B-BRIDDHI

TOOLKIT

APPLYING A GENDER LENS
TO IMPACT MEASUREMENT & MANAGEMENT

A programme by

Supported by Switzerland

Roots of Impact

LightCastle Partners

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MYTHS ABOUT GENDER

There are myths and misconceptions when it comes to Gender. Some examples are:

- It's solely about women while men's needs and perspectives are not relevant
- Gender-lens impact management is only for those Impact Enterprises (IEs) that are producing products or services that specifically target women
- Gender lens in impact management is only relevant for women led enterprises.
- Gender lens in impact management is about ticking boxes only and not about holistic action.

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS PHASE?

This toolkit is about replicating ideas we can learn from and finding innovative new approaches, guiding you step by step.

Do you feel well equipped for IMM but don't see any connections between IMM and gender lens?

Are you relatively new to the topic of Gender and IMM and want to learn where to start from, what tools to use and what options of strategies you have?

Are you already thinking around how to apply a Gender lens to your product or program and interested in learning how to deepen your understanding and strategies regarding Gender and IMM?

Even if you tick one box, you are ready for this phase.

APPLYING A GENDER LENS TO IMPACT MEASUREMENT & MANAGEMENT

IEs create impact by serving the unmet needs of traditionally marginalized population, therefore it's important to talk about gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), putting the concept of "inclusiveness" at the core. A GESI lens emphasizes the inclusion of women, girls and other vulnerable populations such as youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the very poor, minority groups, displaced and conflict–affected populations, migrant workers and employees of hazardous or informal industries.

In this chapter we focus nearly exclusively on the gender aspect from the perspective of working with people who identify as women and men.[1] The chapter emphasizes on tips and strategies to better understand and to measure the impact that your product/service

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[1] Gender is acknowledged as a spectrum and is not necessarily binary, however, our focus is on the binary genders – men and women.

creates for both women and men from the target group, allowing for the better design and delivery of products and services. In addition, the chapter provides some initial suggestions on developing a gender inclusive organizational culture, both as Service Providers (SPs) and as IEs.

Let us begin by gaining a better understanding of gender related concepts!

Experts largely agree on the definitions of the terms, sex, gender and gender identity in the following terms:

- **Sex** refers to a person's biological status and is typically assigned at birth, usually on the basis of external anatomy. Sex is typically categorized as male, female or intersex.

- **Gender** is often defined as a social construct of norms, behaviours and roles that varies between societies and over time. Gender is often categorized as male, female or nonbinary.

- **Gender identity** is one's own internal sense of self and their gender, whether that is man, woman, neither or both. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not outwardly visible to others.

We will now provide a snapshot into applying the gender lens to IMM practice. It is the intention of this chapter to help enterprises in the early stages of introducing a gender lens into their organization and product/service, therefore it focusses on limited areas. The actionable suggestions and strategies provided should be implemented based on the preparedness of the enterprise. While making choices about the same, IEs and SPs are advised to be mindful of the enterprise's ability to measure and monitor the implementation of the gender lens related practices at the same level as other components of IMM.

This toolkit will guide you on the journey of uncovering how our activities can affect, and are experienced by men and women.

INTRODUCTION

What is the gender lens and how does the lens make us see things differently?

When it comes to business, at the core of the gender lens is to firstly, understand how a certain program, product or service impacts men and women differently. Secondly, to identify these points of difference and lastly to find solutions to this difference in experience of men and women users by identifying and redressing the underlying causes as much as possible.

How is applying a gender lens to IMM beneficial for deepening impact and financial sustainability of an enterprise? While there are several, some of the reasons are listed below!

BETTER DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING: The collection of gender disaggregated data enables an IE to better understand the usage pattern and experience of a product or service from their different users, as well as to collect feedback from different users with gendered perspectives. This is where Impact Management and its importance for including the gender lens comes in. A gender lens assessment begins by seeking to understand the differences that may exist between ways that men and women users experience and articulate impact of a product or service.[2] Data can provide new insight on what is working for and between men and women and can reveal problems as well as identify solutions. With this information we are empowered to start new conversations, revisit and revise old strategies, and make better decisions that lead to better outcomes for all.[3]

INCREASED PROFITABILITY AND STRONGER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS: Refining products and services and their delivery such that they capture and reflect the needs of women users can open new avenues for deepening impact as well as reaching a larger set of customers. Women customers control an estimated global consumer spending of about $40 trillion yet are often underserved. Meeting unmet demands of women in water, contraception, telecommunications, energy and childcare sectors represents an additional annual market opportunity of $300 billion by 2025. Therefore, applying a gender lens in designing products and services makes sense from both a commercial and inclusion perspective.[4] In addition to the immediate business benefits, including women as clients is also a long-term bet for companies and society. Women users are often the ones that make purchasing decisions within the household which makes them an important customer base, Unilever articulates this business case on their website[5].

SOCIAL IMPACT: Companies with better environmental, social and governance standards, solutions, and practices are equally or more profitable and may trade at a premium to rivals, according to research[6] that shows responsible practices have a direct link to the financial performance of large businesses. A gender lens application in itself is one of the many social impacts that an IE can generate as it involves engaging stakeholders through its supply chain and improvisation in the way services and products are designed and delivered.

In sum, focusing on women users has significant social benefit which can also allow IEs to improve its access to one half of the population, thereby deepening impact. Potential cascading effects could also include increased profitability if the right approaches are pursued.[7] Thus, it is time for a shift in mindset: Gender and Business must no longer be viewed as two competing areas, but a closely-interconnected unit with sustainable long-term benefits.

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[2] Acumen (2019): A lean data how-to guide. Understanding gender impact. Phase 2.
[3] Acumen (2018): A lean data how-to guide. Understanding gender impact. Phase 1.
[4] 7 Credit Suisse Research Institute (2014). The CS Gender 3000: Female in Senior Management
[5] https://www.unilever.com/news/news-and-features/Feature-article/2017/putting-the-power-into-females-empowerment.html
[6] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2340943615000791
[7] SPRING Accelerator Toolkit (2018): http://spring.tsic.hk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/A4-SPRING-toolkit-oct2018-WEB-FINAL.pdf

HOW TO GET STARTED

Closing the gender gap, whether through the work of corporations, impact investors, IEs, SPs, governments, or donors, simply cannot happen without useful, practical, and accurate tools for measuring gender-specific metrics. [8] The resources captured in this toolkit have been demonstrated to be effective by other IEs or SPs. To guide you step-by-step in this new journey, and as a start, we have narrowed it down into two categories:

FOR BOTH SERVICE PROVIDERS AND IMPACT ENTREPRENEURS:

You will be provided with suggestions and examples on applying an initial gender lens to your IMM journey in order to be able to better understand the needs of women customers and collecting relevant data to manage your impact. This includes aspects such as providing access to products or services to a broader group of end customers, product or service design, monitoring of customer satisfaction, product or services delivery. You can go straight to **Section A** of this chapter, if you are interested in product and service level.

Another important aspect covered by this chapter relates to creating an inclusive organizational culture through a gender lens. This includes aspects such as strategies for improving participation of women colleagues, and ensuring an equal distribution of similar jobs across both genders within the organization. You can go straight to **Section C** of this chapter, if you are interested in understanding how to create an inclusive organizational culture.

EXCLUSIVE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS:

For SPs an additional area of focus is going to be the program level. This chapter provides suggestions on applying the gender lens in different phases of a program, such as recruitment of impact entrepreneurs, program design, delivery and monitoring. You can go straight to **Section B** of this chapter, if you are interested in understanding gender lens application in programs.

The focus areas of the gender chapter, organised into three parts:

A. **Introducing the gender lens to IE product and services**;
B. **Introducing the gender lens to programs** and
C. **Creating an inclusive organizational culture.**

(A) INTRODUCING THE GENDER LENS TO PRODUCT AND SERVICES

Applying a gender lens will allow an IE to effectively serve all users within its target groups, irrespective of their gender. Here are some common pitfalls of failing to apply this lens in products and services delivery:

(1) An incomplete understanding of the needs of women users leading to lowered market access;[9]

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[8] Acumen (2018): A lean data how-to guide. Understanding gender impact. Phase 1.
[9] https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ru/Documents/public-sector/gender-dividend-en.pdf

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(2) Lack of data on gender disaggregated consumer behaviour and perceptions;[10]

(3) Ineffective communication and marketing strategy due to the lack of (1) and (2)

With the 'whys' already listed, let us start with some keys steps to applying the gender lens.

A.1. UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN USERS THROUGH THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Customer Touchpoint Approach to Data Collection is an IMM methodology that helps you create a data collection experience that is seamless, operationally efficient, and cost effective for both your client and your IE. Gender-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data can also be obtained via this resource-efficient approach. While developing a customer journey is a key part of the IMM training already, here are some considerations to understand how you may include women users better.

> **BONUS:** Get inspired by this women user centric customer journey map by Misfit Ray Smartband.

By introducing a gender lens to your customer journey, you will aim to answer these questions and find solutions to gaps that you find:

1. **Is your product or service designed in a manner that women can have equal access to it as similarly situated men?** To elaborate, can men and women within the target group find out about the product/service, without incremental access barriers for women. This ease of access can relate to ability to gather information about your product or service, ability to purchase/subscribe to the product or service and finally to make use of the same. Consider the different social and economic barriers that may be at play in a particular scenario.

   For example, imagine that an IE offers educational content that can be only accessed through a mobile application. In this scenario, it may become relevant to assess if men and women from the target user group have comparable access to smart phones. Is the proportion of mobile phone owners and users the same across men and women in your target group? Factors that influence mobile phone ownership and use can be linked to both social barriers such as the freedom to use a personal mobile device or financial means which limits their ability to buy a mobile phone.

2. **Is the product or service going to be experienced differently by men and women, even when they have equal access?** Ask your users questions to learn if the product or service such that while it is supposed to be gender neutral in its application, it is somehow better suited for men than women users? For example, imagine that an IE offers fitness and self-defence training to young people (15-35 years). While nearly an equal number of men and women enrolled for the programme, eventually more than 50% of the women stopped attending, while more than 90% of the men who had enrolled, continued to attend the training. Concerned by the trend, the IEs

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[10] Id.

asked its women enrollers what the reason was for the same. In the survey, more than 50% of existing and past women users said that because the training centre does not have women trainers, they do not feel free to share their problems in the training process and in fact cannot get the necessary hands-on guidance as men trainers cannot understand posture correction for women and offer adequate assistance to women trainees. Therefore, their experience is not very satisfying.

3. **Is your product or service such that even when men and women users have equal access and continued use over prolonged periods, the average positive impact on women users is overall less than that on men users?** For example, an impact enterprise has created a meal supplement for children aged 5-15 years old that is supposed to help them to get holistic nutrition leading to lowered chance of mineral deficiencies. However, after 5 years of regular use, on an average, only 30% of women users have no mineral deficiencies versus 80% of the men users experience no mineral deficiencies. This could be an indication that women users have other nutritional needs (for example, higher iron consumption need for menstruating women) that your product does not currently provide. Therefore, you may have to revisit your product formulation and identify gaps in your product that are making it less impactful for women users.

While these examples may seem rather straightforward, as mentioned before, no matter how well intentioned, IEs can fail to reach or create impact for more than half of the population if they are not mindful of the difference in access, experience and outcome for women. However, how does one learn the answers to these questions? This is where the role of gender disaggregated data from customers becomes relevant. In the following sections you will learn about the role of gender disaggregated data in each of these broad aspects of improving the impact of your product or service on women users.

A.2. UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN: ROLE OF DATA

The first and most important step to apply a gender lens to a product or service is to learn about the experience of women and men users very specifically, this is where collecting disaggregated data by gender becomes relevant. It can help an IE assess and address issues that may be leading to systemic exclusion of certain target groups or even lead to improved service to an otherwise neglected target group [11]

A.2.1 TYPES OF DISAGGREGATED DATA

A.2.1.1 DISAGGREGATED QUANTITATIVE DATA

Disaggregated quantitative data is the starting point for understanding how your impact enterprise's products or services is used by men and women customers.

A 2.1.2 DISAGGREGATED QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative data helps understand the story behind the numbers and also find actionable inputs from your customers themselves.

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[11] https://data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/MeasuringFemalesFinInclusion-ValueofSexDisaggData.pdf

Aside from basic information such as percentage of users by gender, examples of interesting insights can:

1. **Help identify target groups for different product lines**– Gender disaggregated data can provide deeper insights on who is accessing what kinds of products.
2. **Help understand and streamline channels for access** - what kinds of channels are used by men and women users (e.g. branch, ATM, social media), how and when.
3. **Help understand whether certain buying channel or product are accessible to an intended user group**
4. **There is a possibility to find insights that may create leads for greater research through engaging your users and addressing a gap that may be affecting women users disproportionately.**

A.2.2 COLLECTING DISAGGREGATED QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

This is similar to the Customer Touchpoint Journey Approach to Data Collection captured in Phase II Impact Measurement & Management:

1. Firstly, **map out the entire customer journey. from the gender lens perspective**, this means mapping from the very beginning, when the woman user experiences an issue or situation that draws them to use your product or services. For example, a woman customer may feel insecure using traditional transportation, causing her to consider using your women-oriented transportation services. This is your instigating incident. Continue mapping until the last "touchpoint" is over. For example, once the woman customer no longer has a need for the product or services.
2. Then, you **identify all the interaction points, especially existing data collection**, between women users and your impact enterprise.

   a. *Disaggregated quantitative data*
   For example, a mobile app-based service may already have started collecting client-related data, such as sign-in details or the preference selection on driver's gender.

   b. *Disaggregated qualitative data*
   For example, an impact enterprise may already have started conducting surveys, interviews, reviews, polls, desk reviews, household interviews, or focus group discussions with your customers/target group.

3. Finally, **based on these existing touchpoints, you identify gender disaggregated data collection opportunities.**

   a. *Disaggregated quantitative data*
   For example, sign-in details may require the passenger to make known his or her gender. This allows you to examine gender-based user behaviour and may offer insights that are gender disaggregated. In another situation, you may find that at the usage level, you may also be able to disaggregate data for men and women users. For example: You may find that a user is registered as man, however he often uses services or seeks products that may be typically meant for woman-user. Take the example of app-based healthcare, if a user registered as male asks questions related to women

only health issues such as menstruation or breast cancer, it implies that you are serving a woman client. Take note of these patterns, both, for gathering gender disaggregated data and also for seeing why and how you can bring these dormant women users (who use a male person's account) into your direct clientele.

b. *Disaggregated qualitative data*

For example, household interviews may be focusing on understanding client behavior in relation to products or services of the enterprise. You may also adjust your interview setting in a way that provides woman respondents the psychological safety to provide genuine feedback, frame their thinking and give context to their responses, all of which helps to generate some of the richest insights. While men and women may indicate a similar change in quality of life as a result of a program / product or service, the core question we seek to answer in this is: are there fundamental differences in the way women and men users define and describe these changes?[12]

A.2.2.1. OTHER SOURCES OF DISAGGREGATED DATA

4. **Beyond enterprise-driven data, disaggregated quantitative data are also often available and accessible at national and sub-national level,** especially in the form of census data on basic demographic factors (e.g. education, religion etc.) which you might find helpful for your program / product or service. Similarly, gender-disaggregated qualitative data can also be accessed via existing research conducted by civil society organizations, including NGOs and women's groups gathering information about the potential or actual impact your program / product or services may have.

5. **Identify convenient points where it may be possible to engage men and women customers to learn about their experience.** Examine if you have already been gathering data at these points and have a way to gender disaggregate this information. For example, if you already conduct user surveys at the time of purchase of your product or service you may be able to adjust the survey to ask for the gender of the respondent.

REMEMBER: While collecting primary qualitative data (through surveys or interviews etc), be mindful of the target group that you are seeking to engage. Make them comfortable and welcomed to share useful insights. Factors such as who conducts the survey and where is it conducted can have a major impact on the comfort and consequently on the possibility of receiving honest responses from the survey takers.

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[12] Acumen (2019): A lean data how-to guide. Understanding gender impact. Phase 2.

A.2.3. PRODUCT OR SERVICES DELIVERY

With all the disaggregated data that you collect, you may already have some indication of areas for improvement or channels and aspects of your product or service delivery that need to be changed. A key question to be answered from the gender lens perspective is whether the product or service can be delivered by different people in different formats through different channels (e.g. online, face-to-face, etc) in a manner that you can reach the desired outcome for all (men and women) users within your target group. For example, if your product can only be accessed through a smart phone application then, depending on the context, you may inadvertently exclude potential women users due to the demographic spread of mobile phone users.

A.2.3.1. APPLYING THE GENDER LENS TO PRODUCT AND SERVICES DELIVERY

1. **Ensure diversity among people who are delivering your product / services.** Be mindful of as many socio-economic factors (and their combination) as maybe applicable to your target group, such as, age, gender, geographical location etc. For example, if you provide birth-control advice to married, middle aged women users, consider engaging women of a similar demography in the process of awareness creation regarding your service. This could help create a more inclusive space for women to ask questions, share their concerns etc.

2. **Pay attention to the context and ensure friendly technical support, preferably from the local community**: Depending on the context, there may be a need to translate marketing material into local dialects, paying special attention to adequate explanation of technical terms. This also extends to ensuring that the language used is not exclusionary, sexist or biased. For example, if you provide refurbished bicycles to customers, take care to include representation of both men and women as customers in the marketing material and include women customer relations managers/salespersons so that customers of both genders feel welcome to share their concerns.

3. **Create a safe environment when sharing details of your product or services,** especially if the marketing efforts or customer onboarding for your product is conducted 1:1 or in groups. This will ensure that everyone feels comfortable to contribute and ask questions without feeling intimidated. By creating a safe environment, we mean that consider what location, timing and setting will make your customers more comfortable. For example: if your target audience is middle-aged women with school going children, maybe a 1:1 session delivered by a woman by going to the customers home is going to be a convenient option for your target group.

BONUS: Go to the Exercise Sheet a and work on identifying and defining your IMM gender lens goals.

CASE STUDY

Instellar works towards scalable and sustainable social impact through incubation, advisory, and investment in mission-driven companies in Indonesia. Within their portfolio, they found a majority of female entrepreneur yet large gaps between men and female entrepreneurs in terms of soft skills, affecting their achievement in business leadership. Read how they explored the potential of nurturing female entrepreneurs and running a female-focused incubation program and their lessons learned: Case study: Instellar.

(B) INTRODUCING THE GENDER LENS TO PROGRAMS (FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS)

For a service provider, the program is the key product or service. Although it can vary in design, it tends to involve a mix of education, mentorship, networking and direct or indirect financing opportunities. How these components are delivered can also differ depending on the organization, with programs varying in duration, structure and mode of delivery.

Ensuring all entrepreneurs and clients, regardless of gender, have an equal opportunity to access and engage with your program is key to your organisation's ability to offer valuable support, thus achieving your business and social impact outcomes.

B.1 DELIVERING A GENDER INCLUSIVE PROGRAM

It is important to create a safe and inclusive space for all entrepreneurs/clients, to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to engage with the content being delivered. Remember that it is not enough that your program accepts women entrepreneurs, this will not necessarily achieve equity of access[13] as there may be other factors at play (some of which we will try to illustrate in this section) that may be preventing women entrepreneurs from participating in the programs or making the most of the opportunities that your program offers.

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[13] https://smartygrants.com.au/help-sheets/gender-lens

1. **Ensure there is diversity in the people who are delivering your program content**
For starters, ensure that there are strong women facilitators who can not only deliver technical content, but also understand where the entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs are coming from. This creates role models for all entrepreneurs but also levels out power dynamics and provides a more comfortable environment.

2. **Be intentional about including diverse examples. Ensure language used is not sexist or biased.** As an SP, aside from imparting practical skills, you may also be affecting the morale and self-belief of early-stage entrepreneurs. Therefore, language, examples and presentation of your ideas should be designed with this sensitivity. For example, take care to include equal numbers of examples of women led enterprises in the content of your program. Try to include pronouns for women (she/her) when you discuss examples and topics.

3. **Be mindful that entrepreneurs can have diverse educational and professional backgrounds.** Some of the content delivered may be technical and include specific terms from the business or financial sector, so do not assume equal prior knowledge among all participants and explain ideas in a manner that it can be well received by all. Depending on the community, this could also mean translating into local dialects or being prepared to explain technical terms in the local language.

4. **Create a safe learning environment in the program** so that everyone feels comfortable to contribute and more importantly to ask questions, share problems. For example, acknowledge where power lies in these spaces. In a room with different genders, be deliberate about your aim for creating spaces so that everyone feels invited to speak and be heard. Encourage IEs to feel that they are all doing meaningful work and all of them are here to learn more.

B.1.2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF A SP'S PROGRAM THAT CAN BENEFIT FROM THE GENDER LENS

In this section we offer some suggestions to re-think certain aspects of your program in a manner that is a bit more inclusive towards women. Note that not all aspects need to be addressed at the same time. Depending on the time and resources available, SP may prefer to focus on areas they have identified as 'quick wins' and or areas which are likely to lead to a strong return on investment.

B.1.2.1: GENDER INCLUSIVE FACILITATING AND MENTORSHIP

The role of facilitators and mentors is to facilitate ideas from those who are closest to the issue, the entrepreneurs. It is important therefore that for the best ideas and ideal growth of the entrepreneurs, there is a healthy mix of facilitators and mentors of both genders. Secondly, it is equally important for your facilitators and mentors to understand where their support role starts and ends. They need to become aware of any (gender-related) power dynamics that may be at play. In order to achieve this, consider the following initial steps:

1. **Invest in creating a gender diverse pool of mentors and facilitators.** Remember that the medium of message delivery can sometimes be as powerful as the message itself! Consciously reach out to women mentors and facilitators and include them in your programme delivery. This can create an additional support system for women participants of your programme.

2. **Develop a clear mentor/mentee code of conduct and let both parties sign it.** Consider power dynamics that may occur when pairing different genders to learn from each other, make them explicit. Ensure regular check-ins for both facilitators and participants with the HR team of your organization to identify and address potential negative power dynamics. Find an example of a good Mentor-Mentee Code of conduct.

3. **Have relevant training for mentors, facilitators and all other content deliverers so they can create a safe and inclusive learning environment.** Despite the best intentions, facilitators may conduct their sessions or talk in a manner that has an adverse impact on the morale and learning opportunities of the participants. Example: if there are a few participants who are more forthcoming in the sessions and the facilitator is not mindful of also actively offering opportunities to other participants to speak up, then some participants may feel left out in the session. These key ideas on good facilitation practices can easily be learnt through relevant training.

4. **Be observant of the dynamics between participants** A facilitator may not be naturally observant of whether all participants of the program are equally responsive and free in sharing their ideas with the cohort. In some cases, there may be disproportionately more men who share ideas. Offer training to help sensitize mentors and facilitators to identify such a situation, moderate the discussion effectively and come up with more non-threatening prompts to encourage every participant to speak.

> BONUS: Focus on equipping your trainers to deliver an inclusive programme, get inspired by this Awareness Training example content!

B.1.2.2. INCLUSIVE EVENTS AND PROGRAM FORMATS

As an SP be mindful and ensure that event formats or competitions conducted as part of your program are adequate for showcasing the value of the ideas or the work of different impact enterprises and the men and women that are a part of the team. This becomes especially important when one discounts for other socio-economic factors such as age, wealth etc. In the following specific suggestions, we will try to highlight the implications of this idea.

1. **Pitching Events**: Many SP programs hold pitch events throughout or to mark the end of their programs. These can take different forms (e.g. one on one, the cohort pitching in front of an audience, etc.) and provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs to present their venture to relevant ecosystem stakeholders.

These events aim at 1) **IE sharing their venture and ask for the support they require at that point in time (funding, access to customers, partnerships, mentorship etc.)** as well as 2) **give the SP an opportunity to raise their brand awareness and showcase their work.**

A typical 'pitch' leverages very specific skills that are often not fully relevant to being an effective impact entrepreneur. It relies on the presenter being confident, persuasive and an engaging speaker. These attributes are often culturally more acceptable for men to possess and display whereas not all women across cultures may feel as comfortable in public speaking of this kind. Additionally, there is a power dynamic at play on the side of the investors who 'choose' the successful ventures. Consider the following ways as a starting point to turn pitching events to a more positive experience for all participants:

a. Pick a more neutral name for such kind of events.
If it doesn't resonate with both genders, use alternative terms such as 'showcase'. This can reduce the notion of competition and be perceived as an equal opportunity for all entrepreneurs. Furthermore, use this rebranding to think of more holistic formats that may help in better assessment of IEs to be funded. For example, village capital conducts peer assessment for picking enterprises for funding. This helps in doing away with the pattern recognition bias that motivates investors to only pick similar enterprises as the ones they have already invested in (typically founded by men). As a result they have found that 46% of their funding goes to women founders and they raise 2.9X more capital than the control group that did not have such a peer evaluation.[14]

b. Be deliberate about calling out the power dynamics at the event.
The organiser of the event can open the evening with a statement similar to "For impact entrepreneurship to succeed - we need all these ventures to win. Tonight is not about how one is better than another, but about how we can support all of these important ventures so they can thrive and collectively create the impact we wish to see". If it will resonate with the audience, calling out certain unconscious biases at the start of the event, can also help the audience be aware of when their judgement might be affected. This can be done in a light and playful way, or in a more serious manner depending on what is appropriate in the context.

c. Adapt the format of the event
If you have voting at the event, and this privileges a certain gender, it can be taken out and instead the audience can be asked to make offers of support and suggestions to the entrepreneurs, which can be followed up after the event. This way the event is designed to be one of the many steps for the investors/ funders/other stakeholders to learn about the entrepreneurs (rather than making important decisions after one contact). You could also consider having a mid-program pitch event, and one at the end so that the audience has a chance to see the progress an entrepreneur has made. This can allow entrepreneurs to show what they're capable of and reduce bias against them. Simply running events as discussions rather than presentations (and arranging the room accordingly), can also change the dynamics. Another example could be to send the profiles of the ventures before the event for the audience to read through, but remove the gender of the entrepreneurs.

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[14] https://vilcap.com/entrepreneurs/peer-selected-investment

This can allow investors and other stakeholders to assess a venture based on their ability to solve a problem, without gender biases impacting their judgement.

d. *Take steps to ensure that all entrepreneurs can make the most out of the opportunity.* Have one-on-one chats with the entrepreneurs at the start of the program in order to fully understand their expectations. Ask as many pointed questions as you can think of so that you can have a clear picture or their expectations and also clarify what the program can offer them.

e. *Make entrepreneurs aware of the gender biases that the audience may have.* This will prepare them to handle the situation directly or indirectly but right at the beginning of their presentations. In addition to presentation skills training, other types of training can focus more on personal growth, such as, help to improve confidence, manage imposter syndrome.

2. **Improving access to funding for women entrepreneurs**: By enabling the growth of both enterprises and intermediaries, especially in their early stages, funders play a key role within the ecosystem and are a key factor in ensuring that IEs can grow. Access to the right funders and funding opportunities is often linked to the ability to participate in the right events and program. Therefore, as an SP, it is valuable to curate events and connect a network of investors to your cohort, whose goal is also to achieve greater social impact and gender equality as philanthropic funders and impact investors.

Consider the following ideas to improve funding for women entrepreneurs:

a. *Think of creative approaches to make funds accessible to entrepreneurs of both genders.* Women are often disadvantaged and left behind when it comes to funding and investment. To address this problem, think of creative ways to make funding available to women participants. For example, consider building a seed fund for IEs that are a part of your program, this way all entrepreneurs have a better chance at a more holistic assessment of their and their IEs potential. This will also result in a fairer chance at getting initial funding.

b. *For entrepreneurs with lower financial literacy, provide additional support so that they are confident in presenting themselves and requesting funding.* This can be achieved by building their technical expertise, or by developing high-level documents as support.

c. *Incentivize key financial decision-makers in the communities of the entrepreneurs.* This can create buy-in by these communities aiming at supporting the founder in accessing funding for their venture. For an example: Demonstrate the 'win-win' for the community by showing how if the IE is successful in their community their community will reap the benefits of the impact. For example: If IE A provides cheaper sanitary napkins through its initiative and with funding becomes able to expand its impact then more women in the community will be able to access IE A's services and can enjoy the health benefits of this improved hygiene.

d. *Translate investor language so that it is better understood by all participants,* here's some examples of due diligence key questions. Try to educate the IEs on financial and business terminologies so that they can respond to investors in a better manner.

What investors may ask	What investors want to hear	What investors want to learn
Who is on the Board? What does the management team look like?	Not just how many/ratio of women, but who/what? Is leadership consciously thinking of the perspectives of all genders in designing products and services that will positively impact them?	Can the ratio shift / is it shifting?
What are the policies and practices demonstrating gender equality in the business?	What does the IE think about pay equity / shared parental leave / recruitment / promotion / retention?	Are they self-aware? Are they already great? What are they committed to shifting?
Do you collect gender and age disaggregated data on clients, suppliers and employees?	What does the IE know/see?	Where can they improve? What's their commitment?

3. Creating an inclusive and supportive alumni network

When IEs have completed the program and become a part of the alumni network, SPs have the opportunity to continue to support these ventures. This support can help ventures become successful as well as serve as an incentive for the ventures to report back on their impact and business performance and stay engaged to support subsequent cohorts. In order to ensure equal participation of men and women participants in these alumni activities, consider the following:

a. *Aim to provide continued support for your alumni enterprises* (e.g. workshops, events, online resources, etc.). Conduct workshops and explore gender-related topics that could impact the growth of their venture. Remember that due to social limitations (like staying out after evening, limits on socializing for work) or familial obligations (care giver responsibilities at home), it is often difficult for women to spend time networking and attending several events. Therefore, design and plan these events in a manner that it can serve as a convenient and meaningful networking opportunity, especially for female alumni. Consider hosting specific events within larger alumni gatherings that are exclusively for women

b. *Include gender lens metrics as part of your own impact measurement framework* to ensure that you collect gender-related data which will enable you to advance your program and also support your alumnae. It may help you craft a convincing narrative on GESI impacts. Use varied methods (e.g. phone call, anonymous survey, site visits) for data collection to make safe communication options available through which they can

share sensitive information. Use these insights to fine tune your program to tailor it to the needs of women entrepreneurs.

c. *Contract your alumni as facilitators, mentors, recruiters and/or supporters for next cohorts*. E.g. Find ways of including participating entrepreneurs in the subsequent cohorts of training, this will create a platform for underrepresented genders to become role models within your ecosystem.

(C) CREATING INCLUSIVE IMPACT THROUGH AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

C.1. WHY THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL MATTERS?

For both IEs and SPs: your board, your team, and your organizational culture play a big role in several aspects relating to product and services creation and delivery. They encompass how work is done and decisions are made within your organisation. Addressing gender issues within these areas, therefore, has the potential to create and deepen the impact that you have on your target group.

C.2. CULTURE IN PRACTICE

Your organisational culture refers to the way things are done in and around your organisation and encompasses the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution or organization.

C.2.1. WHY DOES IT MATTER?

A shared belief system can guide people's behaviour and result in an inclusive environment where all team members can thrive. This in turn allows the IE or SP to deliver on the vision of an inclusive product or service that positively impacts all members of the target group, irrespective of gender.

BONUS: JupViec is a highly successful on demand cleaning service that matches women skilled at cleaning with clients looking for services, they call themselves a company for women, by women, although the company is led by a man for CEO. Why is this so? Because most of the C-suite and managerial positions in the company are held by women and they enforce a culture of thinking about the women who find work through their platform as their main stakeholders.[15]

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[15] http://patamar.com/startup-jupviec-vn-secures-funding-from-us-fund/

C.2.2 INITIAL STEPS TO BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE CULTURE

1. **Equip all team members with awareness training so that they understand the organization's commitment to fostering gender inclusivity.** This can be used to learn practical ways to applying a gender lens to their work. Find an example on awareness trainings here.

2. **Consider what can make your culture more inclusive.** Where can including team members with diverse identities have a better outcome on the customers of your product or service? Identify gaps, or issues and whenever possible, build team compositions in a manner that there is a healthy mix of genders.

3. **Look at daily language, day-to-day interactions, etc. and recognize patterns of inequality.** Is there a pattern in the type of work that women team members are assigned? Are there consistently responsibilities for women colleagues to take care of the additional administrative and operational tasks? Do women consistently get fewer opportunities to speak when the team is discussing strategic issues? Identify and break these patterns by simply being mindful of them. For example: Are women in the team quieter when there's a business meeting predominantly comprising of men? Try to recognize these patterns and create unobtrusive prompts and other mechanisms such as small breakout groups so that all members of the team can participate freely in the discussion.

> BONUS: For more insights on creating an inclusive organizational culture, take a look at the Checklist for creating an inclusive culture here.

C.2.3. VALUES AND POLICIES

Your organisational values document or policy serve as an outline to your organisation's core principles. They establish culture as well as serve as an indicator for all the policies that are and will be put in place. Your team and stakeholders might already have deeply-held values associated with your organisation, which may or may not align with your gender lens goals so this articulation of shared values can help in better alignment within the team. Expressing values around inclusion signals to your team and to the world that you are willing to walk the walk while you talk the talk and that only inclusive behaviour is welcomed and tolerated in your organisation. This can in turn help to attract, hire, retain, and align the beliefs of a gender diverse team and board. Moreover, it can also help attract diverse clients, stakeholders, and supporters. Therefore, it is recommended that your organization embrace gender diversity and proactively share your commitment with the team and stakeholders through the values and policies of your company.

C.2.4. INITIAL STEPS TO BUILDING A GENDER VALUES POLICY

1. **Build a value around gender by articulating the vision that you have for a gender inclusive team as well as the standard of inclusive conduct to which your organisation holds itself. Include this in an Organizational Code of Conduct.** This gives a clear message to potential employees, partners and customers that you are a committed organization. It also creates clear goals that your organization can pursue.

2. **Share your values in all marketing activities.** Make your values visible on the website, social media, and job publications. This creates clarity on your organizational goals and culture.

3. **Design new and existing policies in order to be appealing to different genders.** For instance, the term 'maternity leave' can be framed as 'parental leave' with regard to making it accessible to all genders.

C.3. TEAM

C.3.1 TEAM COMPOSITION

A team must have the right mix of skills, abilities, experience, and backgrounds in order to achieve an organisation's goals. In order to achieve the greatest outcome, decision making power and leadership positions need to be equally distributed amongst all genders. As an IE or SP, you may wish to create gender diverse team, where decision-making power is equally distributed between all gender groups.

> BONUS: Research has shown that diverse teams lead to improved organisational performance and financial success. Striving for a diverse team also sends a message to your employees, your clients and the ecosystem in which you work that gender matters to your organisation. Having a gender diverse team can increase your insight into the needs and motivations of the entrepreneurs (or clients) you're supporting, and inform the development of your programs (or products / services) in order to attract and cater to both genders. It is especially important for your leadership team to be gender diverse, so that bias can be reduced when key decisions are being made.

C.3.2. INITIAL STEPS TO BUILDING A GENDER DIVERSE TEAM

1. **Analyse your team's composition**: Evaluate the distribution of gender amongst key decision-makers, and what voices are being heard throughout the processes. Subsequently, put strategies in place in order to achieve a gender-balanced team such as hiring women members to new positions as much as possible.

2. **Don't forget to monitor**: Establish quarterly or bi-annual reporting looking at the gender composition of the organisation in terms of staff numbers and positions, and analyze with part-time vs full-time equivalents, and ultimately salary distribution. Think of sharing the insights internally and externally.

3. **Consider creating channels (even anonymous, if required) where team members** can share their experiences and issues, as well as give suggestions to create an inclusive space, representative of all team members.

> REMEMBER: The idea of creating a gender diverse team is to do away with power dynamics, this enables members of both genders to actively participate and contribute. The fact that you have created a gender diverse team is just the first step. It is even more important that you engage the different genders at work on a daily basis that allows this diverse team to function at its best.

C.4. BOARD

C.4.1. BOARD COMPOSITION AND PROCESSES

Board processes need to be inclusive so that the differing perspectives, experiences, and skills of the board members are heard. This contributes to a well-functioning board that is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

C.4.2. INITIAL STEPS TO CREATING AN INCLUSIVE BOARD

1. **Try including as many women board members as possible.** This is applicable to both SPs and the IEs that they support. This will bring in diversity of thought and ultimately create a culture where persons of both genders feel secure in their position and are equally heard.
2. **Carefully consider the timing and location of your meetings, while ensuring meetings are equally accessible.** Think of weekdays or weekends, as well as online solutions to increase accessibility. Shorten your meetings and offer options to engage in discussions in written form (e.g. email).
3. **Alternate board chair's position between genders.** If someone does not feel comfortable or experienced enough to take on this role yet, consider having two board chairpersons.
4. **Rotate administrative duties** (e.g. minute taking) **between genders** in order to not perpetuate social norms. Or think of delegating administrative duties to a specific role coupled with decision power.

5. **Ensure that both the board chair as well as the agenda invite all members to speak equally at all meetings.** Repeat your statement at the beginning of every meeting to invite all speakers. Think of proactively inviting everyone to participate in discussions.

6. **Clarify what is appropriate versus inappropriate behavior for every board member** by creating an organisational code of conduct.

RESOURCE: If you want to learn how an organisational code of conduct looks with a gender lens looks like, have a look at this example. LSE Generate in partnership with Genderscope created an example of an organisational conduct. Genderscope is a gender consultancy that targets the private sector. Go to Organisational code of conduct.

"Women constitute half the world's population—nearly 4 billion people. They produce about 37 percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and more than half the world's food supply. In some countries, female constitute nearly half the labour force. Therefore, broadscale restrictions on this group's economic participation would necessarily have a massive effect on national (and global) prosperity."[16]

- Linda Scott, USAID

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[16] https://banyanglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Gender-Inequality-Causes-Poverty-Briefer.pdf