

Notes from USP Discussion on Gender Lens Grantmaking

November 9, 2012

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Purpose: Create a space for US Programs staff to reflect on and share current practices and explore how to better integrate a gender lens into our work.

Outcomes:

- Identify and capture 1) Current trends in our work with regard to gender mainstreaming; 2) Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and obstacles; and 3) Shared goals and areas to build capacity in the future
- Build a community practice around gender lens mainstreaming

Discussion of Current Practices among USP staff

How US Programs staff are currently integrating a gender lens into their grantmaking and other work:

- Campaign for Black Male Achievement: working with grantees on pay equity, issues around masculinity, single mothers, school to prison pipeline
- Equality and Opportunity Fund: with the closing of gender justice portfolio, working to integrate into other work
- Campaign for a New Drug Policy: harm reduction work with regard to women, healthcare reform: issues of access for women and children, reproductive health and rights
- Open Society Policy Center: interested in how gender issues fit into an advocacy landscape within the issues we currently work on like immigration
- Transparency Fund: integrated into judiciary work, ex. working on judicial diversity and broad work on gender, not just on sex such as questioning the notion of judicial impartiality and how gender affects perceptions of impartiality

Open society issues that would benefit from integrating a gender lens that we have yet to take advantage of:

- Integrating a gender lens into Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative
- Looking at OSPC's advocacy agenda and integrating a gender lens ex. how does immigration policy affect women?
- Judicial impartiality work
- School to prison pipeline: this affects boys but also looking at effects on gender non-conforming and LGBTQ youth
- In criminal justice advocacy, stories of women are utilized as "sympathetic" examples
- Looking at social security and entitlement programs with a gender lens

Opportunities and Challenges presented by OSF in integrating a gender lens

Opportunities:

- With new leadership, there is an opportunity to discuss gender in the context of institutional shifts, restructuring and strategic planning practices. Level of support from leadership is unclear.
 - Engaging senior management in dialogue – need to provide concrete examples of impact and added value
 - Maryam Elahi and the International Women’s Program staff have convened a group of people working on this across the Foundation globally and Chris knows about it.
 - Could be a time to ensure more attention and resources get devoted to gender
- Gender lens can strengthen our work programmatically and operationally
 - Integrating gender could allow us to explore new strategies and/or find new grantees
 - Cross-cutting lens on gender could help Funds and Campaigns explore connections in the work and share best practices
 - Operationally – issue of being transparent and living our values
 - Need to push for gender justice being a value of this organization to be reflected in our programmatic and operational work.

(See “Next Steps” on ideas to best take advantage of these opportunities)

Challenges:

- Varied definition and interpretation of what “gender lens” involves. Depending on the individual’s engagement with an openness to incorporating gender, there may be inadequate definitions.
 - Some staff might be reluctant to join a conversation on gender or feel defensive because they don’t have prior understanding or a framework, or aren’t currently doing work on gender.
- Limited staff time and capacity – people are already stretched and this might be seen as added work.
 - Need a management to signal encouragement to explore these issues, and the space to do so, so that staff can engage with this
 - Need staff commitment
 - While staff can create space and have agency to make positive changes, for collective efforts to move forward, we need management buy-in to approve grantmaking strategies.
- Some programs find it challenging to find grantees who are willing to incorporate a gender lens into their programmatic strategies.

Next Steps

- Create a community of practice in USP
 - Develop a brown bag or other venue for USP staff to think about and discuss gender
 - Book discussion group for those who are interested
 - Create a KARL Community with resources for USP staff interested in gender
 - Develop best practices on how USP is currently integrating gender (format TBD, whether a document with case studies or some other format)
- Staff engagement:

- Send notes to all USP staff
- Engage senior management to start a dialogue – will need to develop a plan that incorporates concrete examples of impact and added value
- Circulate Luna's exit memo (that talks about EOF's gender justice work)
- Secure time at a USP All Staff meeting (January 2013?) to draw out linkages in our work and raise the profile of gender
- Identify how to engage staff who are newer to gender
- Identify current expertise within USP and OSF broadly that we can draw on in this process
- Identify gaps in current expertise to supplement with professional development opportunities or information sharing
- OSF-wide engagement:
 - Share notes with International Women's Program colleagues and invite them to USP Staff meeting on gender once it's scheduled
 - Engage in sub-committee on Professional Development design team working on Human resource issues related to gender (note: Cristina Parnetti is on that committee)