

Gender Equality Glossary

DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH UN WOMEN



Source: UN Women Training Centre Glossary unless stated otherwise.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) CEDAW, which was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is also known as the international bill of rights for women. CEDAW articulates the nature and meaning of sex-based discrimination and gender equality and lays out State obligations to eliminate discrimination and achieve substantive equality. The Convention covers both civil and political rights (rights to vote, to participate in public life, to acquire, change or retain their nationality, equality before the law and freedom of movement) and economic, social and cultural rights (rights to education, work, health and financial credit).

Discrimination against girls and women Discrimination against girls and women means directly or indirectly treating girls and women differently from boys and men in a way which prevents them from enjoying their rights. Discrimination can be direct or indirect.

Gender The roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. 'Masculine' and 'Feminine' are gender categories.

Gender discrimination Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.¹

Gender diversity Gender diversity is a term that recognizes that many peoples' preferences and self-expression fall outside commonly understood gender norms. In a private sector context, gender diversity is

also used to refer to the equal representation of men and women in the workplace and decision-making roles (see 'Gender parity' below).

Gendered division of labour The way each society divides work among men and women, boys and girls, according to socially-established gender roles of what is considered suitable and valuable for each sex.

Gender equality This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender gap The term gender gap refers to any disparity between women and men's condition or position in society. Examples include the gender pay gap or the gender data gap, and across the four pillars that the World Economic Forum uses to calculate its Gender Gap Index: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment.

Gender identity Gender identity refers to a person's innate, deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth.

Gender-lens investing While there is no single definition of gender-lens investing, most approaches share a common objective of investing to generate both financial returns and positive impacts on women. The Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) defines it as investment strategies which seek to intentionally and measurably address gender disparities; and/or examine gender dynamics to better inform investment decisions

¹ United Nations, 1979. 'Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women'. Article 1

Gender mainstreaming Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including projects, legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's and men's concerns and experiences integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of products, services, processes or policies so that women and men benefit equally.

Gender norms Gender norms are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms, within a range that defines a particular society, culture and community at that point in time.

Gender parity Gender parity is another term for equal representation of women and men in a given area, for example, gender parity in organizational leadership or higher education.

Gender roles Gender roles refer to social and behavioral norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex.

Gender stereotypes Gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences and roles of women and men.

Gender-based Violence (GBV) GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. Examples include sexual violence; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, etc.

Heteronormativity Heteronormativity is used to describe or identify a social norm relating to standardized heterosexual behavior, whereby this standard is considered to be the only socially valid form of behavior and anyone who does not follow it is placed at a disadvantage in relation to the rest of society.

Human rights Human rights are commonly understood as being those rights which are inherent to the human being. The concept of human rights acknowledges that every single human being is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights without distinction as to race, color, sex,

language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Intersectionality The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups. ²

Multiple discrimination Discrimination implicating more than one ground, also known as "additive," "accumulative," "compound," "intersectional," "complex bias" or "multi-dimensional inequalities." It describes two situations: (1) an individual is faced with more than one form of grounds-based discrimination (i.e. sex plus disability, or gender plus sexual orientation) -all women and all persons with disabilities are potentially subject to this form of discrimination; (2) individuals in a specific intersectional group (i.e. women with disabilities, but not men with disabilities), also known as intersectional discrimination.

Patriarchy A traditional form of organizing society which often lies at the root of gender inequality. According to this kind of social system, men, or what is considered masculine, is accorded more importance than women, or what is considered feminine. Traditionally, societies have been organized in such a way that property, residence, and descent, as well as decision-making regarding most areas of life, have been the domain of men.

Reproductive rights The recognition of the right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so; the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health; and the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.

Sexual harassment Uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature especially by a person in authority toward a subordinate (such as an employee or student)³.

² Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020

³ Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

The right for all to make choices regarding their own sexuality and reproduction, providing they respect the rights of others to bodily integrity; and the right to access information and services needed to support these choices and optimize health.

Sex (biological sex) The physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males, female or intersex.

Sexual orientation Sexual orientation refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different sex/gender or the same sex/gender or more than one sex/gender.

Sexual rights The right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to: the highest attainable standard of health in relation to sexuality, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services; seek, receive and impart information in relation to sexuality; sexuality education; respect for bodily integrity; choice of partner; decide to be sexually active or not; consensual sexual relations; consensual marriage; decide whether or not, and when to have children; and pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

Unpaid care work The term unpaid care work encompasses all the daily activities that sustain our lives and health, such as house work (food preparation, cleaning, laundry) and personal care (especially of children, the elderly, people who are sick or have a disability). These activities are most commonly performed by women in the household for free.

Women's economic empowerment Gender equality in the economy refers to the full and equal enjoyment by women and men of their economic rights and entitlements facilitated by enabling policy and institutional environments and economic empowerment. Economic empowerment is a cornerstone of gender equality that refers both to the ability to succeed and advance economically and to the power to make and act on economic decisions.

Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles offering guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.