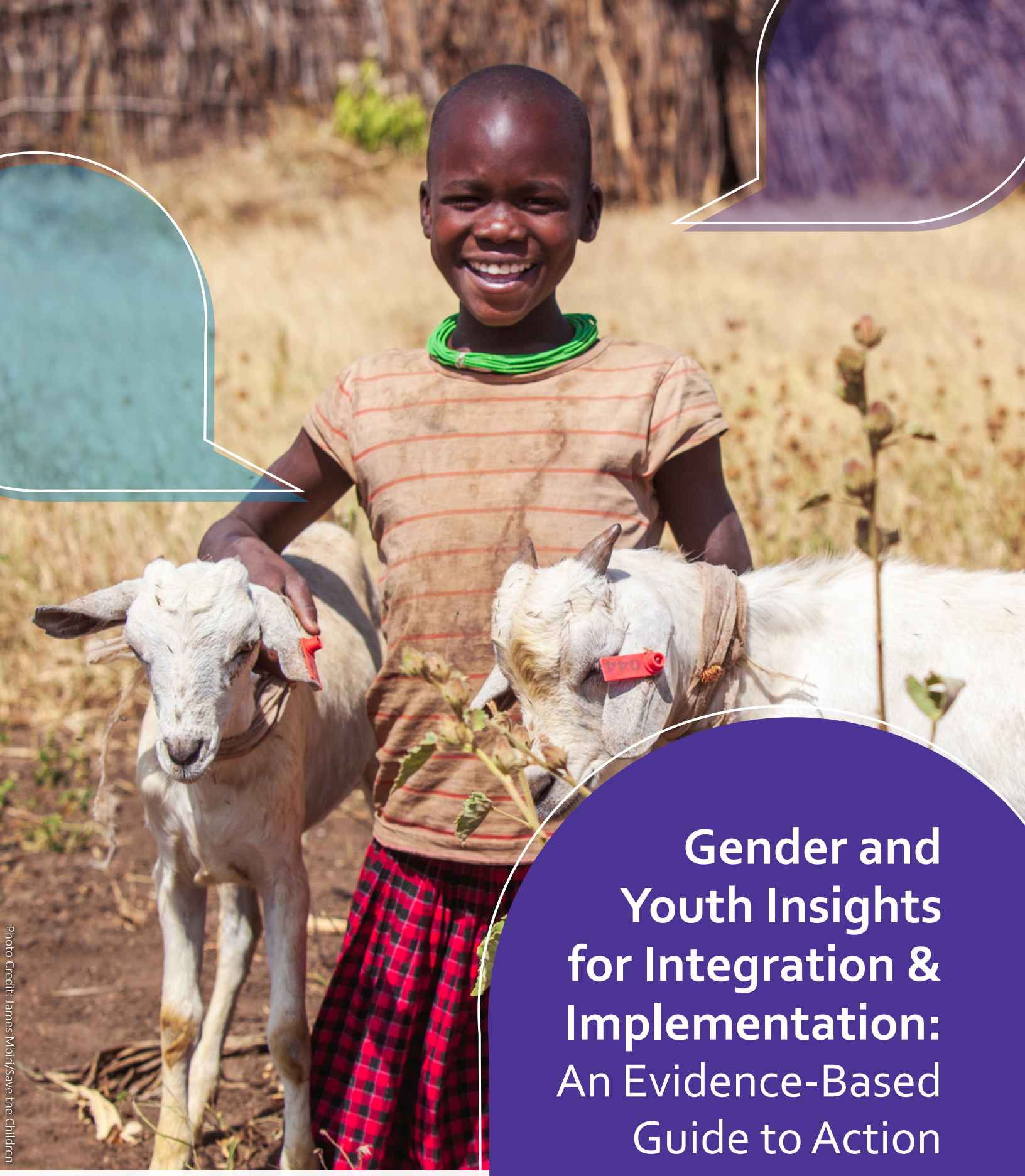


Photo Credit: James Mbiri/Save the Children

Gender and Youth Insights for Integration & Implementation: An Evidence-Based Guide to Action

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

IDEAL

Gender and Youth Activity (GAYA) • March 2023

Photo Credit: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children

OVERVIEW

The Gender and Youth Activity (GAYA), funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), works to improve the quality and impact of emergency and non-emergency food security and resilience activities by addressing the barriers and challenges implementing partners face when integrating gender and youth within their work.

In 2022, GAYA conducted formative research to better understand implementing partners' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding gender and youth integration into their activities. This research included a quantitative survey that received over 600 responses from implementers working in over 30 countries. To triangulate and better understand these findings, GAYA then conducted complementary qualitative research. This formative research helped GAYA gain better insights into the contexts and challenges implementers face to meaningfully integrate gender and youth in their work. GAYA plans to conduct a similar survey annually to further explore the key trends identified and to look at change over time.

Learn more about GAYA's Formative Research, including methodologies and findings, here.

Based on this research, GAYA identified the following core recommendations for implementing partners to ensure effective gender and youth integration:

- Recommendation 1: Enlist senior management and a range of technical sector leads as champions of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and gender equality.
- Recommendation 2: Incorporate Social Behavior Change (SBC) approaches to identify and address barriers to gender equality and PYD.
- Recommendation 3: Systematically utilize disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to inform program adaptations.

In this brief, for each recommendation, GAYA provides *insights* through survey data, actions to *integrate* these recommendations, and resources to support the *implementation* of these actions. If you have feedback or additional resource recommendations, please contact gaya@savechildren.org.

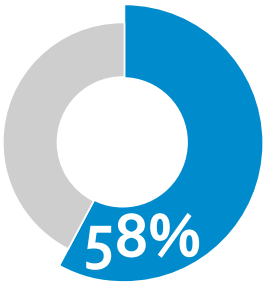
RECOMMENDATION 1.

Enlist senior management and a range of technical sector leads as champions of PYD and gender equality.

Insights

The lack of buy-in or knowledge from management and technical sector experts[1] around gender and youth integration is a key barrier to change at the organizational level. GAYA's key research findings on this topic include:

- **Management does not prioritize PYD and gender equality.** Research respondents regularly mentioned that when senior management prioritizes gender and youth integration within intervention design and program activities, it becomes everyone's responsibility to make time for it. However, only 58% of survey respondents strongly agreed that management in their organization always takes gender equality seriously.



of respondents strongly agree that management takes gender equality seriously

- **Most technical sector experts do not feel responsible for mainstreaming PYD and gender equality.** Gender and youth experts stated that technical sector experts often assume gender and youth integration is solely the responsibility of the gender and youth expert(s). However, the role of gender and youth experts is to guide the integration of these factors across interventions. These misaligned expectations prevent the meaningful integration of gender and youth across a program or activity.
- **Technical sector experts have knowledge gaps regarding key gender equality/equity and PYD concepts.** While more than 85% of gender and youth technical leads reported that their program teams clearly understood key gender concepts, significant gaps remained. This included a lack of knowledge around social inclusion domains, intersectionality, and the gender integration/equity continuum. Furthermore, fewer than 60% reported that their program teams clearly understood PYD.
- **On program teams, men had more positive perceptions regarding the progress made to confront gender inequality, as compared to women.** This finding suggests men, who have a privileged gender status, perceive there has been more progress made in advancing gender equality than there is in reality. Thus, it is essential to influence men team members to recognize the realities of gender inequality.

Integration and Implementation

Elevate the importance of gender and youth for all staff

- Help technical sector leads understand the importance of gender and youth integration to achieving their sectoral outcomes. The following documents provide evidence that Positive Youth Development (PYD) and gender equity approaches can help programs achieve food security outcomes: YouthPower Action's *Recommendations for Youth Programming in Food for Peace Development Food Security Activities (DFSA)* and CARE International's *Food Security and Gender Equality: A synergistic understudied symphony*.
- Provide sector-specific gender and youth integration strategies for each technical area outside of gender and youths. GAYA aims to highlight examples of gender/youth integration strategies for technical areas, such as food security, WASH, agriculture, etc. Submit your examples to gaya@savechildren.org to be featured in future resources.
- Prioritize and highlight gender and youth in meeting agendas and reports by putting these sections toward the beginning and allocating space for robust updates. The following document from USAID Learning Lab provides guidance on how to ensure gender integration in performance plans and reports.

1 For the purpose of this brief, when GAYA refers to "technical sector experts" it refers to technical sector experts who are not focused on gender or youth. When referring to gender and youth technical experts, it was explicitly stated "gender and youth experts/leads."

Photo Credit: Harrison Thane/Save the Children

- Include gender- and youth-focused staff positions in the program's senior leadership to ensure their insights are heard from a position of authority. If this is not possible, build structures to ensure gender and youth leads can escalate gender/youth focused issues to senior leadership team discussions.

Allocate time and resources to strengthening staff capacity around gender and youth integration

- Incorporate specific gender and youth mainstreaming tasks and core competencies into the position descriptions of all team members, and use these as part of recruitment and performance evaluation processes. To learn more about core competencies for Gender Staff, review the Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program's *Core Competency Series Booklet* or review GAYA's event- What Does it Take to Be a Gender and Youth Champion?.
- Use SBC approaches to influence the attitudes and practices of team members around gender and youth integration. Learn more about how to implement SBC approaches in the section below.
- Ensure there are safe opportunities for women and members of sexual and gender minorities to share their experiences of gender inequality during internal training, followed by ample time for reflection from colleagues. There are a plethora of resources available to make people feel safe in internal training, here is one example from We Rise: *Creating Safe Spaces*.
- Collaborate across implementing partners to establish cross-partner training or working groups around gender and youth. For an example of this, check out this case study: ME&A's *USAID El Salvador IP's Mainstream Gender through Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting*.

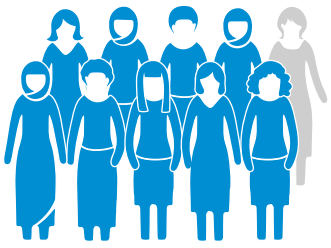
RECOMMENDATION 2.

Incorporate SBC approaches to identify and address barriers to gender equality and PYD.

Insights

Incorporating SBC approaches allows teams to identify the various barriers to gender equality and to design tailored interventions to address those barriers. GAYA's key research finding on these topics include:

- **Programs aimed at changing harmful behaviors often focus on changing gender inequitable beliefs or attitudes, instead of addressing other barriers constraining behavior change.** Research respondents highlighted the importance of using SBC approaches to identify priority behaviors for change, design activities, and measure success. By considering who is most affected by the problematic behavior, SBC approaches help teams identify why the behavior is happening (i.e., the behavioral drivers) and match the appropriate intervention type to the constraining elements. In particular, respondents highlighted the need to properly identify behavioral drivers in two primary categories:
  - **Gender Equitable Behaviors:** In GAYA's research, 91% of respondents reported that local social attitudes hinder women's participation in programs. Furthermore, emergency practitioners reported social attitudes were a more significant hindrance compared to staff in RFSAs.
  - **PYD Behaviors:** GAYA's research also found that attitudes were particularly negative toward youth's capacity to contribute to decision-making and development of communities. In particular, there are negative attitudes and perceptions of young men, who are often falsely considered violent and associated with security and safety risks in their communities.



91% of respondents reported local social attitudes hinder women's participation in programs

Integration and Implementation

Identify Behaviors and Behavioral Determinants

- During the program planning phase, conduct primary or secondary research to identify what gender equality or PYD behaviors the program wishes to shift or amplify, as well as the full array of behavioral determinants that can enable or prevent the adoption of these behaviors. In 2014, TOPS created a set of 30 Barrier Analysis Questionnaires and guidance on how to adapt these questionnaires.

Design SBC Activities to Address Barriers

- Adopt and plan for activities that specifically aim to shift the factors constraining gender equality or PYD behaviors in the program's context, specifically engaging men and others with relative privilege and power-holders who have the ability to reduce harmful practices. In 2016, the TOPS program published a six-day curriculum and framework for *Designing for Behavior Change in Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, and Gender* . Published in 2017, TOPS' *REALIZE: Social and Behavioral Change for Gender Equity and Diversity* helps implementers develop social behavior change interventions for gender equity outcomes.

Measure for Impact

- Measure behavior changes to understand if the program is achieving its objectives, setting realistic timelines, and building in space for adaptation, especially as the impact of normative interventions may not always be immediately realized or visible. Several indicator development resources are available in this field. The *Guide to Formulating Gendered Social Norms Indicators in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition* from FAO, IFAD, and WFP[2] helps implementers formulate indicators to measure changes in gendered social norms in the context of food security and nutrition. Advancing Nutrition's *Measuring Social and Behavior Change in Nutrition Programs* includes an annex of illustrative SBC indicators. Finally CARE International's *Tipping Point MEL Methods Brief* provides proven qualitative measurement tools, along with an analytical framework, to better understand whether interventions shift harmful social norms.

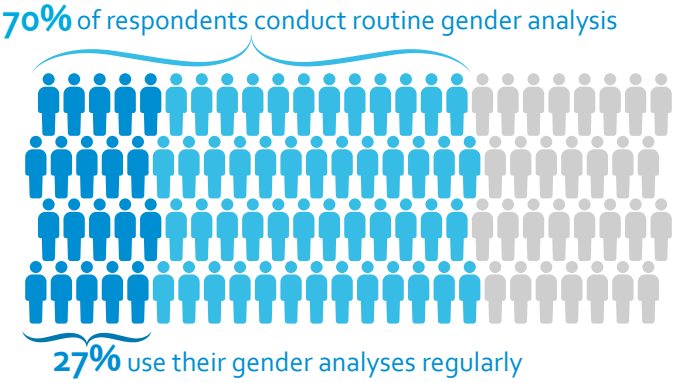
RECOMMENDATION 3.
Systematically utilize disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to inform program adaptations.

Insights

A growing body of evidence suggests that evidence-based learning and adaptation improves both organizational success and the success of programs. The collection and analysis of, and reflection on different types of data can facilitate learning and adaptation. GAYA's research identified two key barriers preventing implementing partners from turning data on gender and youth into learning and adaptation:

1. Implementing partners collect data on different gender and age groups, but do not necessarily use their data fully to inform program activities.

- While 70% of survey respondents reported conducting routine gender analysis in program planning and 76% of survey respondents found gender data useful to their work, only 27% of survey respondents use their gender analyses regularly.



2 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP)

- Furthermore, 30% of survey respondents reported that program design and implementation was not informed by the situation of youth in the local context and 18% of survey respondents said gender equality data was not taken into consideration.
- Even when implementing partners collect disaggregated data, GAYA found that the analysis of this data does not inform program adaptations, especially with regards to excluded groups.

2. Implementing partners are collecting quantitative data, but lack the necessary qualitative research indicators and experience to gain insights into the contextual factors.

- Implementing partners reported that quantitative indicators do not fully demonstrate project results, as it is difficult to measure change around gender equity and PYD through quantitative indicators. However, they also reported that they do not have qualitative indicators to measure and track gender and youth impact.

Integration and Implementation

Photo Credit: Jordi Matas / Save the Children

Incorporate gender and youth analyses into action planning

- Conduct a gender and/or youth analysis and then develop a gender and/or youth action plan based on analysis findings. Regularly update the analysis and the accompanying gender/youth action plan based on MEL data. Ensure the gender and/or youth action plan is integrated back into the program's primary work plan. This USAID Learning Lab document explains how to develop the post-evaluation action plan.
- Conduct a data usability assessment to understand how data could be used prior to collection, and the additional data necessary to fully understand existing data.

Reflect on data to inform adaptive management

- Develop clear indicators to assess the impact of gender and youth integration. Start with existing standard indicators (*BHA's Emergency Application Indicator Handbook*, BHA Indicators List for RFSAs, or adapted standard youth or gender indicators) and develop custom qualitative indicators to more deeply explore the impact of gender and youth integration. In addition to reviewing qualKit's qualitative data collection methods for gender, review general TolaData guidance around developing qualitative indicators.
- Disaggregate data by gender, age, and other relevant factors (e.g., disability, caste, sexuality, location, ethnicity, and religion). Analyze differences between disaggregated categories to understand to what extent groups are being included and are experiencing the program's desired outcomes equitably. This USAID Learning Lab resource provides guidance and best practices on how to disaggregate monitoring indicators.
- Hold quarterly meetings to reflect with the full team on disaggregated data to inform action planning. Encourage team members in all job positions to identify reflections from the past quarter pertaining to gender and youth. Use the Mobile Solutions, Technical Assistance, and Research (mSTAR) guidance to assist in this process: *Bridging Real-Time Data and Adaptive Management: Ten Lessons*.

Photo Credit:
Kristiana Marton / Save the Children

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What is GAYA? The Gender and Youth Activity (GAYA) Associate Award works to improve the quality and impact of emergency and non-emergency food security and resilience activities by addressing the barriers and challenges implementing partners face when integrating gender and youth within their work. Understanding and meeting the unique and intersectional needs of women and youth across their lifespan and addressing the root causes of inequalities are essential to achieve broad and equitable impact in food and nutrition security. GAYA supports partners implementing emergency and early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience programs. GAYA is awarded through the Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Leader with Associate Awards Activity, and funded by the USAID/BHA and is implemented by Save the Children and Mercy Corps.

Why did GAYA conduct Formative Research? GAYA conducted formative research, in partnership with Sayara International, to better understand how implementing partners are incorporating the needs of different gender groups and young people in their programming. The primary audience for this research was BHA-funded implementers working on emergency programs or on Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs). Over 600 respondents completed GAYA's survey- which asked respondents to self-identify their strengths and areas for improvement related to gender and youth integration knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

To validate this data and source recommendations for action, GAYA then held Validation and Discussion Workshops (VDWs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with representatives from implementing partner organizations around the world. In November 2022, GAYA shared findings from the survey, VDWs, and KIIs through a participatory webinar, where over 80 implementing partners shared their reactions to the research findings, including their recommendations on GAYA's workstreams. GAYA then adapted plans for its Year 2 interventions based on findings from the survey, workshops, interviews, and the results-sharing event. GAYA plans to conduct a similar survey annually to further explore the key trends identified and to look at change over time.

Recommended Citation:
GAYA. (2023). *Gender and Youth Insights for Integration & Implementation*. Washington, DC: Gender and Youth Activity Associate Award.

Key Terms/Concepts

- **Gender:** roles, behaviors, activities, expectations, and attributes that a given society may construct. Gender is a *social construct* that varies from society to society and can change over time. As defined by USAID, **gender identity** is the "personal sense of one's gender — which may or may not align with norms attached to birth-assigned gender." **Gender expression** is the "manifestation of one's gender identity; how a person behaves, appears or presents with regard to societal expectations of gender. One's gender expression may not necessarily match one's gender identity."[3]

Photo Credit: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children

- **Gender equality:** adapted from USAID's definition, gender equality is the state in which people of all genders have "equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to economic, social, cultural, and political development; enjoy socially-valued resources and rewards; and realize their human rights."[4]
- **Gender equity:** adapted from USAID's definition, gender equity is the fair treatment of people, regardless of gender or gender identity, according to their respective needs. "This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities (e.g., equal treatment before the law, equal access to social provisions; education; equal pay for work of the same value)." Gender equity often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of marginalized groups.[5]
- **Gender integration/gender mainstreaming:** as defined by USAID, "the process of identifying and addressing gender-based inequalities during the creation of USAID's strategies, the design of all our projects and activities, and their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation."[6]
- **Gender integration/equity continuum**: as defined by the Interagency Gender Working Group, the gender integration/equity continuum is "a tool for designers and implementers to use in planning how to integrate gender into their programs/policies."[7]
- **Gender minorities:** adapted from USAID's definition, gender minorities include individuals whose gender identity or gender expression (see above) is different from their sex assigned at birth.[8]
- **Gender-based violence:** as defined by USAID, gender-based violence is "any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity. Although individuals of all gender identities may experience gender-based violence, women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals face a disproportionate risk of gender-based violence across every context due to their unequal status in society."[9]
- **Intersectional:** as defined by USAID, intersectional "refers to the overlap of social identities that contributes to the specific type of oppression and discrimination experienced by an individual."[10]

3 USAID LGBT Vision for Action available at: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/12-2022/LGBT_Vision.pdf
4 Adapted from USAID Asia Regional Factsheet available at: https://www.usaid.gov/asia-regional/fact-sheets/gender-equality-and-female-empowerment#:~:text=Gender20%equality20%is20%defined20%in,realize20%their20%human20%rights.%E9%80%2D20%The
5 Adapted from USAID's Gender Terminology available at: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadl089.pdf
6 United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV available at: https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/12/2022/GBV-Global-Strategy-Report_v-6 Accessible1292022-.pdf
7 Interagency Gender Working Group's Gender Integration Continuum available at: https://www.igwg.org/wp-content/uploads/05/2017/FG_ GendrIntegrContinuum.pdf
8 Adapted from CDC Gender Terminology available at: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/terminology/sexual-and-gender-identity-terms.htm
9 United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV available at: https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/12/2022/GBV-Global-Strategy-Report_v-6 Accessible1292022-.pdf
10 USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth

- **Positive Youth Development (PYD):** adapted from USAID's definition, PYD is an evidence-based model of youth development that promotes an assets-based approach to working with youth.[11] This approach focuses on four key elements:
  - **Assets:** youth have the necessary resources, skills and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.[12]
  - **Agency:** youth perceive and have the ability to employ their assets and aspirations to make or influence their own decisions about their lives and set their own goals, as well as to act upon those decisions in order to achieve desired outcomes.[13]
  - **Contribution:** youth are engaged as a source of change for their own and for their communities' positive development.[14]
  - **Enabling environment:** youth are surrounded by an enabling environment that maximizes their assets, agency, access to services and opportunities, and ability to avoid risks, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive.[15]

- **Sexual minorities:** as defined by authors Math and Seshadri, sexual minorities are "those whose sexual identity, expression, or orientation deviate from the majority."[16]
- **Social behavior change (SBC)**: as defined by Advancing Nutrition, SBC recognizes "that the way people act is entangled with their social connections and their local conditions. SBC takes into account the many social and environmental factors influencing how people carry out their day-to-day activities."[17]
- **Social inclusion:** as defined in an IDEAL resource, social inclusion is "the process of improving the ability, access, dignity, and opportunity for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of social identity, to take part in society."[18]
- **Women's empowerment:** as defined by Kabeer, "women's empowerment is about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability."[19]
- **Youth-led programming:** as defined by USAID, an activity in which youth are the primary implementers.[20]
- **Youth-focused:** as defined by USAID, an activity in which youth are the primary program participants.[21]
- **Youth-relevant programming:** as defined by USAID, an activity that includes youth within its targeted participants or beneficiaries, or has a youth-specific component.[22]

Photo Credit:Veejay Villafranca / Save the Children

11 Adapted from USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth
12 USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth
13 Adapted from USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth
14 Adapted from USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth
15 Adapted from USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth
16 The invisibles ones: Sexual minorities available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3657897/
17 Advancing Nutrition's What is Social and Behavior Change (SBC)? Available at: https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/what-social-and-behavior-change-sbc
18 IDEAL's Gender and Inclusion Responsive Emergency Food Security Training Available at: https://www.fsnnetwork.org/resource/gender-and-inclusion-responsive-emergency-food-security-training
19 Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/7660.00125-1467/10.1111
20 USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth
21 USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth
22 USAID Youth in Development Policy Update 2022 available at: https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth

Photo Credit: Mustafa Saeed / Save the Children

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Social Behavior Change

- *Prioritizing Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Behaviors*, Advancing Nutrition
- *Using Research to Design a Social and Behavior Change Strategy for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition*, Advancing Nutrition
- *Make Me a Change Agent: An SBC Resource for WASH, Agriculture, and Livelihoods Activities,* TOPS/PRO-WASH/SCALE
- Align's Platform on *Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms*
- *Social Norms Design Checklist*, CARE International
- *Social and Behavior Change Do's and Don'ts*, Advancing Nutrition
- *Stakeholders Consultation on Adolescent Girls' Nutrition: Evidence, Guidance, and Gaps*, Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING)

Measuring For Impact

- *Qualitative Monitoring and Evaluation Peer Community*, IDEAL
- *BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities*
- *BHA Emergency Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance*
- **SBC**
  - *Resources for measuring social norms: a practical guide for programme implementers*, Social Norms Learning Collaborative
  - *Social norm data use tool; Monitoring Social and Behavior Change for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition*, CARE International
- **Gender**
  - *MEL Tools – Tipping Point Initiative*, CARE International
  - *Gender Equality Toolbox*, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

- **Youth**
  - *Formative Research Guidance for Adolescent Nutrition*, Advancing Nutrition
  - *From the PYD Framework to Measuring Core PYD Constructs*, YouthPower Learning
  - *Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit*, YouthPower Learning

Disaggregating Data

Photo Credit:Secilia Bosco / Save the Children Tanzania

- *ADS 201 Additional Help Disaggregating Monitoring Indicators*, USAID Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL)
- *Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data*, MEASURE Evaluation
- *Sex disaggregated data collection guide*, Mercy Corps AgriFin's Gender Transformative Toolkit
- *Standards for Collecting Sex-Disaggregated Data for Gender Analysis*, CGIAR
- *Gender-Disaggregated Data for Agriculture and Rural Development*, FAO/Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA)
- *Sex & Age Matter: Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies*, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University

Reflecting On Data To Inform Adaptive Management

- *Pivot Log Template*, USAID Learning Lab
- *Knowing When to Adapt – A Decision Tree*, USAID Learning Lab
- *Pause and Reflect*, USAID Learning Lab
- *CATALYSE: Communities Acting Together*, Mercy Corps
- *Utilizing and learning from evaluations*, USAID Learning Lab
- *CLA in Safe Spaces to promote learning in food security programming in Madagascar*, USAID Learning Lab

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