West Africa Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive areas (WAGES)

Esther Dadzie, Gender Desk Officer, Bogoso, Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality, June 2018 (Photo Credit: WAGES)

Local Governance Toolkit

Accountability

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Abbreviations

CSO - Civil Society Organizations

MMDA - Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

MTDP - Medium-Term Development Plan

Introduction

This toolkit suggests different accountability mechanisms for local governance stakeholders to utilize and strengthen their community engagement and communication. It also incorporates gender equality and youth inclusion as a cross-cutting component of governance accountability. This toolkit will provide the reader with education, training, and activities for:

1. Participatory Approaches
2. Social Accountability
3. Community Mobilization
4. Team Building
5. Gender and Youth Mainstreaming in Local Plans and Activities

By the end, participants will be able to answer the review questions to test their ability to identify and apply the appropriate tools and techniques to improve accountability in their localities.

Figure 1: Accountability Modules

Why Accountability?

Local governments are mandated to provide opportunity for local people to participate effectively in the democratic governance and development processes. In this regard, accountability to their citizens will contribute towards the well-being of their communities. The capacity of citizens will also be strengthened and enable them to work in partnership with local authorities. With the assistance of accountability mechanisms, the local government personnel will have improved avenues to engage with their communities.

> This toolkit encourages citizens, especially the most vulnerable, to be integrated into the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects, and not just in planning. Remember to be inclusive of all intersections, including women and youth, in each community.

Mechanisms for Accountability

Assess the capacity and the platform for participation from the community members, and then select the appropriate tools to increase their inclusion and contributions. There are different roles for community members in the different stages of local planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The table below shows each stage of the process and the accountability tool / techniques needed for each one.
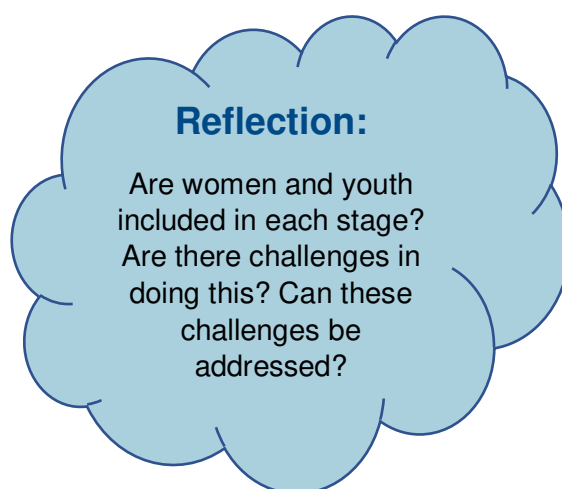
> **Reflection:**
>
> Are women and youth included in each stage? Are there challenges in doing this? Can these challenges be addressed?

Table 1: Stages of process and accountability tool / techniques

| Stages of Process	Purpose of Citizen Engagement	Accountability Tool/Techniques
Data Collection	Identify issues and ideas through broad-based discussions	Public hearings, interviews, workshops, surveys, meetings with existing groups, focus group discussions
Data Analysis	Explore the pros and cons of various options and needs	Focusing the discussions on the options such as participatory design workshops, evaluative workshops, staffed displays
Development of Draft Proposal	Feedback on the draft	More focused discussion to fine-tune the draft such as participatory workshops and written submissions
Finalization of Policy Plan	Report on final decision	Presenting final outcomes
Implementation of Plan	Encourages inclusion and ownership	Hire locally and award contracts to community members to work on project implementation

Stages of Process	Purpose of Citizen Engagement	Accountability Tool/Techniques
Monitoring	Insights provided to prevent delays and overcome unforeseen obstacles	Toolbox meetings, mid-year surveys, townhall meetings, focus group discussions, community observation and reporting
Evaluation	Understand and build on lessons learned and best practices to continuously improve	Key Informant Interviews, surveys, community mapping, townhall meetings, written submissions

1. Participatory Approaches

Participation is a means of empowering community members to engage local government functionaries in a mutually beneficial manner regarding development plans, budgets, resource mobilization and management, procurement, financial management, as well as the monitoring and evaluation processes. It is important that local governance stakeholders hone their knowledge and skills on effective tools of participation, including gender and youth engagement, in order to keep abreast and respond to the challenges of participatory development.

Effective or active participation is built on the premise that people should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives. The indicators for effective participation are:

Reflection:

Does the environment allow for active participation from women and youth? Is there a need to have separate discussions with women and youth? Is there a need to separate young women from young men and / or elderly women?

1. The promise that the public's contribution will influence decisions
2. Let citizens make up their own minds on issues by providing them with basic information about the issues and an experienced facilitator
3. The participation process communicates the interest and meets the process needs of all participants
4. The participation process involves participants in defining how they participate
5. The participation process communicates to participants how their input was or was not used
6. The participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way. Get broad-based, large scale participation which calls for a range of community groups and organizations
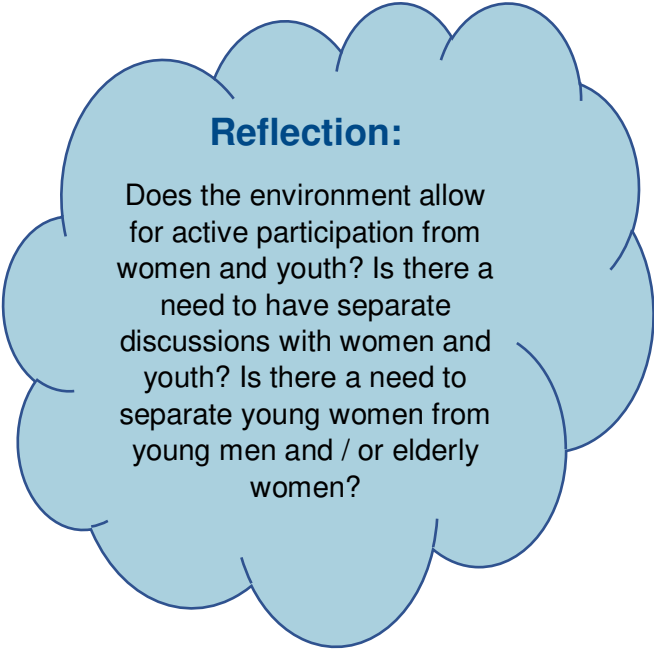
1.1 Five Tips to Consider:

1. **Build awareness.** Local people and organizations, as much as officials, have to understand the rights, obligations and opportunities of local government. In some cultures, this awareness is widespread, whereas in others, it is weak.
2. **Be informed.** The local authority needs mechanisms to do this (a communication strategy, a quarterly magazine, a sympathetic press, local radio and television programmes).
3. **Be consulted.** Local people need consultation on the draft plans and budgets and the kind of services they want. Getting feedback from service users on the quality and accessibility of the services provided is also critical information to gather.
4. **Be relevant.** Opportunities to participate in decision-making where it is relevant needs to be organized. Ensure there are specified times when community members can speak at meetings, have an agenda, and avoid wasting people's time.
5. **Work in partnership.** Communities engaging with local authorities will deliver particular services more effectively.

The design of a public participation process is not based on a single approach or a single method. There are many techniques that may serve different purposes or have varying forms, costs, structures and effects. These approaches may be used single-handedly or in combination. Which method might work best, and when it should be used, is highly contingent on the context. Therefore, designing culturally specific methodologies involves considering on-the-ground structures, discretion and sensitivities.

1.2 Participation Platforms for Different Contexts:

Town Hall Meeting is a gathering of stakeholders in a particular community with the same interest, to deliberate on issues hindering their development, with the aim of finding solutions.

- Enables local government officials to know first-hand problems affecting their community
- Allows citizens to interact with local government on issues of common interests
- Venue of the event should be accessible to all

Reflection:

Do your meetings allow for participation from women in the community? For instance, does it overlap with market day? If yes, what can you do to include women?

Question and Answer Meeting is a forum organized to bring Public Officials face-to-face with the citizens to answer questions on specific issues related to their stewardship.

- Enables local authorities to demystify roles, and to clarify, and explain specific issues
- Improves the relationship between the local authorities and the citizens
- Renders office transparent and accountable to the people

Information Sharing Meeting is an interaction between the local authority and an interest group, where information is shared, and clarification and constructive suggestions are made.

- Semi-formal in structure and facilitated by a neutral resource person/moderator
- Conducted using simple language (not technical terms) to communicate effectively
- Brief presentation and encourages the use of posters and diagrams

Public Seminar is a semi-formal gathering that discusses an issue to the understanding of all persons.

- Semi-formal in structure and facilitated by a resource person/moderator
- Conducted using simple language (not technical terms) to communicate effectively
- Uses brief presentation and encourages the use of posters and diagrams

District Assembly Open Days is an occasion intended to showcase the work and achievements of the District Assembly and to afford citizens the opportunity to learn the operations of the Assembly.

- Photo exhibition and/or presentations on issues of interest to the local people
- Opportunity for the people to ask questions
- An activity to strengthen the relationship between local authorities (including the technical wings) and the citizens

Public Hearing is an open meeting conducted by local authorities with stakeholders to solicit the opinion of the people on critical issues affecting their community.

- Opportunity for community to make direct input into activities that affect their livelihood
- Obtains feedback from the community about proposed plans and budgets
- Ensures that budgetary allocations are directed to the interests and needs of citizens
- Informs citizens of what local government does, what it does not do, what it can, and cannot do
- To create awareness and support for local government

2. Social Accountability

Social Accountability is a form of accountability that emerges through actions by citizens and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), aimed at holding public officers accountable for the use of public resources, including job performance. It is demand-driven, which means that the action is owned and driven by citizens in partnership with local authorities.

Citizens at times adopt militant actions to demand accountability such as: demonstrations, mass disobedience, strikes, etc. which do not augur well for good governance. These measures create a win-lose situation between duty bearers and rights holders. Hence, the need to find a complimentary, informal approach to hold duty bearers accountable to the citizens, at regular intervals and on common platforms, in an all-inclusive and participatory manner.

The aim is to render accounts in order to create a win-win situation. Social Accountability involves:
- Doing the right thing
- Doing it right
- Accounting for doing it

Local authorities need to account for the following reasons:
- Local governments exist for the people; they are established by the people of the local area in order to solve their development challenges
- The people raise the resources in order to meet their collective needs
- The laws of Ghana including the 1992 obliges local authorities to account
- In order to build trusting relationships between local authorities and the local people.

When going to improve social accountability to your community, ask yourself:
- How does your Assembly carry out Social Accountability in policy decision-making, implementation, and resource utilization?
- What are the challenges?
- What are your proposed solutions?

After reflecting on these questions, select the appropriate platform for community engagement and include them in the decision-making process in regards to what you are working on.

3. Community Mobilization Skills

The participation of community members is very crucial for good local governance. This opportunity for community members in the governance process promotes legitimacy of decision-making and cohesion in the communities. Active participation of the community also ensures transparency, accountability and helps in leveraging the cumulative knowledge of the community for better governance and service delivery. The method that can effectively be used in a more participatory manner is Community Mobilization.

Community Mobilization is a process of engaging communities to identify community priorities, resources, needs and solutions, in such a way, as to promote representative participation, good governance, accountability and improved local services. It is an attempt to bring both human and non-human resources together to undertake developmental activities in order to achieve sustainable development.

An example from your community:

Representatives from women support groups based in Wassa East and Prestea Huni-Valley, have mobilized to form Fiaseman Mabaa Yiedie Kuo (FMYK). FMYK's mission is to sensitize, nurture and mentor women and young girls in the communities of the Fiase Paramouncy to secure participation in governance and create a secured foundation for a strong local economy driven by highly-skilled women independent of the extractive industry.

If you are interested in learning more about FMYK , please contact your District Gender Officer.

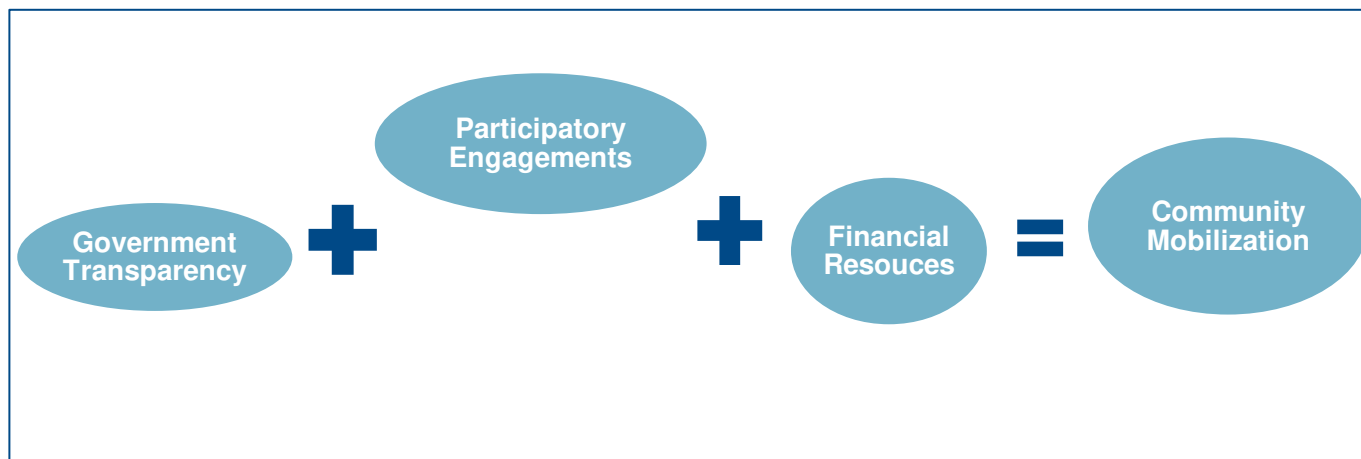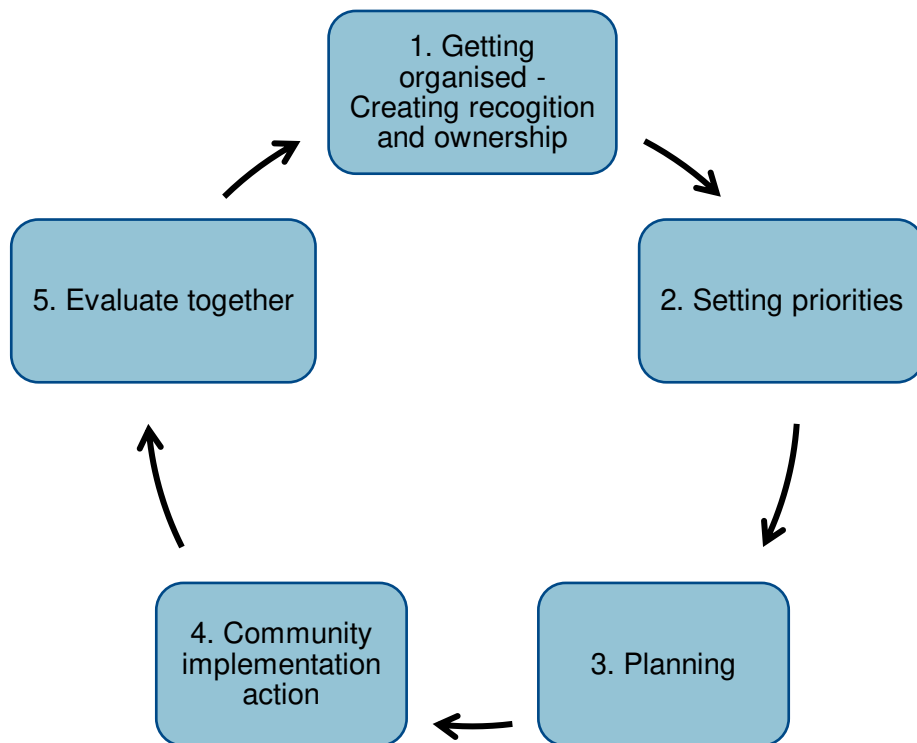**Figure 2: Elements of Community Mobilization**

Table 2: Benefits of Community Mobilization

Benefits of Community Mobilization
Builds community capacity to identify and address community needs
Expands the base of community support to address community issues
Infuses new energy into an issue through community buy-in and support
Promotes local ownership and decision-making about projects
Encourages collaboration between individuals and organizations
Provides a focus for prevention planning and implementation efforts
Leverages community resources for common goals

The community mobilization cycle is a planning activity that is conducted in phases. These phases help determine the many factors that can influence your effort. These processes are carried out to ensure that all stakeholders and resources are mobilized to achieve the agreed upon goal.

Figure 3: Community Mobilization Cycle

4. Team Building

Local government bodies and community groups need strong teamwork in order to be accountable and efficient. Effective organizational or team performance is based on a clear understanding of the shared goals, strategies, and work plans, along with the individual roles and responsibilities of team

"A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they are mutually accountable." (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993)

members. Equally important, are interpersonal qualities of trust, communication, and mutual accountability. Working in tandem, these two perspectives determine a team's ability to achieve and sustain high performance, making teambuilding a necessary companion to the operational and programmatic efforts of organizational capacity strengthening.

A framework developed by *Team Diagnostic International* has identified qualities of high performing teams using their Results/Relationship matrix. **Result strengths** are strengths related to accomplishing the task, such as having a purpose/goal, boundaries, direction, and support. **Relationship strengths** are strengths related to managing team relationships such as interpersonal and facilitation skills. The matrix allows for analysis of a team's pros and cons.

Figure 4: Results/Relationship Matrix

	High Relationship	Low Relationship
High Results		
Low Results		

Figure 5: An example of a Results/Relationship Matrix

	High Relationship	Low Relationship
High Results	Collaborative relationships, respect for each other Work is completed on or before the deadlines	Work may be completed quickly, but can become mundane Limited creativity or harnessing of team strengths
Low Results	Team may be having a good time, but limited work is accomplished	Participants may blame others for team problems; work doesn't get done

Practicing good team skills of communication and conflict resolution is beneficial to all ideal teams. Think about the following aspects when improving your team:
- Envision the ideal team
- Assess the current team effectiveness
- Analyze the assessment
- Document the challenges
- Collaborate for remedies

Envisioning the ideal team:
Imagine what your team looks like at its ideal level to you. Imagine that in the next year, all your wishes come true. What does that look like? Picture your interactions as clearly as possible. Specifically, reflect on the following:
- We know the team has succeeded because we see and hear…
- What is the great job we have done? What are people saying?
- What has been the key to our success?
- Our success in achieving our team purpose is important because…

Assess and rate the effectiveness:
An effective team must possess some key factors which can be rated as **High**, **Medium** or **Low** during assessment. Some of these key factors include
- Clear vision/purpose
- Shared commitment
- Trust and regular communication
- Roles and responsibilities
- Mutual accountability
- Individual and team success
- Group tasks and process
- Challenges with creativity
- Inclusive decision-making

Reflection:

Is your team women and youth inclusive? Can women and youth participate actively?
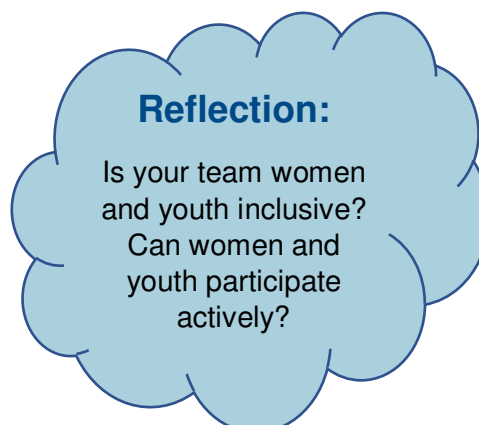
Analyse the team assessment results by using the following questions:
- Where are they strongest?
- Where do they need the most improvement?
- Where are there the most differences of opinion?
- Which characteristics stand out to you as most crucial for your success?

Document the challenges:

There are **four typical problem behaviors** that commonly occur in teams.
- **Blaming/criticism:** attacking person rather than behavior (ex: "You are always late." Or "You aren't trustworthy." Body language ex: pointing at others)
- **Defensiveness:** refusing to own your part of the problem (ex: "It's not my fault that you didn't know about the meeting." Body language ex: arms crossed)
- **Contempt:** includes sarcasm, belittling. This can actually damage a person's health over time (ex: "I can't believe you did that. That's the worst thing I've ever seen." Body language ex: sneer, disgust)
- **Withholding/Obstructing:** cutting off communication, withdrawal. (ex: not answering when they ask you a question, not returning their phone calls, not responding to communication, offer reasons why you can't respond to their request. Body language ex: back turned away).
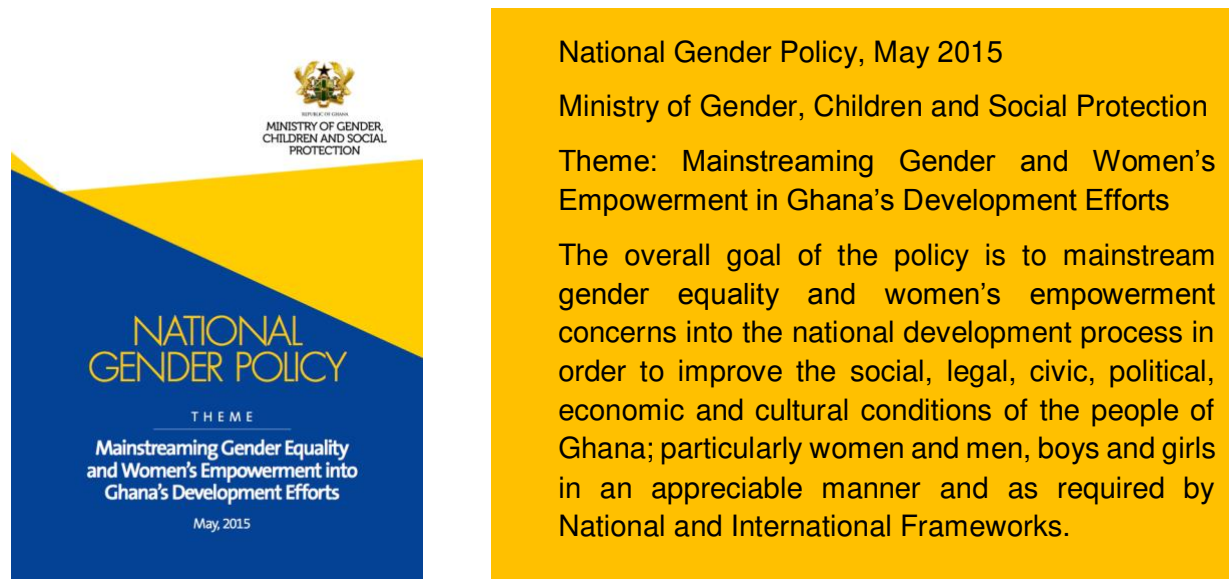
Collaborate for remedies:
- **Notice your own patterns**
  - Which problem behaviors do you regularly use?
  - What is the impact when you use them?
  - Take responsibility for the impact you want to have in your team
- **Educate your team about problem behaviors**
  - Name them when they occur in the team
  - Bringing problem behaviors out into the open can defuse them
  - Create working agreements about how you as a team will handle and address problem behaviors when they occur
- **Look for the request behind the complaint**
  - The problem behavior may be an unskillful attempt to request change
  - If you have a complaint, consider what you want to request of another person; if you are receiving a complaint, consider what is really being asked for
- **Don't take it personally**
  - Instead of focusing on who is doing what to whom, focus on what is trying to happen in the system
  - Request clarification and clear any assumptions that may be underneath.
  - Is there a change that is needed?
- **Acknowledge and appreciate team strengths successes**
  - When they occur to build up a reservoir of positivity within the team and prevent problems

5. Gender and Youth Mainstreaming in Local Plans and Activities

The dynamics in socio-economic and political indicators show that the issue of gender can no longer be ignored. It is therefore important for local authorities to understand and address the issue of gender parity and youth inclusion in the democratic governance and participatory development process.

Figure 6: National Gender Policy

National Gender Policy, May 2015

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

Theme: Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Empowerment in Ghana's Development Efforts

The overall goal of the policy is to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment concerns into the national development process in order to improve the social, legal, civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the people of Ghana; particularly women and men, boys and girls in an appreciable manner and as required by National and International Frameworks.

Do You Know the Difference Between Sex and Gender?

Table 3: The difference between sex and gender

Sex	Gender
Biological make-up	Socially constructed
Universal for all human beings	Differs between cultures, location, climate
Unchanging	Dynamic and changes over time
Identifies the biological differences between men and women	Identifies the social relations between men and women

'Gender' refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male, how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man.

'Sex' refers to the biological characteristics that categorize someone as having either a female or male body.

Gender issues do not only concern women. It is essential to involve women and men in all stages of development at the household, project, the community and the government levels, so that women's and men's, as well as girls' and boys' specific needs are taken into account. This way it can be ensured that they are equally benefitting.

'Youth Engagement and Inclusion' refers to the active, empowered and intentional partnership with youth as stakeholders, problem solvers and change agents in their community.

Did you know?

Each District has a Gender and Youth Inclusion Strategy. Contact your District Gender Officer to learn more!

There is growing consensus to eliminate all forms of discriminations in development actions via gender mainstreaming. In that regard, efforts are made to recognize that both women and men play equally significant roles in community development and delivery of services.

Gender and Youth Mainstreaming enables us to:

- Recognize that every policy, program and project affects women and men differently
- Transform women and youth's participation in reconstruction process from passive beneficiaries to active agents at all levels and in all fields
- Achieve an enabling environment where women and men work as partners and carry values of mutual respect

Gender and youth mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that both women and men have equal access to and control over resources, decision-making, and benefits at all stages of the development process and in development projects. In achieving this, governments over the years have created institutions, policy, project and programmes to ensure that both men and women have equal opportunity to be integrated in development issues. In the District Assemblies, Gender Desk Officers are appointed to help mainstream issues of gender in decision making. In the preparation of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), issues of women empowerment and gender mainstreaming are strongly included. For instance, when schools are built, there are available washrooms for the pupils to use. Also it has been observed that, there are more washroom spaces for the girls than the boys.

Module Review

1. Name the six indicators for effective participation.
2. What are the five tips for participation?
3. How do we develop a larger community of more active citizens?
4. How do we involve harder-to-reach groups?
5. How do we get local businesses/ media interested and engage public authorities?
6. How do we sustain citizens' engagement for long years rather than for a short duration?
7. What factors contribute to effective team-building process?
8. Team formation is considered to a difficult task to undertake; in your opinion what accounts for these difficulties?
9. What are the various stages of team-building?
10. What factors do you think have contributed to a successful team-building strategy in your community engagements?
11. What specific characteristics do successful teams normally formed in your community possess?
12. What are challenges you have encountered in your last involvement with a team in accomplishing a task assigned to you?
13. What characterises a gender equality planning and operation?
14. What are the benefits of gender-equal activities?
15. How will gender mainstreaming improve community governance?
16. What do community members stand to gain in gender mainstreaming activities?

Practice Exercise

Complete the following matrix:
1. Identify any critical community issue(s)
2. Select the participation tools
3. Justify the choice of the tool
4. List the stakeholders
5. List likely challenges and how you will deal with them

Critical Issues	Participation Tool	Justification	Identified Stakeholders	Likely Challenges	Proposed Solution

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