



Gender

Advisor or Specialist

Gender advisors or specialists are typically located in the countries where programs are implemented. They provide guidance to other technical leads and senior management on designing and/or modifying activities for gender equitable outcomes. They also assist in monitoring activities and results, paying particular attention to unintended negative impacts. Gender advisors and specialists take into account contextually relevant considerations such as socioeconomic conditions, religion/faith/spirituality, language, and the physical, as well as enabling environments.

The gender advisor or specialist's core competency areas include:

1. Gender concepts
2. Gender training
3. Gender analysis
4. Implementation of gender strategies and activities
5. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

1. Gender Concepts

1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of gender equality and equity, gender integration, and engaging men as agents of change and women's empowerment.

1.2 Know the Domains of Analysis included in ADS 205¹ and be able to explain them to program stakeholders, including:

1.2.1 Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices

1.2.2 Cultural Norms and Beliefs

1.2.3 Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Used

1.2.4 Access to and Control over Assets and Resources

1.2.5 Patterns of Power and Decision-Making

1.3 Demonstrate a knowledge of gender integration in one or more of the key areas of food assistance programming, including agriculture, natural resource management, nutrition, water and sanitation, and disaster risk reduction.

¹ADS Chapter 205: Integrating Gender Equity and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle can be found at <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/205>.

2. Gender Training

2.1 Design and deliver *context-specific* trainings on organizational gender policies and relevance of gender to programmatic components.

2.2 Work with sector-specific technical staff (e.g., agriculture, nutrition, disaster risk reduction) to develop formal trainings and informal sessions with a gender lens utilizing new or existing resources.

2.3 Train staff on the delivery of gender-specific topics with particular emphasis on addressing sensitive issues (i.e., gender-based violence).

2.4 Identify and train a cadre of staff to serve as trainers. This could include other gender staff or specialists/managers within the program interested in becoming a trainer on gender integration.

3. Gender Analysis

3.1 Serve as the key point of contact for the person or team conducting the formal gender analysis. The gender advisor may support the following activities.

3.1.1 Develop the scope of work for the gender analysis activities.

3.1.2 Provide primary and secondary data to the consultant for review.

3.1.3 Identify key stakeholders and areas for qualitative and quantitative data collection.

3.1.4 Serve as the key point of contact and arrange logistics for interviews, focus groups, and other data collection exercises.

3.1.5 Assist with data collection activities, such as conducting interviews, leading focus groups, or conducting surveys.

3.1.6 Assist with the interpretation of data.

3.1.7 Review and provide feedback on draft copies of the gender analysis.

The Core Competency Series was developed by staff from The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program with significant contributions from the various task forces of the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Network. The series intends to provide hiring managers, program managers, and program staff with explanations of the basic skills and knowledge senior technical staff may possess to carry out their positions effectively. Official job titles, functions, and requirements may vary based on organization and program.

4. Implementation of Gender Strategies and Activities

4.1 Advise on and revise proposed strategies and activities during program start-up, including budget implications.

4.2 Actively engage in developing an action plan to incorporate recommendations from the gender analysis.

4.3 Based on formal and informal feedback, update strategies to address key gender targets.

4.4 Identify and adapt to the local context existing gender resources and tools to support gender integration within the program and activities.

4.5 Coordinate with key program staff, including managers and technical specialists, to ensure the implementation of gender strategies and gender integration into program activities.

4.6 Foster internal and external relationships for coordination and collaboration. This includes, but is not limited to, program partners and organizations doing similar work, including governmental entities.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

5.1 Actively support the design of monitoring and evaluation tools for gender indicators and for monitoring for negative impacts.

5.2 Guide the collection of monitoring and evaluation data.

5.3 Interpret results and present findings, recommendations, lessons learned, and promising practices to colleagues to further learning through communities of practice, online communities, webinars, conference presentations, training sessions, and other knowledge sharing mechanisms.

5.4 Use data to modify activities or mitigate negative impacts.

5.5 Review reports to the donor, and provide gendered data and language where needed.

Notes on Program Implementation

Gender often is presented as a cross-cutting issue within development food assistance programs. Senior management should be held responsible for ensuring the following occurs prior to and during the implementation of a program.

- Staff are held accountable for their role in promoting gender-equitable opportunities and in identifying and reporting potentially harmful strategies and activities. This accountability should be outlined in job descriptions and measured in annual performance evaluations. *Buy-in from staff on the benefit of acknowledging and reacting to gendered needs is key to achieving this shared accountability.*

- Sex-ratios of personnel should be determined by the need to reach beneficiaries of different sexes where the sex of the extensionist, volunteer, or field staff person may be crucial to achieving project outcomes (i.e., health/nutrition behavior change communication among men; providing goods, services, or training to women in many Muslim cultures).
 - Consider the importance of soft skills, such as communication and relationship building, that will open the pool of candidates to more women and benefit many positions, typically those that are field based.
 - Understand that ratios may be unequal due to the availability of qualified people. Because of differing levels of access and different methods of learning about opportunities or sharing information, ensure that positions are posted where both males and females will access them. Program leadership also is strongly encouraged to mentor and offer capacity-building opportunities to those individuals that express interest in pursuing a position usually held by a member of the opposite sex.
- Understand a potential partner organization’s gender policies and be sure to explain expectations for gender in programming and at an organizational level. Expectations for staff qualifications, training, and monitoring and evaluation of gender should be discussed prior to agreeing to partner and expressed in formal commitments.



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The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program is the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace-funded learning initiative, bringing the highest quality information, knowledge, and promising practices in food assistance programming to implementers and donors around the world to ensure more communities and households benefit from the U.S. Government’s investments to fight global hunger.

The TOPS Program Core Competency Series is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the USAID. The contents are the responsibility of Save the Children and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

This is Version 1 of the core competencies for the Gender Advisor or Specialist position, produced in May 2015.

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