

GENDER MADE EASY

A Guide for Border Security and Management Officials



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe

WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD 'GENDER' ...



*What do you think of? What does it mean to you?
How does it make you feel?*

**DO YOU FEEL CONFUSED OR UNSURE OF
WHAT GENDER IS ?**

This is common. You are not alone. Gender is often poorly explained or badly translated and the language used to discuss gender can be complicated and confusing.

**ARE YOU CONCERNED TO MAKE DECISIONS
ABOUT GENDER IN THE WORKPLACE?**

This booklet offers straightforward explanations to help you better understand what gender is and why it is important.

LET'S START WITH HOW SEX IS DIFFERENT FROM GENDER

Sex refers to the biological, physiological and anatomical characteristics with which people are born. Whether you are male or female you have physical sex characteristics. These physical characteristics do not change, except by choice, as a result of surgery/medical procedures.



NOW THINK ABOUT GENDER

How is it different from sex?

What colours do we choose for clothing a baby boy or a girl? These colours - in many cultures usually blue for a boy and pink for a girl - announce the sex of the child. From the moment of birth society determines what is suitable for both sexes.

How does this influence the way people speak to - and about - male and female babies? What kind of language and expressions are used? Are they different for a boy or girl?

Gender influences expectations and assumptions even of a child:
“boys will be boys,” “she’s such a princess.”

In your society what is important in the way boys/girls dress or the toys they play with? Are the rules and standards of behaviour the same for both? How do they differ?



Gender is constructed by society through cultural, political and social practices and norms that define the roles of women, girls, men and boys, as well as the social definitions of what it means to be masculine and feminine.

Gender determines the duties and responsibilities expected of women, girls, men and boys throughout their lives, and sets some of the barriers they may face or opportunities and privileges they may enjoy.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN ?

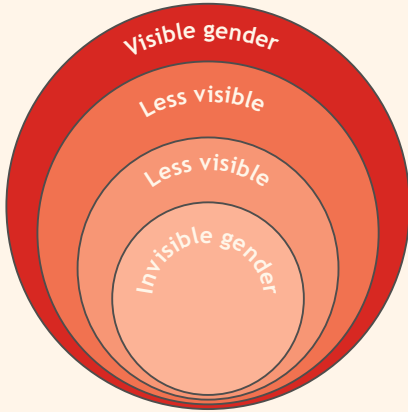
It means that in every society there are expectations, standards and assumptions that influence behaviour, dress, mobility, wealth, education and socially acceptable roles and responsibilities for both women and men.



Gender is a key factor of our identity and strongly influences how we see ourselves in the world, how we are seen and how we want to be seen.

WHAT IS VISIBLE ?

Persaud-Reilly: Spectrum of individual identity



- Outer circle: visible gender
- Next: dress, body language, behaviour, physical traits, ethnicity
- Next: values, beliefs, assumptions, nationality
- Smallest circle: invisible sexuality, sexual preferences

VISIBLE gender:

This is what the world sees, what is most obvious, and is based on physical male/female characteristics

LESS visible:

Dress and body language reinforce visible gender. Even where clothing is mainly unisex, there are always indications in how women/men move and express themselves physically. Behaviour can be a significant indicator especially where the rules for male/female behaviour (expressing emotion, precedence, dominant/submissive etc.) are distinctly different.

LESS visible:

These are less obvious indicators and include beliefs, assumptions, nationality and may only be learned through conversation and/or extensive observation.

INVISIBLE gender:

Sexuality and sexual preference are the least obvious individual indicators. This is the realm of privacy and intimacy and is at the very core of what gives an individual a male or female identity.

Consider the society you live in. Complete the following sentence:



Because I am a MAN/WOMAN I am expected to.....

Think about roles and responsibilities; mobility/freedom of movement; work/employment; education; dress; free time/hobbies/sport; political activity; community life; public behaviour}

HOW DOES GENDER CHANGE OVER TIME ?

Think about your grand-parents.

How have social expectations changed since they were young?

What options were available to your **grandfather**?

- Was he able to choose his employment/profession? Could he become a nurse? A dancer?
- What were his primary responsibilities?
- Was it acceptable for him to wear bright colours?
- What level of education could he achieve?
- Did he participate in the public or political life of his community?

Now consider your grandmother

- What freedom of movement was possible for her?
- Was she able to go outside the home alone? With a male non-family member?
- Were there restrictions on what she could/could not wear?
- What formal education was available to her? Was she employed?
- Was she able to choose her marriage partner?
- Was she permitted to drive?

How gender is understood is **context-specific**. This means that it varies in different locations within the same society. Consider the differences between urban and rural life and the roles and responsibilities, and the expectations and standards for women and men who live there.

Within any society there are also **cultural influences**. While many broad social assumptions and standards are shared with friends/neighbours/work colleagues, distinct cultural beliefs and practices also have an impact on how gender is understood. For example: religion, history, dress, diet, housing and family responsibilities.

The speed of change is also different throughout society and is driven by many influences, both **internal**: laws and regulations, political decisions, education, local media and **external**: social media, TV and movies, international travel, migration.

Some of the influences are significant and far-reaching and challenge the status quo of how gender is understood and practiced. Thinking about changing the status quo is always uncomfortable.

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE¹

Assumed roles of women and men

Typically women's spheres of influence have been 'domestic' - children, family, marital partner, school and community activities. Men's spheres of influence have been more public - local and national government, the marketplace, international organizations and particularly the security sector. Men's spheres of influence have also required and provided more mobility and freedom of movement.

Widely held fixed ideas about women and men and their spheres of influence, interests, capacities and qualities have contributed to stereotypes that in turn lead to prejudice and discrimination against the individual.

Stereotypes:

A stereotype is a widely held but oversimplified image of a particular person or thing².

¹USIP "Women Preventing Violent Extremism: charting a new course." Thought for Action Kit, 2015

²Oxford Canadian Dictionary of Current English Usage, OUP 2005

STEREOTYPES:

For example:

MEN are emotionally strong, heroic, protective, providers, decisive, hard-working, decisive, with leadership abilities - and so on. Globally, the majority of senior management positions, in every sector whether science and IT, government, security, transport and logistics and the senior professional ranks (doctors, lawyers, politics, academia), are occupied by men.

Men working in border security have many opportunities available to them in both type and location of work as well as prospects for development and promotion. They are more mobile and occupy most senior management positions.



For example:

WOMEN are caring, gentle, expressive, nurturing, creative, emotional, indecisive, need leadership and direction - and so on. Based on these stereotypes women are often employed in the 'caring' professions (nursing, teaching, child and elder-care) in administration/finance, retail and in low-paid, part-time, unskilled work that reflect the demands of their domestic responsibilities.

Equally, women working in border security are often confined to work that fits the stereotype - trainers, secretaries, accountants, administrators, cleaners, human resources.



Stereotypes are, by definition, unbalanced and unfair and potentially damaging to both men and women.

In most contexts, men and boys play gender roles that often hold more social, economic and political power than those of women and girls. Consequently, men and boys exercise more decision-making power and autonomy over their own lives and over the decisions in their communities and families³.

Women and girls often lack the power to manage their own lives, including making decisions over their own bodies, marital status and access to social, economic or political resources.

What is the relevance of gender to the border security workplace?

Security services have typically been regarded as a profession requiring “masculine” skills and qualities (physically and emotionally strong; disciplined; protectors/defenders; capable with firearms; ruthless with criminals; etc). In addition, it has been considered a profession unfavourable to family life because of frequent absences and deployment to distant locations.

Therefore, in workplaces where there is no gender mainstreaming , women are stereotyped as having “feminine” qualities and are not considered suitable candidates. Such attitudes limit women’s opportunities and deprive security services of valuable talents, which helps to explain the low numbers of women working in border services

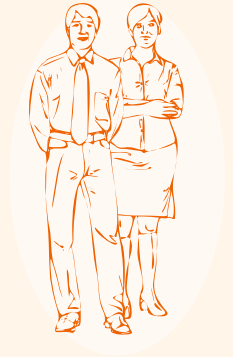
³Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), “*The Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action*,” IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, February 2018

Consider examples of a border institution workplace where gender mainstreaming has not been integrated:

- Mainly men in senior management positions
- Male-dominated standards of behaviour and attitude
- Female personnel fill most junior positions, typically in administration and other positions without influence and power
- Gender mainstreaming is not taken seriously in operations
- There is little or no recourse for incidents of sexual harassment/bullying
- Lack of promotional opportunities for women
- Discriminatory physical entry requirements
- Inadequate accommodation for women's needs (housing, sanitary facilities, uniforms etc.)



Would there be a difference in border security if a diverse work force were recruited that is representative of the population?



Would there be an impact on operational effectiveness?

Consider these advantages:

- Improved capacity to prevent, detect and investigate criminal activity
- Greater ability to establish relationships of trust, and reduce hostility and suspicion with all members of border communities
- Ensure safety for the vulnerable who might be unable or unwilling to speak with male officers
- Female officers are better suited to investigate women refugees' claims for asylum status on the basis of persecution and violence⁴.
- Ensured appropriate interview/investigation and provision of services/assistance to trafficked women/girls, men/boys as victims, not criminals.

⁴This advantage is based not on stereotypical 'feminine' qualities but because women refugees' status claims are based on their persecution as members of an identified group. That group is 'women.' Therefore, given their experience of persecution it is likely female officers are better suited to this task.

Add your suggestions of other advantages.....

The removal of formal and practical barriers to the recruitment, retention and promotion of women plus a focus on the importance of family/work balance for all and health care provisions that attend to women's specific needs are critical steps towards the elimination of prejudice and discrimination.

When a gender perspective is integrated into border services, this field becomes a more attractive profession for both well-qualified women and men. This also demonstrates to the public a serious commitment to honour human rights obligations and develop relationships of trust and respect.

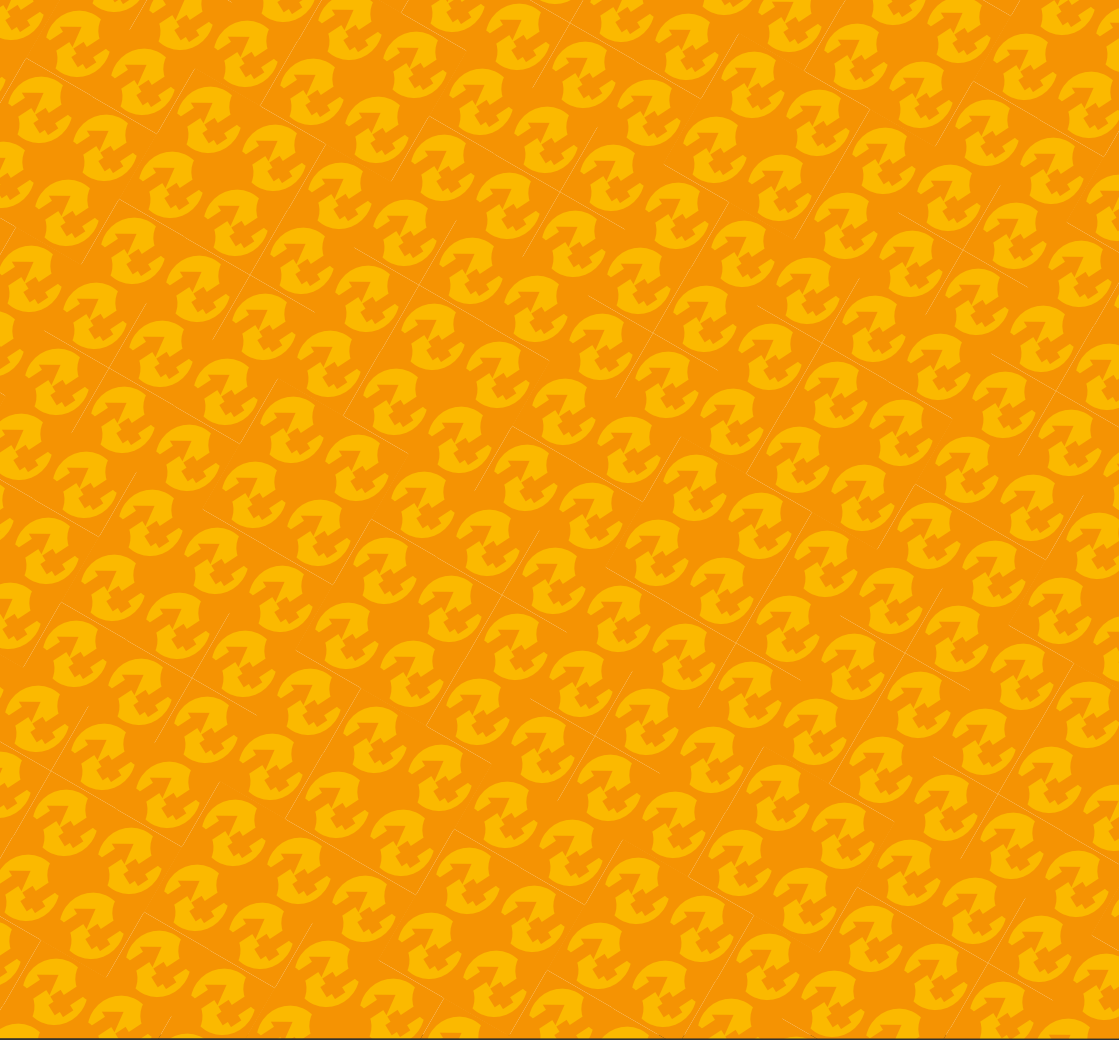


Gender equality refers to the equal access to equal rights opportunities, resources and rewards by women and men regardless of their gender

Gender equality does not mean that women and men are the same. Being born female or male should not govern or limit the enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances.

**Online Training on Gender Mainstreaming in
Border Security and Management
(<https://elearning.osce.org/>)**

For further exploration of gender analysis and gender equality refer to the Government of Canada's Status of Women website: www.cfc-swc.gc.ca and follow links to GBA+ and the animated online mini-courses on sex/gender and equality/equity.



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