

What is GESI

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion



**BOTANIC
GARDENS**
CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL

Gender Equality is

- Equal Rights
- Equal Opportunities
- Equal Responsibilities
for **all** genders

Social inclusion is equal participation in activities, regardless

- Identity
- Background
- Status
- Tribe

Introduction

GESI stands for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. The goal of GESI is to remove barriers and increase access, decision-making and participation of the most vulnerable groups of the community (THET, 2020). This resource explains what gender equality and social inclusion are and provides some examples.

Gender equality: The state or condition that affords women and girls, men and boys, equal enjoyment of human rights, opportunities, choices, and resources. It includes expanding freedoms and voice, improving power dynamics and relations, transforming gender roles and enhancing overall quality of life so that men and women achieve their full potential and can shape their lives any way they want.

Social inclusion: Seeks to address inequality and/or exclusion of vulnerable populations by improving terms of participation in society and enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice, and respect for human rights. It seeks to promote empowerment and improvement of the ability, opportunities and dignity of people disadvantaged and historically excluded from decision-making. (World Vision, 2023; Climate and Development Knowledge Network, 2024)

Groups that might be socially excluded and therefore vulnerable are for instance

- Women and Girls
- Elderly persons
- Widows
- Disabled persons
- Ethnic and religious minorities
- Migrants
- People living with a stigmatising illness
- Low-income households



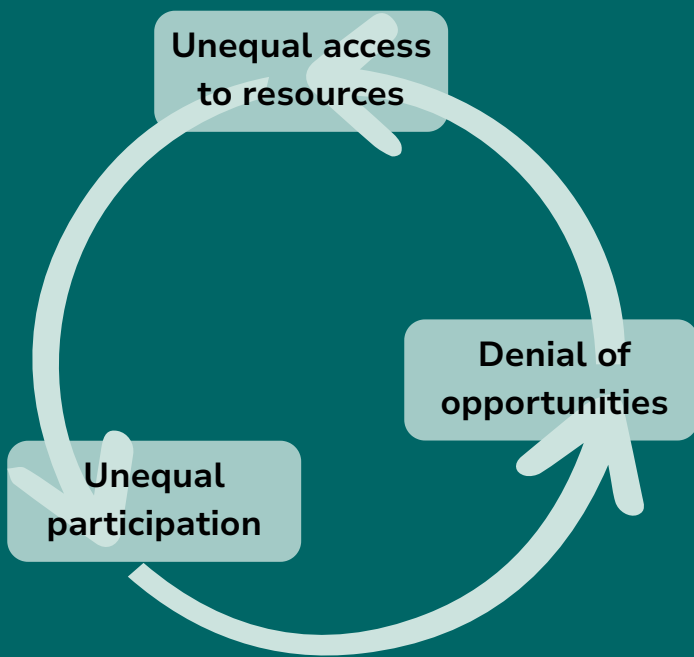


Fig. 1 Social exclusion. Based on AMRUT, (2023).

Vulnerability or social exclusion is influenced by many factors. Low-income households are often more vulnerable because they are more exposed to risks. They may lack access to clean water, have unstable or insecure employment and have little or no savings to fall back on (AMRUT, 2023; Climate and Development Knowledge Network, 2024).

Examples of social ex- or inclusion

Example 1 Exclusion

Imani is a 14-year old girl and has to leave school, because she needs to help her parents working on their land and do more household chores. She will not get the chance to go to college and continue her education. This is an example of denial of opportunities.

When Imani is an adult, she feels insecure about expressing her opinion in community meetings because she feels others know more than her. She visits all community meetings, but she does not say anything in discussions. This is an example of unequal participation.

Imani's father is the sole owner of the land that his household possesses. He makes all the decisions regarding which crops to plant, when to harvest, and who is doing the work, and who to sell it to, leading to unequal access to resources.

Example 2 Inclusion

Zainabu Senkondo works on a tea plantation as a tea processor and explains how that made her life more independent and empowered her as she is now financially independent. She is inspiring other women to break barriers and shows how a woman can be employed in a job traditionally reserved for men. Watch this [video](#).



Five domains of GESI

For a deeper understanding of GESI, the 5 domains of GESI have been included. This model is a bit more complicated. The domains are access, decision-making, participation, system and well-being.

- **Access:** To be able to access, use and own resources, opportunities, services, benefits and infrastructure. Everyone should be able to access essential services such as health care and should not face barriers to (higher) education.
- **Decision-making:** The ability to make decisions independently without being influenced or forced by others at individual, household, community and society level. This also includes control over your shared household assets like land and money.
- **Participation:** Being able to participate in society meetings and influence your own development, life activities and outcomes.
- **Systems:** Live in a society that promotes equality and takes into account the different needs for vulnerable people. There should not be a social norm that says women can't do certain jobs or have no say in their continuing education. Vulnerable people should not be stigmatised and should be able to get a job.
- **Well-being:** Everybody feels a sense of worth, dignity, safety, health and physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being. There is no place for gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination.

This will lead to a transformation in society where everybody can live their life in fulness and feels empowered. All domains are impacted by existing structures, social norms and power relationships that will need a shift towards equality (World Vision, 2023; ASEAN, 2023, Climate and Development Knowledge Network, 2024).

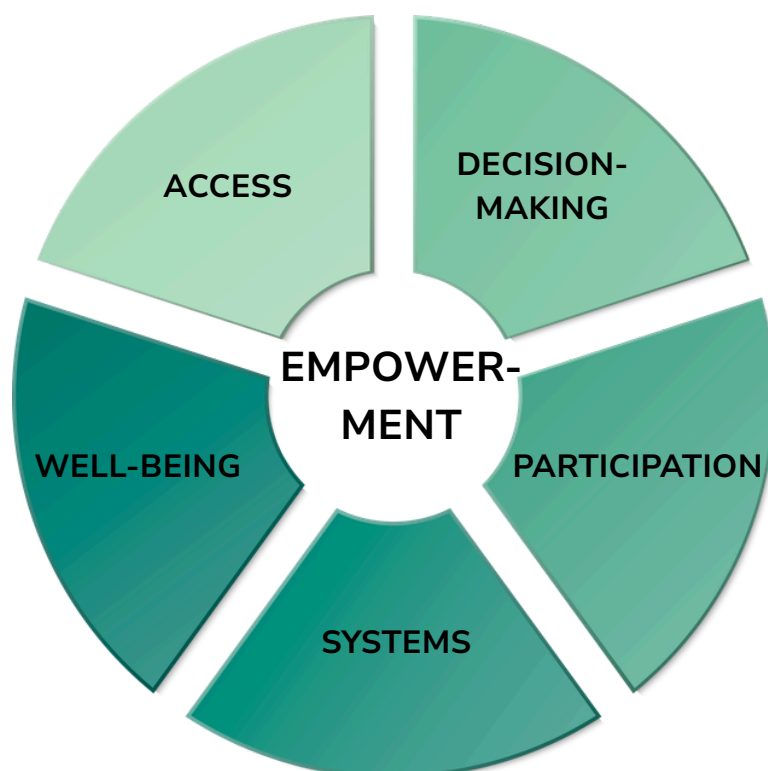


Fig.2 The five GESI domains leading to empowerment. Based on World Vision (2023).
