

Excerpt from [Applying a "gender lens" to your work](#)

The concept of gender applies to both men and women. It refers to our different socially constructed roles, our behaviours, our activities, the way we relate, share resources, make decisions, plan for the future and participate in our community. It is different from “sex”, which merely defines us in a biological and physiological way. (Adapted from a definition by Australians Investing in Women)

Is this only about girls and women?

The 2015 European Foundation Centre report *Grantmaking with a Gender Lens* responds specifically to the question, “When you talk about gender, do you mean just women?”

It says: “No. We mean looking at the different issues arising out of our experiences of being women or men or those identifying differently.

“Effective gender analysis requires engaging with and assessing impacts for people from across the gender spectrum, in diverse circumstances and with a wide range of other social characteristics.”

What we really want to get away from, however, is the situation where words like "standard" or "natural" or "neutral" really mean "heteronormative male". For example, it might be considered unremarkable for a board or council to be composed of seven men and one woman, but noteworthy for it to consist of seven women and one man, and newsworthy for it to include transgender people.

As a result of this “unremarkable really equates to male” bias, you are more likely to need to deliberately examine your program’s effects on and openness to other groups, including to women and girls. As the largest population of the excluded, and given its roots in the feminist movement, gender lens analysis tends to emphasise understanding policies and programs primarily in terms of their effects on females.