PART 7
What is a gender-sensitive approach to social protection in rural context? An overview of key features

KEY OBJECTIVE:
To understand the basic elements of integrating gender into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SP interventions in rural areas.
7.1 What can gender-sensitive SP programmes aim to achieve?

This final section presents a brief preview of the: (i) the main objectives of gender-sensitive programming; and (ii) the key features of the gender-sensitive approach to SP throughout the programme cycle.

The ultimate goal of a gender-sensitive approach in SP programme is to make these programmes more attentive to women’s and men’s specific needs for support in the context of their rural livelihoods; and increase gender equality in programme access and outcomes. SP programmes need to address gender-based vulnerabilities and risks that prevent rural women and men from accessing and benefiting from economic opportunities and claiming their rights and entitlements; and help these men and women to overcome individual and household poverty and food insecurity.

Gender-sensitive programming can achieve several specific objectives:

- create awareness of the ways in which gender norms and gender inequality and exclusion both contribute to and perpetuate rural poverty;
- ensure equal access to SP programmes for women and men;
- address gender inequalities in resources and assets, employment and financial services;
- strengthen women’s voice, bargaining power and decision-making roles, and reduce their work burdens; and
- avoid reinforcing gender inequalities and exacerbating gender-specific risks

7.2 How to implement a gender-sensitive approach to SP?

An important first step in making SP more gender sensitive is to explicitly work towards gender equality. To benefit both women and men equitably, the principle of gender equality needs to be mainstreamed consistently in programme objectives and along all the stages of the programme cycle: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In situations where rural women are more vulnerable to poverty and deprivation, women-specific interventions should be undertaken to maximize gender equality and poverty reduction outcomes. For example, programmes may explicitly aim to target and empower rural women, where this is seen as ‘essential’ for achieving the main poverty reduction objectives.

Figure 6: Twin-track strategy of gender-sensitive approach to SP

Gender mainstreaming
Ensures that women’s and men’s perspectives and needs are an integral dimension of the programmes in order to benefit them both equally.

Women-specific actions
In case women are more vulnerable to poverty and deprivations, women specific interventions should be deployed to maximise poverty reduction outcomes (e.g. targeting).
In concrete terms, the following key actions can help ensure a gender-sensitive approach throughout the programme cycle.

At the planning stage:

- **Undertake a gender-sensitive poverty and vulnerability analysis.** The critical step in undertaking a gender-sensitive approach to SP is to assess the risks and vulnerabilities that rural women and men face throughout their lives, and determine how discriminatory gender norms and inequality contribute to these risks and vulnerabilities. A gender analysis will provide a better understanding of the different roles women and men play; the resources they have; the way they share work burdens (or not); and their practical and strategic needs and priorities in regards to livelihoods security. The results of the analysis can help identify key issues and define gender-sensitive programme objectives, priorities and activities.

  [FURTHER READING: Refer to Technical Guide 2, Part 1 for specific guidance on how to plan and undertake a gender-sensitive poverty and vulnerability analysis.]

At the design stage:

- **Adopt gender-sensitive design features.** Various design features (e.g. adjusted benefit size, flexible work requirements, training and livelihoods support) can be adopted to address women and men’s specific vulnerabilities and promote their participation in the programmes. In certain situations, special targeting provisions may be included (e.g. job quotas, and/or individual entitlements) to increase women’s participation and benefits from the programme. Effective communication and outreach activities used to reach out to and target particularly vulnerable and excluded rural populations (e.g. ‘forest populations’, unpaid family workers, landless peasant workers, people with disabilities, the chronically ill, refugees and widows) are also essential dimensions of the inclusive targeting process.

- **Pay attention to intrahousehold dynamics.** To ensure equitable distribution of transfers within households, programmes must pay attention to aspects of intrahousehold gender dynamics, including: gender roles; the balance of power between women and men; and the way they affect individuals’ access to and control over SP benefits. Appropriate strategies and activities are needed to promote positive intrahousehold dynamics and gender-equitable outcomes for all members participating in the programmes.

- **Engage women and men in programme planning and delivery.** It is essential to engage with female beneficiaries when determining programme priorities and design provisions. Particular focus should be placed on the participation of women experiencing the greatest marginalization. Men and boys should also be actively engaged in programming. This can be done through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities that promote positive changes in gender norms and roles, and increase their understanding of the importance of (and their commitment to) programme objectives related to gender equality and women’s empowerment.
Link cash or wages with complementary support. Complementary interventions may include social and care-based services; productive and livelihood interventions; access to markets and rural organizations (e.g. women cooperative and producer networks). Finally, integrated SP systems need to be embedded in broader rural development and social equity frameworks. Anti-discrimination legislation related to inheritance and property laws, and/or minimum wage, and access to legal support are essential transformative measures that can reduce the exposure of both women and men to social risks and discrimination.

At the implementation and monitoring and evaluation stage:

- **Strengthen staff capacity and set up gender-friendly institutional arrangements.** This includes enhancing staff capacity for gender awareness, gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. It also involves providing adequate incentives, budget allocations and institutional support, including staff operational guidelines to ensure that gender-sensitive design provisions are implemented in practice. Establishing institutional gender mechanisms (e.g. gender focal points within SP ministries and programmes executed by local governments) is also important to ensure advocacy, commitment to continuity, and the monitoring of gender work.

- **Build political commitments for gender-sensitive SP interventions through advocacy for gender equality at the national and local levels.** Social accountability mechanisms (e.g. community scorecards, social audits and grievance platforms) are also necessary to strengthen the inclusive governance, transparency and accountability of the programmes (Holmes and Jones, 2010). These mechanisms must consider the potential constraints (e.g. restricted mobility, time poverty, limited voice and basic levels of literacy and confidence needed to engage with programme officials and participate in decision-making processes) that women encounter when engaging in governance activities.

- **Establish innovative monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to track progress, assess a range of gender impacts, and ensure opportunities for incorporating the results of the assessment into the redesign of programmes and their implementation.** Gender-sensitive indicators and the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data can be used to monitor the access rural women and men have to SP programmes and their participation in them. Particular efforts are needed to develop innovative methodologies and indicators that can assess: gender-related changes linked to women’s empowerment, productive capacity and access to work; intrahousehold roles and dynamics (e.g. decision-making and agency, and work burdens); and whether the programmes (including programmes in which the beneficiaries participate in multiple interventions) negatively affect rural women’s and men’s welfare or exacerbate gender inequalities and risks.

**FURTHER READING:** In Technical Guide 2, readers can find detailed guidance on how gender issues can be integrated into specific design features of cash transfers and PWP. Technical Guide 3 discusses in detail the issues related to gender-sensitive implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
**Figure 7: Key dimensions of integrating gender into SP programming**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning stage</th>
<th>Design stage</th>
<th>Implementation stage</th>
<th>Monitoring and evaluation stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct age- and gender-specific poverty and vulnerability analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Integrate gender into core design features of social protection programmes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Set up gender-sensitive implementation mechanisms</strong></td>
<td><strong>Set up monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to track progress and assess gender-related effects</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Assess how gender inequalities affect women’s vulnerability to poverty and livelihood risks.</td>
<td>- Adapt targeting eligibility criteria and methods to ensure equal inclusion of women and men in programmes (and promote uptake).</td>
<td>- Ensure regular and predictable transfers.</td>
<td>- Identify age- and gender-disaggregated indicators and data to be collected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identify other causes, beyond gender, which contribute to women’s exposure to, and experience of poverty.</td>
<td>- If relevant, include appropriate provisions to reach particularly vulnerable and excluded groups of women/men.</td>
<td>- Design payment transfers in a gender-sensitive way, and ensure they promote women’s financial inclusion.</td>
<td>- Allocate sufficient resources and build capacity to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pay attention to men’s and boys’ poverty and insecurity.</td>
<td>- Provide clear information on programme benefits and process.</td>
<td>- Carry out culturally sensitive sensitization activities.</td>
<td>- Build the evidence base on links between gender design provisions and programme outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ensure findings inform programme priorities and features</td>
<td>- Adjust benefit size and frequency to programme goals.</td>
<td>- Allocate specific and sufficient resources (financial, human, time) to enable the achievement of programme objectives.</td>
<td>- Set up a feedback loop mechanisms to ensure results are taken up into the programme re-design.</td>
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</table>

**Planning stage**

- Conduct age- and gender-specific poverty and vulnerability analysis
- Identify key gender issues.
- Assess how gender inequalities affect women’s vulnerability to poverty and livelihood risks.
- Identify other causes, beyond gender, which contribute to women’s exposure to, and experience of poverty.
- Pay attention to men’s and boys’ poverty and insecurity.
- Ensure findings inform programme priorities and features

**Design stage**

- Integrate gender into core design features of social protection programmes
- Formulate gender-sensitive programme objectives.
- Adapt targeting eligibility criteria and methods to ensure equal inclusion of women and men in programmes (and promote uptake).
- If relevant, include appropriate provisions to reach particularly vulnerable and excluded groups of women/men.
- Provide clear information on programme benefits and process.
- Adjust benefit size and frequency to programme goals.
- Design culturally sensitive programme messaging, and sensitization events to promote gender equality.
- Include women in the participatory selection of PWP projects.
- Integrate transfers with complementary measures aligned to programme gender equality goals.
- Carefully design programme conditionalities.
- Include women and men in programme formulation.
- Review programme components for their gender-sensitivity and identify potential risk mitigation strategies.

**Implementation stage**

- Set up gender-sensitive implementation mechanisms
- Adopt a gender mainstreaming strategy.
- Ensure regular and predictable transfers.
- Design payment transfers in a gender-sensitive way, and ensure they promote women’s financial inclusion.
- Carry out culturally sensitive sensitization activities.
- Allocate specific and sufficient resources (financial, human, time) to enable the achievement of programme objectives.
- Build political commitments for gender-sensitive interventions and promote community support.
- Set up participatory social accountability mechanisms.
- Ensure reliable provision of quality complementary services and measures.

**Monitoring and evaluation stage**

- Set up monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to track progress and assess gender-related effects
- Develop gender-sensitive M&E framework.
- Identify age- and gender-disaggregated indicators and data to be collected.
- Allocate sufficient resources and build capacity to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation.
- Build the evidence base on links between gender design provisions and programme outcomes.
- Set up a feedback loop mechanisms to ensure results are taken up into the programme re-design.
- Use evidence and research to develop communication and advocacy strategies.
Summary questions

➤ Reflecting on your work situation, what can SP programmes achieve in terms of gender equality and rural women’s empowerment outcomes? Is there the capacity and willingness to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to programming? How can staff capacity and commitments be enhanced?

➤ What are some of the elements of gender-sensitive SP design and implementation?

➤ What are some of the elements of gender-sensitive programme monitoring and evaluation?

Exercise 5:
Mapping the opportunities and challenges for adopting gender-sensitive approach to social protection

(SEE ANNEX 1: LEARNING TOOLS)
ANNEX 1
Learning tools

Exercise 1:
Reflecting on gender norms and roles relevant to your context

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** To discuss differences between concepts of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ and reflect on local and contextual understanding of gender norms, gender roles and relations, and progress in gender equality and women’s empowerment.

**Instructions**

Undertake a 5-minute reflection and/or discussion in pairs:

When did you first realize you were different from the opposite sex:

- How old were you?
- Who made you aware of it?
- What was the issue about?
- How did you feel about it?
- What did you do?

Exercise 2:
Mapping SP interventions in your country (breakout groups and plenary)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** To introduce participants’ work on SP to the broader group. To understand if/how the existing SP programmes tackle gender issues.

**Timing indication**

10 minutes (group breakout discussions)
20 minutes (presentation of findings; five-minute presentations)
10 minutes (plenary discussions)

**Notes to the facilitator**

- Ask participants to reflect on the SP programme they manage/work on and prepare a five-minute presentation on the following questions:
  - What types of national SP programmes exist in your country?
  - What are the main programme characteristics?
  - Is gender integrated in programme design in an explicit or implicit way?
- Ask participants to use Figure 2 to guide their discussion.
Exercise 3: Assessing gender-specific effects of shocks and crises (breakout groups and plenary)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the gender-differentiated impacts of different shocks and stresses on people’s livelihoods, work burdens and social empowerment.

Timing indication

30 minutes (group breakout discussions)
20–30 minutes (presentation of findings)

Instructions

- **Step 1:** Divide participants into small groups of maximum 5 people.
- **Step 2:** Ask participants to select a type of risk suggested in the table below. Encourage them to (a) reflect on the differences and similarities in the way this risk affects rural women and men, and (b) then discuss how women and men may address this risk, and whether there are similarities and/or differences in their coping strategies. Record your key points in the table below.
- **Step 3:** Discuss what type of research methods and tools you would use to assess this issue and collect data to inform your programme priorities and activities.
- **Step 4:** Present the findings in the plenary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of risk</th>
<th>How does this risk affect women?</th>
<th>How does this risk affect men?</th>
<th>How do women and men cope with this risk?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crop failure</td>
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<td>Pest infection</td>
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<td>Drought</td>
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<td>Flood</td>
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<td>Climate change</td>
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<td>Food price hikes</td>
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<td>Seasonal unemployment</td>
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<td>Health shock</td>
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<td>Lean/hungry season</td>
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<td>Land/water grab</td>
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<td>Deforestation</td>
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<td>Tsunami</td>
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<td>Dowry expenses</td>
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<td>Conflict</td>
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<td>Marriage</td>
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<td>Pregnancy</td>
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<td>Time poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withdrawal of social protection support</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 4: Assessing how SP programmes address gender dimensions of poverty and vulnerability to risks (breakout groups and plenary)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Understand what types of gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities the SP programmes address and how.

**Timing indication**
30 minutes (group breakout discussions)
20 minutes (presentation of findings)
20 minutes (plenary discussions)

**Notes to the facilitator**
Based on a discussion of gender-differentiated risks mapped out in Exercise 2, encourage participants to discuss what types of risks and vulnerabilities the SP programmes address, and what programme features (if any) they adopt deliberately to achieve these objectives. The participants should also reflect on the gaps and limitations in programme outcomes, and propose ways to address them.

Exercise 5: Mapping the opportunities and challenges for adopting gender-sensitive approach to SP

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Assess the scope for, and challenges to, adopting gender more meaningfully in daily work.

**Timing indication**
30 minutes (group breakout discussions)
20 minutes (presentation of findings)
20 minutes (plenary discussions)

**Notes to the facilitator**
Encourage participants to use a gender continuum tool (Table 1) and a checklist of gender-sensitive activities in SP programming (Table 2) to reflect on the scope for, and challenges to, adopting gender more meaningfully in their daily work, and adapting this to the local context. If they are already working on gender-sensitive programming, they can provide examples of how gender is integrated (or not) in various stages of the programming cycle, the strengths and shortcomings associated with this approach, and how these shortcomings can be overcome.
ANNEX 2
Programme coverage data

Figure 8: Gender gaps in access to old-age pensions

These three countries achieve close to universal coverage and comparatively smaller gender gaps in pension coverage thanks to widely available non-contributory social pensions.

Adapted from ILO, 2014 cited in UN Women, 2015.
ANNEX 3
Key resources

**FAO resources on social protection and gender**


**FAO Gender publications**


See in particular:


**The Transfer Project publications on cash transfer impact evaluations**

[https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/?page_id=310](https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/?page_id=310)

See in particular:


**International Labour Organization (ILO) resources on social protection**


See in particular:


World Bank resources on social protection and gender

See in particular:


https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4591

https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22101)

Institute of Development Studies (IDS) resources on social protection and gender
www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/centre-for-social-protection

ODI resources on social protection and gender

Social Protection and Human Rights platform
http://socialprotection-humanrights.or
ANNEX 4
List of key informants

External experts

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**References**


TECHNICAL GUIDE 1

Introduction to gender-sensitive social protection programming to combat rural poverty: Why is it important and what does it mean?


Toolkit on gender-sensitive social protection programmes to combat rural poverty and hunger


Schjoedt, R. 2016. *India's Basic Income Experiment*. Pathways' Perspectives No. 21, Orpington, UK, Development Pathways. (also available at www.developmentpathways.co.uk/publications/india-basic-income-experiment/)


World Bank, FAO & IFAD. 2015. Gender in Climate-Smart Agriculture: Module 18 for the Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook. Washington, DC. (also available at www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/54c83759-ee1d-48b6-bab1-ac5a967ae0bc/)
This three-part Toolkit focuses on the role of social protection in reducing rural gender inequalities, rural poverty and hunger. The Toolkit is composed of three technical guides. The first technical guide is an introduction to gender-sensitive social protection programming to combat rural poverty. The second, provides practical guidance on a gender-sensitive design of cash transfer and public works programmes. The third and last guide is dedicated to integrating gender into implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of cash transfer and public works programmes.

The Toolkit on gender-sensitive social protection programmes to combat rural poverty and hunger is designed to support social protection and gender policy-makers and practitioners in their efforts to systematically apply a gender lens to social protection programmes in ways that are in line with global agreements and FAO commitments in order to expand social protection systems to rural women and rural populations more broadly.