In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels.

It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”
Within its technical cooperation programme, the ILO has piloted ways to promote gender mainstreaming through a two-pronged approach, including:

• All projects/programmes should aim to systematically address the concerns of both women and men through gender analysis and planning.

• Targeted interventions should be designed to enable women and men to participate equally in, and benefit equally from, development efforts.
As an applied strategy, gender mainstreaming in technical cooperation projects entails:

- Involving both women and men beneficiaries in consultations and analysis;
- Including sex-disaggregated data in the background analysis and justification;
- Formulating gender-sensitive strategies and objectives, and corresponding gender-specific indicators, outputs and activities;
- Striving for gender balance in the recruitment of project personnel and experts and in representation in institutional structures set up under the projects;
- Including impact assessment on gender equality in evaluations as well as gender expertise in the evaluation team.
Building Blocks of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Good practice elements:

- Gender analysis/stakeholder analysis
- Gender needs assessment
- Gender planning
- Gender-specific action
- Capacity building on gender equality
- Gender sensitive monitoring & evaluation
- Relevant gender expertise
- Adequate resources
- Knowledge sharing on gender mainstreaming
• **Gender analysis** can be undertaken at any stage during the project cycle, but it is proving most effective if included at the initial planning and design stages.

• **Gender analysis** is a tool for identifying the different roles and needs of women and men in a given context and project setting.

• In the world of work, a gender analysis includes looking at:
  – The division of labour between women and men;
  – The different needs of women and men in the world of work;
  – The sex-based division of access to, and control over, resources and benefits;
  – Opportunities and constraints in the social and economic environment;
  – The capacity of ILO constituents and other partner organisations to promote equality between women and men in employment.
Promoting the Prevention and Elimination of Bonded Labour in South Asia (PEBLISA)

Brief Project Description: Across South Asia, problems of poverty, unequal power relations and neglect for human and labour rights have been found to make poor women and men vulnerable to debt bondage. PEBLISA was launched to combat indebtedness and bonded labour as a way of enhancing poverty reduction efforts in the project countries – India, Nepal and Pakistan – by testing an integrated set of economic and social services at community level to benefit both bonded families and those vulnerable to bondage.

GENDER ANALYSIS: Identifying gender-based inequalities
With the aim of better understanding the complexities of bonded labour, PEBLISA undertook studies and rapid appraisals to explore, amongst other issues, the gender dimensions of bonded labour as well as the impact of project interventions on gender equality. One of the most comprehensive gender analysis strategies was implemented in Tamil Nadu, India, where project staff conducted participatory research exercises with women and men to understand the gender-related factors underpinning household expenditures, life cycle events and power dynamics in households and communities.
• **Gender needs assessment** is closely linked to the concept of gender analysis: they are both valuable analytical tools for strengthening a project’s potential to meet the different needs and interests of women and men throughout the project cycle.

• A gender needs assessment sheds light on both **practical** and **strategic** gender needs:
  – **Practical** gender needs are needs that, once met, enable women and men to maintain their existing positions in society.
  – **Strategic** gender needs, on the other hand, once met, transform these positions and subsequently alter power relations between women and men.
Promoting equal employment opportunities through social dialogue and policy development in Rwanda

Brief Project Description: In a country where women occupy nearly half of all parliamentary seats and where there is considerable political will to promote gender equality at all levels of government, the project was specifically designed to support national commitment to advocate for equal employment opportunities in national development strategies.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Identifying priority areas for gender-specific actions
In order to ensure that the project would address the most relevant concerns of its tripartite stakeholders, a needs assessment was carried out at the project design stage. The ILO undertook a planning mission to Rwanda involving a series of consultative meetings with ILO constituents and other relevant partners, such as the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Rwandan General Association for People with Disabilities and cooperative organizations. Three priority areas of action were subsequently identified, including the informal economy, gender and HIV/AIDS, and the ratification of ILO conventions no. 183 on Maternity Protection and no. 144 on Social Dialogue, with special emphasis on gender equality and women’s participation.
The findings of the gender analysis and needs assessment should be used to inform strategic **planning** of any project interventions.

**Gender planning** consists of developing a strategy which describes how gender equality will be promoted in project activities through specific measures and organisational arrangements such as:
- Committing to balanced representation of women and men in project activities;
- Ensuring that adequate resources and expertise are available.
CASE EXAMPLE: GENDER PLANNING

Improving the working conditions of informal economy workers through promoting equal access to decent work (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda)

Brief Project Description: The project aimed to contribute to poverty reduction among unprotected informal economy workers in four African countries by improving their living conditions and by promoting decent work and income. Focus was on building the capacity of trade unions and cooperative organizations to work together in organising workers in the informal economy, and working with governments to improve the policy environment for the informal economy.

GENDER PLANNING: Pre-defining objectives, connected and specific actions
The project developed a practical “Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming” for the overall project, which in turn was reflected in the individual work plans for the four countries. The action plan called for the systematic involvement of women and men in the planning and implementation of all project activities and the development of relevant indicators to measure progress in achieving their participation. Moreover, the plan promoted awareness-raising on gender equality amongst the project’s partners and beneficiaries.
Gender-specific action can be defined as action which is adopted to redress gender-based inequalities and discrimination against women and/or men in a given context.

The ILO recognises that if historically entrenched discrimination against women in the world of work is to be tackled, specific action in favour of women could be required. Hence, the ILO promotes, when necessary, the use of gender-specific policy action to achieve such aims.

During a project’s gender planning stage, it can be proposed that the project includes such action (directed at either women or men) to redress gender inequalities.
Gender-equitable access to decent work through skills development and vocational training

**Brief Project Description:** In the former Soviet Union republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, problems of unemployment, underemployment and poverty have remained particularly acute following the deterioration of social and economic conditions during the transition period. The ILO project aimed to contribute to poverty reduction by increasing employability of young women and men through improved vocational training and career guidance and through the introduction of basic “business training” in the curricula of vocational institutions’ and employment services’ retraining programs.

**GENDER-SPECIFIC ACTIONS: Building capacity and partnerships**
During project implementation, expert working groups facilitated capacity building workshops on gender mainstreaming for project staff and the social partners. A balance of women and men participants was promoted in the workshops through targeted letters of invitations and other selections procedures. As part of the capacity building strategy, a series of gender mainstreaming tools were developed, translated into Russian and adapted for the projects.
Building capacity for gender mainstreaming amongst project staff and beneficiaries is essential for ensuring that gender analysis and planning are applied throughout the project cycle and used to inform project activities.

Capacity building could focus on:
- Clarifying key gender concepts;
- Understanding the process and role of gender analysis;
- Providing practical guidance on how to undertake gender planning for project and programme activities.
Advancing equal employment opportunities (Yemen)

Brief Project Description: The Arab States region has traditionally had one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world. This is partly due to a general lack of capacity – within institutions responsible for employment – to address gender equality concerns and women’s rights issues in policy and programme design. The project was designed to promote women’s employment in Yemen by strengthening the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour to work with employers’ and workers’ organisations and play an active role in coordinating the development of the National Women’s Employment Strategy.

CAPACITY BUILDING: promoting Decent Work and gender equality
The project’s main capacity building tool was a training programme on Decent Work and gender equality - developed by a national tripartite expert team – to be delivered to around 40,000 trainees in five governorates. In terms of specific capacity building within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the project set up mechanisms for dialogue, exchange and collaboration on gender issues amongst the relevant Directorates.
• **Monitoring and evaluation** are important processes for reviewing the extent to which projects are addressing key gender issues, including progress towards equal access to education, training and decent employment.

• In order for monitoring and evaluation to be **gender-sensitive**, it is crucial that relevant gender-sensitive indicators are integrated into the project design and that they in turn are integrated into the monitoring and evaluation guidelines and terms of reference.

→ The gender analysis and planning processes are key stages for developing gender-sensitive indicators.
CASE EXAMPLE: GENDER-SENSITIVE MONITORING

Improving equal access to social protection and quality health care through rights promotion (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal)

Brief Project Description: Social protection systems in many African countries do not provide full coverage to their economically active population, so that poor workers from the agricultural and informal sector – a significant proportion of whom are women – do not have access to social security and must rely on their income to protect themselves and their families from health contingencies. The project was implemented in four countries in West Africa with the specific aim of improving women’s access to quality healthcare, including reproductive health services.

MONITORING: systematic supervision of users and services
The project developed monitoring and management support tools – including guides for administrative and financial management of mutual health insurance schemes – to consolidate the skills and information acquired during the training sessions provided within the project. It also introduced management checklists consisting of gender-sensitive indicators which enabled the group schemes to effectively identify operational problems and monitor and strengthen activities.
• **Knowledge sharing** is a process which begins by capturing and organising knowledge and experience, and then proceeds to make this knowledge accessible to a wider audience – thus cultivating new linkages between interested groups.

  ➔ “Good practices” and “lessons learnt” are valuable sources of knowledge, as they enable project staff to learn from the experiences of other projects and apply them in their own work.

• **Knowledge sharing** of the different approaches used to promote gender equality in ILO’s technical cooperation activities allows the entire Organization to capitalise on those experiences.
Promoting decent work for women and men workers through enhanced access to training (India)

Brief Project Description: In India, poor women and men represent a significant proportion of informal workers engaged in low paying, precarious and exploitative working conditions. Due to their limited decision-making power within the household and limited access to basic health services and formal education, the situation of women is especially precarious. With the purpose of improving the working and living conditions of poor women, the project was designed to promote women’s employment by extending the services of formal vocational training institutions to the informal sector.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING: collecting and sharing information
The project designed a knowledge sharing strategy for the social partners to facilitate information sharing on gender issues. A Gender Resource Centre at the National Labour Institute was established, serving as an effective mechanism for sharing experiences and good practices on gender mainstreaming.
The need to attract relevant gender expertise – in order to systematically implement the various elements of a strategy promoting gender equality – cuts across all of the above mentioned building blocks.

Establishing linkages with gender expertise can facilitate promotional and advocacy work on gender equality through project activities as well as technical support and advice to ILO staff and constituents on ways to mainstream gender into the project cycle and thus promote gender equality in the world of work.

The above approach can be very useful, especially when technical activities are centred on the promotion of the ILO’s key equality Conventions:
- No. 100 on Equal Remuneration, 1951;
- No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958;
- No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981;
CASE EXAMPLE: RELEVANT GENDER EXPERTISE

Extending health care to workers in the informal economy through equal access to social protection schemes (Philippines)

Brief Project Description: In many Southeast Asian countries, informal economy workers and their families do not enjoy adequate health care coverage and financial protection against illness, work-related accidents and other life contingencies. The project aimed to enhance the quality of life for informal economy workers and their families by improving their access to health care services and benefits through micro-health insurance schemes.

RELEVANT GENDER EXPERTISE: mainstreaming gender in project activities
A gender consultant was engaged to provide technical support to the integration of gender concerns in project activities and training materials. Moreover, project workshops focused on building the gender mainstreaming capacity of project staff and social partners. Collaboration with civil society organizations with a strong role in advocacy work on gender equality also helped reinforce the project’s advocacy efforts.
Like gender expertise, **sufficient resources** are essential to implement the various building blocks of a mainstreaming strategy promoting gender equality.

This is not to say that gender mainstreaming will necessarily require vast amounts of resources, but rather an affirmation that the above elements require strategic commitment, in terms of human resources and budgets, in order to be implemented successfully.
SUMMARY: Gender mainstreaming in the project cycle

Knowledge sharing
Gender-analysis/Needs assessment

Gender expertise
Gender-sensitive monitoring/evaluation

Adequate resources (financial / Human)

Gender planning
Gender-specific action/Capacity building

Introduction | Overview | Building Blocks | Summary
This presentation is based on the publication:


To receive a copy of the publication and for more information on the cited projects, please contact the Bureau for Gender Equality, [gender@ilo.org](mailto:gender@ilo.org)