Commission defines gender mainstreaming as the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men. It means assessing how policies impact on the life and position of both women and men – and taking responsibility to re-address them. The gender audit tool facilitates the process of identifying gaps that may not be immediately visible as it compels its users to closely examine their organization's policies and practices with a new lens.

Acknowledgement

The information contained in this gender audit tool was informed, in part by the following sources;

1. A Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators. The ILO Participatory Gender Audit Methodology, 2nd Edition (2012)
2. International Trade Union Confederation Asia-Pacific Gender Audit Manual (2007)
3. Gender Audit Tool and Guidelines , Together for Equality and Respect (March 2015)
4. European Institute for Gender Equality

B) Introduction

What is a gender audit?

A gender audit is essentially a social inspection that assesses the extent to which gender equality is effectively institutionalised in the policies, programmes, organisational structures and proceedings (including decision-making processes) and in the corresponding budgets. (European Institute for Gender Equality).

Objectives

A gender audit establishes a baseline, identifies critical gaps and challenges, and recommends ways of addressing them, suggesting possible improvements and innovations. It also documents good practices towards the achievement of gender equality. A gender audit not only supports the development of gender equity strategies to promote equality, but will also encourage the development of gender sensitivity throughout the workplace and organisational environment.¹

The following are the objectives for carrying out the gender audit:

- To generate understanding of the extent to which gender mainstreaming has been internalized and acted upon by the employers and employees ;
 - To assess the extent of gender mainstreaming in terms of the development and practise of gender responsive policies and programmes;
 - To identify and share information on mechanisms, practices and attitudes that have made a positive contribution to mainstreaming gender in the organization;
 - To assess the level of resources allocated and spent on gender mainstreaming and gender activities;
 - To examine the extent to which human resources policies are gender-sensitive;
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- To examine the staff gender balance at different levels of an organization;
- To set up the initial baseline of performance on gender mainstreaming in an organization with a view to introducing an ongoing process of benchmarking to measure progress in promoting gender equality;
- To measure progress in implementing action plans on gender mainstreaming and recommend revisions as needed; and
- To identify room for improvement and suggest possible strategies to better implement the action plan.

Preparing for the gender audit

Gender audits require demonstrated political will from senior management, particularly as these audits require resources, planning and coordination. It will require getting the buy in of management about its importance and the accruing benefits from a gender equal work place. According to the Work place Gender Equality Agency in Australia, a workplace that promotes gender equality can benefit by:

- Attracting the best employees;
- Reducing cost of staff turnover;
- Enhancing organisational performance;
- Improving access to target markets;
- Minimising legal risks; and
- Enhancing the organisation's reputation.

Communication with Management

Before the audit, it is important that management understands the extent of the audit. Explain what steps are involved; what the timelines are; and what the benefits for the organisation are.

- Clarify the expectations for the gender audit: explain how the results will be disseminated; how action plans will be devised; and how action plans will be implemented. You should be honest and clear about what your organisation should expect from the gender audit;
- Clarify levels of staff involvement – will focus groups be formed; will feedback be encouraged; will surveys be disseminated; how many staff will have the opportunity to be involved?

Who to Involve

Creating a gender audit working group from across the organisation is a recommended approach. Depending on the size of your organisation anywhere from 2-3 up to 10 people could be involved. Selecting a variety of people from within the organisation will help to generate ownership of the results of the gender audit, and commitment to action. Including a member of senior management is encouraged to facilitate political will. Also consider already formed groups and committees that may be interested in taking on the tasks. For example, an existing gender committee or the women's committee.

Methodology

1. Selecting Areas to Audit

It's important to consider your resources, time and political will in deciding what areas within your organisation you would like to assess. Initially, an organisation may choose to audit either internal or external policies, procedures or practices, or both. You may also choose only a few departments or services to audit. Areas to audit include

2. Categories for auditing

A comprehensive gender audit takes into account internal and external factors

- Internal refers to whether the organisation actively fosters gender equity and sensitivity within its internal operations and managerial structure.
- External refers to whether the organisation actively fosters gender equity and sensitivity in the way it offers services, or delivers projects and programs in the community.

A. An internal audit will focus on the following areas

- a) Staffing and human resource
- b) Leadership and decision making

- c) Organisational Culture
- d) Gender Policy
- e) Financial / Resource Commitment

B. External Audit

External audits focus on projects, programs and services the organization may be offering to the community

The categories may be audited through the following methodologies depending on which information is required and available resources

- **Document Analysis**—This could involve an examination of existing policies, committee meeting minutes, memos to staff, budgets and other relevant documents the organization feels can support in the audit process
- **Staff Survey** – For quantitative data, you may want to conduct a survey to capture the realities of as many staff members as possible. Please be conscious that illiterate people, many of whom are women, may not be able to respond to a written survey may require engagement in person.
- **Internal Consultation/Focus Group Discussions**—This allows for an in-depth discussion for issues being researched and creates room to adequately discuss gaps that may exist.

1. Key Tips

- Ideally you would audit both internal and external systems. However, depending on your organisational level of readiness you may wish to consider only a few categories within the themes
- A comprehensive gender audit will use more than one method of collection to elicit a mixture of responses.
- Ideally, you would ask each question from each category. At least 3 questions from each category will ensure validity of results.

NOTE:

- Ensure a proportional number of respondents from each unit or department
- Your human resource department will be a critical stakeholder for internal questions

Benefits and Risks of undertaking a gender audit

There are numerous benefits to conducting a gender audit which include:

- To demonstrate to staff, stakeholders and clients that your organisation has a commitment to improving gender equity and the status of women in the work place;
- To recognise any progress already made to improve gender equity and to raise professional standards within your organisation; and
- To promote action in areas requiring more gender-responsive policy and practice.

The risks of undertaking a gender audit for an organisation may be:

- That the audit will demonstrate that your organisation is averse to the incorporation of gender responsive policies, procedures and practices;
- That this will negatively affect the capacity of your organisation to attract women to work there; and
- That lack of political will may result in no action to implement gender-responsive policy and practice.

Remember!

Conducting the gender audit should not be an end in itself. The audit should be accompanied by an action plan and dedicated resources to respond to the gaps identified. Attach a timeframe to the action plan so that it generates urgency and is prioritized in implementation of organization activities.

The gender audit tool is attached as appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Gender Audit Guiding Questions

The questions in this tool can be used for a focus group discussion, a staff survey or staff consultations, depending on availability of resources, time and the number of respondents. The tool proposes the most appropriate method of collecting information with an “X”. Again this can be adopted or not, depending on the context. Depending on the questions being asked, the audit may require a document analysis to support certain assertions. For example it is not enough to talk about the existence of a sexual harassment policy. Rather it requires a critical examination of the policy to gauge if captures the issues posed in the question.

Use your discretion to decide which format works best and which questions work best depending on the audience; Executive leadership, middle level management or workers. For example questions on development and dissemination of policies may be posed to management while staff may be asked about organizational culture.

Internal Gender Audit

1. Organizational culture

	method of collecting information			
Question	document analysis	staff survey	internal consultation/FGD	Internal consultation/FGD prompts

Do people in senior positions demonstrate commitment to and leadership on gender issues?	X	X	X	How is this demonstrated?
Do you believe gender equality fits into the image of our organisation?		X	X	If so, why? If no, why not?
Are gender issues taken seriously and discussed openly by men and women in our organisation?		X	X	If yes, can you provide an example?
Does our organisation have a gender sensitivity policy or code of conduct in place in terms of unacceptable language, jokes and comments made, images and materials displayed, and action taken around sexual harassment?	X	X	X	How is this demonstrated?
Does our organisation encourage gender sensitive behaviour, for example, intolerance of sexist language, jokes or comments?		X	X	Can you provide an example of this practice? How is this demonstrated in practice?
Are learning materials on gender equality made available to staff and partners? In field offices, are these available in national languages?	X	X	X	
Are there provisions for light/safe duties for pregnant women?	X	X	X	If yes, is this enforced?
Does the firm have child care facilities on site?				If yes, are they accessible and safe?
Are there breast feeding breaks for nursing mothers?				If yes, is the time adequate?
Do staff have paid parental/maternity leave/benefit?	X	X	X	If yes, for how long?
Does the HR policy have a prohibition of dismissal for pregnant workers clause?	X	X	X	If yes, if the policy respected?
Does the sexual harassment policy have a complaints procedure and complaints officer	X	X	X	Are you aware of the procedure?
Is there protection and support for harassed employees?	X	X	X	How is this support demonstrated?

Are there sanctions for those found guilty of harassment?	X	X	X	Do you know any of the sanctions?
Are staff given training on sexual harassment?	X	X	X	If yes, how often does this happen?
Are there provisions against discrimination on basis of gender	X	X	X	How is this demonstrated?
Are there provisions for protection against violence at work	X	X	X	How is this demonstrated?

2. Gender Policies

method of collecting information				
Question	document analysis	staff survey	internal consultation/FGD	Internal consultation/FGD prompts
Does our organisation have written policy/policies that affirm a commitment to gender equity and equality?	X	X	X	Are they accessible? Are these commitments actioned?
Is gender taken into account during strategic planning for organisational activities?	X		X	How is this demonstrated?
Does management take responsibility for the development and implementation of the gender policy/goal in the strategic plan?	X		X	How is this responsibility demonstrated?
Does our organisation set agreed success measures for gender equity principles?	X		X	Are these accessible to staff?

<p>Have you developed a gender equality action plan through consultation with a range of staff, which is incorporated into an annual plan for the work unit and staff member annual work plans?</p>	X	X	X	<p>Are these plans discussed and disseminated? Are they actioned? How?</p>
<p>Are policy documents on gender available and actively disseminated to the work unit's staff and partner organizations?</p>	X	X		

3. Financial/Resource Commitment

method of collecting information				
Question	Document analysis	staff survey	internal consultation/FGD	Internal consultation/FGD prompts
Is there a budget allocation for staff training or other workforce development activity in gender equity?	X	X	X	Have you been provided the opportunity to participate? · Have you participated?
Is there designated responsibility for promoting gender equity in our organisation?	X		X	Is it part of a job function or group ToR?
Does our organisation conduct an annual pay equity analysis?	X		X	Were any actions taken using findings from the last analysis?

4. Human Resources

method of collecting information				
Question	Document analysis	Staff survey	internal consultation/FGD	Internal consultation/FGD prompts
Is gender-disaggregated data used for workforce/HR planning and reporting?	X		X	If so, how is this data used?
Is gender awareness present in all job descriptions and/or in job performance criteria?	X		X	
Do position descriptions include responsibility for the promotion of gender equity?	X		X	Is this responsibility actioned? How?
Are recruitment applications assessed with a gender equity approach?	X		X	Please share examples.
Is action taken to recruit, mentor and retain a representative number of women on the board of the organisation?	X		X	How is this action demonstrated? · Is this embedded into policies and procedures?
Are there proactive strategies implemented to recruit or promote women into senior management positions?	X		X	Can you provide an example?
Are men and women receiving the same career training and development opportunities?	X		X	·Are these embedded into policies and procedures? Can you provide an example?
Are men and women receiving the same access to leadership and management training?	X		X	How do you know this? If not, why do you think this may be the case?

Do you have guidelines requiring you to report on gender equality progress in your annual reports?	X		X	How is this done?
Is there a focus on women leadership training?	X		X	·Are these embedded into policies and procedures? Can you provide some examples?
Has there been an increase in the representation of women in senior management positions in the past 1-2 years?	X		X	·If so, why do you think this is the case? If not, why do you think this is the case?
Does your organization have a gender Committee?	X		X	Does it have freedom to meet?
Does the Gender Committee have TORs?	X		X	Does the committee exercise its mandate? How?
Are any members of the committee part of the executive or senior management?	X		X	Does this impact the committee in any way? How?

5. Trade Unions

method of collecting information				
Question	Document analysis	Staff survey	internal consultation/FGD	Internal consultation/FGD prompts
Are gender issues included in the union's proposals/claims?	X	X	X	How is this demonstrated?
Does your union have policies, targets or affirmative action to ensure equitable representation of women and of women's issues?	X	X	X	Please give an example of this practice.
Does your union have equality guidelines/manuals/checklists, etc. for CBA negotiators?	X		X	Are the guidelines respected?
Does the CBA of your organisation contain the elimination of gender bias in job descriptions and advertisements	X	X	X	Is this put in practice?

6. External Projects, Programs and Services:

method of collecting information				
Question	Docu- ment Analysis Staff	Staff Surve- y	internal consultatio- n/FGD	Internal consultation/FGD prompts
Do you consider the views of both male and female community members in your project, program or service design?	X		X	How is this demonstrated?
Is sex disaggregated data used for planning projects, programs and services?	X		X	Is this process embedded into policy and procedures?
Are gender equity goals and objectives included in program, project or service design?	X		X	How is this demonstrated?
Is the gender impact of projects, programs and services monitored and evaluated?	X		X	Please explain how
Is participation in community consultations analysed by gender?				
Is feedback from community consultation analysed by gender?	X			
Is effort made to engage and invite both men and women in community consultations?			X	If so, what measures are put in place?
Is effort made to ensure women are able to participate in community consultation?			X	If so, what measures are put in place?