What is Gender Mainstreaming?

**GENDER EQUALITY**
Where access to rights and/or opportunities are unaffected by gender.

**GENDER EQUITY**
Constitutes a state of fairness for all people according to their respective needs. [Figure 1](https://healthcarehome.org.nz/equity/)

**GENDER MAINSTREAMING**
Is the strategy of assessing gendered impacts and implications throughout all phases of planning and policy development. It can include an intersectional approach to gender analysis, thereby avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach and recognising the full variety of experiences within a population.

**GENDER BASED ANALYSIS (GBA)**
Is an actionable process to assess the potential impacts – positive or negative – of initiatives for women, men, and gender-diverse people, to identify specific risks and means of mitigation.

**BENEFITS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING**
- Encourages a critical understanding of the full impact and implications of policymaking and reform.
- Increases public trust in government and parliamentary democracy.
- Remedies and/or mitigates existing discrimination in certain sections of society.
- Avoids creating new and unnecessary disadvantages.
- Allows for more robust and effective legislation.

**CREATING GENDER SENSITIVE PARLIAMENTS (GSP)**
GSPs allow institutions to respond to the needs and interests of both women and men in terms of structures, functions, and operations. For Commonwealth Parliaments to become gender sensitive institutions they must remove all barriers to women’s full participation offering a positive example to wider society.

The CPA have produced a Seven-Step Field Guide which provides a blueprint for Commonwealth Parliaments interested in undertaking a GSP Self-Assessment. These guidelines suggest measuring gender sensitivity across four GSP Dimensions:

1. **Equality of Participation within Parliament**
2. **Parliamentary Infrastructure**
3. **Parliamentary Culture**
4. **Gender Equality Policy and Women’s Substantive Representation**

The Field Guide is a flexible framework for Commonwealth Parliaments and allows for variation in gender sensitising priorities.

**THE CANADIAN APPROACH TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING: GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS (GBA+)**
GBA+ is the approach to gender mainstreaming used by the Federal Government of Canada and is distinct from previous approaches through the incorporation of other diverse identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, education, sexual orientation, culture, income, language, and mental/physical health, adopting an intersectional approach.

**INTERSECTIONALITY** refers to how the relationships between these identity factors impact the way in which diverse groups experience government programmes and initiatives, and the corresponding ways in which multiple power structures interact to produce divergent experiences of privilege and/or oppression.

**GBA+**

1) **Targeted approaches which comprise specific, and direct interventions to meet the requirements of a particular demographic - e.g. mandating gender quotas for the membership of parliamentary committees.**

2) **Integrated approaches which involve effecting systematic, attitudinal and policy changes at a holistic level - e.g. undertaking a Gender Sensitive Parliament Self-Assessment to identify gaps.**

These approaches are undertaken will depend on the context of each institution and a strategic and focused approach is vital. Nonetheless, undertaking both targeted and integrated approaches will ensure progress is visible for all stakeholders and political will for the change is maintained across the organisation.

**GOAL 5: Achieve Gender Equality and empower all women and girls.**
TARGET: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life.

**GOAL 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.**
TARGET: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.

**IMPLEMENTING GENDER MAINSTREAMING: MOVING BEYOND CONCEPT AND INTO PRACTICE**
It is imperative to ensure that approaches to Gender Mainstreaming can move beyond rhetoric, and that their practice becomes the norm across the whole policy process. This requires a series of interconnected practices and tangible policies intended to situate gender as a constant consideration, alongside a strong commitment to gender equality from the top down, starting at the highest possible level. Figure 4 highlights a series of questions that can encourage the development of a gendered approach at each stage of the policy process.