

GESI: What can you do in your organisation?



**BOTANIC
GARDENS**
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Understanding the GESI scale

Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion into your work or project starts with being aware of the concept of GESI. GESI has a five-step scale (see figure 1) ranging from GESI Unequal to GESI Transformative.

When you are not aware of GESI, your actions may unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities. We call this **GESI Unequal**. The next step up the GESI scale is that you ignore these inequalities, making you **GESI Blind**. At a **GESI Sensitive** level, you recognise that inequalities between men and women exist within your organisation, but you only make limited efforts to address them. Moving up the steps, a **GESI Responsive** approach actively works to reduce these inequalities. Finally, **GESI Transformative** approaches go a step further and address these inequalities beyond your organisation and challenge and change underlying norms, power structures, and systems. As the differences between these levels can be subtle, the examples below might be helpful (Climate and Development Knowledge Network, 2024; THET, 2023).

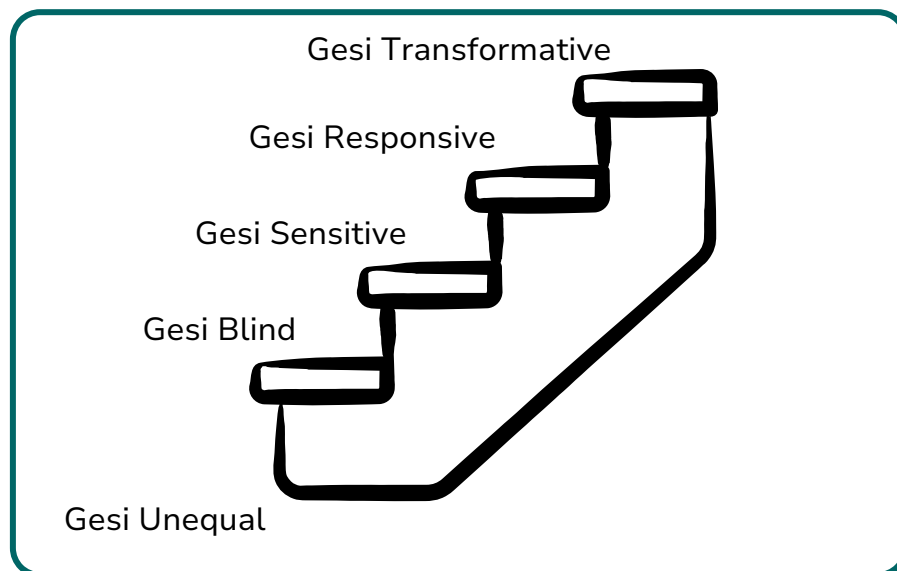


Fig. 1 GESI scale, based on GESI-Responsive Assessment Scale (THET, 2023; Climate and Development Knowledge Network, 2024)

The GESI scale with examples

GESI Unequal

Reinforces unbalanced norms, roles and power relations, making inequalities and stereotypes worse, often favouring men over women.

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) example: Women are largely excluded from making decisions in forest management. Many women go in the forest to collect firewood, medicinal plants, edible plants and fruits, but they have no voice in the committee. Although committees are officially meant to include women, cultural norms discourage women from speaking up in public forums, resulting in a male-only committee in your village. The forest rules for use of the forest are based on men's priorities, like timber harvest permits. Meanwhile, firewood collection for women without a permit is penalised. Men benefit economically, while women's access is restricted.

Gesi Blind

Ignores gender and social inequalities by treating everyone the same, without considering different needs or barriers. There is no consideration for vulnerable groups.

PFM example: “All” villagers are invited for forest management meetings and trainings, but these are scheduled in the morning, overlooking that most women are busy in the morning with household chores and can't attend at that time of the day. As a result, few women attend, and those who do, don't dare to speak up. Women's needs, like firewood collection are not discussed and rules are designed on men's priorities, like timber harvesting.

Gesi Sensitive

Recognises gender and social inclusion, but there are no direct actions to address them.

PFM example: The PFM committee wants to collect data on forest use as well as the purpose of use and who attends PFM meetings in the village. The data is disaggregated by gender. As a follow-up the forest management committee encourages more women to attend meetings by announcing this in the meeting. From now on, the committee organises meetings at a time suitable for women. This results in a slight increase in women in the meetings. While awareness improves and participation of women increases slightly, decision making power and benefit distribution remain unchanged and there are no structural changes.

Gesi Responsive

Actively address gender equality and social inclusion.

PFM example: The PFM committee in your village has an underrepresentation of women. You are part of the committee and actively encourage women to join and support them through training, like public speaking to build up their confidence.



Before the actual PFM meeting take place, women come together to discuss their priorities and represent those who cannot attend. Meetings are scheduled at a suitable time for women and childcare is accommodated, so there are no barriers for women not to attend the trainings and meetings.

Gesi Transformative

Bring about structural changes and challenge underlying norms and power dynamics in your work sector or at village or even higher level. The goal is to create a lasting change in attitude, behaviour and power structure.

PFM example:

Changing the community norm to address the belief “women should not speak in public”. You make it happen that community norms around gender roles shift and women have real authority. Women are not only part of the forest management committee, but the majority of the committee consists of women, as well as the head of the committee. Rules are revised to reflect both men’s and women’s needs. Decision making in meetings becomes inclusive and all voices are heard. This will not be easy and includes a lot of steps before you will be able to convince everyone, but you have changed the system itself.

How to make your project or organisation more GESI responsive

Now that you understand the GESI scale, it might be useful to reflect on your own projects or organisation. Where is your organisation at the moment on the GESI scale and what is a realistic next step? To grow directly from GESI blind to GESI transformative is not realistic, because this will involve a complete overhaul of your organisation. Instead, you can design a plan and think about what you would like to change first.



Integrate GESI into your day-to-day work

Working optimally with vulnerable groups involves the following steps:

1. **Identify:** Identify which groups you are overlooking and assess their needs. Women are often not the only vulnerable group. For more information about other potential vulnerable groups, look back at *What is GESI*.
2. **Engage:** Design and implement activities that improve inclusion.
3. **Partner:** Collaborate with organisations that are led by vulnerable people or organisations that focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.
4. **Safeguard:** Ensure dignity, safety and wellbeing at all times.
5. **Learn:** Continuously reflect and improve your approach (World Vision, 2023).

Relatively easy measures

- Make project participants and employees aware of GESI: Include a GESI presentation and a few small exercises or questions that make participants aware of gender equality and social inclusion.
- Ask some women in your organisation how they feel about gender inclusion. Can they have a discussion with all the women in your organisation and give some recommendations to you?
- Identify vulnerable groups and their barriers and plan how to overcome them.
- Identify GESI champions. Example: Sharon Ringo Foundation, a 15-year-old girl from Dar Es Salaam became a nature advocate at age five and helped plant 50,000 trees.

Training related

- Strengthen the capacity of women and vulnerable groups. Most of them
- When you give training, provide a time and location suitable for everyone: Make sure the entrance is wheelchair accessible, the time is before or after daily chores, tell women to bring their children if needed and provide childcare, so everyone can participate.



Gesi Champion

For your organisation: Is there a female role model in your organisation or in your network you can invite to show women what their possibilities are? Maybe there is an inspiring female manager, or a female in the community who advocates your line of work well which other women can learn from?

In general: Do you know any people from vulnerable groups who are fighting for their rights? Did they defy social norms and have for instance a very unusual job? Invite them to your organisation to give a talk!

Want to know more about GESI?

Read one of the following manuals:

- [GESI Toolkit for Health Partnerships](#) from Global Health Partnerships
- [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: Integration in Development Initiatives Training Manual](#) from the Climate and Development Knowledge Network.

- Consider women-only groups for training: Women might feel less secure speaking out when men are present.
- Setting quota for specific groups in meetings and workshops: For instance a 50-50 male-female participation rate.

More difficult measures

- Try to give women more opportunities in also considering employing females for jobs that are more seen as typically male.
- Provide additional skills training to women so they are at the same level as males: Organise a pre-training or mentors to help women to get at the same skill level as their male counterparts. Only organise the intended training after this the skills training.
- Strengthen representation of women and other vulnerable groups in your projects by including them in all phases of your project. (Planning, delivery, review and monitoring > have women work at all levels of your organisation).
- Dedicated budget for GESI activities
- Confronting and challenging gender and social norms related to inequality in your project or workflow



Resources

Training manuals

AMRUT (2023) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Training Module for AMRUT 2.0. <https://amrut.mohua.gov.in/uploads/GESI-Traning-Module.pdf>

ASEAN Secretariat (2023) Training Module on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Responsive Anticipatory Action. Jakarta, Indonesia. [https://asean.org/book/training-module-on-gender-equality-andASEAN Secretariatn-responsive-anticipatory-action/](https://asean.org/book/training-module-on-gender-equality-andASEAN-Secretariatn-responsive-anticipatory-action/)

Climate and Development Knowledge Network (2024) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: Integration in Development Initiatives Training Manual. https://cdkn.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/GESI%20and%20Development%20Training%20Manual-MoPD_final.pdf

THET (2020) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Toolkit for Health Partnerships. <https://www.globalhealthpartnerships.org/resources/gender-and-social-inclusion-toolkit/>

World Vision (2023) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: Approach and Theory of Change https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/WV-GESI-Approach-Theory-of-Change-2nd-Edition-2023_0.pdf

Websites

Gender Inequality Index (2023) <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/gender-inequality-index-from-the-human-development-report>

Hali (2021) Education Factsheet Tanzania <https://www.haliaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Tanzania-Education-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>

Human Development Reports (2023) <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>

UNDP (2021) Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2027 https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-07/gender_equality_strategy_2022_-_2027.pdf

https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Tanzania/Literacy_rate

<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>

<https://data.unwomen.org/country/united-republic-of-tanzania>
