

Why is GESI important?

- The global stage is set to Leave No One Behind but what does that mean for the health system and how do we do it?
- Turning international commitments into reality requires a systematic and long-term commitment.
- Much can be learned from Nepal.

Political conditions for change...

- Armed conflict and massive political change over 20 years.
- Interim Constitution (2007) provided fundamental rights, elimination of discrimination and affirmative action for socially excluded groups.
- Free basic health care became a right.
- Evidence on the depth of disparity in development.

...led to supportive health policy

- Health Sector Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (2010).
- Inclusion of GESI objectives into national sector programme (2010-2015).
- Equity at the core of Health Sector Strategy (2015-2020).

Integrating GESI into the health system: experience and learning

A. GESI into health systems

Policy

- GESI integrated into new policies and strategies across the sector, linkages forged with allied ministries.

What we learned

- Strong policy mandate is essential to give direction to the process and to hold staff accountable.
- Government ownership and leadership of GESI is key. High management turnover means technical assistance plays a key role in building and feeding the interest of new decision-makers.
- In environments with strong GESI policy mandates, GESI objectives can be a stimulus for broader reforms.
- A common understanding of GESI needs to be nurtured to forge consensus on a coherent pathway and results.

Institutional structure for GESI

- GESI institutional structure of policy level and management committees created from Ministry down to district level.

What we learned

- Institutional structure for GESI needs to be sector wide.
- Organisational leadership on GESI has to be strategically located and may need to change as the conditions evolve.
- Activating GESI structures without incentives and in a climate of inertia where there is little motivation to change is challenging.
- Resources and authority are necessary for them to be functional.



Planning and budgeting

- GESI operational guidelines developed and GESI integrated into business plans and annual planning and budgeting.

What we learned

- Entry points for integrating GESI into planning and budgeting are fluid and unpredictable. Seize and build on them as they emerge.
- Ensuring resources for addressing GESI issues is very challenging.
- Centralised systems inhibit responsiveness to local exclusion.

Evidence

- Evidence generated on health inequity and the barriers to access.
- GESI disaggregated data included in HMIS and results frameworks.

What we learned

- Evidence to monitor disparities has to be authentic and accepted by government to have influence.
- Disaggregation is complex and requires political commitment and adequate resources and skills for it to be well used.

Capacity building

- Capacity building through sensitisation, training and coaching tailored to people's scope of work.

What we learned

- Influencing the attitudes that underpin social exclusion and gender discrimination requires creative training and broader political and social change. It takes time to affect male and high caste dominated institutions.
- Innovative decentralised and sustainable approaches to capacity building and integrating GESI into health worker training is critical.

B. GESI into programmes and service delivery Reaching underserved and excluded populations

- Initiatives to enhance access to MNCH services in remote mountain areas where outcomes are the worst in the country.

What we learned

- Context specific and bottom up approaches conducive to GESI are at odds with the top down systems and organisational culture.
- Targeted approaches to reach excluded groups are easier to progress than reforming existing programmes and services.

GESI service innovations

- GESI focused innovations including services for GBV survivors, targeted hospital subsidies to the most vulnerable, and social audit.

What we learned

- GESI innovations provide narrative and visibility to maintain momentum and a spotlight on GESIs.
- Technical assistance can incubate government led innovations that may not survive in a hostile, risk averse environment.



Learning for technical assistance

How technical assistance can enable the change process:

- Demystify and explain GESI concepts in simple language.
- Ensure government leads change processes at every level and build the capacity of the government to lead.
- Nurture government leadership through participation in all processes and by being responsive to their priorities.
- Be flexible and strategically positioned.
- Influencing needs to be highly skilled, honest not manipulative, without a hidden or personal agenda.
- Networks and resources need to be leveraged.
- Nurture informal relationships to build trust.
- Balance process facilitation with content-related outputs to maintain visibility and mobilise the widest support.
- Set a long term change horizon.

Further Information

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Caste, ethnicity, religion-based

Gender-based

Exclusion

Location-based

Poverty-based