Why and how to include gender+ perspective in VOPEs?

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Gender inequalities persist in practically all spheres of life

• Although in different ways and with different intensities, we face a universal inequality that causes women to be less present in the different spheres of power, earn lower salaries than men, and be more prone to poverty and social exclusion – in addition to suffering structural and specific violence due to the mere fact of being women.

• Since social, political and organizational structures have been conceived with an unequal idea of the assigned roles of men and women (gender roles), they reproduce and maintain these inequalities.

• Moreover, people are discriminated differently according to the context in which they find themselves, and depending on the social class to which they belong, their ethnic or religious origin, their age, their sexual orientation, their functional capacity, etc.

From Guide to including a gender+ perspective in VOPEs: innovating to improve institutional capacities
The subject is key - one of the Millenium Dev. Goals – and some progresses have been made

**GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN**

- Many more girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

- In Southern Asia, only 74 girls were enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys in 1990. Today, 103 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys.

- Women now make up 41 per cent of paid workers outside the agricultural sector, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.

- Between 1991 and 2015, the proportion of women in vulnerable employment as a share of total female employment has declined 13 percentage points. In contrast, vulnerable employment among men fell by 9 percentage points.

- Women have gained ground in parliamentary representation in nearly 90 per cent of the 174 countries with data over the past 20 years. The average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled during the same period. Yet still only one in five members are women.
For EU, gender equality is a “fundamental right, a common value and a necessary condition for the achievement of its objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion” (European Commission)

- Gender equality is one of the EU policy fields with the longest history. While this does not mean that all policy areas today have a clear gender perspective, the issue of equality between women and men has been on the agenda since the late 1950s.

- The EU has clearly recognized the benefits of the dual gender equality approach, and all EU-funded policies, actions and programmes accordingly must include a gender perspective.

- Gender mainstreaming is therefore not an option, but an obligation.

- Gender equality is usually described as a “fundamental right, a common value of the EU, and a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion” (European Commission).

There are many reasons why gender mainstreaming is important in relation to the European Social Fund, for example:

Four of these are set out below:
- It can make a real contribution to closing persistent gender gaps
- It can challenge gender stereotypes
- It is a formal requirement in ESF funding (reflecting its importance)
- It will ensure more effective implementation and better targeting of the ESF
Examples of gender + aspects in the projects evaluated

• Specific objectives of the projects should be set so as to reflect specific gender inequalities identified in the socio-economic analysis.

• *For example:* “Increasing the level of women’s employment in the ICT sector”;

• All objectives of the projects should be reviewed from a gender perspective. In particular, it is important to consider:

  • *Whether there is a gender dimension which needs to be taken into account. The objective may incorrectly be assumed to be “gender neutral”.*

  • *Whether the objective may even reinforce gender inequalities. For example, a measure promoting work-life balance which only targets women may reinforce stereotypes about gender roles in society.*
Examples of gender + aspects in the programmes evaluated

• In Finland the Valtava programme have developed a guide which includes a section on how an assessment of gender in relation to ESF and ERDF projects can be made.

• The Swedish official Gender Mainstreaming website Includegender.org provides a multitude of tools that can be used (including gender budgeting).

• Example from Agency for Gender Equality within the ESF on the issues of training in companies (only in German).
What is Gender+?

• gender+ - the view is open and includes the analysis of other inequalities and their interactions with gender

• It is based on feminist and gender theories which have called attention to “intersectionality” - the interaction produced when crossing gender with other inequalities (based on age, class, ethnic origin, sexual orientation etc.).

Activists and professionals must concentrate on:

• the dynamics of privileges and exclusions when not enough attention is given to persons and groups situated at the point of intersection of different inequalities;

• the risks of policies and interventions which can result in marginalizing some persons by reproducing the power mechanisms existing among different groups.
Gender+ & evaluation

• evaluation - is a **tool with great potential for detecting the way in which these inequalities** – often not pre-meditated–operate in the programmes and polices being evaluated.

• international bodies, national public institutions, evaluation professionals and pro-equality activists ask **evaluation - to be a tool for promoting greater gender equality and addressing its intersection with other forms of inequality** (age, class, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, etc.).

• different theoretical and methodological proposals militate for incorporating a gender approach, along with an interculturality and Human Rights perspective, in the design and implementation of evaluations
Why gender+ inequality in the mission of evaluators?

• valuable theoretical and methodological proposals are not enough.

• institutions and organization that request the evaluations tend to reproduce the existing inequalities where gender inequality appears transversally

• Evaluators themselves might – often not pre-meditated – have discriminative approaches

• various instruments (guides, codes) for facilitating greater knowledge of how to integrate a gender+ perspective in VOPEs (Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation) and in the professional evaluation community are needed
Guide to including a gender+ perspective in VOPEs: innovating to improve institutional capacities

1. self-assessment of gender+

Each VOPE form an internal group that plans the discussion process and invites the members of the organization to be part of the diagnosis and design of actions for incorporating the gender+ perspective.

SWOT analysis to help identify – collectively – the VOPE’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with respect to its incorporating a gender+ approach.

2. design of actions for incorporating a gender+ perspective

• VOPE can plan actions and activities that take advantage of the strengths and opportunities, and address the deficits encountered.

• To do this, the organization propose specific and measurable results and goals (just as we demand of the programmes and policies being evaluated).

• The next step will be to plan activities such as:
  - Confirm that the gender+ approach has been included on the agenda.
  - Confirm that there is diversity among those invited, and that wide dissemination channels have been used.
  - Confirm that equitable presence has been taken into account, in terms of gender and cultural origin or other characteristics of the associates in filling the different roles (organizing committee, presenters, facilitators, etc.)
  - Take care to use inclusive and non-sexist language.
  - Allow a broad public to have access to the products of the activity.
Dimensions to consider

The associates’ capacities:
- Work Groups
- Circulation of Information
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge

Organizational Structure:
- Membership
- Vision/Mission
- Statutes
- Decision Making

Professionalization:
- Development of evaluation capacities
- Criteria for designation/accreditation
- Decent working conditions
- Continuous training

Advocacy:
- Communications
- Public Activities
- Strategic Agenda
Organizational structure

• The assessment can include a set of questions concerning the association’s membership, vision and mission, its statutes or internal regulations and its decision making structure.

• The aim of these questions is to generate self-reflection, debate and a shared vision of the respective aspects and how they can be addressed by the organization.

The associates’ capacities

• One valid motivation for becoming a member of an association is to enhance personal capacity for carrying out evaluations at the individual level, sharing knowledge, accessing information on labor and professional development opportunities.

• The aim of these questions is to see if the association has included the gender+ approach in this dimension, which is so important for its members.
Professionalization

• The increased demand for evaluators has also led to a demand for quality and rigor in their implementation, as well as the capacity to account for the results, given complexity and diversity of our societies. Therefore the association have begun to assume an important role in the professionalization of this function.

• The questions from this section should refer to evaluation training and capacity development, decent labor conditions, process of professionalization and accreditation.

Advocacy

• An important element of the associations is to consider if the bid for equality and respect for the right of all people as established in the gender + approach constitutes part of the associations’ agendas and if they materializes in the messages they emit and the projects they promote or facilitate.

• The questions from this section should refer to associations’ communication, public activities and strategic agenda.
Following steps

• Define the questions for each of the above 4 sets
• Have the discussions / focus group
• Analyse them - SWOT format
• Set organizational activities – including code of conduct, workshops on gender + aspects in project evaluation, training etc.

Thank you!
Based on:

- Guide to including a gender+ perspective in VOPEs: innovating to improve institutional capacities, Dec. 2014
- The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015
- Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation -Towards UNEG Guidance, 2011(2)
- http://standard.gendercop.com/project/implementation/