Gender Equality Check-In

A tool to assess gender integration and gender transformative programming

June 3, 2020
Updated July 26, 2021

About the Check-In

The Gender Equality Check-In is a quality assessment and learning tool to help those working in social and behavior change (SBC) programs consider: (1) the level of gender integration in their program and (2) the level to which the program is using gender transformative approaches (see Box 1).

The tool includes two components. The **first component** is a set of checklists to assess gender integration throughout the program cycle. The **second component** is a checklist to assess where a program falls along a continuum of gender transformation. The tool provides an opportunity for teams to identify areas for improvement and develop an action plan.

The Check-In is designed around the SBC Flow Chart, a model which describes the design process used by the Breakthrough ACTION project for SBC activities to address health and development issues. As such, some of the terminology or approaches may be new to those not already familiar with the SBC Flow Chart. However, even those programs or projects not using the Flow Chart *can* use the Check-In, as it follows the general phases of the project life-cycle (e.g., assessing the situation or problem; designing and testing solutions; refining, evaluating, and scaling up).

Box 1: Definitions

Gender integration: Strategies applied in programmatic design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to take gender considerations into account and compensate for gender-based inequalities. The overall objective of gender integration is to move toward gender transformative programs and policies.

Gender transformative approaches: Approaches that attempt to achieve gender equality and female empowerment and promote positive and sustainable change by: 1) fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms, and dynamics; 2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment; and 3) highlighting the relative position of women, girls, and marginalized groups and transforming the underlying social structures, policies, and broadly held social and gender norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

When to Use the Check-In

At a minimum, each team should complete the check-in following each phase of the SBC Flow Chart or other project life cycle model being used in order to assess progress before moving on to the next phase. The tool can also be referenced before starting a new phase to identify areas of consideration for gender integration. Additionally, the tool should be completed on a yearly basis as part of annual work plan development to ensure gender is intentionally integrated into the work plan and budget. The tool can also be used more frequently—such as during monthly or quarterly project review meetings—to consider and assess ongoing gender integration.

How to Use the Check-In

For smaller projects, teams may use the tool to review the entire project. For larger programs, teams may find it useful to use the tool to review specific components of the overall program.

Key Steps:

1. First, gather together a mixed team of individuals involved in the implementation of your program, project, or project component who have different roles and perspectives on implementation—for example, research, program, and operations staff; central, regional, and local office staff; early, mid, and late-career staff. The tool can be used internally within a project team or with a broader range of partners and stakeholders—for example, project staff plus external subcontractors or consultants like researchers, non-governmental organizational (NGO) partners, government counterparts, and relevant target audiences (e.g., youth, people with disabilities).

2. Next, as a team, complete the checklist for the relevant phase of your program or project: Define, Design and Test, or Apply (or equivalent phases in your project life cycle model). In each phase, review the questions and decide as a team to what extent the program has addressed it. Consider and discuss specific examples to justify your scoring. Score each question as follows:

   0 = Not at all   1 = Somewhat   2 = Comprehensively

   If helpful, add notes under each question to explain your scoring.

3. Add up the total number of points to arrive at the overall score for the checklist and use the "interpreting your score" continuum to interpret the degree to which the program has integrated gender into the particular phase.

4. Discuss as a team what steps can be taken take to remedy gaps in gender integration and/or to improve gender integration in the next phase, develop an action plan, and identify needs for additional support and resources. Consider engaging gender experts and resources for help in identifying possible actions. Document these notes and decisions in the summary notes section. Refer to supporting documentation as relevant.

5. Finally, complete Checklist #4 each time you use the tool to assess your use of gender transformative approaches. This checklist can be repeated multiple times during implementation.

REMEMBER

It is important to conduct an honest and reflective assessment of the current state of gender integration. The aim of the check-in is to help all projects reflect on their level of gender integration, learn from past experience, and help identify areas and strategies for improvement going forward.

Even if gender equality is not an explicit goal of your project, all projects can do more within their funding parameters to move towards gender equality. Try to use this tool to think about how your project can use gender transformative approaches within the parameters of your funding and resources.

Checklist 1: Define Phase

Purpose: Assess the level of gender integration during the Define phase. This phase assesses the findings and insights that already exist and establishes mechanisms to deepen understanding of the complexity of the situation.

Project Information

Review date	Project name	Country
Review team		Project end date

Check-In Questions

Respond to each question using the following scale:

0 = Not at all   1 = Somewhat   2 = Comprehensively

Place a 0, 1, or 2 in the appropriate column. This provides both a visual snapshot of gender integration in this phase as well as helping to find your total score.

Question	0	1	2
1. When mining existing knowledge and data, has the program/project considered how gender-related factors impact the health or development problem? This may include gender norms, power dynamics between men and women, gender-based access barriers, gender discriminatory policies, etc.			
Notes:			
2. Has the program/project used sex-disaggregated data to explore how gender effects differ by age, residence (urban/rural), socio-economic status, educational attainment, race/ethnicity, and other factors?			
Notes:			
3. Has the program/project reviewed best, promising, and emerging practices to identify effective approaches to address gender within health programming, including literature on male engagement, women's empowerment, and gender synchronized approaches?			

Question	0	1	2
Notes:			
4. Has the program/project ensured a balanced representation of women, men, girls, boys, or other marginalized groups (e.g., youth, sexual and gender minorities, people with disabilities) in consultations and decision-making?			
Notes:			
5. Has the program/project considered gender in the Intent Statement (looking at the current and future states)?			
Notes:			
6. Has the program/project included questions in any original formative research to understand gender-related factors that impact the health of women and men?			
Notes:			
7. Has the program/project conducted any kind of gender analysis? (Gender analysis is a systematic methodology for examining the differences in gender roles and gender norms; the different levels of power held; differing needs, constraints, and opportunities; and the impact of these differences on people's lives.)			
Notes:			
8. Do the insights generated from primary and secondary research analysis include a deeper understanding of existing gender dynamics and their impact on the outcome(s) of interest?			
Notes:			
9. Has the program/project leveraged or established partnerships with key partners and stakeholders focused on gender equality and/or the rights of			

Question	0	1	2
women and girls and/or engaging men and boys, as well as individual gender champions who can provide insights and support?			
Notes:			
10. Has the program/project incorporated specific questions and/or insights about gender when discussing formative research findings with stakeholders?			
Notes:			
Subtotal (add totals for each column)			
TOTAL (add subtotals)			

Interpreting Your Score

0–7: Gender Neutral	8–14: Gender Aware	15–20: Gender Integrated
The Define phase ignores gender considerations.	The Define phase examines and addresses some aspects of gender considerations.	The Define phase examines and addresses most or all aspects of gender considerations.

Remember! Gender integration is a journey. You may score lower than you expect when you first complete the checklist. Think of this as the first step in your journey towards gender transformation and a great opportunity to learn how to strengthen gender integration in your program/project.

Action Plan

Use the spaces below to document steps you can take to remedy gaps in gender integration for key areas in this phase; develop an action plan and identify needs for additional support and resources. Refer to supporting documentation as relevant.

Area/issue	Action items
	Describe specific steps the team will take to further integrate gender into this phase and identify any needs for additional support or resources
Mine existing knowledge	
Establish partnerships with stakeholders	
Conduct additional research	
Analyze research and generate insights	
Discuss and validate findings with stakeholders	

Area/issue	Action items
	Describe specific steps the team will take to further integrate gender into this phase and identify any needs for additional support or resources
General comments	

NICE JOB!

You are now ready to move on to the next phase.

At this time, you can also use Checklist 4: Gender Transformative Programming.

Checklist 2: Design & Test Phase

Purpose: Assess the level of gender integration during the design and test phase. Grounded in deeper understanding, this phase informs how practitioners will address SBC by involving community members in the solution ideation process.

Project Information

Review date	Project name	Country
Review team		Project end date

Check-In Questions

Respond to each question using the following scale:

0 = Not at all   1 = Somewhat   2 = Comprehensively

Place a 0, 1, or 2 in the appropriate column. This provides both a visual snapshot of gender integration in this phase as well as helping to find your total score.

Question	0	1	2
1. Has the program/project purposefully involved women, men, girls, and boys in the generation of ideas for potential solutions?			
Notes:			
2. Has the program/project made necessary accommodations to remove gender-related barriers to participation when testing prototypes?			
Notes:			
3. When imagining solutions to the health challenge, has the program considered which solutions are most likely to lead to more equitable changes in gender-related knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, norms, roles, and behaviors as well as the health behaviors and outcomes of interest?			
Notes:			

Question	0	1	2
4. Do prototypes take into consideration that individuals are part of social relationships influenced by norms and power dynamics based on gender?			
Notes:			
5. Do prototypes contribute to more equitable changes in gender-related knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, norms, roles, and behaviors?			
Notes:			
6. Has the program/project considered any unintended gender-related consequences that may result from the prototypes, such as increased inequality or gender-based violence?			
Notes:			
7. Have sufficient human, financial, and material resources been allocated for gender-related activities and to test prototypes among different audiences?			
Notes:			
8. Has the program/project developed questions to monitor the gender-related aspects of prototype/activity implementation—including access, participation, and unintended consequences?			
Notes:			
9. Has the program/project tracked and analyzed disaggregated quantitative monitoring indicators by sex, age, and other relevant demographic characteristics?			
Notes:			
10. Has the program/project included monitoring indicators to track changes in gender-related outcomes such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, norms, roles, and behaviors?			

Question	0	1	2
Notes:			
Subtotal (add totals for each column)			
TOTAL (add subtotals)			

Interpreting Your Score

0–7: Gender Neutral	8–14: Gender Aware	15–20: Gender Integrated
The Design & Test phase ignores gender considerations.	The Design & Test phase examines and addresses some aspects of gender considerations.	The Design & Test phase examines and addresses most or all aspects of gender considerations.

Remember! Gender integration is a journey. You may score lower than you expect when you first complete the checklist. Think of this as the first step in your journey towards gender transformation and a great opportunity to learn how to strengthen gender integration in your program/project.

Action Plan

Use the spaces below to document steps you can take to remedy gaps in gender integration for key areas in this phase; develop an action plan and identify needs for additional support and resources. Refer to supporting documentation as relevant.

Area/issue	Action items Describe specific steps the team will take to further integrate gender into this phase and identify any needs for additional support or resources
Imagine a broad array of ideas for possible solutions	

Area/issue	Action items
	Describe specific steps the team will take to further integrate gender into this phase and identify any needs for additional support or resources
Co-create prototypes	
Test prototypes with audiences, refine, and continue testing	
Design the delivery of the prototype pilot test and develop operational and monitoring plan for the pilot	
General comments	

NICE JOB!

You are now ready to move on to the next phase.

At this time, you can also use Checklist 4: Gender Transformative Programming.

Checklist 3: Apply Phase

Purpose: Assess the level of gender integration during the Apply phase. Once programs/projects synthesize testing feedback into a prioritized suite of solutions, this phase marks the progressive implementation of these solutions.

Project Information

Review date	Project name	Country
Review team		Project end date

Check-In Questions

Respond to each question using the following scale:

0 = Not at all   1 = Somewhat   2 = Comprehensively

Place a 0, 1, or 2 in the appropriate column. This provides both a visual snapshot of gender integration in this phase as well as helping to find your total score.

Question	0	1	2
1. Has the program/project considered gender-related factors in implementation to achieve scale—such as ensuring that gender-related interventions are sustainable over time or addressing gender-related barriers to participation at scale?			
Notes:			
2. Has the program/project allocated sufficient human, financial, and material resources to build gender integration capacity for all partners involved in scale-up?			
Notes:			
3. Has the program/project taken action to document and address unintended gender-related consequences as relevant?			
Notes:			

Question	0	1	2
4. Have women, men, girls, and boys been meaningfully and equally engaged in the monitoring and evaluation process?			
Notes:			
5. Has the program/project intentionally included gender-related analysis into the evaluation?			
Notes:			
6. Has the program/project tracked and analyzed disaggregated quantitative outcome indicators by sex, age, and other relevant demographic characteristics?			
Notes:			
7. Has the program/project tracked and analyzed gender-sensitive indicators on knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, norms, and behaviors at each relevant level of the social-ecological model?			
Notes:			
8. Has the program/project identified changes or tweaks to the interventions during scale-up to make them more gender transformative?			
Notes:			
9. Has the program/project continued to partner with key stakeholders and organizations focused on gender equality and/or the rights of women and girls/engaging men, as well as individual gender champions who can provide support during scale-up?			
Notes:			
10. Has the program/project documented successes, failures, and lessons learned using a gender lens?			

Question	0	1	2
Notes:			
Subtotal (add totals for each column)			
TOTAL (add subtotals)			

Interpreting Your Score

0–7: Gender Neutral	8–14: Gender Aware	15–20: Gender Integrated
The Apply phase ignores gender considerations.	The Apply phase examines and addresses some aspects of gender considerations.	The Apply phase examines and addresses most or all aspects of gender considerations.

Remember! Gender integration is a journey. You may score lower than you expect when you first complete the checklist. Think of this as the first step in your journey towards gender transformation and a great opportunity to learn how to strengthen gender integration in your program/project.

Action Plan

Use the spaces below to document steps you can take to remedy gaps in gender integration for key areas in this phase; develop an action plan and identify needs for additional support and resources. Refer to supporting documentation as relevant.

Area/issue	Action items Describe specific steps the team will take to further integrate gender into this phase and identify any needs for additional support or resources
Implement the design solution	

Area/issue	Action items
	Describe specific steps the team will take to further integrate gender into this phase and identify any needs for additional support or resources
Monitor the results	
Evaluate the program and determine impact among audiences	
Adapt and scale	
General comments	

NICE JOB!

You are now ready to move on to the next phase.

At this time, you can also use Checklist 4: Gender Transformative Programming.

Checklist 4: Gender Transformative Programming

Purpose: Assess the level to which the program is using gender transformative approaches. This checklist should be completed each time you use this tool.

Project Information

Review date	Project name	Country
Review team		Project end date

Assessment of Gender Transformative Approaches

Respond to each question using the following scale:

0 = Not at all   1 = Somewhat   2 = Comprehensively

Place a 0, 1, or 2 in the appropriate column. This provides both a visual snapshot of how gender transformative your project is (at a specific point in time) as well as helping to find your total score. If you are in the define or design and test phase, use these questions to think about your planning and design.

Question	0	1	2
1. Does the program/project's gender-related work go beyond the health sector?			
Notes:			
2. Does the program/project seek to achieve gender-related change at the community level rather than the individual level alone?			
Notes:			
3. Does the program/project seek to shift inequitable gender norms that are embedded in institutional structures at the community, legal, political, and/or policy level?			
Notes:			

Question	0	1	2
4. Does the program/project's gender-related work engage people and institutions at multiple levels of the socio-ecological model?			
Notes:			
5. Does the program/project's gender-related work have multiple activities that reinforce each other?			
Notes:			
6. Does the program/project focus on the most influential gender norms that are shaping a given behavior?			
Notes:			
7. Does the program/project focus on influential reference groups that are upholding inequitable gender norms?			
Notes:			
8. Does the program/project address gendered relationship dynamics between men and boys/women and girls?			
Notes:			
9. Does the program/project seek to equalize gender power imbalances between men and boys/women and girls?			
Notes:			
10. Does the program/project create spaces for critical reflection of gender norms by community members where women and girls feel safe to participate?			
Notes:			

Question	0	1	2
11. Do spaces for critical reflection and discussion of gender norms foster the inclusion of marginalized community members?			
Notes:			
12. Does the program/project root reflection of gender norms within a community's own value systems, helping to identify how gender norms serve or contradict those values?			
Notes:			
13. Does the program/project foster opportunities to create new positive gender norms or enhance existing equitable gender norms?			
Notes:			
14. Does the program/project promote collective, community-led action in shifting inequitable gender norms and/or promoting equitable new gender norms?			
Notes:			
Subtotal (add totals for each column)			
TOTAL (add subtotals)			

Interpreting Your Score

0–7: Gender Neutral	8–14: Gender Sensitive	15–21: Gender Responsive	22–28: Gender Transformative
Program/project does not have any attributes that aim to identify and challenge gender norms and relations.	Program/project has some attributes that adapt to gender norms and relations.	Program/project has several attributes that contribute to challenging inequitable gender norms and relations.	Program/project has many attributes that change inequitable gender norms and relations and promote gender equality.

Remember! Gender transformative programming is a journey. You may score lower than you expect when you first complete the checklist. Think of this as just the first step in your journey.

Action Plan

Use the spaces below to document steps you can take to remedy gaps identified, develop an action plan, and identify needs for additional support and resources. Refer to supporting documentation as relevant.

Area/issue	Action items Describe specific steps the project will take to support gender equality