



**Themes in Domestic and International Literature  
respecting Experience with Gender Analysis  
& Gender mainstreaming as Strategies to Achieve Gender  
Equality Goals**

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Cornet Consulting &Mediation Inc.

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## 1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of themes arising in the literature reporting on the successes and failures of efforts to achieve gender equality through the strategies of gender analysis and gender mainstreaming since the UN Conference on Women in Beijing and the adoption of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

There is a considerable body of literature describing the efforts and experience of States including Canada, as well as UN and European NGOs to implement gender mainstreaming and gender equality. A bibliography of resources related to gender equality analysis and gender mainstreaming is attached to this report as Appendix A.

Canada has expressed its commitment to securing gender equality in all aspects of life through several domestic and international instruments and policies:

- As a signatory to the 1995 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, in addition to other international human rights instruments
- As a member of the Commonwealth, commitment to the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and Gender Management System
- Through the adoption of federal human rights legislation and constitutional guarantees of gender equality in the *Constitution Act, 1982*
- Through the adoption of policies such as the *Federal Plan for Gender Equality (1995-2000)* and the *Agenda for Gender Equality (2000-2005)*, committing the government to strategies such as gender equality analysis and gender mainstreaming on a government-wide basis
- Through the adoption of gender equality policies and tools at the departmental level such as INAC's *Gender Equality Analysis Policy*
- Operationalizing gender equality strategies and commitments through broad-based partnerships with women's NGOs and other civil society stakeholders.

The rationale of gender mainstreaming is to incorporate gender considerations as a focal point of policy making, rather than treating impacts on women as an add-on or after thought. The purpose of gender mainstreaming and gender-based analysis is ultimately to secure gender equality by ensuring that government policies and actions take into account the conditions, needs, interests and rights of women.

Common elements of gender mainstreaming strategies include:

- conducting gender analysis that is quantitative and qualitative (including developing systems for institutionalized collection and use of sex-disaggregated data in statistical analysis to reveal how policies affect women and men differently)
- using gender sensitive indicators to measure progress
- policy analysis from a gender perspective
- establishing mechanisms to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of gender-related sectoral platforms of action to be consolidated into national action plans
- a supporting legal framework with gender equality protections and guarantees
- macroeconomic policies and development planning that incorporate a gender perspectives
- education
- increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions in government and the public and private sectors and setting gender targets for women in decision-making positions
- addressing gender-related issues in personnel management
- applying incentives to encourage gender mainstreaming and/or sanctions on managers who practice gender discrimination
- gender based policy appraisal
- gender action plans
- Monitoring and evaluation of progress
- providing tools and training in gender awareness, gender analysis and gender planning to decision-makers, senior managers and other key personnel to ensure that they understand the importance of and know how to integrate a gender perspective into their work;
- fostering linkages between government, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure a co-ordination of efforts and resources.
- effective internal and external communications.

## 2. Overall Value of Gender mainstreaming

Raising gender to the centre of the full range of public policy through strategies such as gender mainstreaming is considered by the vast majority of observers an essential piece in the complicated task of achieving gender equality. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Chinkin, 2001; European Commission, 2006; European

Commission, 2007; European Union, 2007; Expert Panel, 2005; Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2005].

Despite identifiable progress since 1995 toward the goal of gender equality, opinion, in and outside Canada, is that progress has not been what it should be. The 2006 European Commission report on equality between men and women perhaps sums up the situation best for many countries respecting progress on closing gender gaps. This report observed that despite solid advances in recent years: “[T]he challenges we face now are on par with our achievements. Substantial gaps persist between women and men: women’s employment is concentrated in a limited number of sectors and professions, the gaps in employment and pay remain at unacceptably high levels, women’s access to political and economic decision-making positions remains insufficient.” [European Commission, 2006,]

The Expert Panel on Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality [Expert Panel (Canada), 2005] came to similar conclusions about the need to close persistent gender gaps and address lack of understanding about or resistance to strategies such as gender mainstreaming. The Expert Panel concluded that despite significant progress in legal and constitutional protections expressing gender equality principles, social and cultural norms have not changed sufficiently to bring actual change to women’s lives to close persistent gender gaps in various areas of life such as gender specific violence and representation in decision-making roles in business and government. The Panel said the Government of Canada must take the lead now in producing measurable results that will close the gaps between women and men in Canada within our lifetime.

Domestically and internationally, there is a widely held view that gender mainstreaming, as it so far has been conceived and implemented, has limitations that must be addressed. The overwhelming majority of commentators are careful to say while improvements (e.g. in conceptualization, communication and implementation) are needed to ensure an acceptable level of progress toward the goal of gender equality, gender mainstreaming as a strategy is useful and has shown identifiable successes and advantages to women in all areas of life affecting women, their rights and their quality of life. [AWID 2004; Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Chinkin, 2001; European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2007; European Union, 2007; Expert Panel, 2005; Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2005]. There are a smaller number of commentators who have deeper questions about the utility of gender mainstreaming as a strategy. [See for example, Charlesworth, 2005]

Current issues and challenges have not changed much from the description Canada provided in its reply to a 2000 UN questionnaire on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action:

*“Decentralization of government and devolution of federal programs and services to provincial/territorial levels have posed challenges for gender mainstreaming throughout government activities in Canada.*

*“Further, the sectors and constituencies which play a key role in achieving gender equality are extremely diverse in their perspectives, as well as in their level of knowledge, effort and resources, which makes the systematic implementation of gender-based analysis a challenge. These stakeholders include: other federal departments and agencies, parliamentarians, provincial/territorial governments, women’s organizations and other equality-seeking groups, the private sector, educational institutions, labour, and other key institutions and sectors in society.*

*“Despite progress made in Canada on the integration of gender-based analysis and the development of tools and methodologies, there is still much to be done in order to fully integrate gender-based analysis into the work of governments. Some examples of areas where further improvements could be made include:*

- enhanced accountability processes for gender analysis across government;*
- enhanced policy links between governments and NGOs, such as the greater use of symposia and "think tanks"; and*
- strengthened reporting and accountability mechanisms, including updates of the Economic Gender Equality Indicators and reporting on the Federal Plan, and continued and enhanced information sharing with other levels of government.”*

### 3. Gender Mainstreaming and Women’s Empowerment

There is a significant discussion of the concept of ‘women’s empowerment’ both as a necessary goal of gender mainstreaming and as an alternative strategy to gender mainstreaming. While both gender mainstreaming and the need for women’s full participation and empowerment were endorsed by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, many observers see a need to place greater focus on women’s empowerment in order to improve or to overcome the limitations of gender mainstreaming as a strategy alone. In this regard, the need to address the informal entrenched power relations between men and women within institutions is just as important as technical mechanisms such as establishing special units and training programs. [See for example, AWID, 2004; Esplen, Heerah and Hunter, 2006; Expert Panel, 2006; Maholtra, 2003; NWAC 2007; Rao, 2005; World Economic Forum, 2005.]

Multi-disciplinary review of approaches to conceptualizing, measuring and analyzing women’s empowerment have been undertaken. [Maholtra, Schuler and Boender, 2002 and Maholtra, 2003] Maholtra distinguishes the concept of ‘women’s empowerment’ from other terms and agenda’s relating to women’s

equality in two ways: first it encompasses a process from one state (women's inequality) to another (women's equality); and the second element is agency, meaning women themselves must be significant actors in the process of change being described and measured. Maholtra has developed a table (attached in Appendix B) illustrating commonly used dimensions of empowerment in household, community, and broader arenas (Maholtra's 2003 *Conceptualizing and Measuring Women's Empowerment As A Variable In International Development*). The need to measure indicators of women's empowerment relations not only areas such as employment or education but just as importantly in household and interfamilial is often stressed. In South Asia, measures of women's empowerment and gender justice continue to revolve around employment and labour force participation and not the alleviation of the burden of domestic labour, increased political participation or equal property rights. [Baruah, 2005].

#### 4. Gender Mainstreaming and the Diversity of Women

While some observers maintain that gender mainstreaming as so far conceived contributes to the homogenization of women's experiences and to the exclusion of difference as a legitimate terrain of analysis [Wood, 2005; Bergeron, 2004], others conclude that gender mainstreaming can go some way to avoid previous problems of universalism in feminist theory [Carney, 2004; Hanson, 2007].

The 'invisibility' of indigenous women has been noted in UN processes devoted both to the human rights of indigenous people generally and of women generally. [Kambel, 2004].

The gendered impact of a particular policy may be obscured by other forms of disadvantage; similarly, a focus on gender must not obscure the relevance of other factors. [Chinkin, 2001]

The literature recognizes that there are unique challenges and issues in addressing gender equality issues in the case of peoples in a transition process to secure the enjoyment of full human rights such as those emerging from liberation struggles to governance, those re-asserting indigenous autonomy or those implementing a peace agreement and necessary constitutional reforms, These challenges arise because of the equal of addressing multiple and interacting forms of structural and legal inequality while dealing with different views on priorities to address them with limited resources. [AFN 2007; Clisby 2005; Cock and Bernstein, 2001; Hanson 2007; Rao and Friedman, 2000; Martinez, 2005; Meer 2005; Mihesuah, 2000; Ward, 2006]

Some specific country case studies have identified examples of the kinds of structural barriers that may exist to securing proper gender analysis and full women's participation of women in liberation or other political transition processes:

- failure to maintain a gendered perspective throughout the process of planning and implementation of laws aimed liberation or increasing local autonomy
- lack of support for women's participation through capacity building at all levels leading to inadequate and even decreased participation of women following liberation or devolution initiatives
- entrenched ideological or cultural barriers to the participation of women
- failure to accommodate women's disadvantage in bearing much more of domestic duties compared to men
- failure to include women's forms of political participation and organization within the mainstream are some commonly identified barriers that need to be addressed in this regard
- deeply entrenched gendered division of labour that assigns to women the weight of unpaid social reproductive work, low pay in feminized job ghettos, precarious part-time work that affords few benefits or other forms of income security in later life, and few governmental supports for either child and elder care or training programs and skills upgrading [Clisby, 2005; Ward, 2006; Brodie and Bakker, 2007]

Indigenous organizations in Canada have begun examining the limitations of current conceptions of gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming strategies. In particular, by way of addressing the risk of homogenization, indigenous people in Canada have been exploring the notion of 'culturally-relevant gender-based analysis'. The need for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments to develop culturally relevant processes for gender-based analysis is seen as a necessary element of community-based, rather than a top-down, paternalistic approach to development; as required to meet the multiple needs of Aboriginal women who suffer multiple forms of discrimination; and as required by Supreme Court of Canada decisions on the s. 15 Charter equality guarantee. The application of a CRGBA is key to understanding and advancing Aboriginal women's individual and collective rights, needs and issues. [AFN, 2007; NWAC, 2007; Stirbys, 2007].

The Native Women's Association of Canada has developed a framework to illustrate its vision of culturally-relevant gender based analysis. NWAC also has provided examples of concrete actions in three main areas (Health, Safety and Wellness; Equality and Empowerment; Strength, Balance, Honour) that would demonstrate a commitment to meet the gender-based needs of Aboriginal women in a culturally-relevant manner. [NWAC, 2007]

The importance of gender-based analysis carried out or 'owned' by the population concerned and not outside experts is supported by international experience. [Chinkin, 2001; Dawson, 2005; Stirbys, 2007] In a South American indigenous Andean context, staff working with an international development NGO expressed concern that Western gender analysis fails to give value to the relations of complementarity and reciprocity, which are so much part of the

Andean people's survival strategies. Developing locally rooted or owned gender-based analysis requires resources and capacity. In Ghana, the assumed oppositional positions of men and women in social, economic, political and ritual order in most gender-based analysis frameworks has been found not to match the reality of specific peoples. [Dawson, 2005]

Where an approach of 'progressive realization of rights' is adopted to address situations of 'competing' claims for rights implementation, and limited resources to address these, the right of women to participate in priority setting processes becomes vital to ensuring that commitment to measures to gender equality goals do not become marginalized or amount only to rhetoric. [Powell, 2005; Gooneskere, 2001]. The right to participate has been described as the entry point to realizing all other rights [Powell, 2005].

## 5. Successes

Domestically and internationally, there has been considerable progress in the development of broad-based policies and strategies aimed at securing gender equality. Since 1995, gender mainstreaming has been adopted more widely than before and the most elaborated examples of gender mainstreaming as a strategy are found in Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands. [Verloo, 2000]

In Canada's response to the 2000 UN questionnaire, the following achievements were noted:

- the development of tools and methodologies to carry out gender-based analysis, including a guide and brochure for policy makers
- information sessions on gender-based analysis for managers and officials;
- stimulating gender-based policy discussion through dialogue, roundtables, workshops, symposia, and conferences with governments, women's organizations and other nongovernmental actors;
- contributing to the development of statistics and indicators to support gender-based analysis, such as the *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, *Finding Data on Women: A Guide to the Major Sources at Statistics Canada*, and a *Guide to Gender-Sensitive Indicators* with an accompanying handbook; and
- development of gender-based policy research in the Government of Canada and with counterparts in other governments and international organizations.
- Several departments within the federal government have undertaken specific activities to advance gender-based analysis of the policies and programs within their mandates.



## 6. Obstacles and Challenges

One of the most common observations about experience to date with “gender mainstreaming” efforts, is that governments too often mistake or forget the gender mainstreaming is a process and a strategy to achieve gender equality goals – and not a goal in and of itself. In other words, gender mainstreaming cannot be equated with gender equality goals themselves and these goals will not be achieved unless there are proper evaluation and accountability measures to ensure that gender mainstreaming ultimately does lead to the achievement of gender equality goals.

Fewer problems arise with the goals of GBA than with its operationalization and implementation. Policy reform can have unintended and undesirable outcomes. The new language of gender mainstreaming has been used by governments, less than sympathetic to gender equality, to legitimate the dismantling of units with expertise in promoting equal opportunity for women and designated groups. Dismantling of gender-based capacity can also happen inadvertently as a result of the reorganization of government departments when staff with expertise is moved and repeated reorganization of the bureaucracy especially can disrupt and disorganize GBA capacity. Examples of such ‘dismantlement’ have been identified in the federal and provincial bureaucracies in Canada and in Australia. [Brodie and Bakker 2007;

Many observers say that gender mainstreaming has been less than successful in part due ongoing confusion, lack of understanding or comfort with the concept of “gender” and “gender mainstreaming” as opposed to “women’s rights” and different understandings and different models of gender mainstreaming. Translating theory into action will require improved performance in communicating clearly the goals and the meaning of gender mainstreaming. [Carney, 2003; Charlesworth, 2005; Chinkin, 2001; Eveline and Bacchi, 2005; European Union, 2007; Expert Panel, 2006; Greed, 2004; Hanivsky, 2005; Verloo, 2000; Walby, 2005; Warren, 2007]

The lack of senior management support, lack of political will and leadership, lack of accountability, lack of knowledge and skills among senior staff on gender issues, marginalized, under-qualified and under-resourced theme groups and specialists are all problems in organizations with gender mainstreaming mandates. [Rao, 2005; Hanivsky, 2005; Expert Panel, 2006]

Rao suggests four inter-related factors that maintain gendered power relations within organizations: 1) political access: there are neither systems nor actors who can put women’s perspectives and interests on the agenda; 2) accountability systems: organizational resources are steered towards quantitative targets that are often only distantly related to institutional change for gender equality; 3) cultural systems: the work/family divide perpetuated by most organizations prevents women from being full participants in those organizations as women

continue to bear responsibility for the care of children and old people; 4) cognitive structures: work itself is seen mostly within existing gender-biased norms and understandings. [Rao, 2005].

Despite positive trends in employment rates for women, women continue to face significant difficulty reconciling their work and private lives, due to uneven division of domestic and family responsibilities and entrenched aspects of the work culture and institutions that are built on assumptions of male workers without such responsibilities. [Expert Panel, 2005; Committee on the Status of Women, 2005; European Commission, 2007]

A global cut-back in funding to women's organizations has been observed and is attributed to a misperception that women's needs are now taken care of through gender mainstreaming efforts of governments and multilateral and bilateral NGOs. Funding cut-backs to women's organizations are viewed by these organizations and by many academic and expert observers as having had a negative effect on the degree of success governments and NGOs have in implementing gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality goals. [AWID, 2004; Bar, 2006; Expert Panel, 2006; Pauktuutit/Inuit Women's Association, 2006; Rao 2005]. Cuts to social programming in general and strict adherence to market capitalism and globalization have been identified as contributing factors to the slow progress of gender mainstreaming.[Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Hanivsky, 2005; Rao, 2005].

In many countries, gender justice concerns cannot be pursued in isolation from other social justice concerns such as inequalities arising from poverty or the treatment of 'race'. Agencies charged with implementing gender mainstreaming often have conflicting agendas and gender mainstreaming is just one of many tasks assigned to staff, including consideration of other 'cross-cutting issues' such as diversity in the development of policy, legislation or programming. Gender can easily get lost within current diversity agendas. [Rathberger, 2005; Rao and Friedman, 2000; Greed, 2004; Dawson, 2005; Walby, 2005]

Efforts to work in transformative ways with the dynamics of power and hierarchy in achieving gender equality goals are proving complex and challenging. While governments have done much to develop policy documents to guide practice in the direction of greater social equity, changing people's values and ways of behaving and entrenched institutional cultures is not so easy. To move organizations towards greater gender equality, strategies and activities focused on a single layer of an organization may be necessary but are seldom sufficient. Efforts that have concentrated on policy development, affirmative action, training or project/programme analysis with less emphasis on organizational and institutional cultures, rules, procedures, budgets and practices have had limited success. The basic building blocks of our institutions are gendered in ways that are invisible from the surface. This problem requires means of challenging the

'deep structures' of these organizations and their systems and processes. [Rao and Friedman, 2000; Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Rao, 2005; Tiessen, 2005]

Overvaluing instrumentality – focusing narrowly on the accomplishment of quantitative goals – can militate against gender equality. This can happen when a narrow focus on targets results in an inability to recognize other options and opportunities for achieving the larger goal of contributing to women's empowerment. [Rao and Friedman, 2000; Rao, 2005]

There also has been too much reliance on technical solutions (such as appointing a person to oversee gender-related activities, staff gender training sessions). Technical responses alone have a limited impact on organizations, are unlikely to transform the mainstream and have led to minimal changes to inequitable gender relations. Case studies and field research reveal that alternative gender mainstreaming initiatives are needed including so-called 'subtle strategies' such as resistance and networking. [Tiessen, 2005]

Many observers say that social and economic policy issues of concern to women remain secondary to the priorities of financial markets and economic policies in which gender issues such as the impact on women are at best a marginalized consideration. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Charlesworth, 2005]

## 7. Proposals for Improving Gender mainstreaming Efforts

In Canada, it has been suggested that the federal government identify and address outstanding equality in a proactive manner with commitment from the highest levels to consider the differential impacts of all policies, programs and laws on men and women. [Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2005; NWAC, 2007; Expert Panel, 2005.]

There is a growing preference for more focus on "women", "women's rights" and "women's empowerment" in addition to gender-neutral terms like "gender" and "gender mainstreaming". The rationale for more use of language that focuses on women's needs and rights is to ensure the focus of gender mainstreaming work remains on addressing women's inequality. Many observers feel that the use of gender-neutral language alone can give the impression that the task of gender equality has been achieved simply by using the term gender mainstreaming or having gender-mainstreaming initiatives regardless of their results. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Lister, 2004]

Adopting or returning to 'rights-based' or 'human rights-based' approach to gender equality and women's rights approach can add value to current gender mainstreaming efforts. [Powell, 2005; Goonesekere, 2001; Chinkin, 2001] International human rights are considered to offer a powerful means and a central framework by which citizens can hold their states accountable for the

provision of basic needs (through the conceptualization of state obligation to meet the basic needs of rights-holders). [Powell, 2005; Goonesekere, 2001; Chinkin, 2001] Rights-based approaches recognize that certain social structures can systematically advantage some groups and disadvantage others, and public policy can appropriately corrects for systemic barriers and inequalities. Recognition of structural inequalities is required rather than policies and processes that assume that poverty for example can be arise solely from personal deficits such as education, skills development or moral direction. [Powell, 2005; Brodie and Bakker, 2007; OHCHR 1996, Rao, 2005] However, a number of issues and lessons learned should be addressed to ensure that a rights-based approach does not marginalize gender equality and women's rights. One example given is ensuring that the goal of eliminating gender specific violence or violence against women is not seen as a private matter. [Powell, 2005; Goonesekere, 2001]

A common theme is the view that true gender analysis must include an examination and a focus on the roles of men in achieving gender equality. A focus on men and their involvement is necessary to properly examine and transform male privilege arising from current gender relations in the home and in institutions and the way power is exercised formally and informally in decision-making structures in ways that disadvantage women. [Charlesworth, 2005; Chinkin, 2001; Rathberger, 2005; Ruxton, 2004] Indicators of women's empowerment must be developed and these must include women's freedom from violence. [NWAC, 2007; Maholtra, 2003; Rao, 2005;

Rao suggests there is a web of five spheres in which power can be generated to move an organization toward transformation: politics, organizational politics, institutional culture, organizational process, programmatic interventions. [Rao, 2005]

Building, promoting and strengthening connections between governments and women's movements and organizations is crucial to the success of gender mainstreaming in achieving gender equality goals. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Chinkin, 2001; Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2005; Massé, 2002; Rao, 2005; European Commission, 2006

Measures should be taken to ensure that women's interests are better met by mainstream economic and fiscal policies by acknowledging and analyzing the gender dimension to macroeconomic objectives. Suggestions for ensuring a gender perspective in the development of budgets as well as fiscal and economic policy include (among others) making improvements in pre-budget consultations to seek participation of more diverse organizations and experts and establishing systematic annual process within government to evaluate budgets from a gender-sensitive perspective. Gender-based analysis of spending and taxation measures require more direct resources being allocated to gender expertise within governments.[Brodie and Bakker, 2007; Chinkin, 2001; Elson, 2003;

European Commission, 2006, Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2005;

Departments such as Finance, Privy Council and Treasury Board have made commitments to appoint champions with the responsibility for implementing a gender-analysis process allowing the department to take a leadership role internationally in gender-budgeting. [Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2005] Necessary staff reports and resources should be allocated to support such champions. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007]

Practical governmental initiatives to undertake gender analysis in budget processes have been undertaken in the European Union and throughout the Commonwealth. [Commonwealth Secretariat, 2002; Brodie and Bakker, 2007] Brodie and Bakker say in Canada, this would require enhancing the capacity of gender-based units within federal and provincial governments to undertake the gender-based analysis of budgets and fiscal policy including the allocation of necessary funds. A questionnaire to assist all line departments to launch dialogue and build this capacity more broadly through line departments could be developed. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007]

Research and policy formation is needed to assist women and families in achieving a sustainable work-life balance.[Brodie and Bakker, 2007; European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2007; European Union, 2007]. The European Commission has identified several specific measures it plans to implement to address this issue. [European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2007;]

New methods for interdepartmental coordination need to be explored to track gender outcomes in the federal system - such as the open method of coordination developed by the European Union. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007]

Studying the politics of the budget process is essential for understanding how the distribution of power within that process affects the subsequent distribution of public resources around social policy that affects women and marginalized populations. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007]

Elson provides an example of how measures to reduce the financial costs of public sector services can affect the work/family life balance by transferring or perpetuate real costs, in terms of time use, to women as principle care-givers for family members – *“measures to reduce the financial costs of health services by shortening the time that patients stay in hospital for post-operative recovery may transfer the burden of convalescent care to women in the home. In turn this can have a knock-on effect, forcing women to be absent from their paid employment and lowering their productivity.”* [Elson, 2003]

Unequal power relations within the budget process can be expressed by inclusion or exclusion of different social groups to the decision-making process;

and norms and values explicitly expressed and embedded in the priorities, assumptions and content of the budget. [Brodie and Bakker, 2007]

The ILO suggests gender mainstreaming can be implemented by: institutionalizing gender into the programming process, conducting 'Participatory Gender Audits' and adopting a 'Shared Operational Objective on Gender Equality'. [ILO website: 'Gender: Equality between men and women']

In analyzing the challenge of organizational transformation in working toward gender equality, Rao and Friedman suggest a detailed list of questions around five main topics:

1. **Context** (Where and why does transformation take place?)
2. **Vision** (What is our vision of gender justice within transformed organizations? In keeping with our vision of the society we are working towards, what are the characteristics of transformed organizations?)
3. **Changing Agents** (Who will act as changing agent? As changing agents, we come with our own values and biases. If we are helping organizational staff to become more open to different ways of being and doing, how do we manage this in ourselves as changing agents?)
4. **Transformation** (How do we transform organizations and build gender justice? What are the factors we need to consider?)
5. **Progress and sustainability** (How do we monitor progress and ensure sustainability?). [Rao and Friedmann, 2000]

For Aboriginal peoples dealing considering issues of gender equality, the following suggestions arose in a recent Aboriginal Women's Health and Healing Research Group Workshop:

- Critically analyze present GBA processes and consider whether it is useful in Aboriginal communities.
- Develop and answer fundamental questions on what GBA means to Aboriginal peoples, such as, "Do we want to use the GBA model, and can it be used to rebalance the roles of men and women in our communities?"
- Work to understand traditional gender roles as they actually were, and the impact of colonization; knowing where we come from will show us where we want to go.
- Draft a set of fundamental values and principles that are reflective of First Nations, Inuit and Métis
  - Create an *Aboriginal* form of GBA that is based on principles and values of Aboriginal peoples.
    - Define terms: "GBA", "culturally appropriate" versus "culturally sensitive"
    - and/or develop own terms based on First Nations, Inuit and Métis values/principles.
    - Consider developing a GBA framework as well as a communications and accountability framework.

[Stirbys, 2007].

To ensure the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, there is a need for political will and commitment at the highest levels of government, communication and strategic alliances with the women's movement and civil groups as well as organizational change involving the commitment and mobilization of staff, senior managerial support, adequate financial and human resources, proper timeframes and achievable targets. [Chinkin, 2001; Greed, 2004; Massé, 2002; European Commission, 2006]

Clearly articulated goals for gender equality are needed first, in order to ensure that gender analysis frameworks are properly constructed and rest upon correct assumptions and principles relevant to the population concerned. [Warren, 2007]

In addition to recent measures such as new employment legislation and funding policies aimed at gender equality goals, the European Commission adopted a Regulation in December 2006 to establish the European Institute for Gender Equality. The Institute is intended to be an important tool for the dissemination of information about gender equality as well as the exchange of good practices and the development of methodological tools for the promotion of gender mainstreaming. European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2007]. The promotion of equality between women and men is among the overarching objectives of the new framework for the open coordination of social protection and inclusion policies adopted by the European Council in March 2006.

The following have been suggested as relevant Indicators of progress in gender mainstreaming [European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2007, Elson, 2003]:

- Inclusion of women's organizations in the budget process
- Publication of an annual gender budget document that includes benchmarks to measure progress (examples include reporting on share in total expenditure explicitly targeted to promoting gender equality; share in total expenditure devoted to public services prioritised by women share in total expenditure devoted to income transfers prioritised by women; reporting on gender balance in public sector employment ( eg share of women in employment at each grade; average cost of female employees compared to average cost of male employees); reporting on gender balance in public sector contracts with private sector ( eg share of women-owned businesses in total number and value of contracts).
- Presence or absence of gender segregation by occupation or sector
- Commitment from the highest levels of government to track implementation and accountability for implementation of gender equality policies
- Concrete measures to address need to reconcile work/family life balance.

Commentators such as Brodie and Bakker maintain that government policies that treat poverty as gender neutral and only marginally affected by broad-based,

deeply entrenched and unequal social structures in Canadian society are an obstacle to achieving gender equality goals.

Chinkin has suggested a list of indicators for progress in compliance with CEDAW and in gender mainstreaming in Chapter 7 of Gender Mainstreaming in Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

Canada's Expert Panel recommended that the Government of Canada pursue a two-fold approach to enhance efforts to achieve substantive equality for women: 1) taking immediate action on administrative processes and; 2) over the medium term, adopting legislation to demonstrate proactively the Government's commitment to gender equality commitments (and noted that Citizenship and Immigration Canada became the first department to have accountability for gender-based analysis entrenched in law, while domestic policies are not subject to a legislative standard of compliance).

The following themes were noted by the Panel

- the need for strong leadership from elected leaders and top public servants, which would include the setting of priorities for genderbased analysis in the Speech from the Throne;
- the need for the Government's activities and actions to be more focused in order to achieve substantive equality;
- the importance of integrating the goal of equality for women into the Treasury Board Secretariat's systems of management accountability;
- the lack of understanding within the Government about the value of gender-based analysis, and the lack of substantive results to date;
- the need for those inside government to seek advice on an ongoing basis from experts outside government, consistent with the Government's approach on the Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANNEX F);
- the capacity of non-government organizations to engage fully is hampered by insufficient funding;
- the need to focus more on the inequality of immigrant women, Aboriginal women, lone-parent women, seniors living alone, visible minority women and women with disabilities; and
- • the need to strengthen the role of Status of Women Canada.
- calls for new legislation to help achieve substantive equality for women.

The Expert Panel concluded that there was a deeply held view that non-legislative efforts had not worked to date, and that a law would bring a far higher degree of permanence of action, accountability and results.

There is currently no obligation on the part of departments to report on the practice of GBA or its integration into their organizations. In its consideration of accountability mechanisms in its report on GBA, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women recommended that the Government of Canada be obliged to demonstrate not only a high level of support and activity, but also clear



successes for GBA and equality for women. This reflects international experience with accountability frameworks that tie goals and objectives of public policies and programs to outcomes and results and make GBA an inherent part of policy and program development. To achieve this objective, the Government of Canada needs to:

- articulate a clear set of goals and anticipated outcomes and link them to major gaps in achieving substantive equality for women;
- develop key indicators and benchmarks;
- establish formal monitoring and reporting mechanisms;
- increase financial resources allocated to SWC and other relevant departments;
- strengthen horizontal coordination of government actions including GBA activities.

A 2005 Commonwealth Secretariat report (*Gender Equality A Decade of Action*) reported that Canada's country report highlighted those areas that reflect the priorities of the National Women's Machinery (NWM) and for which there is a common recognition among women's machineries across jurisdictions of where attention has been focused in recent years. These priority areas include:

- Women and the Economy including Women in Poverty;
- Human Rights of Women and Violence Against Women; and
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women.

SWC says that practical experience has shown that individual capacity-building is not sufficient to ensure sustainability of GBA; and therefore recommends the an organisational capacity-building approach.

Canada's main gender equality challenges include continuing to learn from, and build on, its own and others' experiences; accelerating GBA and gender mainstreaming activities and ensuring demonstrable results; identifying and addressing gaps in relation to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable women, particularly Aboriginal women; and improving accountability mechanisms. While Canadian women have made many gains towards equality, especially in the formal sense, governments in Canada recognise that full substantive equality has yet to be achieved. Due to a public environment that largely perceives women's issues as 'solved', it proves difficult to mobilise adequate political attention and economic resources. Many challenges remain, both long-standing and new, including the fact that within positive overall trends for women, not all women are benefiting and some continue to be seriously disadvantaged or at risk of facing further barriers. The CEDAW Committee, at the presentation of Canada's 5th report in January 2003 highlighted a number of issues of continuing concern, including poverty among women, the situation of Aboriginal women, trafficked women, live-in caregivers and the implementation of GBA across the federal government. [Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005]

## 8. Conclusion

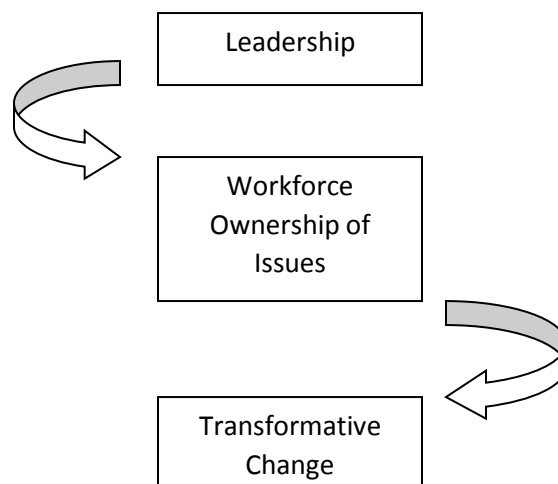
The domestic and international literature suggests a variety of actions and approaches to improve performance in decreasing and ultimately eliminating gender gaps through improved gender equality strategies. Some of the common themes in proposals for reform or new directions include the following:

- A greater focus on measures and measurements of women's empowerment
- adopting right-based approaches institutional transformation
- funding to sectors within government as well as women's organizations to deal with gender equality promotion
- networking and communication with women's organizations
- commitment and involvement of senior management and political leaders
- addressing the informal as well as informal ways in which gendered power relations are maintained at home, at work and in institutions
- formalizing requirements to set and meet gender equality targets by enacting gender equality legislation applicable to all departments of government; gender-based budgets.

The major challenge identified by domestic and international literature is finding ways to move beyond the mechanics of policy reform to transformative organizational change that actually implements policy.

Leadership and commitment at the highest levels of government is seen as critical to underline the legitimacy and importance of gender equality goals and strategies to achieve them.

Involving target populations or workforce in the design and implementation of gender equality strategies is also pointed to, as a necessary element to ensure ownership of gender equality issues by those charged with implementing gender mainstreaming strategies.



## Appendix A

### Select Bibliography of Sources Relating to Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming

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## Appendix B

**Table 1: Commonly used dimensions of empowerment  
in household, community, and broader arenas**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Household</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Broader Arenas</b>
<b>Economic</b>	Women's control over income; relative contribution to family support; access to and control of family resources	Women's access to employment; ownership of assets and land; access to credit; involvement /or representation in local trade associations; access to markets	Women's representation in high paying jobs; women CEO's; representation of women's economic interests in macro-economic policies, state and federal budgets
<b>Socio -Cultural</b>	Women's freedom of movement; lack of discrimination against daughters; commitment to educating daughters	Women's visibility in and access to social spaces; access to modern transportation; participation in extra-familial groups and social networks; shift in patriarchal norms (such as son preference); representation of the female in myth and ritual	Women's literacy and access to a broad range of educational options; Positive media images of women, their roles and contributions
<b>Familial/ Interpersonal</b>	Participation in domestic decision-making; control over sexual relations; ability to make childbearing decisions, use contraception, obtain abortion; control over spouse selection and marriage timing; freedom from violence	Shifts in marriage and kinship systems indicating greater value and autonomy for women (e.g. later marriages, self selection of spouses, reduction in the practice of dowry; acceptability of divorce); local campaigns against domestic violence	Regional/national trends in timing of marriage, options for divorce; political, legal, religious support for (or lack of active opposition to) such shifts; systems providing easy access to contraception, safe abortion, reproductive health services
<b>Legal</b>	Knowledge of legal rights; domestic support for exercising rights	Community mobilization for rights; campaigns for rights awareness; effective local enforcement of legal rights	Laws supporting women's rights, access to resources and options; Advocacy for rights and legislation; use of judicial system to redress rights violations
<b>Political</b>	Knowledge of political system and means of access to it; domestic support for political engagement; exercising right to vote	Women's involvement or mobilization in the local political system/campaigns; support for specific candidates or legislation; representation in local government	Women's representation in regional and national government; strength as a voting bloc; representation of women's interests in effective lobbies and interest groups
<b>Psychological</b>	Self-esteem; self-efficacy; psychological well-being	Collective awareness of injustice, potential of mobilization	Women's sense of inclusion and entitlement; systemic acceptance of women's entitlement and inclusion