

African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
United Nations Development Programme



IDEP



GENDER AND ECONOMIC POLICY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE—AFRICA



INTRODUCTION

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Module 2 has three broad objectives. The first is to synthesize the separate insights that are acquired during the course, in relation to economics, gender relations, economic development strategies, sectoral issues and the development and implementation of public policies. The second is to review and systematize the insights of gender-aware policy analysis developed during the various components of the course. The third is to test participants' abilities to use their insights into gender-aware policy analysis to structure the development of gender-aware policy proposals. Starting from intensive group discussions at the beginning of Week 1, a gender-aware sectoral policy intervention for a particular country is framed and designed and an implementation strategy developed, drafted and documented, in the form of a group paper, during Week 2. The group paper is then refined into a policy brief during Week 3.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the module, participants will have:

1. Grasped a basic understanding of economic policy analysis.
2. Achieved a common competence in understanding why economic policy analysis must be gender-aware.
3. Undertaken a gender-aware policy analysis.

OUTLINE

- I. Economic policy analysis.
- II. Making economic policy analysis gender-aware.
- III. Sectoral gender-aware policy analysis.

DURATION

Initially, half a day; thereafter, for the duration of the course.

I. ECONOMIC POLICY ANALYSIS

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Objective: to enable participants to understand the fundamentals of economic policy analysis

ECONOMIC POLICY

Economic policy is undertaken to alter the behavior of individual consumers, households, communities and firms and the way in which their behavior is coordinated when they take part in economic activity. This can involve changing the terms and conditions by which markets and non-market social institutions operate, which has consequences for individual, household and community well-being and human security.

ECONOMIC POLICY ANALYSIS

Economic policy analysis examines and assesses the effects of individual, household, community, firm and government behavior on well-being. Economic policy analysis requires:

- Specifying the objectives of the intervention, particularly whether it is equity or efficiency oriented.
- Examining the methods used to achieve the objectives, within the constraints of available resources or technology.
- Defining the instruments of policy.
- Evaluating whether the policy methods or instruments can achieve or have achieved the objectives, usually through an economic cost-benefit analysis (defined below).
- Assessing whether the objectives were appropriate, often using the standard axioms of welfare economics, and particularly asking whether one person can be made better off without making another person worse off.

Economic policy analysis examines the effects of policy changes on:

- Prices.
- Supply and demand that bring about changes in prices.
- State budgets.
- The trade position.
- The welfare of producers and consumers, whether they be individuals, households or communities.
- The institutional setting that affects economic decision making.

EFFICIENCY

A process is *efficient* when nothing more can be produced with the resources available. *Technical efficiency* is when production takes place at the lowest possible cost per unit. *Allocative efficiency* is when output is produced using the best possible combination of inputs. *Economic efficiency*, also known as *Pareto-efficiency*, is when no one can be made better off without making someone else worse off.

EQUITY

Horizontal equity is the identical treatment of similar people. *Vertical equity* is the different treatment of different people to reduce the effects of those differences. *Distributional equity* occurs when individuals in a given society deem the allocation of goods and services among themselves to be fair. Distributional equity clearly implies a value judgment by individuals or their representatives; as it cannot be objectively defined, it may be subject to disagreement within communities and societies.

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY

There are two main methods in economic policy: those that try to augment markets and those that try to bypass markets. Taxes and subsidies, direct interventions, trade policy and exchange rate policy are the key instruments of economic policy. In general, policies that operate with or through markets are often, but not always, more likely to achieve their goals than those that seek to control markets. Policies that affect prices have more complex side effects than non-price interventions.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Cost-benefit analysis is a framework for evaluating public- and private-sector actions that affect the conditions under which consumers and firms operate. Cost-benefit analyses can monetarily estimate all the gains and losses from an investment in an economic or social project over the life of the project, to assess whether or not the gains outweigh the losses. In principle, investments should only be made when gains outweigh losses.

II. MAKING ECONOMIC POLICY ANALYSIS GENDER-AWARE

Objective: to enable participants to recognize the need for a gender-aware economic policy analysis

GENDER ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Economic policy is developed by the state, which is a social institution; in turn, it also affects institutions such as households, markets, communities and states. As introduced in Module 1, gender relations are power relations located at different points in different institutions and reflecting visible and invisible values, motivations, practices and products. For example, as demonstrated in Module 1, households as social institutions operate in ways that affect and reflect gender relations; markets as social institutions operate in ways that affect and reflect gender relations; and within government, the ability of women and men to develop and implement policy is affected by their social identities as women and men, and thus, is affected by and reflective of gender relations. It follows that gender identities and relations can be embedded within social institutions, that gender relations can both influence and be influenced by economic policy, and that this may limit the capacity of economic policy methods to achieve their objectives. In considering the objectives of economic policy, gender-based price and institutional distortions in the operation of the economy may need to be addressed. In choosing the methods and instruments of economic policy, there may be gender-based constraints to resource and technology availability; the instruments of economic policy may themselves be gender-biased. Thus, gender relations can strongly affect the capacity of economic policy interventions to achieve either their efficiency or equity objectives.

GENDER-BLIND POLICY

Gender-blind economic and social policy ignores the different situations, roles, needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys.

GENDER-NEUTRAL POLICY

Gender-neutral economic and social policy is not affected by, and does not affect, the different situations, roles, needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys. In reality, very few policies are gender-neutral. When policy makers claim a policy is gender-neutral, they are usually being gender-blind.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICY

A gender-responsive economic and social policy considers and addresses the different situations, roles, needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys. The term *gender-sensitive* can be used rather than gender-responsive, as they have the same meaning.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender mainstreaming should be applied to economic policy analysis, in which the ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

EXERCISE 1

Objective: to demonstrate to participants why there is a need to make economic policy analysis gender-aware.

This is a directed reading exercise that should be used to facilitate discussion. Each participant will spend 15 minutes reading the two-page United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) policy brief, "Sustaining African Agriculture: Organic Production."¹

Each participant should then reflect on the following questions:

1. What are the main policy messages of the brief?
2. Are these policy messages feasible? Why or why not?
3. Is the policy brief gender-blind, gender-neutral or gender-aware? Why?
4. What is the implication of your answer to Question 3 for the brief as a whole? Is the brief stronger, weaker or about the same?
5. What is the implication of your answer to Question 3 for the policy? Is the policy stronger, weaker or about the same?
6. List three ways in which the gender content of the policy, as described in the policy brief, could be strengthened.

The facilitator should then introduce a discussion among the participants of the gender-blind characteristics of many economic policies. The facilitator should ask the participants to reflect on their own experiences and consider whether employment policy, macroeconomic policy, trade policy and financial policy in their countries is gender-blind, gender-neutral or gender-aware. To conclude, participants also should consider whether a policy being gender-blind might account for at least some of the policy failures that they have seen.

¹ The brief is available at http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/presspb20091rev1_en.pdf (accessed April 30, 2010).

III. SECTORAL GENDER-AWARE POLICY ANALYSIS

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Objective: to facilitate the capacity of participants to undertake a gender-aware policy analysis and present the analysis in the form of a policy brief

ONGOING EXERCISE

Objective: to enhance participants' gender-aware policy analysis skills

On the second day of the course ask participants to sort themselves into groups of three for team work that will last for the duration of the course. It is strongly advised that participants from the same country form themselves into a single group, given the nature of the teamwork. If this is not possible, participants should be encouraged to form themselves into groups based upon the extent of their in-depth knowledge of a given country.

The teamwork is undertaken in three phases:

1. In week 1 of the course, teams identify the subject of their work: a sectoral or subsectoral policy that they will analyse from a gender perspective.
2. In week 2 of the course, teams complete a group paper that reviews, systematizes and synthesizes the gender-aware sectoral or subsectoral policy analysis that they have undertaken.
3. In week 3 of the course, teams translate their group paper into a policy brief that can be offered to policy makers.

WEEK 1

Facilitators ask self-selected teams of three participants on Day 2 to choose a sectoral or subsectoral policy from the country in which they are interested, on which they are going to conduct a gender-aware policy analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to

- Describe the policy intervention.
- Evaluate it from a gender perspective.
- Propose measures to enhance the gender-awareness of the policy measure.

The term *sectoral policy* should be interpreted broadly for this exercise, and the facilitators should explain this broad interpretation to the participants. Teams can choose to focus on any of a variety of types of sectors: traditional economic sectors (e.g., agriculture, retail and wholesale trade, manufacturing, finance) or social sectors, including public and private components (e.g., education, health). A subsectoral policy is more specific: a particular economic activity (e.g., cut flowers) or a particular social intervention (e.g., access to clean water). The teams can also develop new approaches to sectors, should they so choose. For example, unpaid care work could constitute a care sector. The informal sector could also be used for this exercise, if appropriately defined (e.g., all informal enterprises, or informal enterprises engaged in a specific activity).

The sectoral or subsectoral policy should be one that has been developed relatively recently, that is still in operation, and for which participants can obtain policy and budgetary documents if they have not brought such documents with them.

During the first week of the course, participants will be asked to ensure that they agree on the sector and policy, compose a gender-aware policy analysis work plan that will allow them to describe and evaluate the policy,

and obtain any necessary documents. At the end of the first week, each team will present an initial report to the entire group to obtain comments and constructive criticism regarding their proposed group paper.

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WEEK 2

During the second week, participants are given time to work on their gender-aware policy analysis to produce a group paper that critically evaluates the policy from a gender perspective. The paper must encompass the spectrum of policy analysis:

- Identifying the problem that the intervention seeks to address.
- Specifying the objectives of the intervention, particularly whether it is equity or efficiency oriented.
- Examining the methods and instruments used to achieve the objectives.
- Evaluating the indicative costs and benefits of the intervention.
- Evaluating whether the intervention is gender-neutral, gender-blind or gender-aware, and why.
- Proposing alternative or supplementary gender-aware methods and instruments that could achieve the objectives of the intervention while enhancing the gender equality of the expected outcomes of the intervention.
- Roughly costing out the feasibility of alternative or supplementary gender-aware methods and instruments.
- Proposing reasons why feasible costs should be borne.

At the conclusion of the second week, teams will be required to submit a group paper of no less than 10 and no more than 15 pages to the facilitators for evaluation before the start of Week 3.

WEEK 3

The group papers, along with the comments of the evaluators, form the basis of a policy brief that the teams produce during Week 3. These briefs are distributed to the group as a whole and presented to the course at its conclusion. The purpose of the presentation is to convince participants that the policy proposal should be implemented. After all presentations, participants vote for the best policy proposal as described in the policy brief.

GUIDELINES FOR GENDER-AWARE POLICY BRIEFS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Policy makers want policy briefs that justify what they are doing. Depending upon the audience for the brief, this justification may or may not be situated within a larger theoretical or empirical context. Regardless of the audience, however, the policy brief should be written in a non-technical way, for interested readers (policy makers) with an academic background, but who may not understand all the theoretical and empirical nuances of the policy issue being covered in the brief. When writing the brief, participants should not try to be comprehensive. Rather, they should present only the policy-relevant aspects of the group paper, focusing on those research results arising from the paper and, particularly, the meaning of those results that will be of interest to policy makers. Thus, the main task in presenting the brief is to focus the attention of the reader (policy maker) on the policy relevance of the intervention that is being analysed from a gender perspective.

BEFORE WRITING THE POLICY BRIEF

Try to summarize the results of the group paper in terms of the policy relevance of:

- The key question used to address the policy issue evaluated in the group paper.
- The major quantitative and qualitative descriptive and analytical results obtained in the group paper.
- The interpretation of these results in relation to the policy issue of interest to policy makers.

Use this summary to write the policy brief.

GENERAL RULES WHEN WRITING THE POLICY BRIEF

1. Focus on one major message per brief. This will improve the clarity of the presentation and, by focusing on a single message, should assist in structuring the brief.
2. Do not try to explain the method of analysis used. Most readers will not be interested in such details.
3. Do not only present results of the analysis, but also try to interpret the factors that caused the results. Such (new) insights may be very interesting for policy makers.
4. Use only one diagram, graph or table per brief, and a diagram or graph is better than a table. Make sure the diagram or graph is well used if it is included.
5. Attractive design is important in getting the attention of the policy maker.
6. Keep the policy brief to two sides of A4 paper.

COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY BRIEF

This is only an indicative guide.

The title should attract the attention of the reader. It should also reflect a policy issue or research result that derives from the policy analysis of the group paper and is found in the policy brief.

The first paragraph should provide general background information that defines the problem and, in so doing, justifies further examination of a specific policy intervention. It must be done in non-technical terms.

The second paragraph should contain the question that is being investigated in such a way as to throw light on the specific policy intervention identified in the first paragraph.

The third paragraph should provide any contextual theoretical or empirical considerations that throw light upon the question. At this stage that a specific policy instrument can be introduced, in the context of a wider theoretical or empirical discussion of the need for a gender-aware policy appraisal. This paragraph must, very efficiently, link the question of the policy brief back to wider theoretical or empirical issues, in a maximum of six sentences and in a non-technical way.

The fourth paragraph should provide the results of the analysis, usually illustrated by a diagram, graph or small table. Provide only the briefest information (one sentence maximum) on the approach used and provide no methodological details. Avoid using jargon at all times to maximize readership. Do not present any results that are not directly relevant to the question.

The fifth paragraph should answer the question asked in the second paragraph. It is feasible to try to interpret the factors that caused the results presented in the fourth paragraph.

The sixth paragraph should describe the policy relevance of the gender-aware policy analysis, along with the key policy recommendation that arises from the answer to the question. Reference to the growth, distribution and welfare effects of a policy, in light of government objectives and the scope for first-and second-best policies, can be examined. The sixth paragraph thus concludes the policy brief, but to do this effectively, it should directly link back to the third, fourth and fifth paragraphs, and succinctly give the brief overall coherence. It should also make explicit reference to the limitations of the policy analysis provided in the brief. The last paragraph can be the longest in the brief.

Following the sixth paragraph, the brief may provide a short guide to further reading and provide any (minimal) references that have been used.