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PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR GRANTMAKERS

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# GRANT MAKING WITH A GENDER LENS

# grant making with a gender lens

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### **Introduction**

Using a “gender lens” in grant making is partly a matter of perspective, partly a matter of practice. Why do some grant makers think it’s important to bring gender analysis into their work? How do they go about understanding gender, using it, and applying it in their own organizations and their grant making?

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### **Understanding It: What Gender Analysis Is and Isn’t**

“Gender” doesn’t mean “not men,” and “gender analysis” is more than a way of thinking about programs for women and girls. By uncovering assumptions about gender, grant makers have found hidden opportunities, framed more insightful questions, and explored the possibility of new programs and organizations that work better for women and girls and men and boys.

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### **Using It with Grantees: Gender Analysis in Grant Making**

At its best, gender analysis is a tool for promoting curiosity, which in turn can help people improve the effectiveness of programs and institutions. In this section, grant makers offer their advice on how to foster inquiry by asking the right questions at the right time, encouraging experimentation, and supporting learning.

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### **Applying It in Your Own Organization**

Gender analysis works best when it’s on the agenda for the whole foundation. Grant makers suggest a number of ways to get colleagues thinking about gender. The key, they say, is to emphasize connections between gender analysis and the values and principles of your organization.

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**IN THIS GUIDE,** grant makers and grantees describe the experience of using a “gender lens” in their work. They explain what gender analysis is and isn’t — and why it can help shape more effective programs and organizations. The guide also takes a closer look at how gender analysis has led to new thinking in fields as diverse as public health, international development, juvenile justice, and youth services.

*This guide was written by William Ryan. It is part of the GrantCraft series.*

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*Publications and videos in this series are not meant to give instructions or prescribe solutions; rather, they are intended to spark ideas, stimulate discussion, and suggest possibilities. Comments about this guide or other GrantCraft materials may be sent to Jan Jaffe, project leader, at [j.jaffe@grantcraft.org](mailto:j.jaffe@grantcraft.org).*

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## Introduction

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“People worry they’ll be harangued, or maybe they’ve had the experience of being harangued.”

— A researcher, on the difficulty of starting conversations about gender and program design

“You can’t just paint the walls pink and call it a girls program.”

— An advocate for girls in the U.S. juvenile justice system, critiquing the superficial program designs that purport to meet girls’ needs

“That’s interesting. We have more boys in the public-speaking program, and our girls are involved in internal leadership. Why is that?”

— A grant maker, recounting a turning point in a grantor-grantee conversation about gender and program design

**Consciously and unconsciously, grant makers use different “lenses”** to help them understand a field, program, or organization. They might view the same landscape from several perspectives — for example, leadership, public policy, and community engagement — each time seeing something different. The lenses they choose shape their decisions.

This guide features the ideas and experiences of grant makers who use gender as a lens to inform their grant making. Working in a variety of foundations and with different program and policy interests, they come to their views on gender by different routes. For a former Peace Corps volunteer and human-rights worker, sensitivity to gender is “a matter of justice.” For an anthropologist-turned-grant maker, the fact that programs and policies that disadvantage girls actually disadvantage entire communities was an unavoidable research finding: He “didn’t actually look for it,” but finding it was a professional “coming of age” that has shaped his work ever since. For a grant maker involved in global HIV research, it now seems impossible to set research priorities without understanding how the role of women within their families varies from culture to culture and affects the prospects for different public-health strategies.

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Whatever the reason, each of these grant makers has accepted a simple proposition: In virtually all societies, men and women have different social positions. Their different roles and upbringings give men and women different skills, opportunities, and resources – and, usually, different amounts of power.

In this guide, grant makers explain how gender differences shape the prospects for effective programs and supporting social change – goals central to much of philanthropy. They explain why they choose to look at their work through a gender lens, their experiences in doing so, and the results they see. They tell how using gender as an analytic tool has transformed public health, international development, juvenile justice, and other fields, enabling those fields to serve people more effectively and contributing to a

more just society. They explain, as well, how gender analysis can be used in combination with other “lenses,” such as race or ethnicity, to gain perspectives on grantee organizations and their own foundations.

Gender analysis is part perspective and part practice, a way of trying to understand things and a set of techniques for converting that understanding into results. This guide is organized to help grant makers explore three aspects of using a gender lens:

- **Understanding it:** What grant makers say gender analysis is and isn’t.
- **Using it:** Principles and tools for examining programs and organizations through a gender lens.
- **Applying it in your own organization:** Suggestions from grant makers who have “mainstreamed” gender analysis in their own institutions.

## WHERE THE EXAMPLES COME FROM

This guide was developed through a series of interviews and informal conversations with more than two dozen grant makers, scholars, and nonprofit practitioners in a wide array of organizations. They generously shared insights on how gender analysis has clarified unexamined assumptions, made their programs more effective, and influenced thinking and practice in their fields. At the same time, many of our contributors talked frankly about tensions they’ve encountered in trying to apply a gender lens in their work.

A list of people who contributed their thoughts and experiences appears on page 24.

# Understanding It: What Gender Analysis Is and Isn't

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**The techniques of gender analysis** emerge from a few basic principles that help define what it is and isn't, what it does and doesn't do.

## WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT DOES

In describing gender analysis, grant makers referred to four starting points:

**Gender is social not biological.** The term "gender" is used to refer to the social positions of men and women and our assumptions about who they are. Those social differences themselves differ from society to society, place to place, and time to time. If gender were about fixed, innate, or biological differences, then we wouldn't need gender analysis at all: We would always know what differences to expect and could invent "male" and "female" programs. The point of gender analysis is to identify and anticipate differences, explore their significance, and respond to them.

**Gender analysis is a form of inquiry.** Gender analysis examines whether and how programs, policies, and even organizational cultures can affect men and women differently because of their different social situations. Grant makers observe that people may mistakenly think that to use gender analysis is to subscribe to a specific ideological agenda. Yet understanding that boys and girls seem to have very different experiences of the juvenile justice system is not to say that there is an orthodox way to respond to those needs. Gender analysis frames questions; it does not dictate answers.

**Gender analysis promotes social justice.** The different effects of a policy, program, or institution on men and women can lead to injustices small and

large. The problems extend far beyond the obvious (for example, that many political systems grant power to men but not women) to encompass subtle disparities that can produce inequitable results. It's precisely because injustices often arise from unexamined aspects of daily life that we need some sort of inquiry to understand them. When understanding leads to action, the result is often a more equitable workplace, community, or society.

## Gender analysis improves programs.

As grant makers have learned from their own experience, inequitable programs or policies are often ineffective ones, as well. Programs that aspire to serve men and women, or boys and girls, often end up not working well for one or the other. Gender analysis can help identify and correct these problems.

## WHAT IT ISN'T, AND WHAT IT DOESN'T DO

It's also important to be clear about what gender analysis isn't. "You say 'gender,' and they hear 'not men,'" says one grant maker of conversations with colleagues and grantees that have gone nowhere. Grant makers emphasized four helpful not's:

**Gender analysis does not explain everything.** "There's no such thing as a generic woman," points out one grant maker. Social position is not only about gender. Class, race or ethnicity — and sometimes sexual orientation, religious affiliation, caste, and clan — matter, too. Grant makers who use gender analysis also tend to weigh other features of social position and need. For example, it's hard to think productively

*“The heart of the matter,” says one grant maker, “is whether you’re conscious and critical of the gender assumptions” that shape your thinking.*

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about AIDS prevention for women in a generic way. The situations and needs of middle-class women in an affluent, Western country are different from those of poor women in the same country — and even further removed from those of poor women in a developing country. It’s thinking about gender as one element of a social situation that can inspire new responses. As one grant maker explained, “A gender lens strengthens what I learn from looking at the people we’re trying to serve in terms of class, race, or sexual orientation.”

**Gender analysis doesn’t compromise neutrality.** The real choice is whether to engage in thoughtful gender analysis or to be guided by unexamined gender assumptions that pass for neutrality. “The heart of the matter,” says one grant maker, “is whether you’re conscious and critical of the gender assumptions” that shape your thinking. To leave gender out as a consideration, she argues, is not to be neutral. It’s “inherently biased toward the status quo,” and since the status quo is often inclined toward male experience and perspectives, it’s not neutral at all. It was that “neutral” thinking, says a former grant maker and health researcher, that allowed people to count condoms among the anti-AIDS measures that women use, an assumption that he and others found preposterous once they stopped to reflect on it. “Of course,” he says in reflecting on gender in his work, “women don’t use condoms. Men do.” Uncovering the fact that “neutral” really meant “male” opened the door for a new and promising strategy. (For more on this case, see “Gender Analysis in Action,” page 6.

**Gender analysis doesn’t apply only to women and girls.** Because “neutral” has in fact meant “male” in most societies, gender analysis does involve understanding the implications of policies and programs for women. But as several grant makers argued, it should also involve assessing the needs of boys and men. “We want to support programs that offer the chance of equitable outcomes for women and girls and for men and boys,” said one. As a grant maker who works in the health area explained, there’s “decent access” to health care for girls in many communities but very little access for boys. Building on that insight, one national foundation, according to its president, is “looking more at gender roles for both women and men.” She notes that surveys of public attitudes increasingly find that men are dissatisfied with the roles assigned them, especially when those roles prevent them from “participating in family life.”

**Gender analysis is not the particular province of women.** Many of the stories recounted in this guide came from men who apply gender analysis in their work. Moreover, our contributors stressed that thoughtful, deliberate grant making comes from listening to many voices — women’s and men’s — in a field or community. Regarding her own role in developing strategy, one grant maker commented, “Just because I am a woman and from a particular ethnic group does not mean that I know what needs to be done in a community.”

## Gender Analysis in Action: Three Cases

Grant makers use a gender lens mainly because they understand that it can improve programs and, ultimately, communities and societies. Grant makers suggested three cases to illustrate the power of gender analysis in action.

### AIDS AND MICROBICIDES

The development of microbicides — compounds that women can apply vaginally to prevent the transmission of HIV — promises to revolutionize anti-AIDS strategies in developing countries that are being devastated by the epidemic. The inspiration for this relatively low-tech innovation came not from the research lab but from gender analysis.

“If someone had asked 20 years ago, ‘What will women need in order to protect themselves?’” says Lori Heise of the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, the AIDS epidemic in the developing world, where 60 percent of victims are now women, “might have been a different story.” But a “gender blind spot,” according to Heise, kept the question off the table during the early years of the epidemic.

That changed in 1990, at an international preventive health care conference in Washington, D.C. Frontline health workers from developing countries argued that the strategy of the day — “condom education and condom distribution” — took no account of the social reality of the women they worked with and, as a result, was simply ineffectual.

The health workers had in effect conducted their own gender analysis. Their findings challenged current practice. First, the at-risk women they needed to reach were married — to men who were having “outside relationships.” Second, the women were often economically dependent on their husbands. In “epidemiological discourse,” says Heise, “we say risky behavior is not using a condom.” But insisting that their husbands use condoms — “not for a one-night stand, but forever, as part of their marriage” — put women at real risk of ending up rejected or divorced, “thrown out of the house.” Third, many of the women were young and wanted children. They needed to be able to protect themselves and get pregnant — using a means they could control.

In other words, the social position of women made the apparently gender-neutral idea of condom use profoundly impractical. Taking account of that social situation led to the launch of the Global Campaign for Microbicides, a broad-based coalition of NGOs working toward new prevention options for women: “If they can send a man to the moon,” asked a Ugandan health organizer, “why can’t science produce something that women can use to protect themselves and allow them to get pregnant while staying healthy?”

As Heise found when she began questioning scientists immediately after the conference, science can produce such a thing — if someone thinks to ask for it and supports its development. The recently created International Partnership for Microbicides has helped do both by accelerating the development of several products for the large-scale trials needed to gain regulatory approval.

With those approvals still several years away, “it’s important not to let the gender perspective slip,” argues one grant maker. In fact, a good interim solution, he suggests, might be the female condom. And as with microbicides, moving it off the “back burner” will mean getting past “paying lip service to the gender perspective.”

### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

International development organizations like the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development are among the most notable students of gender analysis. They came to embrace gender analysis after discovering that their efforts weren’t succeeding without it.

Early development practices, explains Martha Chen, lecturer in public policy at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, were thought to be gender neutral. In reality, the models that development agencies exported to developing countries were not only based on gender assumptions but shaped by the conventional gender roles of men and women in the United States. For example, many U.S. Agricultural Extension Service programs assumed that men worked on the farm and women worked in the house. This image — already too simplified as a description of American farm life — was even less apt when exported.



Frontline workers were left to cope with faulty assumptions and the misguided programs that resulted from them. Chen recalls the classic story told to her by a poultry developer working in Bangladesh. His program model directed him to offer education and training to men at their homes. But knowing that women, not men, were really caring for the poultry, he hit upon the idea of asking for a cup of tea at the beginning of each visit. This ploy got him into the kitchen, where he could deliver his advice within earshot of the women poultry workers as they served the men. Operators of scores of other development programs found the same thing: Programs that didn't account for gender didn't produce results. Eventually, policymakers discovered this — and something more as well: If programs not only respond to the real situations of women but actually improve their situations — particularly through education — women find ways to benefit their families and communities.

As gender analysis has become central to development, the tools and frameworks used to conduct it have become increasingly sophisticated. All of them start, says Chen, with three fundamental questions: “Who does what? Who owns what? Who gets what?” These questions can inform the design of a single local program or a national policy. Ideally, Chen hopes, program planners and policymakers will take gender analysis one step further by asking about “the conditions that give rise to women’s disadvantage in the first place.”

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

For decades, the gender assumptions implicit in the U.S. juvenile justice system were simple and serviceable: Since boys in the system vastly outnumbered girls, making the system work for boys was tantamount to making the system work — period. And since the girls in the system were often runaways seen as needing protection more than anything else, keeping girls off the street passed for a thoughtful response to their needs.

Two developments of recent years, however, have moved gender analysis toward the center of program design and policymaking. First, the system is dealing with many more girls. Second, many more of those girls are involved in destructive and dangerous behavior.

Those calling for a new understanding of gender in juvenile justice agree on the type of superficial response that won't work: “You can't just paint the walls pink,” says James Bell of the W. Haywood Burns Institute, and call it a “girls program.”

Instead, Bell and others argue, juvenile justice for girls needs to understand the patterns and experiences that bring girls into the system. In many cases, they say, those patterns and experiences are quite different from those of boys. And programs — which range from residential detention facilities to community centers that aim to help young people stay out of the system — should change as a result.

A widespread, apparently gender-neutral preference for strict attendance policies at youth programs illustrates the point. To promote responsibility and commitment, many programs eject participants for tardiness or absence, which sometimes counts as a parole violation. But according to Francine Sherman of the Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project at Boston College Law School, practitioners and researchers alike have discovered that at-risk girls have a propensity for coping with trauma or stress by running away. So a strict attendance policy that might get boys to focus on the program could end up driving girls out entirely. More practically, says Lateefah Simon of the Center for Young Women's Development, a number of girls have babies. Their good-faith efforts to cope with a sick baby or unreliable child-care can mean absences that provoke an inappropriately rigid reaction. Without a “gender-specific understanding,” says Simon, “it's hard to know how to respond.”

Girls' mental health is another case in point. Sherman says studies find that up to 70 percent of girls in the juvenile justice system are depressed or have post-traumatic stress disorder, conditions that may reflect a high incidence of sexual abuse before reaching the system. To miss that, says Sherman, would limit the prospects for helping girls increase their focus and motivation.

In any of these examples, the argument is not that girls and boys are innately different. Rather, they tend to have different experiences — one set more common for girls and another for boys — that call for programs specifically tailored to each.

# Using It with Grantees: Gender Analysis in Grant Making

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**Using a gender lens in grant making can raise issues of power** — and not only the obvious ones having to do with relationships between men and women, but also subtle ones having to do with relationships between grant makers and grantees. To begin, it may be helpful to distinguish between analysis of *grantee programs* and analysis of *grantee organizations*.

## LOOKING AT PROGRAMS THROUGH A GENDER LENS

In theory, looking at programs through a gender lens fits easily within the work of grant making because it is a method for exploring program effectiveness — something grant makers and grantees are accustomed to doing together. But grantees may not see the connection between effectiveness and gender. To the contrary, explained one grant maker, many people seem to think, “That was a ‘70s thing. Women and men are equal now. We don’t have to worry about that.” Consequently, the challenge for grant makers is twofold: first, to stimulate thinking about gender and effectiveness; and, then, to use that thinking to improve program effectiveness. Here are some suggestions:

**Use a standard protocol for a first look.** Some foundations have developed standard protocols to help grant makers think about the gender implications of proposed programs. (See “Gender Analysis Tools,” page 17.) A protocol can help answer the question, Has this program taken gender into account? Grant makers caution, however, that the questions can sometimes provoke a counter-reaction, especially if the grantee has not given much thought to gender issues. If posed too

early in the discussion, one grant maker reports, questions about gender can lead some people to “just shut down.” A checklist can sometimes be a better tool for organizing your own thoughts in advance than for engaging a grantee directly.

**During discussions with grantees, encourage curiosity.** The biggest resource for helping grantees improve programs isn’t a grant maker’s knowledge — it’s a grantee’s curiosity.

Uncovering the gender implications of a program, and then figuring out how to respond to them, are creative acts. According to grant makers who regularly use a gender lens, their first challenge is often to help grantees become curious, in effect helping them move —

■ *From indifference ...* If grant makers bypass the challenge of nurturing curiosity and baldly inject gender into the discussion, grantees may not see the relevance of gender to their work, or how it can contribute to program effectiveness. Because they’re not intellectually engaged, they become “somewhat perfunctory,” explained one grant maker. In the worst case, grantees simply comply with what they think the funder wants: “You get, ‘OK, we’ll set up a girls program,’” she explains, without asking questions that can lead to different approaches. Gender analysis is reduced to gender hoop jumping.

■ *... to inquiry.* Grant makers report a different result when they can stimulate curiosity, usually, as one said, by being “enthusiastic” and “doing half the learning myself.” When a grant maker’s curiosity becomes contagious, grantees tend to “look more

closely,” says another grant maker. In the best cases, they begin making observations about their own programs, and then reflecting on them. “You hear, ‘Oh that’s interesting,’” she said, recounting a typical example. “We have more boys in the public speaking program, and our girls are involved in internal leadership. Why is that?” When grantees frame questions about their own work, real gender analysis begins.

**Use “effectiveness questions” to uncover gender assumptions.** The goal of gender analysis is not to help grantees focus on gender per se but on how gender and program effectiveness are related. Instead of talking about gender, explained one grant maker, it may make more sense to ask about the program. Typical questions include:

- *How does the program work?* Assumptions about what we know and how things work can sometimes be assumptions about what we know about men and how things work for men. A recent example has fast become a classic. Studies of emergency room workers assessing heart-attack symptoms suggest they really rely on their knowledge of men’s heart attack symptoms. Since what’s effective for men is not always effective for women, asking how a program might work for different users is one way of checking assumptions.
- *Where does program outreach take place?* Thinking about the location of programs can often uncover assumptions about who will be served, and how. For example, a job-

training program that recruits only in welfare offices is likely to attract only women, since men aren’t eligible for public assistance in many jurisdictions.

- *When are programs offered?* Reflecting on timing might also uncover assumptions. Timing affects some participants, such as mothers with young children or people who work more than one job, profoundly.

**During discussions, watch for jargon creep.** Grant makers who have started reading about gender analysis and discussing it with peers often find that specialized terms become a useful shorthand. But a lot of those terms are impenetrable jargon for many grantees. One grant maker learned this the hard way. After a long meeting in which she had stressed the need for “gender balance,” one participant approached her for clarification about her concern for “agenda balance.” She’s watched her jargon ever since.

Another grant maker is vigilant about the way grant seekers use jargon to frame their arguments, especially when they know a funder is interested in gender issues. “If they’re really good at the language, they can run circles around you,” she said. “You have to press to find out what they’re really saying – and what it means for constituents.”

**Ask what “universal” really means.** Some grantees feel that by offering a universal or co-ed program they have sidestepped the gender dilemma and, moreover, done the “fair thing” by offering the same program to everyone. But universal programs always rest on some sort of assumptions about gender.

*To understand the impact of gender, it's often necessary to bring race, class, culture, and other factors into the picture.*

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The challenge is to help a grantee identify assumptions that might have been overlooked and recognize their consequences.

For example, researcher Molly Mead, in examining youth development programs, found that programs that attracted few girls and marginalized them were often based on assumptions that equated a “neutral” perspective with a boys’ perspective.

**Think about other lenses that might apply.** To understand the impact of gender, it’s often necessary to bring race, class, culture, and other factors into the picture. One West Coast grant maker recalled a project on immigrants’ rights in the workplace: “When we used the two lenses together – gender and immigration status – we discovered that a lot of women in our region were working in other people’s houses, taking care of children or house cleaning. As a result, we helped our grantee start a cooperative to represent and support workers employed in homes.”

**Use brainstorming to move from diagnosis to design.** The grant maker’s role in responding to gender issues depends partly on the culture and practices of the foundation. If the foundation encourages a more hands-off approach, the grant maker might simply urge a grant seeker to give further thought to gender issues uncovered during discussions. If collaboration and give-and-take are more the norm, moving from diagnosis to design typically involves joint brainstorming.

Recalling a typical example from his work at a family foundation, one grant maker described how he asked the dean of a theological seminary about

the enrollment of women in his school. The dean noted that very few women were enrolled, despite efforts to recruit female students. In further discussion, the two began to focus on faculty composition: Perhaps the absence of women on the faculty was affecting the program’s appeal to women. They began exploring options, which ultimately led to a grant for a faculty recruitment program. “They had been thinking about this problem all along,” notes the grant maker, “but didn’t think to ask for a grant about it.”

**Encourage experimentation and research when the best design isn’t apparent.** A closer look at data may reveal significant patterns. In one workforce development program, for example, data disaggregated by gender showed that women’s travel patterns were different because of child care and household responsibilities. To probe this finding, the program interviewed a sample of women, then began to offer participants a ride home after work and access to emergency transportation.

Sometimes a gender problem is clear but the solution is not, and supporting experimentation is the best grant-making strategy. In their forthcoming book, *Effective Philanthropy*, Mary Ellen Capek and Molly Mead recount one example. Grant makers and grantees at a public foundation noted that girls’ attendance at some youth programs was very low compared with boys’, and that girls who did attend sometimes barely participated in the program activities on offer. Additionally, girls and boys tended to segregate themselves, with boys in the computer lab and girls in the craft room. The

funder offered a grant to help the program managers experiment. Among other things, they assigned all girls to the computer room and all boys to the craft room for a short period. The experience disproved the program staff's original assumptions – that boys simply don't like crafts, and girls don't like computers – and led them to encourage kids to try both programs. When co-ed programs were restored, attendance and participation by girls in all program activities increased.

**Support wider learning and experimentation.** Sometimes grant makers encourage experimentation among a number of grantees – at a field level. A family foundation with an interest in juvenile justice, for example, learned from research and grantee reports that programs were not meeting the needs of girls. The reports suggested broad lessons for programming, but they didn't specify best practices. To encourage the development of new programs for girls, the foundation issued a request for proposals, then awarded a series of grants to organizations that converted research lessons into actual program designs.

Grant makers can also use their convening capacity to enable grantees to learn from each other. Conferences, workshops, and other contacts can help create a learning network within a field.

## WHAT ABOUT MEN AND BOYS?

Because women and girls have been so pervasively disadvantaged by nominally “neutral” programs and policies that were actually designed for men and boys, it may seem unnecessary to study the needs of boys and men. But as many grant makers are learning, gender analysis is increasingly uncovering issues that affect mostly boys and men. The result, as one grant maker put it, is that “we need to do both.”

In medicine and health services, for example, the idea that women are often poorly served is widely acknowledged, although the situation is not yet remedied. Drugs that work often turn out to be drugs that work for men, and “classic” symptoms often turn out to be men's symptoms. But as researchers have begun to look at questions of health services demand, they have discovered a different gender imbalance: Men are far less likely than women to seek health care, even when they need it.

According to one grant maker, findings about low rates of health care utilization among men have prompted a new generation of outreach programs. These programs take blood-pressure screening and health education out of institutions and into neighborhood gathering spots, county fairs, and even, in a recent effort in the United Kingdom, local pubs. A few providers have sought to attract underserved men; for example, one opened a

community health center aimed exclusively at low-income men. In response to these specially tailored services, says one grant maker, “men are coming out of the woodwork.”

Attracting far greater public notice is the situation of boys in the American classroom. In a series of books, articles, and lectures, a handful of researchers have argued that standard classroom practices and curricula typically don't serve boys well. As William H. Pollack, director of the Center for Men and Young Men at McLean Hospital, told *Education Week* magazine, boys “come to school already socialized in a different way.” Their learning, social, and emotional needs are not accommodated in most classrooms, where the curriculum “just happens to work better for girls.” As a result, many boys are disengaged, discouraged, or reassigned to special-education classrooms. Instead of faulting and fixing boys, Pollack argues, we should be reconsidering how classrooms work.

These changes need not happen at the expense of girls and women. This is “not a zero-sum game,” concludes one grant maker. Ultimately, she suggests, the measure of excellent programs and institutions is that they serve men and women, boys and girls equally well. But as gender analysis suggests, that can sometimes mean serving them differently.

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## LOOKING AT ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH A GENDER LENS

For some grant makers, a commitment to gender analysis is bound up in commitments to organizational equity and diversity. In conversations with grantees, they tend to ask questions about women's access to power and opportunity within the organization: How many women are involved? In what capacity? With what authority or influence? To grantees, these are complicated questions, and the foundation that asks them may seem like a powerhouse bent on imposing its views.

The grant makers we interviewed conclude that handling these conversations requires three things: an understanding of their own organization; a willingness to learn about the grantee organization; and careful attention to the power dynamics of grantor-grantee interactions throughout. Here's what they recommend:

**Understand your authorization.** The first gender-equity question is not for the grantee but for the grant maker: Where does my own organization stand? In other words, am I authorized to use gender equity as a major consideration in assessing grantee organizations? Most grant makers we interviewed see this as a matter of fairness to grant seekers, who need to know when they're dealing with a foundation's institutional priorities, not just a grant maker's personal vision.

If you do have authorization, it can be helpful to frame equity as a publicly acknowledged institutional value, not a personal crusade. As one grant maker explained, sometimes when she

broaches diversity questions with grantees, "They seem to think, 'She's doing that because she's a woman, or because she's black.' By personalizing the issue, they can discount it." Yet other grant makers note that they are careful not to leave their personal passion out. "It's important to say, 'These are also my values,'" said one. Grantees are less apt to treat the issue perfunctorily if they see that the grant maker is talking with authenticity and care.

If you're not authorized, suggest several grant makers, you've got to start your work at home. Try to build your own institution's commitment to gender awareness before you bring it to grantees. (See "Applying It in Your Own Organization," page 18.)

**Understand your institution's rationale.** To present gender equity as an institutional priority, grant makers need to understand how their foundations got to it. Why are they promoting it? Grant makers described several strands of the case for gender equity as an operating principle, and the implications for their own work:

- *"It's a matter of justice."* Most foundations that promote gender equity through their funding do it because they believe it's right. For that reason, several grant makers noted the importance of looking at leadership opportunities and access to power in informal networks, not just formal hierarchies. A rural grant maker, for example, looked with only mild interest at the under-representation of women in volunteer fire departments, until he understood that the volunteer fire department is "an informal power structure where community business gets done. And

*If mobilizing supporters is essential to a nonprofit's mission, then thinking about the organization's diversity is critical.*

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by excluding women, knowingly or unknowingly, women have been excluded from that power structure.”

- *“Diverse organizations design more effective programs.”* Because the experience of living as a woman in a society is different in some ways from that of living as a man in the same society, women’s perspective on program design may be different from men’s. This is a central proposition in diversity efforts — that more perspectives generate more insights and innovations. The Ugandan health worker who drew on her own assessment of how anti-AIDS strategies failed women is a case in point: She saw what many men did not. Involving women, however, should not substitute for thoughtful gender analysis, nor should it relieve men of that responsibility. But it does increase the chances for gender awareness and, therefore, the chances for program effectiveness. Another grant maker, who does not accept the idea that there is “a distinctive women’s leadership — more relational, less hierarchical, and so on,” does believe that “women leaders tend to change the agenda, because women often draw on different networks and bring new leadership in, and their networks tend to be much closer to the problem.”
- *“Diversity improves outreach.”* If mobilizing supporters is essential to a nonprofit’s mission, then thinking about the organization’s diversity is critical. One grant maker recalls talking to the founders of a public foundation about raising money for its grant-making program: “An hour

and a half into the meeting, I said, ‘Because you’re a public foundation that will be reaching out and trying to involve the community, you might consider what it means that you have only men involved.’ ” A few months and two planning retreats later, the founders had assembled a much more diverse board, which positioned them to tap community resources more effectively.

- *“Diversity improves quality of life.”* Some grant makers have concluded that “organizations of all sorts are healthier and work better to the extent that women are considered.” For example, workplace policies that are sensitive to the needs of working mothers — with flexible hours or good leave policies — are “good for everyone.” Preventing stress or burnout by helping workers balance work and personal life might start as a way to promote women’s involvement or advancement, but the policies usually benefit men and single or childless women, as well. And beyond ensuring fairness in the workplace, taking gender into account can help build a more inclusive workforce, whose members encompass a greater variety of experiences, perspectives, and talents.

**Think “compatibility,” not “compliance.”** Grant makers concerned about their grantees’ diversity expressed a dilemma. On the one hand, they believe their foundations are not only entitled to their values but have a right to look for grantees who share them. On the other hand, they are reluctant to interfere in and sit in judgment on the values of grant seekers. “We have

*“Most of our grant applicants recognize we’re concerned about equity and access,” explained one grant maker. “People expect us to ask these things.”*

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aspirations,” commented one grant maker, “but we’re not trying to manipulate people. We want them to share our values.”

To resolve that tension, grant makers often position their concerns about gender equity within a broader discussion of institutional values – with the goal of allowing both grantor and grantee to make an informed decision about their compatibility. The most important part of the process is to articulate the foundation’s own values. “Most of our grant applicants recognize we’re concerned about equity and access,” explained one grant maker whose foundation makes its values clear. “People expect us to ask these things.”

**Show your institution’s own struggles.** Some grant makers disclose not only their values but also their own efforts to realize them internally. Explaining why he thinks most of his grantees “wouldn’t say we’re heavy-handed and pushy,” a grant maker from a family foundation said, “I start by talking about us and what we’re trying to do in our own organization ... It makes it much more comfortable.” Another, much bigger foundation shows grantees data tracking changes over a number of years in the composition of its own staff and board – from a mostly white male institution to a much more diverse one. Sharing those data signals that the foundation acts on its own values and appreciates the effort required to change hiring and advancement patterns.

**Look with grantees—not at them.** Grant makers emphasized that looking closely at diversity and gender issues is

a shared endeavor. They use several techniques for joint inquiry:

- **Observation.** Some take an informal approach. “We don’t ask for a written census,” said one grant maker. “The exact numbers don’t matter so much. But we’ll sit down and go through the board list” and talk about staff composition during site visits.
- **Benchmarking.** Whether or not they use a formal census, grant makers often refer to the composition of the local population during discussions about diversity. “I try to make it clear that I’m thinking about their diversity with reference to the general population,” explained one. “If there are organizations with 25 percent or fewer [women on staff and board], I would definitely try to explore that.”
- **Using a diversity table.** Several organizations ask grantees for a written breakdown of board and staff composition. These foundations believe that a numerical reckoning like this is often the best way for an organization to start thinking seriously about its diversity. (See “Gender Analysis Tools,” page 17.) “The diversity table helps me think,” says one grant maker who uses it. “It’s a basic, crude instrument. Sometimes you have a great project on paper, and then you see the table and it does make you question it.” On the few occasions when grantees have objected to what they see as “quotas,” one grant maker makes clear that the goal isn’t to force any action on grantees, but “to get them to think of their boards as incredibly diverse resources and perspectives.”



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**Develop a timing strategy.** Timing conversations about diversity can be important — and tricky. Grant makers have to decide whether to raise diversity issues before a grant is awarded or after, and then work with the grantee to determine how long it might take to address the problems that could be uncovered.

■ *In advance . . .* Raising diversity questions early in grantor-grantee discussions signals that the grantee’s commitment to dealing with diversity issues is important, and perhaps a deciding factor in the grant award. If it is a critical consideration for the foundation, says one grant maker, the “worst thing you can do is have your assistant call a grantee at the last minute for data about diversity.” It’s too late for discussion and reflection, much less developing a plan of action.

■ *Or later . . .* Some grant makers raise the issue after the grant is made. Their foundations encourage diversity but do not condition initial grants on demonstrating it. Some foundations flag particular problems, such as a workforce that is drastically unreflective of the wider community, as issues they will “return to as factors to evaluate future grant recommendations.”

■ *Change takes time.* If the grantee commits to improve its diversity, don’t underestimate the “time and space” required for the job. Many grantees “need lots of dialogue internally” to clarify their goals and plans, says one grant maker. “Anyone who understands how organizations work,” added another, “knows that trying to create too much change overnight can just backfire. It can destabilize everything.”

**Provide financial support for diversity initiatives.** Many grantee organizations are so strapped — for both time and money — that expecting organizational change without financial support is unrealistic. You have to acknowledge that “money is involved,” cautions one grant maker. Sometimes a small grant can support self-study. For bigger organizations contemplating far-reaching institutional reforms, the process can be more involved and the costs greater. To understand how it had come to marginalize so many constituents, one antipoverty nonprofit appointed a special advisory commission to learn more about the needs of different populations. A longtime funder made grants in support of the commission’s work and helped the grantee hire a consultant to design and implement a plan of action.

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**Help to build an internal mandate.**

Sometimes the most useful action a grant maker can take is to get the board of a grantee organization to start thinking about diversity issues – especially if it’s the board itself that fails to reflect the wider population. One grant maker explained that it’s common to see “staff to staff” agreement – between the grant maker and the executive director of the grantee organization – but not board support for taking action. To “get the board’s attention,” she sometimes writes a

letter to the board explaining the foundation’s concerns.

**Troubleshoot.** Many grant makers reported that they work with grantees through informal troubleshooting.

“When someone says, ‘Look, we need help with this,’” said one, “we’ll try to help.” Often this takes the form of networking – offering referrals for board recruiting. One grant maker keeps a long list of potential candidates handy for grantees who complain they can’t find qualified women candidates.

## Gender Analysis Tools

**Some foundations use standard gender analysis tools to assist their grant makers and grantees in the field.** The documents listed here are examples of two common types, the interview protocol and the diversity table:

- The **ClearSighted protocol**, created by Chicago Women in Philanthropy, is a set of questions — some simple, some more probing — designed to open up a conversation about gender with grantees. The protocol (available from Women and Philanthropy at [www.womenphil.org](http://www.womenphil.org)) has been adapted and customized by a number of other organizations.
- The **Agency Diversity Data Form**, a diversity table used by the Hyams Foundation ([www.hyamsfoundation.org](http://www.hyamsfoundation.org)), helps grant makers and grantees understand how inclusive an organization is, in terms of both gender and race/ethnicity — and therefore where it might need to make changes in order to deliver on its objectives. The form is available as a downloadable spreadsheet.

The experience of grant makers who have used these and similar tools suggests five “principles of practice,” or ideas for making the best of a gender analysis tool:

- *Use it to start gender analysis, not to substitute for it.*  
Although many grant makers use formal protocols or tools to start or organize the inquiry that is at the heart of gender analysis, they caution against letting tools substitute for that inquiry. If grant makers use the tools mechanically, the result is often perfunctory discussion or, worse, a compliance activity in which grantees simply look to please grant makers. “It’s a basic, crude instrument,” said one grant maker about the diversity table used by his foundation, “but it helps me think.” The goal is to explore important topics, not complete a checklist.
- *Use it most before and after grantee discussions.*  
In advance of meetings, grant makers use interview protocols to prepare — to refresh themselves on important issues and questions. After grantee discussions, they may use the questions to organize and analyze what they’ve heard, turning

impressions into a more organized set of reflections. Ideally, grantee discussions will not follow a methodical review of the questions in a protocol. Once the conversation gets going, it will often cover the most important points at hand, and grant makers can use the protocol as backup, checking occasionally to see that important angles are being explored.

- *Use it at grant-renewal time.*  
Tools or protocols can generate findings or analyses that are useful in reviewing progress and commitments. In discussions about grant renewals, for example, grant makers and grantees can look back at issues they identified earlier and see how they have played out. Did gender-appropriate program design or outreach efforts really seem to pay off? How? Did the organization make any progress toward enhancing the diversity of its workforce? If so, how? What’s an appropriate next goal?
- *Use it to signal commitment.*  
Sometimes grant makers introduce a tool early in their dialogue with grantees — but not because they want it front-and-center during discussions. Instead, it signals to grantees that gender analysis is an important institutional priority for the foundation, not just a personal interest of the grant maker. It can also ease defensiveness, if grant makers remind grantees that they have the same discussion with all grant seekers — and are familiar with the challenges that the tool often uncovers.
- *Use it in your foundation.*  
You may want to use these tools within your own foundation to organize reflection and learning. In staff development meetings, grant makers can share their experiences with and reactions to using the tool in the field, or review a “critical incident” in which things went particularly well or badly, or talk through the implications of including particular categories (such as gender, race, sexual orientation, class, religion, and sometimes others) in the analysis. The ensuing discussion illuminates not just issues about the tool itself, but also reflections on how grantees approach gender equity and grantee-grantor interactions more generally.

## Applying It in Your Own Organization

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**Many grant makers believe gender analysis works best** when an entire foundation – not just an individual grant maker – supports its use. “You can give people some principles and it might change their work,” one grant maker points out, “but it might not be sustainable at the institutional level. They can put on this lens and do a great job, but it’s really at the trustee level that change happens. It has to be integrated.”

So how does an individual grant maker get gender analysis on a foundation’s agenda? According to the grant makers we interviewed, that challenge involves creating pockets of experimentation, conversation, and learning. Starting points might include:

**Emphasize research and learning.**

Two tools of the grant maker’s craft can be used to inquire about gender issues and thereby bring attention to them within the organization:

- *Scanning the landscape.* When grant makers are learning about a field, they can inquire – from practitioners, researchers, and policymakers – about how gender figures in program and policy development. By querying experts in youth development, one foundation learned that gender analysis had led to new approaches for working with at-risk girls. Although the foundation didn’t start out using gender analysis, it ended up embracing it. In effect, the people they consulted in their scan put gender analysis on their agenda. (For more information on this technique, see the GrantCraft guide

*Scanning the Landscape*, at [www.grantcraft.org](http://www.grantcraft.org).)

- *Designing evaluation.* Grant makers who commission or conduct evaluations have other important opportunities to promote inquiry and discussion about gender. Disaggregating data – i.e., presenting them by gender – may show different participation rates or outcomes for men and women, and trying to account for those differences will inevitably lead to gender analysis. But don’t assume that evaluators will look for gender issues without being asked. One grant maker, recalling a presentation by the evaluators of an after-school program, noted that they emphasized the importance of identity to program outcomes, “but they were considering only class and race. They never even looked at gender.”

**Let grantees speak.** In some cases, grantees who learn important lessons about the effect of gender on their programs can stimulate interest within a foundation. The grant maker’s job is to focus attention on those findings. As many of our contributors pointed out, some of the best examples of gender analysis started in the field, with grantees, not with grantors. The push for microbicide development, for example, started with grassroots health workers and led to the Global Campaign for Microbicides. Similarly, in juvenile justice, researchers and girls’ advocates have brought gender inequities to the attention of funders who are now supporting their work.

### Look for an institutional rationale.

Grant makers who want to promote gender analysis can take a lesson from foundations that have embraced it: frame the issues in terms of the foundation's present culture and values. For example, a grant maker at a corporate foundation explained that, because the parent company's customer base is primarily women and "we know who buys our product," the foundation is favorably inclined toward proposals that deal with women's issues. For another grant maker, his foundation's commitment to broad principles of fairness is what "resonated for the board — rather than saying we're doing something special for women." It's easier to propose gender analysis as an expression of existing values rather than as a new orientation.

## MAKING A GENDER LENS VISIBLE

How does a grant-making institution communicate its commitment to gender analysis — and to diversity and equity, more broadly — to the public and to potential grantees? Where do those commitments manifest themselves?

- **In the foundation's Web site and annual report.** The Web site is the first point of contact for many prospective grantees, and it communicates a lot about a foundation's values and priorities. The annual report serves a similar function by highlighting past accomplishments that the foundation views as especially important. What policies and commitments do grantees see reflected in the mission statement and other text? What images represent the foundation and its grantees?
- **In standard application forms and information to grantees.** Grant guidelines and application requirements can attract and encourage grantees who share a foundation's values. One grant maker noted that applicants often call her with questions about the "nuts and bolts" of completing the diversity table, then work their way into "a deeper conversation about the values and focus of the foundation."
- **In projects and evaluations.** The most important evidence, of course, is in the actual grant making. Who receives grants, and for what projects? Do evaluations employ gender, race, and other analytic lenses?
- **In site visits.** A site visit is a good opportunity to observe a grantee organization and give helpful feedback. "We can observe dynamics," explained one program officer, "such as who attends the meeting, who speaks, and their level of engagement during the conversation."
- **In public and professional meetings.** A grant maker at a regional foundation said that she and her colleagues make it a regular practice to raise issues of race and gender in public meetings. They often present on those topics during grant makers' gatherings.
- **In alliances.** One way to learn more about using a gender lens and signal a commitment to women's issues is to collaborate on a project with a local women's fund. See [www.wfnet.org](http://www.wfnet.org) for a list of these organizations.

# Uncovering Gender Assumptions

## A Conversation with a Youth Development Researcher

*What does a gender assumption look like? How does it influence programs? Molly Mead, Lincoln Filene Professor at Tufts University, has studied more than 20 youth development programs and analyzed their implicit gender frameworks, which she describes in her monograph “Gender Matters.” She explained to GrantCraft some of those assumptions and their consequences.*

**Q:** You’ve written that many people involved in designing and running nonprofit youth programs don’t want to discuss gender. Why the resistance?

**A:** *We don’t like to have conversations about difference. I’m sure people don’t love to have conversations about race — but they might think they have to. With gender, I think they think, “I don’t have to have this conversation — and thank God.” Why is that? One, people worry they’ll be harangued for having incorrect attitudes about gender, or maybe they’ve actually had the experience of being harangued. Two, people, especially youth workers, are excited about all that they’ve done to improve girls’ lives. So they think the issue is behind them. Not long ago, a great majority of youth organizations were boys-only and the relatively fewer programs for girls were much less well funded. Now the better funded, former boys-only programs have opened their doors to girls. And the people who run those programs are excited about what they’ve accomplished. Their idea is, “Let’s treat the girls as if they can do anything that boys can do. Once we’ve made that commitment, we don’t have to think more about gender, do we?” On top of all this is our nervousness about running segregated — for example, girls-only — programs. Integration is something we value as a society. It’s viewed as the better way to go. But integration doesn’t automatically produce better outcomes.*

**Q:** People don’t want to talk about gender, but you found that they do think about it. Can you give us an example of an implicit framework and its influence on program design?

**A:** *One is what I call the Differences Are Fundamental model. These are programs that ostensibly try to treat both genders the same. They often use the traditional drop-in, lightly structured approach, usually with age-based sports activities — your Y or Boys and Girls Club. When you point out — in a very neutral*

*way — that boys and girls seem to be participating differently, you often hear: “That’s just how girls are. They’d just rather sit on the sidelines and talk with friends. Despite our attempts to treat them the same, there are fundamental differences.” But research has shown that, in most sports, girls have two years’ less experience than boys of the same age, so girls cannot enter at the same level. Then boys get frustrated that the girls can’t play as well, and girls get disappointed and drop out. Looking at this, sometimes staff unwittingly problematize the girls. They sigh and say, “Whatever we try, we can’t get them engaged.” But the differences here aren’t really fundamental — and girls aren’t the problem.*

**Q:** You found something slightly different in what you call the Males Are the Model approach. Here program operators don’t so much believe there’s nothing they *could* do to encourage girls’ participation, but there’s nothing they *should* do. How do they get to that view?

**A:** *You get this, for example, with computer clubhouses and construction programs. And these are often great programs. We need these programs! My intent is not to tear them down. They’ve got models that work really well with the boys. But there are some skill assumptions they’re making — about whether you’ve ever picked up a hammer, played around with a computer, or played with the tools you need to repair a bicycle. Often these programs don’t realize that girls typically come in with a lower level of skills. So you see a computer clubhouse where kids come in to use all these great software programs — not computer games, but some really sophisticated stuff. The basic model is that the staff lies back and lets kids explore. They don’t get involved unless kids have questions. But again and again girls seem too timid to try out new ideas and reach the limits of their knowledge. At some point they end up saying, “I don’t really like this. I’m not coming back.*

**Q:** And instead of figuring out why girls might be timid and addressing that, what are the program operators doing?

**A:** Lots of staff are saying, “These girls are going to have to learn how to compete. We’re not doing them any favors by coddling them.” I saw one clubhouse where they were so distressed about their gender-skewed participation rates that they decided to set up a girls-only day to help girls close the experience gap and get enough confidence to try new things. They chose a Monday, when they weren’t regularly open, so it wasn’t taking away from boys. It worked really well. But most of the staff still hate it. They’re frustrated: “Oh, we’re having to do this affirmative action thing for girls.” For them, it’s all about, “OK, girls, you’ve got to fit into a man’s world.”

**Q:** Your take on what you call We Are All the Same is a little discouraging. Here you found programs working hard on gender but still missing big opportunities. How can that happen?

**A:** I’ve seen this in peer leadership programs, including one that was working on violence prevention. This is a little subtle. I don’t see anything in this day and age that’s particularly gendered about things like peer leadership. Girls don’t come in thinking, “This is only for boys.” These programs pay lots of attention overtly to participation by girls. But they don’t necessarily want to think about gender. I learned something quite interesting in one program. When I talked to the girls, I heard that a number of them were in relationships with boys, and there was some violence and sexual pressure going on. But in the program, they were working on the types of violence that mostly affected boys — street fighting, gangs, guns, and knives. They weren’t even naming violence issues that affected girls, including the girls in the program. And this is considered a very good program.

**Q:** So you’re saying that the aspiration of We Are All the Same actually blinded them to important differences?

**A:** Yes, and in some other ways, too. For example, the girls said they did twice the work. They were doing all the out-front stuff of

leadership, which is great, but they also did all the food ordering and ordered all the supplies for events. They said, “The boys are not taking an equal share of the work.” In an interesting and ironic way, I could argue that girls were getting more out of the program than boys. The girls were getting great experience and, sadly, a whole opportunity to critique gender culture. We’re not offering enough programs in which boys learn how to learn from girls. Boys are going to benefit enormously when they learn from girls and about how girls have been socialized.

**Q:** You say the model to aim for is Equal Voice. What does it do?

**A:** When it works well, you see fabulous things. Girls and boys learn from each other. But you can do that only when you help kids think about gender. For example, I saw a program doing AIDS education about safer sex. That usually involves desensitizing kids about terms for sexual parts of the body, so they’re not giggling and distracted in the discussion. So kids say every slang word they can come up with for penis and vagina. The kids did this activity, and in the debrief one girl said she was really shocked that there were so many more negative slang words for vagina than for penis. Then I heard one of the boys say, “I never thought about that either. Wow, that’s not OK.” He was excited about this. You could see this huge light bulb going off. Or I saw in a youth theater program kids doing theater work about violence. They were thinking about male violence — guns, knives, young boys beating each other up — but then also relationship violence. You see boys and girls doing this and all learning and all participating.

**Q:** Do the kids raise gender issues that are troubling for the boys, or is it usually about how girls are affected?

**A:** It’s both. It’s good for the boys to look critically at the gender roles that society gives them. For boys, the stereotype of the male role — you’ve got to be a player, you’ve got to have the babes around you — is really oppressive. It’s exhausting to take that role on! Some boys don’t want it. And some of the ones aiming for it desperately would be glad not to have it either.

*When you point out — in a very neutral way — that boys and girls seem to be participating differently, you often hear: “That’s just how girls are.”*

# Key Lessons from Grant Makers

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■ **Consider the basic proposition:**

*Men and women have different social positions; their different roles and upbringings can give them different skills, opportunities, resources, and, very often, different amounts of power.* If that seems reasonable to you, consider learning more about using gender analysis in your grant making. Gender analysis is a way to understand how programs and organizations can unintentionally affect men and women, or boys and girls, differently.

■ **Gender analysis is necessary but not sufficient.** Because social position (and therefore ability to benefit from programs and organizations) is not a function of gender alone, gender analysis is never sufficient by itself. Class, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs — these and other aspects of social position need to be given their fair weight in the development of effective programs and organizations.

■ **Don't forget boys and men.** The status quo has tended to disadvantage women and girls, which is why gender analysis often focuses on understanding their needs and situations. Yet as suggested by recent developments in health care (where men use services less often than women) and education (where some researchers have raised questions about how well boys function in the typical classroom), the needs of men and boys have sometimes been overlooked as well.

■ **Encourage grantee curiosity.**

When you ask grantees to factor gender into their proposal development, you run the risk of having them treat gender analysis as one more hoop to jump through. Try to position gender analysis as a form of creative intellectual inquiry, then think along with grantees about how it might be important in a given program.

■ **Mind the power dynamics.** If your foundation wants to encourage diversity in the organizations you fund, you have to walk a fine line. On the one hand, you need to make clear that diversity (including gender equity) is an important value for your institution. On the other hand, you want to avoid imposing your values on grantees. The best course is to be clear about your values but recognize that even grantees who share them in principle might need encouragement, help, and time to change their organizations.

■ **Listen to people in the field.** The insight that leads people to reexamine a supposedly “neutral” assumption often originates with someone working on the frontline — in AIDS prevention or after-school programming or faculty recruitment — who notices a problem. By listening well to evidence from the field, you can affirm the value of unconventional thinking, encourage the search for more equitable solutions, and be an ally for proponents of diversity within the organizations that receive your support.



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## Ways to Use This Guide

This guide is written primarily as a resource for individual grant makers in their own work. It may also be helpful in encouraging learning and dialogue about the use of gender analysis with:

- Colleagues at your foundation. Use the guide in staff development or retreat sessions as a framework for comparing experiences and developing grant-making strategies.
- Colleagues in your network or affinity group. Use the guide as a starting point to explore how gender analysis can help advance your shared goals.
- Trustees in your foundation. A board of directors may want to use the guide to explore the place of gender analysis in the foundation's strategy and decision making.

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## **Let Us Know ...**

Are you involved with a nonprofit organization that has used gender analysis in program design, capacity building, or another aspect of your work? Were funders involved in the process? How did it go?

If you're willing to share thoughts about your experience that might be helpful to others, please contact Jan Jaffe: [j.jaffe@grantcraft.org](mailto:j.jaffe@grantcraft.org).



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