



# GENDER INCLUSIVE GRANTMAKING CHECKLIST

## 1.0 Introduction

It has been clear for decades that funding of mainstream programs – particularly those that do not consider gender (and other related differences) – generally underserves women. This gender-neutral approach seeks not to discriminate on the basis of gender, but actually results in women (and sometimes their children) missing out. Research has proven that to be more inclusive, and to achieve the best philanthropic outcomes, funders will have more impact by incorporating a ‘gender lens’ into their mainstream funding approaches. They should also encourage grant seekers to design projects or programs that address gender needs and are inclusive.

Some people equate gender with women, and believe that gender issues refer only to women’s issues but this is not accurate. It is necessary to consider how gender norms affect women and girls; as well as men and boys; and people who identify differently. If we fail to recognize these differences we risk our programs becoming ineffective and not fully reaching their intended impact of supporting the most marginalized groups. A gender perspective is therefore not an additional burden, it is merely recognizing how gender is already affecting our work.

## 2.0 How to Use the Checklist

Building transformative philanthropy takes time and concerted, consistent action. This checklist can assist APM partners to initiate or strengthen a gender transformative approach to grantmaking by taking actions proposed in the checklist and integrating them into plans and actions, as well as tracking their progress and impact.

### Next Steps

1. Select 1-3 strategic actions from the list of Strategic Considerations that the organization will integrate into its strategy.
2. Use those strategic actions to select operational actions from the Checklist of Grantmaking Practices to include in operational plans and actions that will be implemented annually.

### 3.0 Using a ‘Gender Lens’ Approach

A **‘gender lens’** is a tool for questioning how programs will meet the different needs of people in a target group. Asking the question *‘how will this funding help women and girls?’* is an example of applying a gender lens. A gender lens approach does not favor women over men, nor does it compromise funding on merit. It simply acknowledges that men, women and gender diverse people face different challenges and have different opportunities, and consequently, programs and policies can impact them in vastly different ways.

A gender lens approach is a first step to improving effectiveness of giving or grantmaking through a lens of identity and difference. A person’s gender should not determine their opportunities in life, but research has shown that it can, intersecting with factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, age, education, geographic location, disability and sexual orientation.

- a. Gender analysis, or using a gender lens, is an important analytical tool in grantmaking and service provision, and makes the activities of grantmakers more effective.
- b. It allows grantmakers to identify and anticipate gender differences, explore their significance and respond to them.
- c. This approach can begin to show how people’s gender identity and expression determine their opportunities, access to and ownership of resources, and their capacity to enjoy and exercise their human rights, and seek redress if these rights are denied.
- d. It helps to understand each person’s roles and position in a society, the power dynamics and division of labor within a household, a workplace and the wider community.
- e. Applying a gender lens also allows grantmakers to analyze when laws and policies and cultural values, norms and practices affect people differently. And, it gives a clearer picture of how the many different forms of inequality intersect.
- f. By using a gender lens, grantmakers can better meet the needs and interests of those they seek to assist; tackle the wide range of issues they address in more coherent and equitable ways; and increase their impact.

A gender perspective is not a “one-size-fits-all” strategy. A gender lens cannot explain everything. It needs to be accompanied by:

- a. A deep analysis of the complexity of cultural differences
- b. Actions that carefully consider and respond to the target groups’ needs, interests and aspirations.

Addressing gender difference in all programs can bring about the remarkable social change that is the goal of philanthropy.

### 4.0 What is a Feminist Approach to Funding?

Feminist funding is not just about gender equity. Being a feminist funder is also about orienting funding practices toward the long-term work of challenging systemic patriarchy, which can be slow and exhausting. Change happens incrementally or over a long period of time, and strategies need to go beyond just integrating language about gender or bringing in leadership of women (and gender nonconforming people).

A feminist approach could include:

- a. Taking a rights-based, transformative approach to eliminating poverty. Gender, power and wealth inequalities exacerbate each other and as a result, women and girls make up the majority of living in poverty; and poverty affects women, men, boys and girls differently.
- b. Ensuring that a gender analysis is at the core of influencing objectives and tactics, and not just an add-on or afterthought.
- c. Considering strong partnerships with women's rights advocates and their organizations/networks, not just as grantees but also as advisors.
- d. Making sure that the team has the time, capacity, knowledge, budget and resources to integrate gender from start to finish.
- e. Holding staff must accountable for their commitments to integrate gender.
- f. That it Isn't just about including women and girls: it's about ensuring that women and men's specific needs and experiences are understood and accounted for.
- g. An examination of the way people's intersecting identities (class, gender, race, ability, etc.) impact the ways that they have power and privilege, and the ways they face marginalization and discrimination.
- h. Ensuring that no one is left behind and the poorest and most marginalized, men, women, boys and girls, are given an equal voice and opportunity to shape the future.

# Gender Inclusive Checklist

## Strategic Considerations

	Description
Put Gender on the agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether gender awareness is already an established part of our bigger picture.</li> <li>• Is gender equality an existing priority within our organization?</li> <li>• Does our funding purposely seek to enhance gender equality and is this reflected in your mission, vision and strategy?</li> <li>• Do you measure the gender balance of our granting? I.e. do we keep data on the proportion of our funding that benefits men, women and those of diverse gender identity?</li> <li>• Which of our funded programs over the past two years best illustrates our organization's awareness of gender?</li> <li>• Thinking about these projects, how was gender awareness translated into our design, implementation and outcomes?</li> <li>• Can we think of any examples where increased gender awareness might have led to stronger outcomes from a project?</li> </ul>
Understanding the context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and other inequalities differ from society to society, place to place, and time to time, and so a deep understanding of the context in which each focus community or target group lives and works is vital for a more relevant grantmaking strategy.</li> <li>• Using a gender lens helps to appreciate each context.</li> </ul>
Understanding the power dynamics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gender lens exposes the power dynamics within and between groups.</li> <li>• We can see how gender power relations play out in families, target groups, communities, workplaces, and within structures and systems.</li> <li>• We work with those most affected by gender inequality and focus efforts on what matters to them. We consult and work in participatory ways.</li> <li>• We aim to shift power to those most affected by funding decisions.</li> <li>• We take our lead from those on the frontlines of challenging gender equalities that are building a more equitable, sustainable and just future.</li> </ul>
Understanding the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding sensitively to each context, set of power relations, and the ways in which gender and other forms of inequality intersect,</li> </ul>

complexities	<p>requires that building our gender expertise, and adjust the ways we work, our priorities and grantmaking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It necessitates that we make time to listen, and that we become more flexible in our approaches and processes.</li> </ul>
Being inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are inclusive at every level of our decision-making structures from staff to advisors to Board Members, to applicants and choosing grantees.</li> <li>• We promote diversity within our organization’s leadership and governance structures.</li> <li>• Our diverse Board and staff help promote inclusiveness and ensure diverse perspectives in decision-making.</li> </ul>
Accountable Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We ensure our grant making processes are clear and simple.</li> <li>• We respect the limited resources of our grantees —from organizations with the smallest capacity to organizations with the largest capacity.</li> <li>• Our decision-making processes are transparent and we strive to be accountable.</li> <li>• Our goal is to ensure that our grant applications are simple, easy to understand, and concrete.</li> <li>• The reporting we require of grantees is grounded in a learning approach.</li> <li>• We ask for the most important impact information and avoid complicated evaluation.</li> <li>• We rigorously align your investments, grantmaking, and policies with the feminist and social justice values that we espouse.</li> <li>• We accountable to our grantee communities and women’s rights movement and partners.</li> <li>• We establish clear and ongoing structures for our grantee communities and women’s rights movements to inform our strategies, priorities, and mechanisms for resourcing.</li> </ul>
Build inclusive partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We network with other donors, foundations and women’s funds and consider co-funding with mainstream organizations or women’s rights organizations.</li> <li>• We initiate / facilitate / lead conversations with stakeholders about the importance of including women and girls in programs.</li> <li>• We recognize that community partners will be able to give us strong insight into the gender differences of the programs we are already funding or looking to fund in the future.</li> </ul>
Support long-term transformative social change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We support long-term transformative social change, including working within our own institution and beyond to move funding back into the hands of the communities that are working to improve the lives of marginalized African people.</li> <li>• We take a historical and systemic view on the economic structures that have made it possible for resources to be unjustly distributed in the past.</li> </ul>

## Checklist on Grantmaking Practices

Adopting a gender inclusive approach requires a transformation of grantmaking practices to disrupt entrenched ways of working; dismantle the power dynamic between grantmaker and grantee; and implement practices that build a resilient, innovative and impactful civil society.

Consideration	Description
Establish long term supportive relationships with grantees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create trust to allow the organization to explore new strategies, and acknowledges that gender justice work must take a long-term approach if it's going to be effective.</li> <li>• Make multi-year commitments that can reduce the harm and stress that is reminiscent of unhealthy relationships where the funder can choose to walk away at any moment.</li> <li>• Engage in site visits to understand not just to evaluate.</li> <li>• Acknowledge the power dynamic inherent in funding, and get to know the people doing the work.</li> <li>• Participate in partnerships, collaboration, and coalitions; and avoid competition with other funders, instead identifying ways we can work together toward a common goal.</li> <li>• Encourage partnerships among our grantees and promote cross-organization and cross-movement efforts to solve a problem or respond to an opportunity.</li> </ul>
Practice gender transformative grantmaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the power imbalances inherent to grantmaker / grantee relationships and use an intersectional lens.</li> <li>• Use participatory decision-making processes so women and communities most affected by our work have a say in what happens.</li> <li>• Build relationships based on trust that we have shared aims and all bring our best efforts to the problems we are working to address.</li> <li>• Prioritize funding organizations working towards transformative gender change. This includes organizations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- where women, girls, and gender nonconforming people actively participate and lead, as they are most affected by gender inequalities;</li> <li>- that apply an intersectional approach, recognizing and responding to the diversities of people and communities;</li> <li>- that build networks, collective action, partnerships, and movements; that respond to peoples' immediate individual needs while they try to change policy, law, and institutions for the better;</li> <li>- that do innovative new approaches and use proven strategies that work;</li> <li>- that strengthen the resilience of people and communities and try to shift the balance of social power and clout to those who have less; and</li> <li>- that value and pay attention to the lived experiences of the diverse people they work with.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A commitment to seeking feedback from those most impacted, integrating that feedback into meaningful changes as the</li> </ul>

Consideration	Description
	<p>organization evolves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions that encourage people to explain the role they play in the organizing they do, the work that moved them forward even if they wouldn't necessarily call it a "win". Gender socialization affects the way people take credit for the work they do, which affects the way they convey their work in funding proposals, which plays into the typical funder focus on tangible policy outcomes and campaign wins.</li> <li>• Encourage grantseekers to apply a gender lens to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects or programs</li> <li>• Consider providing information in our supporting guide about gender and how it can impact on programs.</li> <li>• Review our application form and processes, decision-making structure, and monitoring and evaluation policies to address gender issues.</li> <li>• In our grant application form, consider using specific questions such as: How does this program address the specific needs of women and girls?</li> </ul>
Provide flexible and long term funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to gender equality with a strengths-based approach. This means giving to not only fund deficits but also investing in resilience.</li> <li>• Accepting that covering operating expenses is a feminist act. Feminist workplaces cost more resources (childcare, healthcare, etc).</li> <li>• Offering core, long-term support to constituency-led women's rights and feminist movements that work at the intersections of issues and identities. Such flexible funding allows grantees to build their realities and craft their own solutions.</li> <li>• Aiming to provide lasting, sustainable funds that cover administrative/core costs, are flexible and predictable, and last for multiple years. We do not provide only short-term funds that can only go to "direct service expenses".</li> <li>• Work toward building the longer-term capacity of organizations through multi-year grants that can partially be applied to administrative costs.</li> <li>• Aim to provide a "grant plus" approach which provides financial support for things many funders do not always like to fund: capacity-building, leadership development, networking, childcare, accessibility costs, meals, and so on. This is sometimes called a "grants plus" approach.</li> </ul>
Go beyond grantmaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use our power to influence others in philanthropy.</li> <li>• Join our grantees in shifting power relationships by convening discussions, making statements with an institutional voice, encouraging the flow of more resources to best support communities.</li> <li>• Focus on mobilizing multiple forms of resources to programs supporting women and girls, from financial support to representation</li> </ul>

Consideration	Description
	at regional and global meetings to capacity development of all kinds.
Take an intersectional or ecosystem approach to funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize the complexity, dynamism and fluidity of any ecosystem where the expansion or contraction of one part affects all parts of the system.</li> <li>Look at all areas of transformative change taking a holistic rather than an issue based approach and recognize how they relate to each other. For example climate justice, labour rights, migrant rights etc.</li> </ul>
Recognise the leadership of women, girls and marginalized groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to raise the power and ambition of all women, girls, and gender nonconforming people—who carry many identities, backgrounds, and life experiences.</li> <li>Support and build collective action and movements, taking direction from organizations led by people they represent and acting on the concept of “nothing about us, without us.”</li> </ul>
Prioritize “self-led” groups whose leadership reflects constituencies they serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize groups that are led by women, youth and gender nonconforming people who reflect communities directly impacted by the conditions the group seeks to transform.</li> <li>When considering funding an organization, we will ask about who is most impacted by the issue, and whether the people most affected by the issue help to design and/or implement the programs?</li> <li>Include questions about the organization’s approach to gender justice as part of the grant review process.</li> <li>Include a demographics chart to better understand the demographics of the group’s leadership and to communicate women’s rights values in what demographic information you are looking for.</li> </ul>
Be open to new approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think beyond the typical women’s rights funding discourse and instead, allow what is happening on the ground to shape grantmaking strategies.</li> <li>Recognize that local-level grantees have a unique role in supporting the efforts of women whose groups often work informally, and are typically unrecognized and underfunded. They need reliable funding partners who respect their autonomy and agendas, and who are willing to work openly and provide flexible, timely and appropriate resources.</li> </ul>
Value a range of advancements not just policy wins:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize that challenging patriarchy can be slow and exhausting, and victories may happen incrementally or over a long period of time.</li> <li>Assess the achievements of grantees in terms that include narrative explanations of advancements in the work, beyond just policy outcomes.</li> </ul>



Consideration	Description
Invest in holistic healing and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose to centre sustainability and healing justice as a way of valuing the security, health and wellbeing of grantees and their communities. Gender- oppressed people may need the space to transform themselves and build the power and confidence to be the kind of leaders that many men are encouraged to be from birth.</li> <li>• Even if it looks small at the moment, recognize that healing justice can be a pathway to transforming society and may not lead to immediate change.</li> <li>• Understand that changemaking work can be draining and people often burn out by supporting service providers and activists to pursue well-being, health, safety, and resilience.</li> </ul>
Critically appraise proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When assessing grant applications that deliberately target women and girls, we will ask the following questions in order to ensure that the investment yields the greatest returns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the project reflect the needs of women and/ or girls in all main aspects of the proposed project or program?</li> <li>- Are there opportunities for women and/or girls to give voice and enjoy real and effective involvement in the project or program?</li> <li>- Are the needs and interests of women and girls safeguarded in practical and effective ways – including childcare, other caring roles and responsibilities, language and cultural sensitivities?</li> <li>- What are the expected outcomes for women and/or girls? Are these real and lasting in the medium to longer term, as opposed to those outcomes that might be positive but short-lived?</li> <li>- Will the outcomes be communicated beyond the project to strengthen advocacy and policy development elsewhere?</li> <li>- Will the project outcomes be communicated to others working in the philanthropic sector?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Seek to interrogate, challenge and change deep-rooted attitudes and values about gender roles, rights and responsibilities in proposals and projects.</li> <li>• Support organizations whose leadership is representative of the communities most affected.</li> <li>• Ensure that appraisal of proposals recognize the complexity of people’s lives and apply a holistic approach addressing the root causes of social and economic inequality.</li> <li>• Focus on proposals and approaches that tackle under-addressed issues, which may be overlooked by the community, other organizations and/or donor agendas.</li> </ul>
Write gender into design, targets and measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the gender aspect of programs we are considering funding as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the project have clear aims and targets, either for men (or boys), women (or girls) and gender nonconforming people in mind, or even both?</li> <li>- Does the project consciously reflect and take account of the possibly different needs, interests and circumstances of all</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Consideration	Description
	<p>affected groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there a satisfactory gender representation on the project management and governance group?</li> <li>- Does the project provide a climate and a capacity in which both women (girls), men (boys) and gender nonconforming people are able to voice their opinions?</li> <li>- Are there adequate accountability structures for reporting on impacts and outcomes?</li> <li>- What are the impacts and outcomes for the people involved? Do these differ for particular groups?</li> <li>- How can other gender identities be considered?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure measurement and evaluation required of grantees serves their needs too.</li> <li>• Measurement and evaluation are seen as tools that can build learning, demonstrate impact, and encourage people, government, and funders to support community programs.</li> <li>• Help organizations measure impact in ways that truly make sense for them and direct the results to rally further financial and volunteer support.</li> <li>• Distinguish and track funding that is direct verses funding that is general. This should be done within organizations, as well as across all funded programs and projects.</li> <li>• Recognize that “return on investment” can take different forms and that the financial bottom line is not the only important measure.</li> </ul>

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