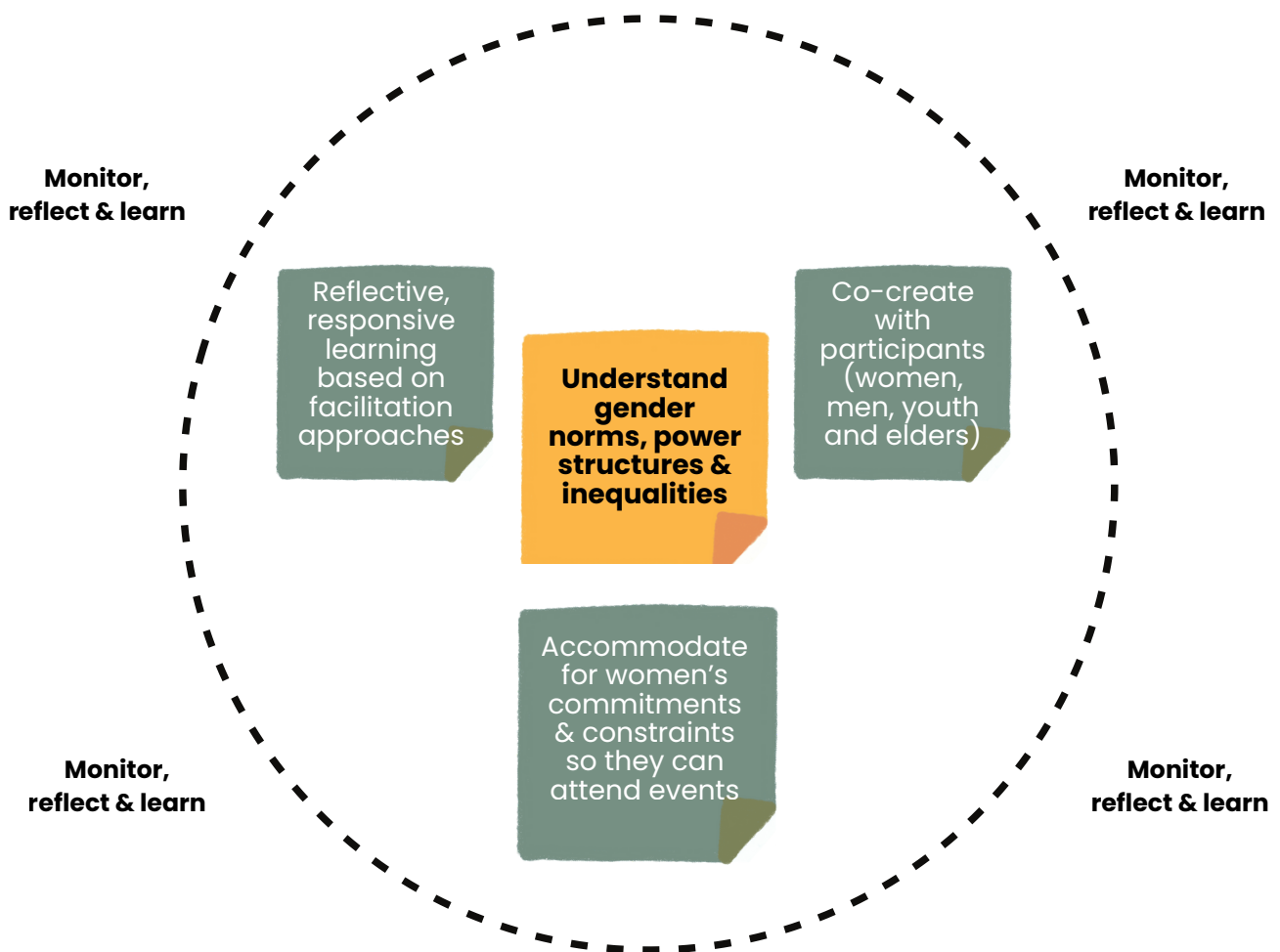


Beyond Attendance: Tips for Meaningful, Inclusive Gender Work in Projects

GENDER

This tip sheet offers practical ways to make your project, work or farm more inclusive of women. Many of the ideas are drawn from the [2024 Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa's \(KCOA's\) Gender Guide](#) and aim to support meaningful inclusion that benefits everyone.



Implemented by:



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1. Understanding & planning

Get to know the local context before starting your project or farm work. Understanding gender roles, power dynamics and social structures will help you design and budget for activities that work well for both women and men. Pay attention to the gender norms – current gender perceptions, beliefs and practices within the group(s) and how these affect the way women and men interact – this insight helps you plan in a way that respects and responds to real-life situations.

- **Conduct a gender analysis**

Start by learning how gender roles, power dynamics and social norms work in the community you're engaging with. Find out what people believe, how they behave and how this shapes the opportunities and relationships between women and men. This understanding will help you design a project that truly meets people's needs.

- **Integrate gender into project design and budget**

From the outset, build gender considerations into project plans and budgets. For example, include provisions for things like:

- Context and gender analysis.
- Childcare and additional transport costs.
- Skilled facilitation.
- Diverse representation in leadership.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

2. Implementation phase: Inclusive practice

- **Co-create and co-design activities**

Co-create your project with participants. Work together to understand different needs, value all voices equally and create space for participants to lead. This builds shared ownership and stronger results.

- **Ensure diverse leadership**

Make sure leadership reflects the diversity of your community – include women and men, young people, elders, different racial or ethnic groups and people with disabilities. Use quotas systems to ensure there are enough people from different backgrounds, marginalised groups in particular, in leadership and decision-making positions so they have a real voice in decisions (critical mass representation).

- **Remove practical barriers to participation**

Address women's specific commitments and constraints so they are able to participate in events and activities by doing things like:

- Providing childcare services
- Scheduling meetings during daylight hours for safe travel.
- Choosing accessible venues close to participants' homes.
- Being aware of power dynamics that may inhibit women's participation.

For some useful practical tips refer to Oxfam's 2014 [Quick Guide to Promoting Women's Participation](#).

- **Use skilled, responsive facilitation**

Select experienced facilitators with these skills:

- Deep understanding of local context and gender dynamics.
- Ability to navigate power and group dynamics.
- Flexibility and responsiveness to participant needs.
- Strong listening and communication skills.
- Non-judgmental attitudes.
- Ability to reflect on and challenge their own biases.

Facilitation practices include:

- Iterative approach: Adapting activities based on participant responses.
- Participatory methods: Using creative tools like theatre, art, anonymous feedback and role-play to navigate gender norms. For example, KHSA's [Guide to Facilitating Participatory Theatre](#).
- Creating a safe space: Establishing ground rules, acknowledging equal value of all input, and consideration given to splitting groups by gender or other criteria when needed.

3. Sustaining change: monitoring and support

- **Implement ongoing monitoring and assessment**

Regular reflection and "pause and learn" sessions with participants are essential to:

- Ensure participants feel heard, safe, and comfortable.
- Assess whether positive changes in gender equality are occurring.
- Identify potential negative repercussions early.
- Allow for course corrections.

- **Involve all stakeholders**

Because everyone plays a role in shaping gender norms, real change needs everyone's involvement – women and men, young and old. Include all groups in the process to create lasting, meaningful transformation.

- **Create safe spaces for expression**

Create safe, dedicated spaces where marginalised team members and project participants can speak openly. These spaces spark new ideas, build confidence and help make your project or organisation stronger and more resilient.

- **Establish accountability mechanisms**

Implement clear policies on harassment and gender-based violence, including:

- Clear grievance procedures that consider power dynamics.
- Designated focal points and safe spaces for reporting issues, this could include training respected community members (women and men) to identify and escalate concerns.
- Accessible channels for ongoing feedback; for example, regular community feedback meetings, one-on-one meetings, or more anonymous options like a suggestion box or surveys.

Make these policies responsive and relevant to the specific groups involved, remembering that those that are most vulnerable and marginalised may have limited levels of literacy and access to technology.

- **Build support networks**

Working on gender issues can be emotionally difficult. Connect with organisations that can provide:

- Counselling services.
- Mental health support.
- Advice and guidance.
- Training and resources.



Useful terms

- **Critical mass:** Refers to the minimum number of people from diverse backgrounds on the management team/leadership positions necessary to ensure that their voices are no longer perceived as marginal, but become an integral part of the dominant discourse. It is the threshold beyond which their influence becomes significant and transformative. **In simple terms:** Having enough people from different backgrounds in leadership so their voices actually matter and aren't ignored.
- **Gender equity:** Equity is a principle involving the pursuit of fair treatment. It recognises and takes into account the existence of inequalities and the different needs that women and men may have, showing the difference in treatment need to re-establish equality. **In simple terms:** Giving people what they need to be equal. Sometimes this means treating people differently because they start from different places. (Source: [Agronomes & Vétérinaire sans Frontières, 2025](#))
- **Gender:** The socio-cultural roles, behaviours and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women and further gender identities, influencing their opportunities, responsibilities, and access to resources. **In simple terms:** The roles and behaviors that society expects from men and women. These affect what opportunities people get and what resources they can access. (Source: [KCOA Gender Guide, 2024](#))
- **Gender equality:** The equal rights, opportunities, and treatment of individuals, regardless of gender, aiming to eliminate discrimination and promote fairness in all aspects of life. **In simple terms:** Treating all people fairly, no matter if they are men, women, or have other gender identities. (Source: [KCOA Gender Guide, 2024](#))
- **Intersectionality:** The interconnected nature of social categories such as gender, race, class and sexuality, leading to overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage. **In simple terms:** When someone faces discrimination for multiple reasons – like being a woman AND being from a minority group. (Source: [KCOA Gender Guide, 2024](#))
- **Sex:** Biological characteristic and refers to all the physiological differences between women and men (reproductive and genital systems, chromosomes, gametes, etc.). **In simple terms:** The biological differences between people – like reproductive systems, chromosomes, and physical characteristics that make someone male or female. (Source: [Agronomes & Vétérinaire sans Frontières, 2025](#))

Useful resources

Project planning and implementation

- [Guide to gender mainstreaming in the project cycle](#) by Agronomes & Vétérinaire sans Frontières
- [Gender mainstreaming the project cycle](#) by UNIDO Gender

Gender analysis tools

- [Gender analysis for project planning](#) by Grassroots Collective
- [Guidance note to preparing a rapid gender analysis](#) by CARE International

Supporting women's participation

- [Quick guide to promoting women's participation](#) by Oxfam

Participatory methods

- [Facilitator's guide to participatory theatre for community engagement and advocacy](#) by Soils, Food and Healthy Communities
- [Measuring gender dynamics in resilience: tools for integrating gender into resilience focused programmes](#) by Mercy Corps

About the KHSA

The KHSA is part of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA), a collaborative country-led partnership funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and nongovernmental organisations across Africa. The aim of the project is to strengthen actors and their networks in the five knowledge hubs in their role of promoting organic agriculture and agroecology.

The South African-based Sustainability Institute supports project implementation in southern Africa. Activities are focused in Zambia, implemented by Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Zambia and Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre; in Namibia implemented by the Namibia Nature Foundation in collaboration with the Namibian Organic Association; in Malawi implemented by Soil, Food and Healthy Communities and Kusamala Institute of Agriculture and Ecology. SAOSO and PGS SA are KHSA's in-country partners in South Africa. The other knowledge hubs are implemented by GIZ with partner organisations in North, West, Eastern and Central Africa.