



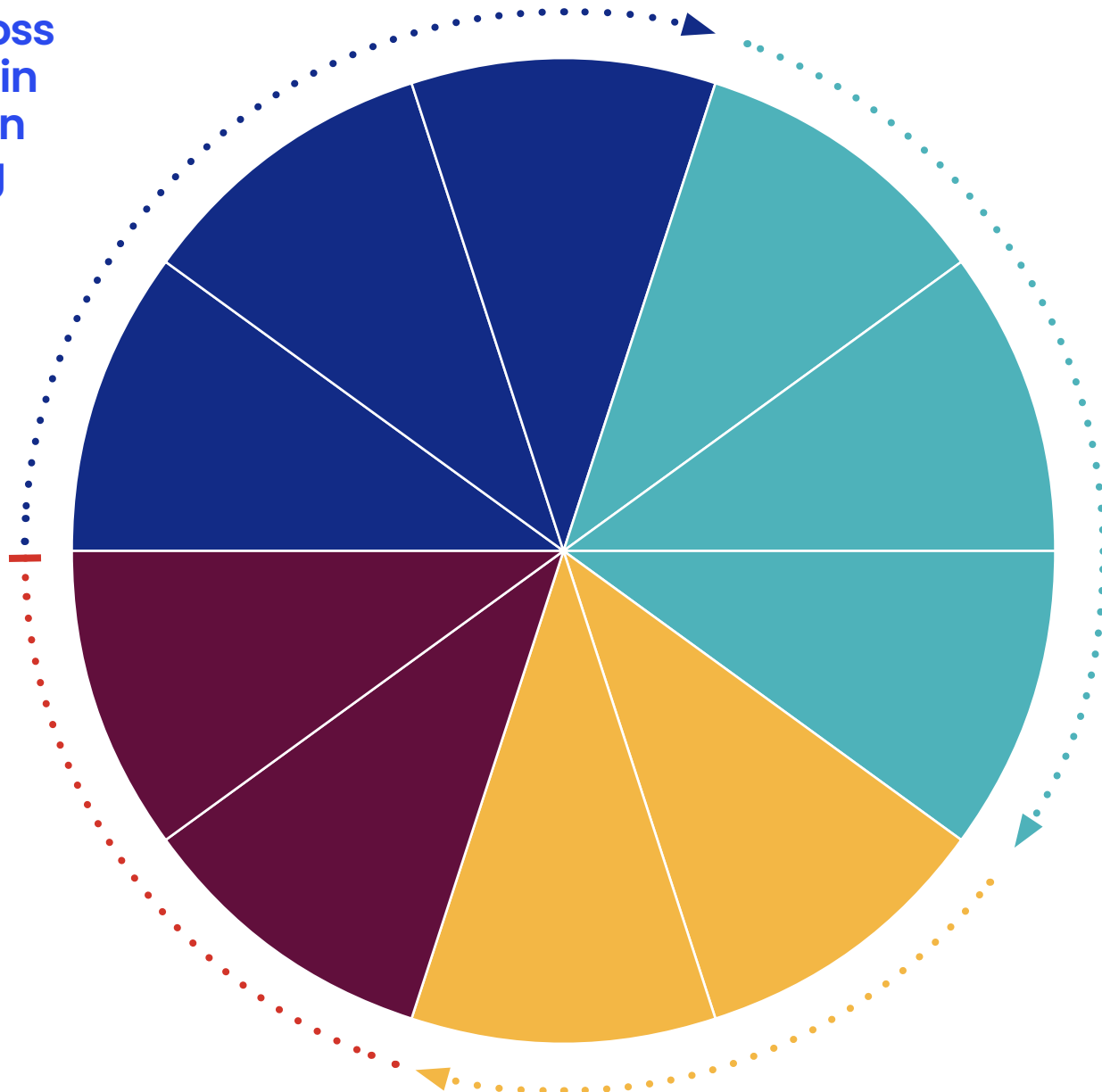
# Nourish Equality

A Philanthropic Guide to the  
Double Dividend of Good  
Nutrition and Gender Equality

**Nourish Equality** is a guide to grantmaking in pursuit of the double dividend of gender equality and a well-nourished world.

This guide provides practical tools across the grant cycle to mainstream gender in nutrition investments and to strengthen gender equality-focused grantmaking through better nutrition.

An upcoming third and final section will present **catalytic investments** in pursuit of this double dividend of gender equality and good nutrition.



Adopting a gender lens in investments for improving health and nutrition can accelerate progress towards global targets such as reducing anemia, which can also advance overall gender equality through improving education in adolescent girls and women, reduce gender wage gaps, and help girls, women, and their families escape poverty.

**World Health Organization**

Dr Lisa Rogers, Technical Officer,  
World Health Organization &  
Secretariat of the  
WHO-hosted Anaemia  
Action Alliance

For far too long, women and girls have faced a disproportionate burden of malnutrition, which has caused insidious impact on their lives and those of future generations. Simultaneously, women have been at the front lines of the fight against malnutrition. As community health workers, farmers, mothers and caregivers, teachers, researchers, policymakers, and beyond, women have been the engine driving reductions in malnutrition. Imagine what impact could be unlocked by investing in the health and nutrition of these leaders, their sisters, and their daughters? Nourish Equality highlights the transformational opportunity of that investment. Now it is up to us to act.

**Eleanor Crook Foundation**

Kimberly Cernak,  
Managing Director

At CIFF, we firmly believe that embedding equity into our grant-making portfolio is not just the right thing to do, but will also enhance the impact, relevance and sustainability of our giving. Stronger Foundations' new guide is a timely and welcome resource to help funders unpack the importance of mainstreaming gender equity into their nutrition portfolios and support them in doing so effectively.

**Children's Investment  
Fund Foundation**

Anna Hakobyan,  
Chief Impact Officer

We welcome this as an important resource that is both immediately practical to anyone grantmaking in the food or gender – or indeed any – sector that touches upon either topic, which let's be frank, is all grantmakers. This step-by-step guide is informative and easy to apply. We will not make progress against any of the complex problems we're grappling with unless we stop seeing things in sector siloes, and this guide helps in a very practical way to do just that.

**International Education  
Fundors Group**

Laura Savage,  
Executive Director

Philanthropy has an important role to build the evidence base and identify and scale catalytic investments in effective interventions such as childcare, which have the potential to improve outcomes for children, women, families, and communities. Affordable, quality childcare can accelerate progress on multiple goals such as women's economic empowerment, child nutrition, cognitive development, and other early childhood development outcomes.

**Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

Divya Dhar, Deputy Director,  
Data and Evidence,  
Gender Equality Division



More than twenty years ago, my wife, Kristen, and I founded Kirk Humanitarian because we were inspired to reduce global inequity of maternal nutrition. When we invest in women, particularly pregnant women, with a proven, affordable, cost-effective nutrition intervention like multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS), we can improve the health and well-being of millions of mothers and babies during pregnancy and at birth. There is no reason to wait: MMS is available now and resources like Nourish Equality can be used immediately to help place this critical intervention in the hands of women everywhere.

**Kirk Humanitarian**  
Spencer Kirk, Founder and  
Managing Director

Empowering girls and women is not only a moral imperative but a strategic necessity in the fight against malnutrition and neglected tropical diseases. Their health burden cannot be overlooked, for it is through their resilience and well-being that families, communities, and nations thrive. Funders must apply a gender lens to unlock transformative solutions, recognizing that investing in the health of girls and women is an investment in the future.

**END Fund**  
Dr. Kelly Zongo,  
Senior Director, Programs

Nutrition investments provide important entry points to addressing the underlying drivers of inequality, reflecting a global necessity. In 2021, 126 million more women than men faced food insecurity. Undernutrition, along with micronutrient deficiencies and anemia, afflicts over a billion women and girls, profoundly impacted by gender-based discrimination in food, healthcare, and education access. The stark truth remains: without confronting gender-based discrimination, scaling up nutrition efforts will falter. The economic argument is equally compelling: every dollar allocated to nutrition interventions for women and children potentially returns up to \$16. Addressing women's anemia alone, through proven interventions, can produce \$12 for every dollar invested. Our call to action is clear: Invest in nutrition, invest in women.

**Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement**  
Afshan Khan, Coordinator

Grandmothers, mothers, women and girls shoulder primary responsibility for the nutrition of the children, and are the first ones to skip meals so the rest of the family can eat. Malnutrition is not gender blind – we can't hope to tackle malnutrition without taking into consideration the impacts of gender inequality on malnutrition, and of malnutrition on gender inequality. Resources like Nourish Equality are critical tools to apply a gender lens to our collective efforts.

**Ecobank Foundation**  
Elisa Desbordes,  
Chief Operating Officer

Women and girls suffer disproportionately from the burdens of food insecurity and malnutrition, with severe consequences that extend to future generations. Climate change is making this burden even more acute. Progress is possible, but only if we put the needs of women and girls front and center. Nourish Equality is a valuable resource for any grantmaker who is ready to take action.

**King Philanthropies**

Kim Starkey  
President & CEO

In 2022 alone, 148 million children had stunted growth and 45 million children under the age of five were affected by wasting as a result of malnutrition. Rotary's 1.4 million members are committed to initiating long-term, sustainable projects that not only address malnutrition, but also fight disease, promote peace, provide clean water, protect the environment, grow local economies, and support education so that the world's most vulnerable populations — including women and children — can have the foundation for a healthy future.

**Rotary International**

Stephanie Urchick  
President-elect

The goals of the women and girls' rights agenda and the global nutrition sector are mutually reinforcing. Nutrition is a feminist issue. Multiple governments are committed to improving nutrition and promoting gender equality to achieve the SDGs. At FHI 360, a key priority is closing an overlooked, pervasive gender gap — women's and girls' nutrition. Together with 50+ organizations we led the development of the Gender Nutrition Gap (GNG) Action Agenda, a global framework of concrete actions to improve women and girls rights, advance gender equality, and improve their nutrition. Nourish Equality is a much-needed practical guide to embed the GNG policy actions in donor and philanthropic strategies and prioritize investments that can lead to tangible and lasting change.

**Gender Nutrition Gap, FHI 360**

Nadra Franklin, PhD, MPH,  
Vice President, Global Nutrition

The OECD Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD) encourages philanthropic foundations to provide holistic, inter-sectoral support for gender-related development goals. Last year, at the COP28 Business & Philanthropy Climate Forum, netFWD launched a Call to Action inviting philanthropy to accelerate gender-responsive climate actions. As we continue this work into 2024 and beyond, we are delighted to support Stronger Foundations' practical guidance on how to mainstream gender in nutrition investments — another essential building block on the road to gender equality

**OECD Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD)**

Bathylle Missika, Head of Division,  
Gender, Philanthropy and Partnerships

In this guide:

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**Understanding the double dividend:**

A virtuous cycle of gender equality  
and a well-nourished world

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**Grantmaking for the double dividend:**

Integrating a gender perspective into  
a nutrition investment portfolio

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# Understanding the double dividend: A virtuous cycle of gender equality and a well-nourished world

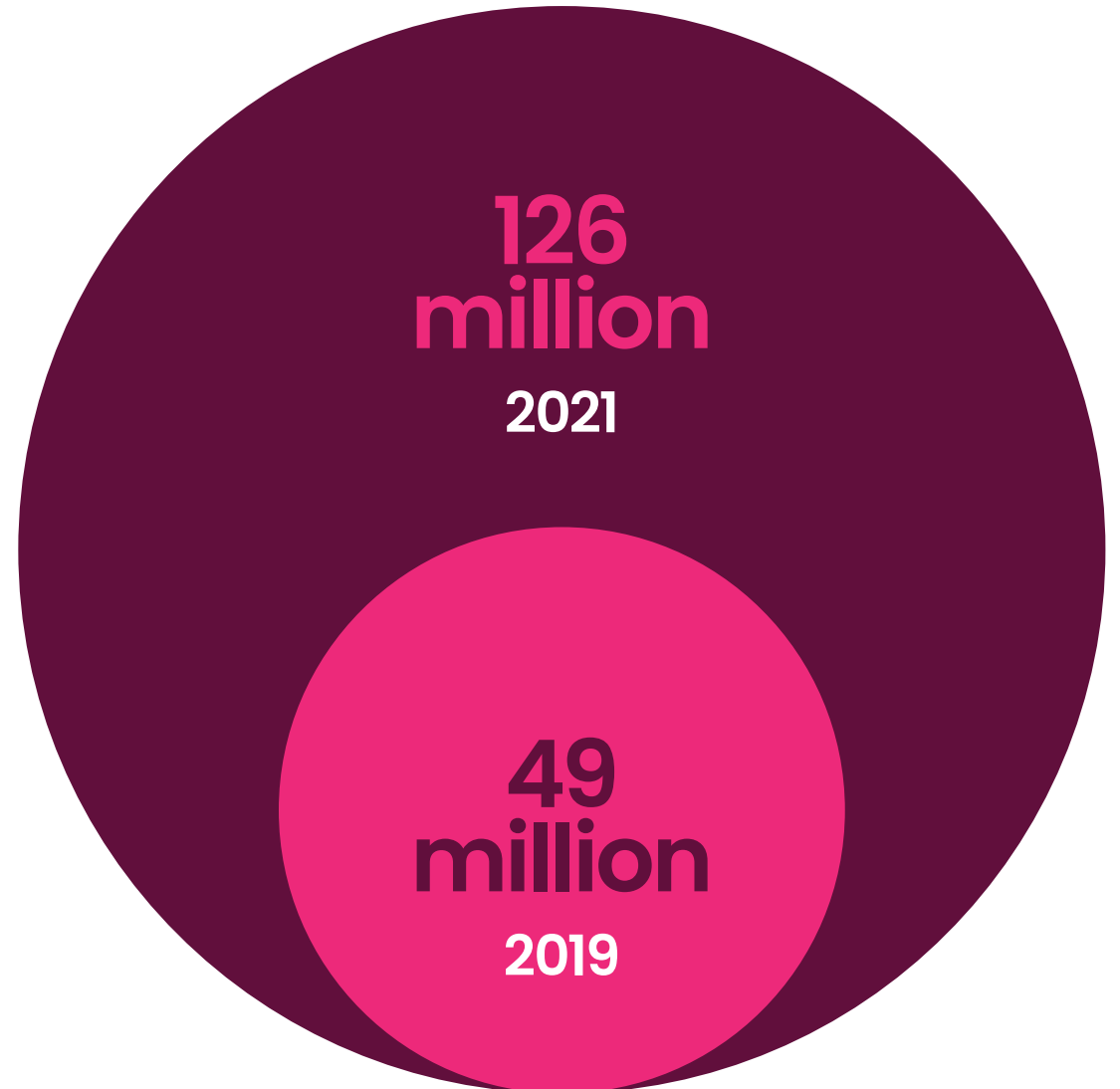


**Rising conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ever-growing burden of climate change have all thrown into sharp relief a harsh truth: in times of crises, adolescent girls and women<sup>1</sup> disproportionately bear the brunt of harm.<sup>1</sup>**

This is no truer than in the context of global food crises. **A 2023 analysis from UNICEF found that between 2019 and 2021 the gender gap in food insecurity – a measure of gender inequality in access to sufficient and healthy food – had more than doubled.<sup>2</sup>** These issues are only intensifying with a warming climate. By mid-century, under a worst-case climate-scenario, 236 million more women and girls will be food insecure compared to 131 million more men and boys.<sup>3</sup>

But crises only amplify existing issues. In far too many parts of the world a range of barriers have been built into the everyday lives of adolescent girls and women that block their access to the healthy and nutritious food they so desperately need. And, in turn, their lack of access to good nutrition and the burden they often carry to nourish the next generation powerfully and yet invisibly undermine gender equality.

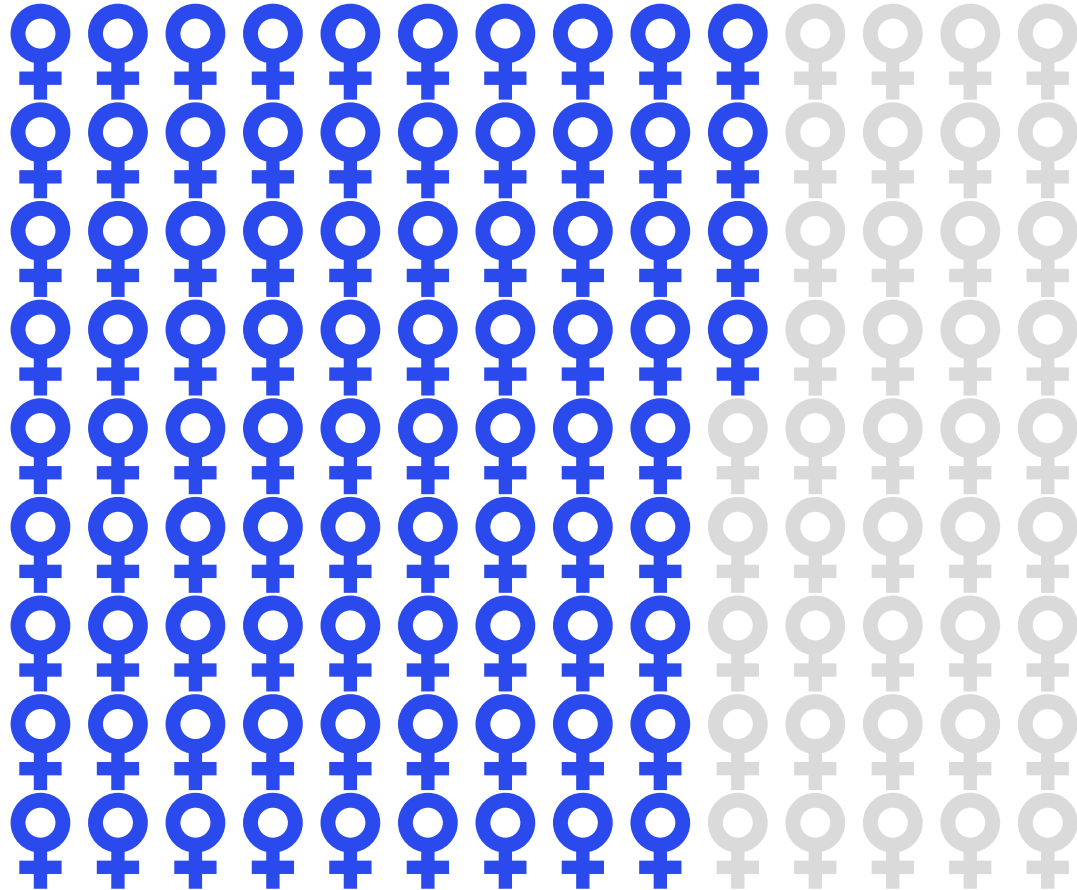
The gender gap in food insecurity has more than doubled:



<sup>1</sup>In this guide, we define girls and women as those who are assigned female at birth. This is due to limitations in the evidence base relating to the rates of malnutrition among trans and gender-nonconforming people and is not a lack of recognition of their unique rights and needs. More research is needed into the intersections of nutrition and gender identities beyond the binary to enable more inclusive analysis of these issues.



Staggering numbers of adolescent girls and women are undernourished, missing out on the critical building blocks that they need to survive and thrive.



Two in every three women of reproductive age worldwide suffer from at least one essential micronutrient deficiency.

The scale of malnutrition among adolescent girls and young women is profound. In the 12 hardest-hit countries around the world, **the number of pregnant and breastfeeding women and adolescent girls suffering from acute malnutrition has soared from 5.5 million to 6.9 million – or 25 percent – since 2020.**<sup>4</sup>

However, the issue is also truly global: a study in 2022 in the Lancet demonstrated that two in every three women of reproductive age worldwide suffer from at least one essential micronutrient deficiency, directly undermining their health and quality of life.<sup>5</sup>

Anemia, just one of the many health problems resulting from these deficiencies, **impacts the lives of almost one third of women worldwide.**<sup>6</sup> This pervasive condition undermines brain function, reduces women's capacity to work, increases their risk of infection,<sup>7</sup> and, if they choose to have children, makes pregnancy more dangerous for both them and their baby.<sup>8</sup>

## High rates of malnutrition place a heavy and unnecessary cap on the potential of adolescent girls and women worldwide and undermine progress on gender equality.

Girls who are undernourished as infants are more likely to leave school earlier<sup>9</sup> and earn less later on in life.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, **well-nourished girls perform better educationally and are more likely to remain in school.**<sup>11</sup> This in turn reduces the chances of girls getting married and having children at a young age – an issue that further increases their risk of malnutrition<sup>12</sup> – all of which enhances their lifetime earning potential and ability to participate fully in family and public life.<sup>13</sup> The wider, intergenerational implications of this are profound: **children born to mothers with good nutrition are more likely to live healthy and fulfilling lives themselves.**<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, differences in the ways that girls' and women's lives and health are valued can mean that they **eat later and less than male members of the family.** This is particularly true when food is scarce,<sup>15</sup> as is ever more frequent in the context of climate change.



### Gender lens: Climate change and malnutrition

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change. They are more likely than men to die in climate-related disasters<sup>16</sup> and are vulnerable to increasing rates of gender-based violence, including child marriage, as communities come under strain.<sup>17</sup> Extreme weather has particularly damaging effects for maternal health, increasing pregnant women's risk of pre-eclampsia, vulnerability to infection, and chance of preterm birth.<sup>18</sup>

The climate emergency is also weakening already fragile food systems, with women likely to disproportionately suffer due to burdens and barriers they face in food production, resource access, and as carers.<sup>19</sup> For example, extreme weather like droughts and erratic rainfall can put women at greater economic risk given lack of access to productive and protective services like financing, agricultural inputs, and insurance.<sup>20</sup>

This also has implications for girls, who often have to leave school to help their mothers manage the increased burden, undermining their ability to access school-based nutrition programs and their future economic independence.<sup>21</sup>

In many contexts, **women often have lower decision-making power in their homes**, are less likely to have stable incomes, and are more likely to face time poverty due to the disproportionate burden of childcare.<sup>22</sup> All of these limit their capacity to influence decisions about what food is purchased and how it is shared,<sup>23</sup> as well as their ability to access and prepare healthy food for themselves.<sup>24</sup>

These same issues also pose **barriers to the key services, like nutrition interventions and social protection programs**, that would help make up for the unequal access to good nutrition that adolescent girls and women may face in the home. For instance, rural women often face gender-related barriers to participate in and benefit equally from services like cash transfers – which provide essential support for those most vulnerable to malnutrition<sup>25</sup> – due to the unequal care burden, illiteracy and limited access to information.<sup>26</sup>



## Gender lens: What about boys and men?

A common misconception of gender mainstreaming is that it only focuses on girls and women. In fact, gender mainstreaming aims to understand how issues affect people of all genders differently.

This comprehensive approach to mainstreaming is particularly important for malnutrition because most forms of it – stunting, wasting, underweight, and overweight – are disproportionately high among boys of certain ages.<sup>27,28</sup>

Even where the burden of undernutrition is particularly high amongst young boys, due to their potential role as mothers, high rates of malnutrition among girls and women are a key driver of malnutrition for the next generation.<sup>29</sup> We also know that many of the determinants of malnutrition among girls and women are linked to gendered stereotypes and roles.

Applying a gender lens provides the means to evaluate how gender is contributing to inequalities and helps make the case for engaging boys and men in programming – both as enablers of better nutrition for girls and women, and as sufferers of malnutrition themselves.

**Introducing a gender lens to nutrition investments would yield a double dividend: it can improve the impact of nutrition programs on girls and women and, in so doing, turn a vicious cycle into a virtuous one for women's equality.**

**Gender mainstreaming** – a process of integrating gender equality into the development, implementation, and monitoring of organizational strategies, policies, and programs – improves health and development outcomes.<sup>30</sup>

This guide aims to provide philanthropic actors, as well as other development practitioners who may benefit, with the **practical tools and resources to mainstream gender into nutrition investments**, addressing critical interdependencies with gender equality.



## By mainstreaming gender into the grantmaking cycle, funders can:



**Nourish Equality** A Philanthropic Guide to the Double Dividend of Good Nutrition and Gender Equality



### Improve the impact and sustainability of nutrition interventions

By identifying and addressing how gender norms and gender-based discrimination influence the causes of malnutrition, grantmakers can deploy resources in more nuanced ways to achieve nutrition outcomes and address inequalities.



### Strengthen the evidence base on gender and nutrition smart investments

By better integrating a gender lens into nutrition interventions, grantmakers can uncover insights and evidence to further inform integrated programming, helping to fill many of the data gaps that exist.



### Create opportunities to co-design solutions that more effectively meet the needs of women and girls, men and boys

By intentionally engaging people of different genders and designing in a way that considers their unique needs and roles in supporting or challenging progress, programs are able to meet the true needs of all people.



### At a minimum, ensure programs do no harm

Well-intentioned nutrition investments can have unintended negative consequences and deepen inequalities if they do not sufficiently account for harmful gender norms, such as increasing care responsibilities.



# Applying a gender lens to nutrition investments can unlock a double dividend of gender equality and better nutrition. Examples include:



## Coupling nutrition services with girls' education programs

Ensuring girls can access school-based nutrition programs provides an important safety net, and strengthens their ability to learn.<sup>31</sup> School feeding programs can help get girls into school and stay there, increasing enrollment and reducing absenteeism.<sup>32</sup> They also contribute by enhancing girls' ability to concentrate and learn,<sup>33</sup> particularly when providing nourishing foods like whole grains.

In fact, the wider links between girls' schooling and malnutrition are so strong that one study estimated that improving female education was responsible for nearly 43 percent of the total global reduction in undernutrition between 1971 and 1995.<sup>34</sup>



## Creating a supportive environment for breastfeeding

Breastfeeding support is recognized as one of the most cost-effective solutions for preventing malnutrition, with some estimating that every dollar invested in these interventions yields a \$35 economic return.<sup>35</sup> Breastfeeding programs also play an important role in improving gender equality outcomes for women who wish and are able to breastfeed.

Not only does breastfeeding improve women's health outcomes but, by creating supportive environments for breastfeeding through social and workplace policies, more women can remain in employment and strengthen their economic independence.<sup>36</sup>



## Supporting women's role in food systems

Adolescent girls and women are crucial players in food production, processing and retail.<sup>37</sup> However, many women face barriers to the resources needed for this role, such as accessing finance and credit options,<sup>38</sup> technical and vocational educational and training, and land rights for food production.<sup>39</sup> Their increased participation in these roles can also create pressures on time that is already strained as a result of other gendered caring responsibilities.<sup>40</sup>

Programs that increase adolescent girls and women's access to productive resources, while also recognizing and addressing the unpaid burden of care, can therefore be critical in improving their access to good nutrition and their wider economic prospects.<sup>41</sup>



## Delivering prenatal multivitamins

Women have unique nutritional needs, particularly during pregnancy. Prenatal multivitamins, referred to as multiple-micronutrient supplementation (MMS), are the standard of care for most pregnant women in high-income countries (HICs). But expectant mothers living in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) struggle to access this cost-effective intervention which, among other benefits, help prevent anemia and reduce rates of stillbirth, low birthweight, and infant mortality.<sup>42</sup>

Even for iron-folic acid (IFA) supplements – the current standard of care for women in most LMICs – weak health systems are often failing women, resulting in less than 40% of women in sub-Saharan Africa having good compliance.<sup>43</sup>

## The mutually reinforcing impact of ending malnutrition and gender inequality is increasingly well understood. But global action and investment on these critical issues remains insufficient and largely siloed.

Over the past several years, new coalitions and frameworks have helped to move sector thinking forward on the complex relationship between gender inequality and malnutrition. For instance, the **Gender Nutrition Gap**, launched in 2023, seeks to better articulate the ways in which women and girls' unique biological needs and gender inequalities all contribute to poor nutrition outcomes. **The Gender Transformative Nutrition Framework** also provides an evidence-based conceptual model to expand the capacity of nutrition programs to tackle gender inequalities.

Thanks to efforts like these, there is growing recognition of the multi-dimensional, bi-directional impact of malnutrition and gender at a conceptual level. However, **a lack of practical guidance for mainstreaming gender equality in nutrition grantmaking and consensus on which investments to prioritize** at their nexus continues to undermine collective action.



### Gender lens: Nutrition and menstrual health management

Cultural beliefs and practices around menstruation can affect women and girls' access to nutritious foods. Certain foods are sometimes deemed to harm health or affect menstruation: some communities believe girls and women should avoid meat, dairy, eggs, spicy, or acidic foods during menstruation because their consumption will cause excessive bleeding.<sup>44</sup>

In other contexts, menstruation is viewed as polluting, meaning that menstruating women and girls are expected to eat and wash separately, creating an additional time and access burden.<sup>45</sup> Although these norms may intend to protect girls, women and the community, they render them more vulnerable to malnutrition.

There is a growing but still nascent body of research into the links between nutrition and menstrual health, including how women and girls' nutritional needs may vary throughout the menstrual cycle and how nutrition can impact on menstrual symptoms. However, further evidence is required to understand the true depth of interdependencies.<sup>46</sup>

**Philanthropy has a critical role to play in bridging these divides, unlocking gender and nutrition smart investments that can build a stronger world.**

**Working alongside all partners in global development, private funders are well positioned to push forward this important agenda by:**



**Providing catalytic, long-term giving to tackle the systematic issues** that drive both gender inequality and malnutrition. Private funders can provide more sustained investment than public donors constrained by legislative and budget cycles. This can help tackle more complex and ingrained issues, like the social norms that dictate adolescent girls' and women's access to food and how the care burden is divided.



**Reaching beyond the traditional silos of development assistance** to facilitate cross-sector partnerships. Private funders' role outside of the traditional development architecture enables them to find common ground and propose holistic solutions, building bridges between historically distinct communities, like those working on gender equality and malnutrition.



**Responding to gaps in the investment landscape**, prioritizing high-impact interventions that might be overlooked or underfunded by other donors, such as prenatal multivitamins or nutrition counseling.



**Funding research into and taking bets on new and innovative approaches** with the potential for catalytic impact. Many private donors have a greater capacity for 'big bet' thinking, enabling them to explore solutions and ways of thinking that might be considered too risky for more traditional donors.



### **In conclusion**

There is a powerful link between malnutrition and gender equality. Though increasingly understood at a conceptual level, limited practical guidance means that these communities are not yet fully aligned and that investments in both sectors are underleveraged for this double dividend.

Nourish Equality intends to change this and the following section provides tools for impactful grantmaking at this nexus. This will support investments that are foundational to achieving progress on nearly all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to building a stronger world.



A group of women, seen from behind, are walking along a dirt path in a rural, arid landscape. They are wearing vibrant, patterned traditional clothing, including headwraps and shawls in shades of pink, yellow, blue, and orange. The path leads towards a wide river or lake in the distance, with rolling hills under a clear sky. The foreground is filled with dry, golden-brown grass and scattered rocks.

# Grantmaking for the double dividend: Integrating a gender perspective into a nutrition investment portfolio



# Introduction

## What is the purpose of this guide?

### **What you can do**

Practical steps throughout the grantmaking cycle to integrate gender into funding objectives and priorities.

### **How you can do it**

Equitable approaches for engaging grantseekers and managing grants that set your project up to achieve its stated goals.

Nourish Equality has been developed to help funders, in particular philanthropic organizations working on nutrition, to better apply a gender lens to their grantmaking in support of the double dividend of an equitable and well-nourished world.

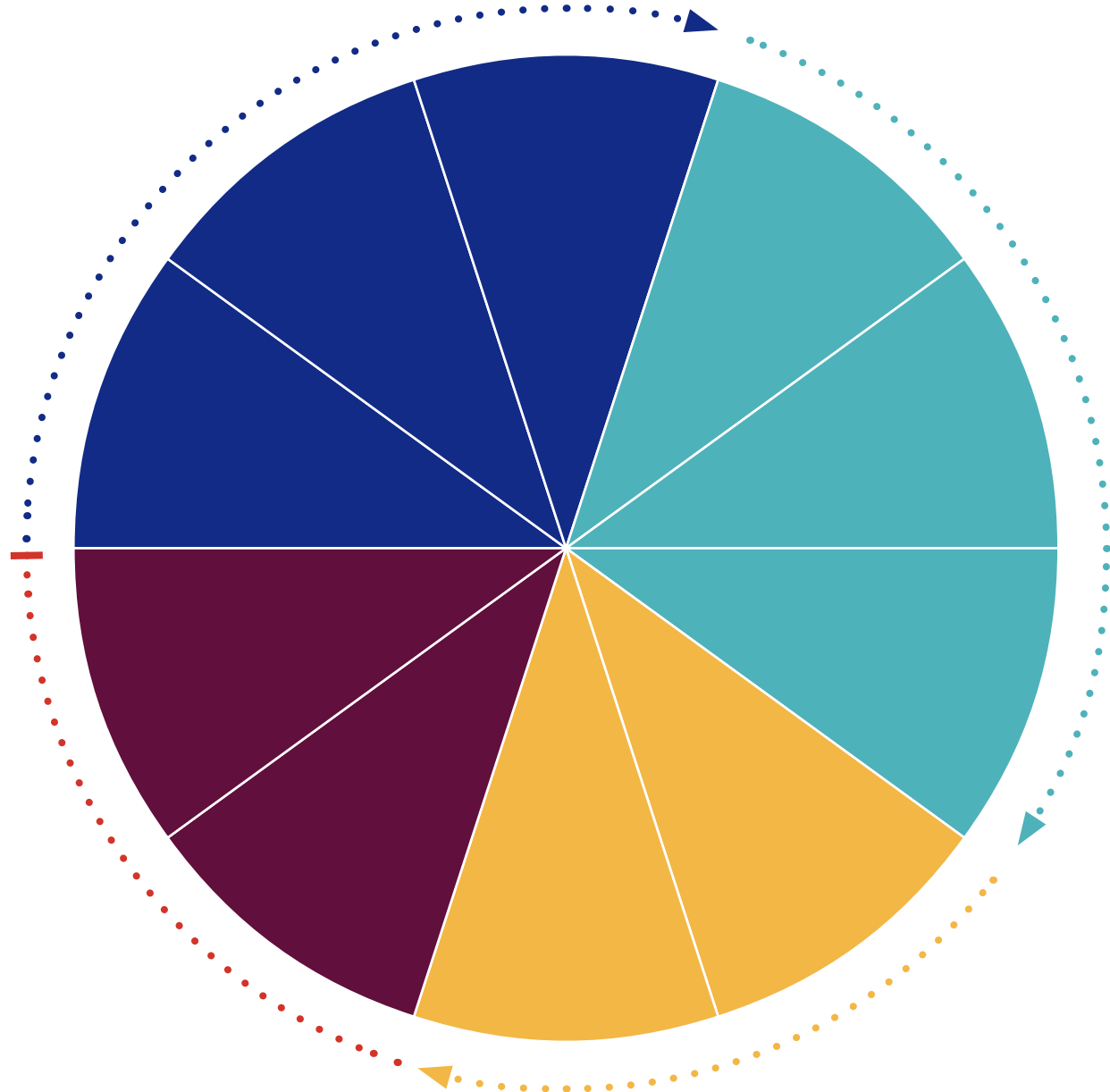
This guide is primarily for funders actively investing in nutrition – both private foundations and public donors. However, given the symbiotic relationship between nutrition and gender equality, it also aims to help gender equality-focused grant-makers understand the interrelationship of these issues and integrate nutrition into their grantmaking.

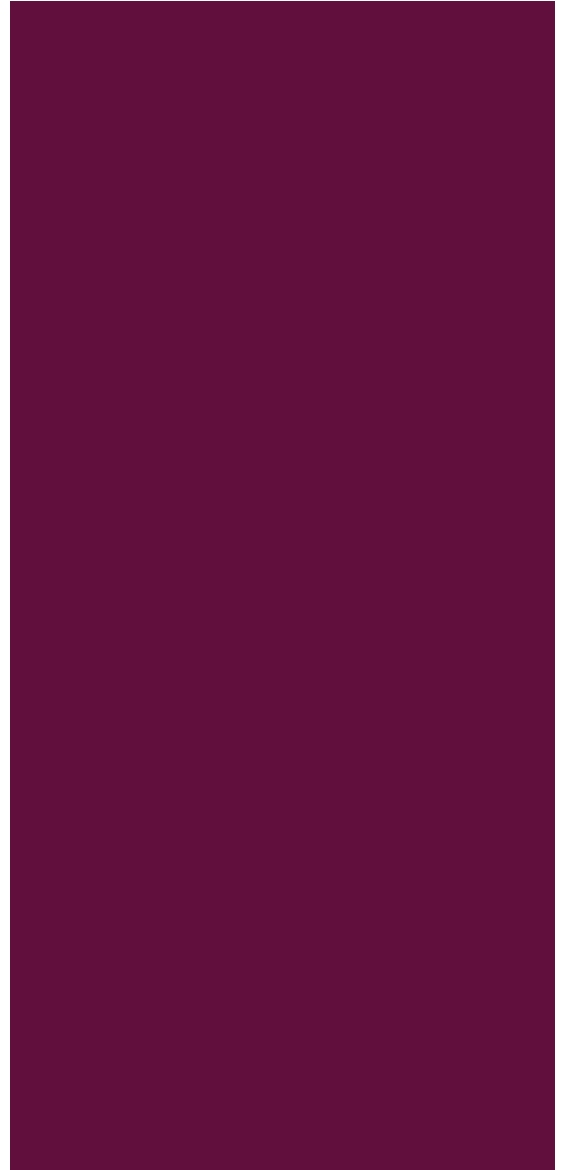
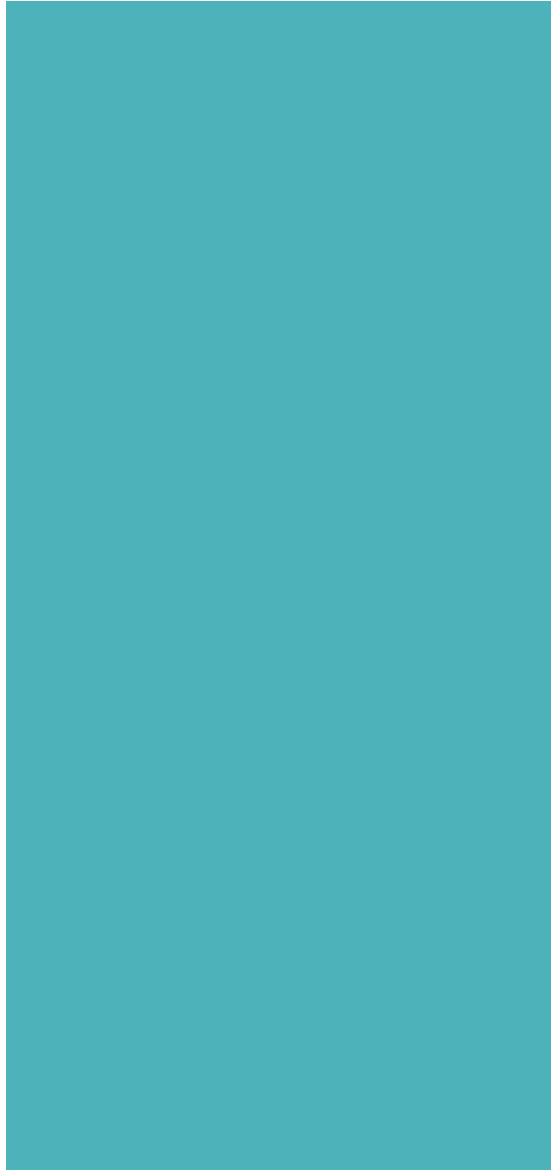
While this guide focuses on grants, returns-seeking investors can also benefit from these approaches. For instance, it is relevant to investors seeking to improve gender equality and nutrition outcomes through investments in enterprises operating within health and food systems.

## How do I use this guide?

This guide is presented in ten steps across four stages of the grant cycle.

Each step is explained in detail, providing practical actions for how to mainstream gender, examples of what it might look like in practice, and links to additional tools for readers seeking to learn more.





# Differing levels of gender inclusion

Across program design and implementation, there is a scale on which interventions intentionally acknowledge and redress gender inequalities and dynamics.

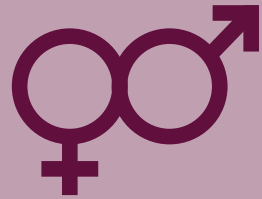
These range from gender discriminatory through to gender transformative. UNFPA provides the following definitions:<sup>ii</sup>

<sup>ii</sup>From UNFPA & UNICEF's [Gender Responsive and/or Transformative Approaches](#).



## Gender discriminatory

Programming that reinforces harmful and negative gender norms and actively harms women and girls.



## Gender blind

Programming that ignores the differing needs of women, men, boys and girls, as well as gendered power dynamics. It therefore, by default, has the potential to harm women and girls.



## Gender sensitive

Programming that recognizes the different needs of women, men, boys and girls and acknowledges gendered power dynamics. However, it does not necessarily take action to address these inequalities.



## Gender responsive

Programming that also includes specific actions to try and reduce gender inequalities within communities, in addition to its wider objectives.



## Gender transformative

Programming that is specifically designed around the fundamental aim of addressing the root causes of gender inequalities within a particular issue.

## What might this look like in practice?

To ensure the greatest sustainability and impact of your investments, mainstreaming gender into program design and implementation should result in interventions that are gender sensitive

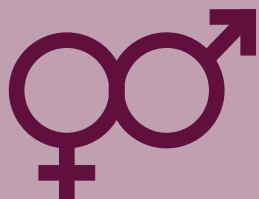
at a minimum and, ideally, gender transformative. The following diagram provides examples of gender and nutrition smart programs at each level of gender inclusion.



### Gender discriminatory

An Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) program teaches women to plant, buy, and cook nutritious food.

By focusing solely on women, this intervention reinforces the idea that they are the only family member responsible for cooking, and increases their burden of care. It also fails to account for sensitive household power dynamics regarding planting and market purchases, which may increase the risk of violence.



### Gender blind

Unconditional cash transfers are sent to every adult in a community via cash on their mobile phones. Recipients are also sent text messages about the importance of good nutrition and healthy recipe ideas.

In treating men and women the same, the program ignores that many women lack access to a phone and mobile banking and the ability to read, as well as the fact that evidence suggests that women are more likely than men to spend cash transfers on healthy foods for the family.<sup>47</sup>



### Gender sensitive

A childcare center expands drop-off and pick-up hours to make it easier for mothers to get to the fields early in the morning and cook a healthy meal at night, increasing their economic independence and access to good nutrition.

This acknowledges women's inequitable and time-consuming role in care and household labor but does not challenge gender roles associated with food preparation and care, or reduce the amount of time women spend on these tasks.



### Gender responsive

Community meetings educate men and women on inequalities in food preparation and other unpaid labor and encourage critical thinking on the norms driving these inequalities. High-efficiency cookstoves are provided to women to help reduce time spent cooking nutritious meals.

This approach recognizes gender inequalities yet fails to address root causes as it does not actively redistribute the burden of unpaid work.



### Gender transformative

A wasting prevention program improves gender equality by engaging male celebrity influencers and local religious leaders. Through sustained community dialogue, they promote that "being a man" means preparing nutritious meals and feeding children so that wives can choose to rest or pursue employment outside the home.

This approach achieves nutrition outcomes by transforming harmful gender-based norms.



## Steps 1–3

# Building strong foundations for gender inclusive nutrition grantmaking

The following three steps guide grantmakers through a process of **applying a gender lens to existing grantmaking strategies and objectives**. This will result in a **gender and nutrition smart rationale** for investments that can be used to communicate your approach to internal and external stakeholders, including grantees who seek to work with you. These steps can be applied to a grantmaker's nutrition portfolio as a whole or to individual investment areas.

**Steps 1–3 will inform all subsequent steps**, and are particularly important for funders early in the journey of understanding and articulating how gender considerations relate to their work. For funders with an existing grasp of gender mainstreaming, this stage can identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Although these steps are presented separately, it is likely in reality that **the process of undertaking them would happen concurrently**. It is not expected that you work through each step in chronological order as the actions required to implement them overlap. For instance, you may undertake internal and external stakeholder consultations in parallel with primary and secondary research.

# ↳ Step 1

# Strategy and context analysis

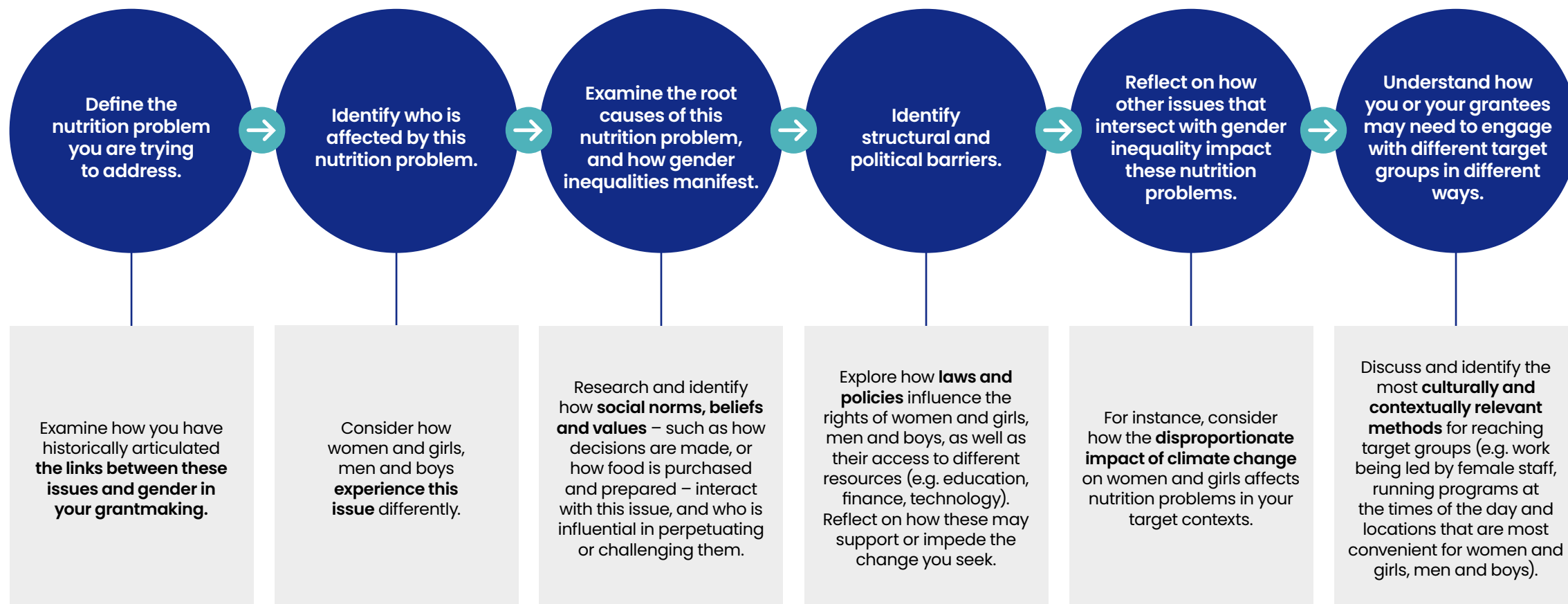
## Why is this step important?

Step 1 will help you identify the gendered elements of the nutrition problem you seek to solve and apply a gender lens to your nutrition grantmaking strategy. Articulating a gendered strategy and analyzing the gendered context of a nutrition issue are foundational activities for gender and nutrition programs.

## How do I implement this step?

This step is best conducted as a participatory process with key internal stakeholders including senior leadership, program teams, and gender expertise (if you have it), in addition to primary and secondary research and engagement with existing grantees.

Use the guidance below to apply a gender lens to your existing nutrition strategy and objectives and identify the gendered elements of the nutrition problem you are seeking to solve.







## What might this look like in practice?

A grantmaker is specifically interested in supporting smallholder farmers to grow biofortified iron-rich beans to improve children's diets, but this funder has never intentionally applied a gender lens to the intervention. Gendered primary and secondary research uncovers how gender differences in agricultural practices, time use, and access to capital and information all influence the desired goal of children eating iron-rich beans.

The gender analysis reveals that men are more able to purchase iron-rich bean seeds on credit, increasing the nutritional quality of their yields, but that they consider these fields cash generating and so sell all of their produce. The gender analysis also reveals that women's lack of financial credit prevents them from purchasing these types of seeds and that, when they can, they more often choose to feed their harvest to their children.

By conducting a gender analysis, the grantmaker becomes aware of the gendered drivers that will impact the success of this intervention before it begins. The grantmaker addresses these drivers through activities such as giving a starter set of bean seeds to female participants at no cost or providing equal access to credit.

## What is the context?

- What is the legal and policy landscape that relates to the nutrition of women and girls?
- What are the levels of education and labor force participation of women and men, and how does this impact nutrition outcomes?
- What are the commonly held gendered beliefs, perceptions, and stereotypes that influence nutrition outcomes?

## Who has what?

- Who has access to and control over which resources at national, sectoral, and local levels?
- Who has access to resources like education, technology, finance, social capital, and food?
- What are the impacts of inequitable access and control over resources?

## Who does what?

- How do gendered divisions of labor relate to nutrition?
- How do different gender roles play out in the household, community, and in paid work?
- What are the norms, beliefs, and values that govern expected gendered behaviors?

## Who decides?

- Who participates in which spheres of decision making (e.g. household, public sector, private sector)?
- Do women and men have equitable bargaining positions and power?
- Who influences nutrition-related behaviors and norms in the home, in the community, and at a policy level?
- Who has political influence?

## Who benefits?

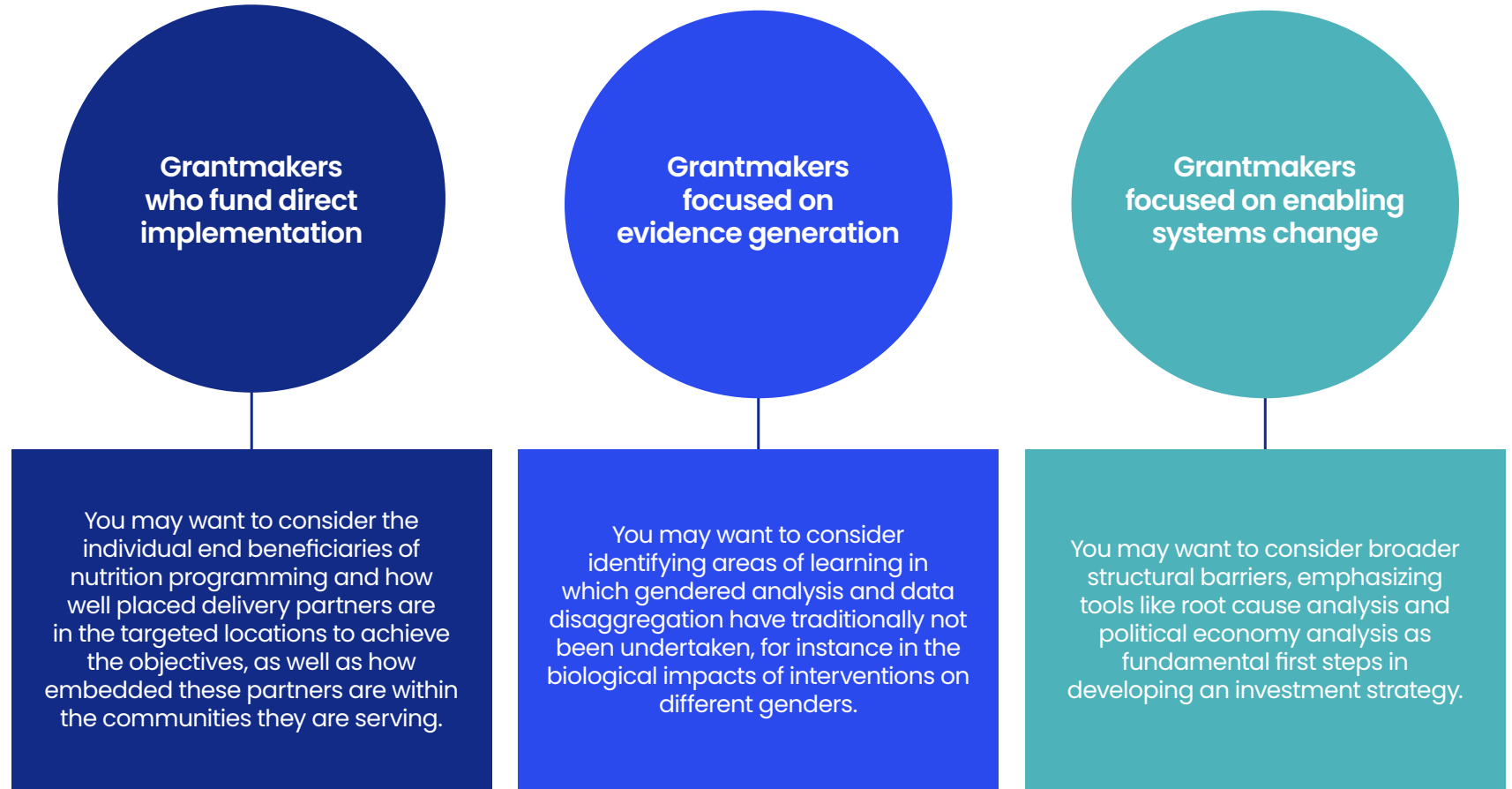
- Where are the opportunities or entry points to ensure equal participation in programs?
- Are women and girls, men and boys likely to benefit equally or differently from an intervention? Why?
- How is this influenced by other elements of their identities (e.g. age, ethnicity, ability)?
- Have specific response strategies been identified for each target group?

**These five sets of questions** provide a framework that enables you to apply a gender lens to the nutrition issues you are targeting, uncovering their gendered root causes and consequences.<sup>iii</sup>

<sup>iii</sup> Adapted from UNIDO's [Gender Analysis Tool](#).

## Gender mainstreaming for different funding models

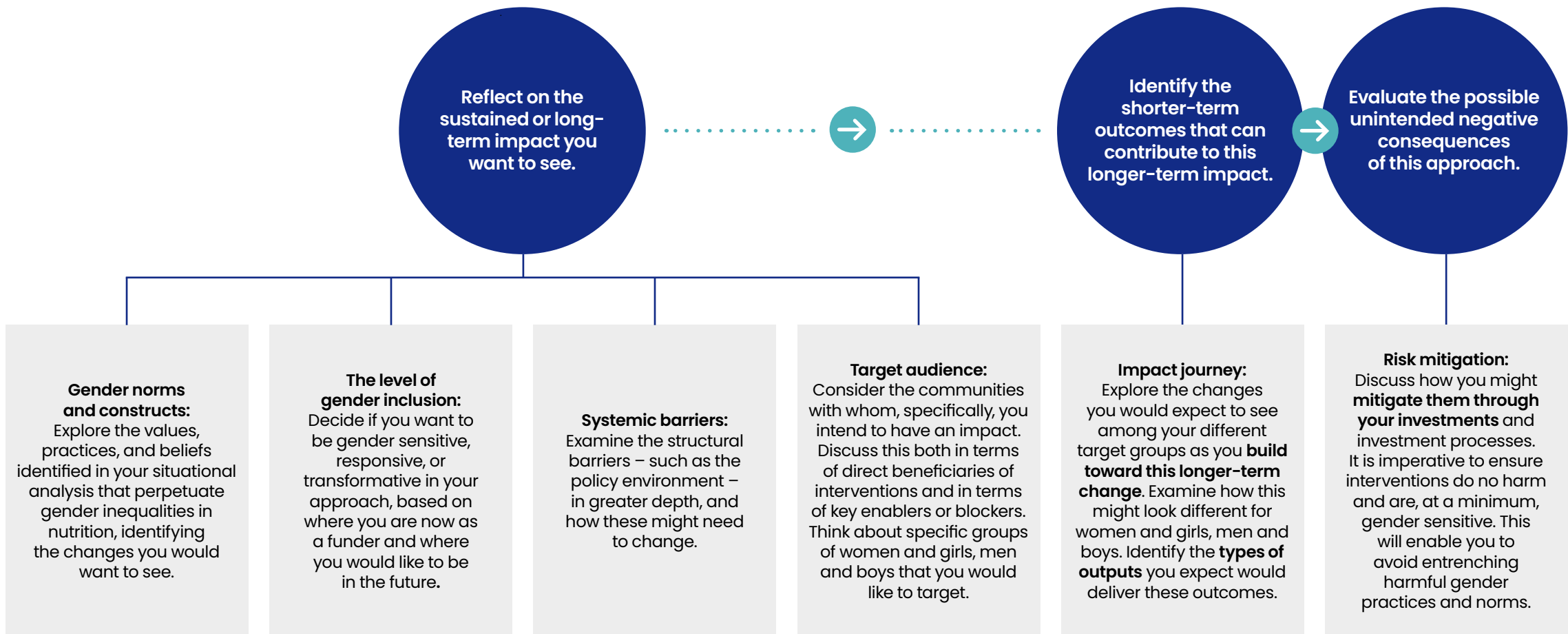
Gender mainstreaming can look different based on the type of funder you are and the funding approach you are using, so tailor each step of this process to your particular approach.



## ↳ Step 2

# Defining goals and outcomes





What might this look like in practice?



# ↳ Step 3

# Organizational capacity analysis

## Why is this step important?

This step considers your role and capacity as an organization, and how that might impact your ability to achieve your desired impact – specifically with regard to achieving gender inclusive outcomes. It clarifies what your organization is best placed to do and what additional support or capacity you might need.



## How do I implement this step?

When analyzing organizational capacity and resources, it is important to assess:

### Human resources and talent

The skills, knowledge, and experience of your existing team.

### Financial resources

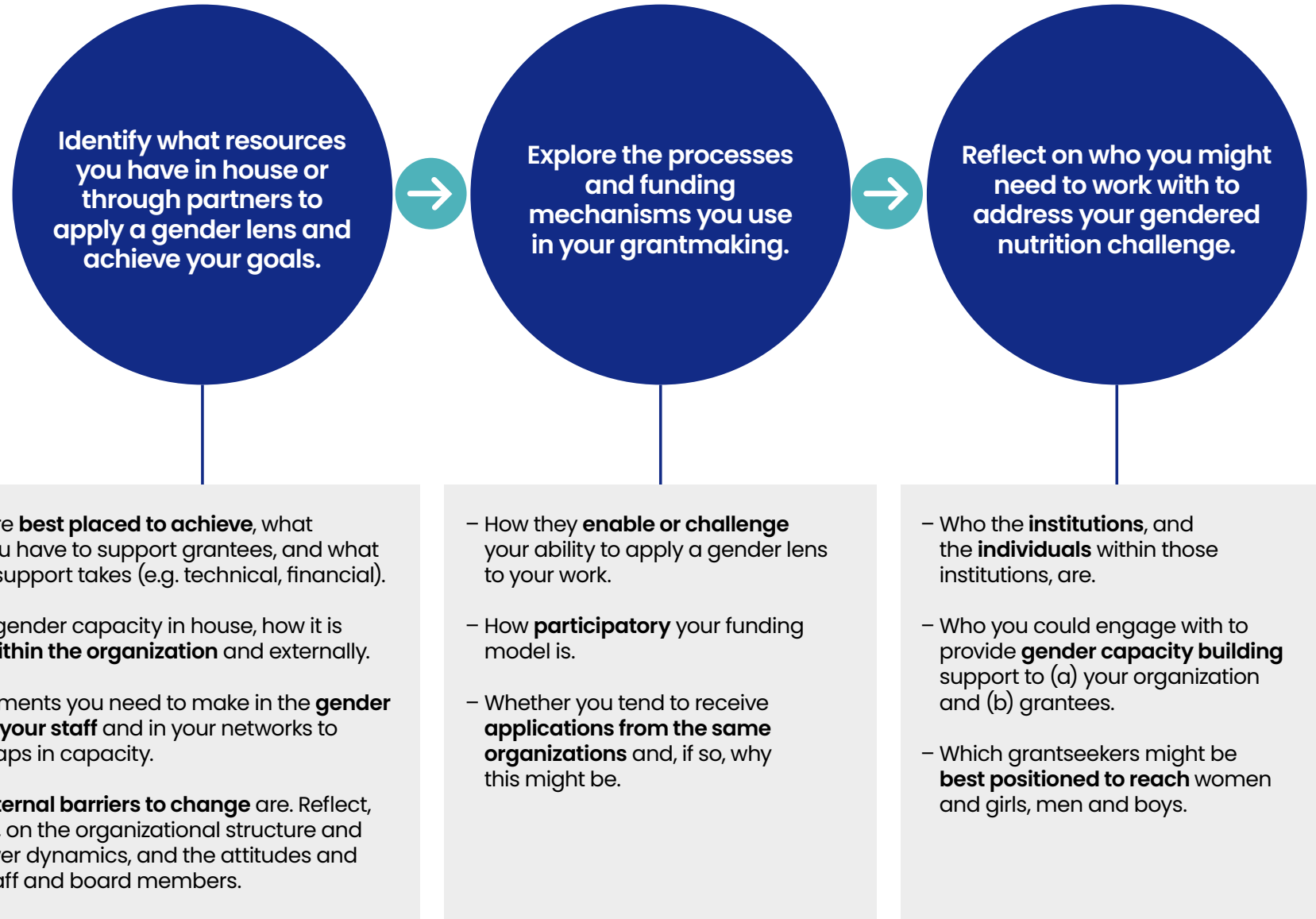
What you are willing and able to invest to ensure you have the necessary capacity.

There are several organizational capacity assessment tools and frameworks, but it is important to note that the **process is more important than the tool itself**. With that in mind, it is recommended to engage a skilled external facilitator with relevant expertise to ensure the process is tailored, thorough, and meaningful.

An organizational capacity analysis requires honesty and realism about the limits of what you as a grantmaker can deliver in terms of mainstreaming gender meaningfully into your grantmaking process. This can help identify where you may need to **draw on external support, partnerships, and expertise to deepen this work**. If you do have internal gender expertise, consider how well integrated it is within the whole organization and how these skills and capacity can be deployed.

For example, in many organizations, gender experts are drawn upon for specific advisory roles or focus more on support to external partners, meaning that the gender capacity is siloed to that team or individual. Greater integration of gender expertise with other teams supports meaningful gender mainstreaming at an organizational level.

The following points can be used to guide you through a **gendered organizational capacity assessment**, but it is recommended that you engage in an externally facilitated process if you are able to.



## What might this look like in practice?



Though not exclusively focused on gender, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) has published an **Equity Toolkit** that outlines their unique understanding of key terms and approaches relating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and how they have, as a funder, integrated this understanding into their investment cycle.

It includes a summary of the learning journey they undertook as an institution to reflect on why an equity focus was important to CIFF and where they are best placed to integrate this approach within their existing organizational capacity and priorities.

### Where can I learn more?

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' **Gender and Diversity Organizational Assessment Toolkit** provides useful guidance on assessing gender capacity across political will and commitment; organizational culture; resources and capacity; program delivery and implementation; and accountability.



## Steps 4-6

# Applying a gender lens to application and assessment processes

Mainstreaming gender into grantmaking requires considering how gender is being addressed in **program design**, as well as how grantmakers select **approaches and mechanisms for allocating funds** and the **types** of funding they provide, e.g. unrestricted funds, repayable grants, returns-seeking investments.

While the following guidance focuses primarily on program design, it is important to remember that the more participatory, localized, and transparent a grantmaking process is, the more inclusive it will be of different types of organizations. This is particularly important for smaller organizations that serve marginalized populations, such as grassroots Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), who tend to be less well-resourced.

This stage includes three steps, covering **solicitation and Requests for Proposals**, **assessing applications**, and **assessing applicants' capacity**.

# ↳ Step 4

# Solicitation and Requests for Proposals

## Why is this step important?

This step is important because integrating gender more intentionally into your nutrition portfolio may necessarily involve seeking out new partners and projects to fund, as well as adjusting how you fund interventions.

For example, you may have worked with a trusted nutrition partner for many years but they may lack gender and behavior change expertise. The pool of organizations working at the intersection of gender and nutrition is relatively small and so broadening your reach beyond your usual channels and methods will help to increase visibility among new potential partners.



## How do I implement this step?

**Demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the gender norms, structural barriers, and other dynamics in the project location.**

**Articulate the intended outcomes and impacts for different target groups, disaggregated by gender and, where relevant, other identity markers.**

**Identify potential gendered risks and challenges that might affect implementation and offer appropriate and effective mitigation strategies.**

**Showcase their ability to address the gendered challenges identified.**

## Application questions for grantseekers to respond to in your RFP might include:

What is the economic, legal, policy, and social context for women and girls, men and boys in the target location, as it relates to nutrition?

Who are the intended beneficiaries?

How does the program take into account the different needs, interests, and circumstances of each gender?

How will you ensure that, at a minimum, the intervention does no harm and does not reinforce harmful gender norms and behaviors?

How might women, girls, men and boys be impacted differently by the intervention?

What impact might the intervention have on gender dynamics within communities that influence nutrition outcomes?

How have women and girls, men and boys been (or how will they be) involved in the design of the intervention?

What gender norms, values or behaviors might present barriers or risks to the intervention? How do you plan to overcome these?

How will women and girls, men and boys be involved in the monitoring and sustainability of the intervention?

How will women and girls, men and boys be involved in the delivery of the intervention?

How will the program address gender inequalities?

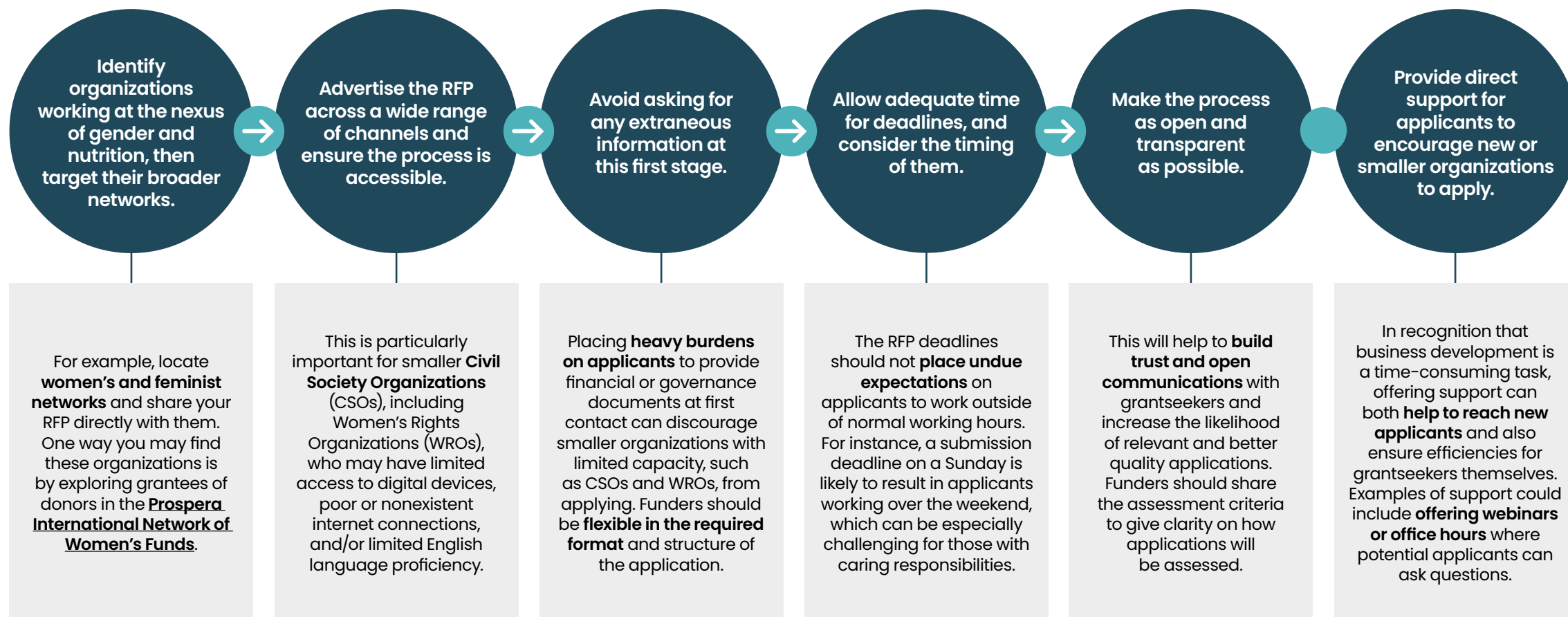
What structural barriers might present risks to the intervention? How do you plan to overcome these risks?

What impact might the intervention have on gender dynamics within communities that influence nutrition outcomes?



## Designing an effective concept solicitation process

Engaging **strong partners with robust gender expertise** is the single most effective way to mainstream gender into nutrition programming, especially if this partner is proximate to the work. To ensure you see a broad range of relevant applicants, you can:



## What might this look like in practice?

The following examples demonstrate how to integrate gender into a nutrition RFP:

- **Tanager International/IGNITE RFP:** Gender and Nutrition Technical Assistance Provision Capability Assessment of Local Service Providers.
- **Nutrition International RFP:** Sex and Gender Based Analysis of Adolescent Health and Nutrition Program in Indonesia.
- **CGIAR RFP:** Integrate Women's Empowerment and Nutrition Methods and Tools in CGIAR Research.



### Gender lens: Locally led, trust-based, and feminist funding principles

Debate over the role of grants and investments in perpetuating and challenging entrenched practices that promote gender inequalities and wider power imbalances is continually evolving. Private donors are uniquely positioned to disrupt traditional giving paradigms and redistribute and challenge discriminatory power structures that are reflected in international development and aid systems.

Many principles associated with locally led, trust-based models are also compatible with feminist funding and inclusive practices, but it is important to remember to be **intentional** about gender inclusion, and not assume it will happen by default. For instance, adopting a more locally led approach will not necessarily be gender inclusive in and of itself.

For those interested in undertaking much deeper work on feminist funding, it is recommended to work in partnership with organizations with specific expertise who can guide and advise on your practices, such as **FRIDA** or **AWID**.

# ↘ Step 5

# Assessing applications

## Why is this step important?

This step is your opportunity to ensure that a program is aligned with your goals and objectives and to evaluate applicants' ability to deliver on their plans. Having a robust and gender inclusive assessment process will support successful implementation.

## How do I implement this step?



Typically, **application processes include multiple stages** including inviting expressions of interest, concept notes, full proposals, work plans, and budgets. In some cases, interviews or an opportunity to discuss the proposal in more detail may be offered.

Embedding gender into each stage of your application process enables you to **communicate that gender equality is a clear objective** of the program that applicants are expected to respond to, as well as evaluate the extent to which applicants are meaningfully considering gender.



## What might this look like in practice?

A scoring rubric can be developed for each question, or specific questions, to **create a more objective assessment of grantseekers' level of understanding and commitment to gender**. The example to the right has been adapted from an acceleration program for clean energy innovations in Africa and Asia funded by Innovate UK. Nutrition grantmakers can use this rubric to evaluate a potential partner's gender equality expertise. Grantmakers can also use this rubric to **identify areas of weakness** in how a potential grantee approaches gender equality in order to dedicate resources to build that grantee's capacity.

### Where can I learn more?

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's **Gender Integration Marker** is designed to assess how well gender is integrated into proposals, and serves as a useful template that can be adapted.

### Example gender inclusive scoring rubric<sup>iv</sup>

Score	Description
9-10	There is a <b>compelling case</b> for the positive impact this funding will have on gender equality during and beyond the lifetime of the project. <b>Plans are specific, evidence-based, realistic, and highly likely to achieve positive impact.</b> Gender challenges are outlined and specific to a context. Impacted groups are identified and a realistic strategy for engaging with them during multiple stages of the project are outlined. <b>Potentially negative impacts of the project are explored, and a thorough mitigation plan outlined.</b>
7-8	There is a <b>good case for the positive impact</b> on gender equality during and beyond the lifetime of the project. <b>Plans are likely to achieve positive impacts on gender equality.</b> A generic understanding of regional challenges is shown. Impacted groups are identified and a strategy for engaging with them is outlined. <b>Potentially negative impacts of the project are explored and a mitigation plan outlined.</b> Gender support may be required to fully realize this project's impacts.
5-6	The positive impacts on gender equality are explored. <b>Outlined plans may somewhat achieve these impacts.</b> A modest understanding of contextual gender challenges is presented which is broad and non-specific. Potentially negative impacts of the project are explored but mitigations could be better. <b>Gender support would be needed</b> to generate a much greater impact.
3-4	The arguments for the positive impacts on gender equality are <b>poor or not sufficiently justified.</b> Outlined plans are <b>unlikely to achieve these goals.</b> Overviews of gender issues are extremely generic and not specific to the context. Potentially negative aspects of the project and a mitigation plan are barely or not explored. Significant gender support and/or partnership with a local partner with relevant expertise would be needed.
1-2	Little <b>attempt</b> has been made to identify or address gender issues as they relate to nutrition in the context of the RFP. There is <b>no argument for the positive impact of the project on gender equality.</b> Extensive information is required from this applicant if other elements of their application have merit.

<sup>iv</sup> Adapted from Innovate UK, **Energy Catalyst Round 10 Assessor Guidance**.

# ↳ Step 6

# Understanding grantseeker capacity

## Why is this step important?

Assessing and supporting grantseekers' capacities to deliver on gender inclusive objectives is essential to success and offers grantmakers and seekers an opportunity to co-create a capacity development agenda.

## How do I implement this step?

If you feel a proposal has merit but the grantseeker lacks the necessary gender capacity – or it could be strengthened further – there are several things you can do:

**Fund a gender-specific organizational capacity assessment.**

Several **frameworks and toolkits** for undertaking this type of assessment exist. Organizations conducting this assessment are strongly encouraged to enlist an external gender specialist to tailor the methodology to their context.

**Offer a gender capacity-building grant to the organization or consortium.**

This would be **in addition to the project-specific funding**, would need to be discussed and defined with the grantseeker, and would include a clear scope, objectives, and KPIs.

**Provide gender technical assistance through a relevant partner.**

This would require a separate RFP process to identify a **consultant or organization with gender expertise**, who would then work with the grantseeker to identify and address gender skills and knowledge gaps.

**Offer connections to other organizations with relevant gender skills and expertise.**

## What might this look like in practice?



A grantseeker responds to an RFP that is intended to increase women's productivity, control over nutritious food production, and the value of the foods produced. In their application, the grantseeker acknowledges that women's time burden of unpaid care will be a barrier to their proposed approach of structured offtake agreements, but the grantseeker does not propose any solutions to mitigate this burden.

The funder decides to connect the grantseeker with a local organization providing and advocating for childcare services whose costs would be subsidized by profits negotiated with the offtaker of nutritious foods. This funder-facilitated connection would strengthen the program approach and deepen the grantseekers' understanding of the care economy.

### Where can I learn more?

This case study on **IGNITE's diagnostic process** to assess institutional capacity on gender and nutrition in agriculture describes its capacity-building support to clients.



## Steps 7–8

# Undertaking gender inclusive monitoring, evaluation, and learning

# ↘ Step 7

## Selecting gender and nutrition indicators

### Why is this step important?

Indicators measure the progress of your program and its eventual impacts. They show what in the project is working, what is not, and who is benefiting.

Grantmakers, implementing partners, and, ideally, intervention participants should select a list of indicators that is comprehensive enough to evaluate project impacts but not too onerous to risk respondent fatigue and enumerator error.

## How do I implement this step?

Identify standardized indices or indicators that can strengthen larger bodies of knowledge.

Using standardized indices or indicator modules **facilitates data aggregation and comparison** across programs and contexts.

Use published literature and consult sector experts to decide what changes to expect and which gender and nutrition indicators best capture those changes.

Select complementary indicators that align with the program's specific goals and anticipated impacts.

These could be biochemical (e.g. micronutrient status, hemoglobin concentration), anthropometric (e.g. body mass index), dietary (e.g. MDD-W, ICYF practices), and behavioral (e.g. antenatal care visits) measures.

Ensure all indicators are **disaggregated by sex** and other relevant identity markers, such as age, to facilitate gender analysis.

Adopt a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

These types of data complement each other by explaining **what is happening and why** it is happening. For instance, you can use qualitative indicators to gather different perspectives that clarify how and why gender norms changed during the intervention. You can use quantitative indicators to track changes in patterns of these gender norms over time.

Adopt indicators that measure incremental as well as long-term progress toward outcomes.

Gender inclusive programming challenges unequal power dynamics and is therefore a fundamentally political, rather than solely technical, process. Gender transformative change can occur in a **non linear fashion over a long period** of time, so tracking small changes demonstrates progress in the interim rather than only at end-points.

Employ proxy indicators to measure sensitive outcomes indirectly.

Measuring complex concepts such as women's empowerment or gender-based violence directly can be unethical or extremely difficult. In these cases, use proxy indicators instead of or in addition to measuring the concept directly. For example, control over resources and distribution of labor can be **proxy indicators** for gender equality, though it should be noted they do not give a full picture of reality and should be interpreted with caution.

Ensure a diverse set of participants have a voice in indicator selection.

Indicators are often created by donors and partners, excluding the **perspectives of target participants** who are most invested in and will be most impacted by the project, particularly women and girls.

Grantmakers can address this inequality by funding participatory methods during indicator selection, such as those used in **Feminist Participatory Action Research**.

## What might this look like in practice?

The following table illustrates how gender norms, beliefs, and structural barriers influence health and nutrition program objectives. Grantmakers and implementing partners can use a similar exercise to select indicators that address gender-related barriers to their project objectives.

Note that gender equality should also be an objective in its own right, rather than simply a means to achieve better nutrition outcomes.

### Sample exercise to select gender indicators for health and nutrition programs<sup>v</sup>

Project objective	Gender-related obstacles to achieving objective	Activities to address the obstacles	Indicators to measure success of activities in reducing gender-related obstacles
Improved dietary diversity among women	Gendered food taboos; social norms dictating that women should eat after men	Conduct formative research on feeding practices; use community theater to model good intrafamily food distribution; provide education on women's unique nutritional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Change in knowledge among family members of women's nutritional needs</li> <li>– Change in attitudes toward intrafamily food distribution</li> <li>– Improved women's dietary diversity as per the <b>MDD-W</b></li> </ul>
Women's improved access to multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS)	Women cannot afford to travel to clinics to collect MMS; women lack time to travel to clinics due to care duties	Shift MMS distribution from facilities to communities; run a mass media campaign on the critical role of the family in supporting women during pregnancy in the ways women request; educate men on women's need for MMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased distribution of MMS</li> <li>– Change in family members' attitudes of the value of women acquiring and taking MMS</li> <li>– Change in community perceptions of women's ability to go to health clinics unaccompanied</li> </ul>
High-quality obstetric care widely available and used	Health services focused on outcomes of the child rather than on the health of the mother	Training to increase provider awareness of pre- and post-natal medical and support needs of mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased budget allocations focused on improving the health of newly delivered mothers</li> <li>– Improved satisfaction of mothers with the level of care received</li> </ul>

<sup>v</sup> Adapted from the Population Reference Bureau's **Framework To Identify Gender Indicators For Reproductive Health and Nutrition Programming**.



## Where can I learn more?



- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s guide **What Gets Measured Matters: A Methods Note for Measuring Women and Girls Empowerment** provides practical guidance to grantmakers and implementing partners on how to integrate measures of empowerment into investments targeting gender equality.
- FAO’s **Guidelines for Measuring Gender Transformative Change in the Context of Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture** lists step-by-step guidance to formulate qualitative and quantitative indicators of gender-transformative change.
- J-PAL’s **Practical Guide to Measuring Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in Impact Evaluations** shares learnings from J-PAL’s impact evaluations of women’s empowerment programs and offers examples of and tips for selecting a broad range of indicators.

### Resources for gender and nutrition-related standardized indicators:

- The **Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index** – which measures gender parity within households and women’s empowerment in agriculture.
- The **Women’s Empowerment in Nutrition Index** – a newer nutrition-specific index of empowerment for rural contexts that complements the WEAI.
- The **Food Group Diversity Score** – which can be disaggregated by sex and age, instead of or in addition to indicators like the **Household Dietary Diversity Score** which aggregate at a household level.
- FAO’s **Compendium of Indicators for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture** – which lists common indicators for food and nutrition programs and includes indicators around women’s empowerment.

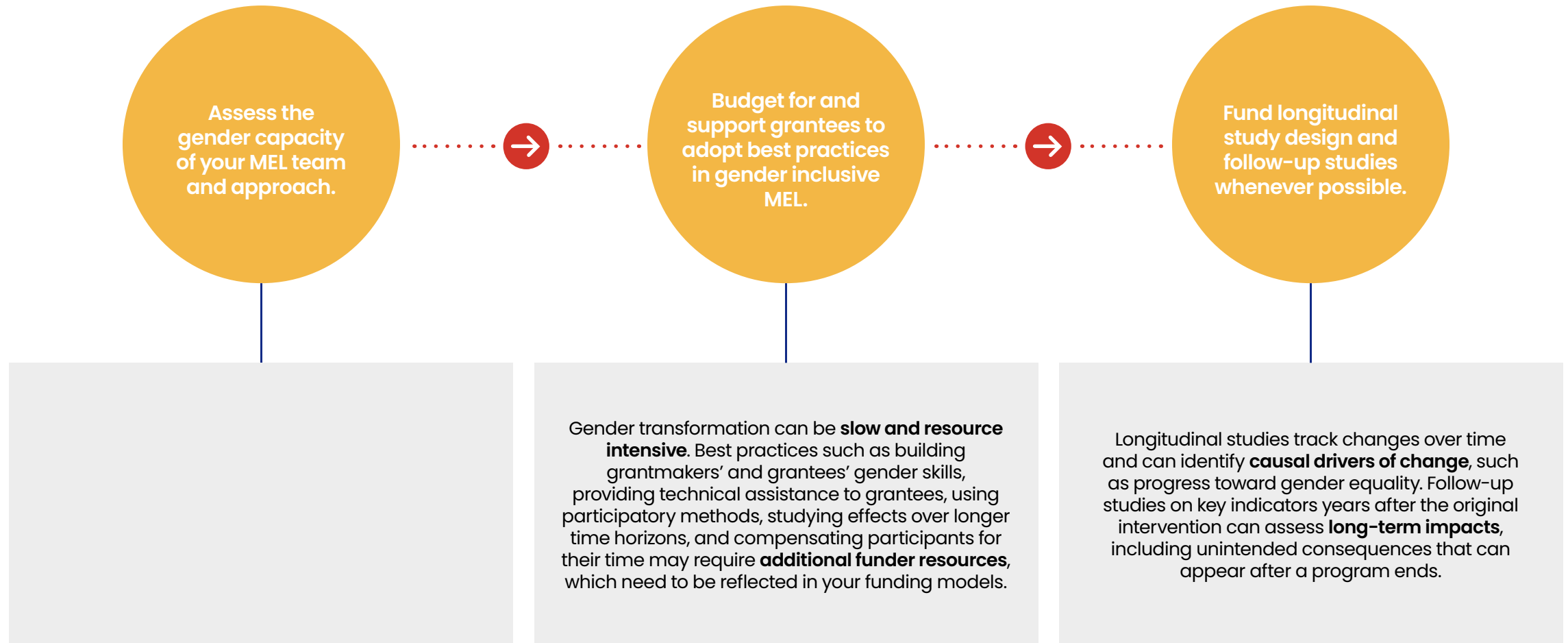
# ↘ Step 8

## Planning and executing MEL for gender and nutrition smart programming

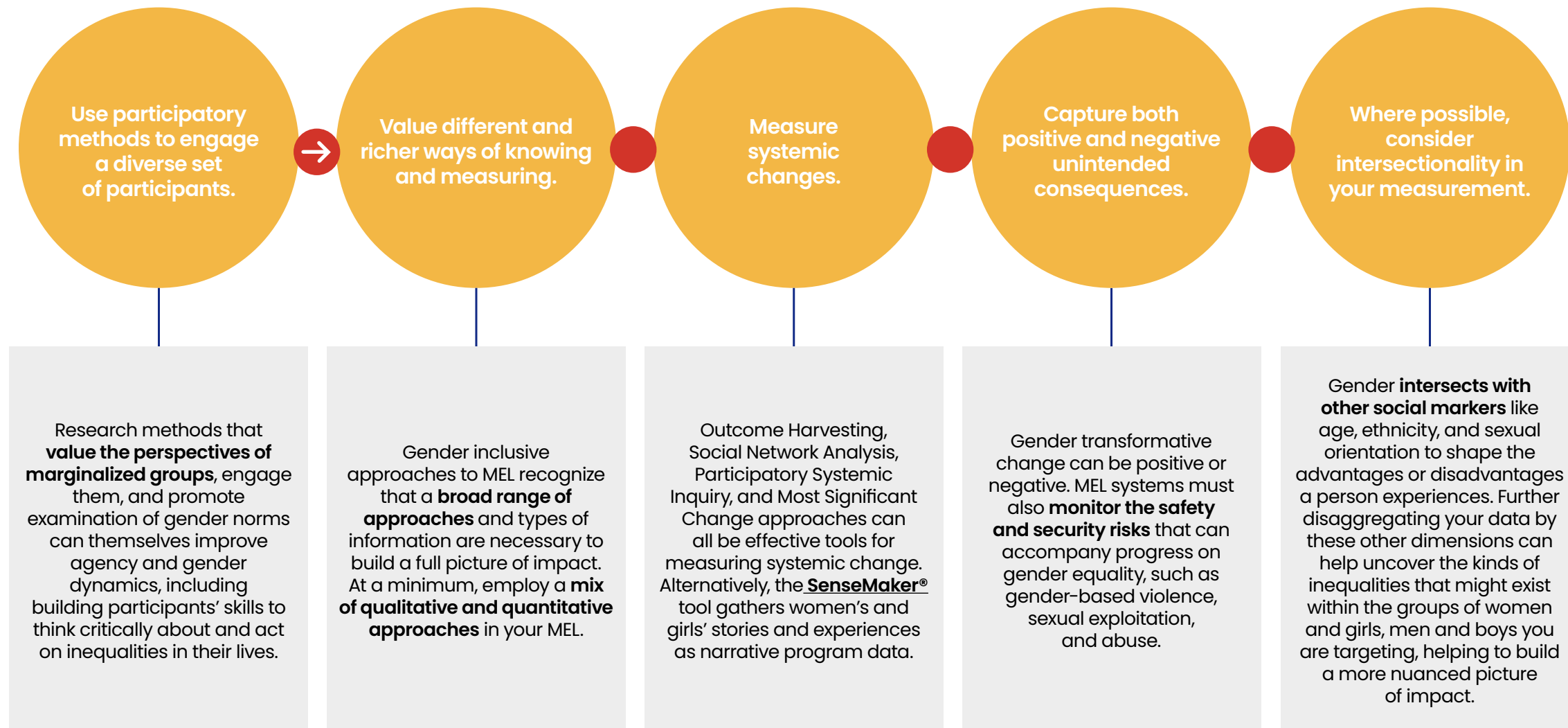
### Why is this step important?

While Step 7 covered what to measure in gender and nutrition smart programs, Step 8 presents the equally important consideration of how to measure those indicators. These recommendations ensure your MEL process gathers meaningful data on how your investments are impacting women and girls, men and boys, while also challenging some of the gendered power dynamics that traditional MEL approaches may omit.

## Gender inclusive MEL practices for grantmakers



## Gender inclusive MEL practices for implementing partners and grantees





## What might this look like in practice?

A range of participatory methods are available to grantmakers and implementing partners who want to advance gender equality through their MEL process while strengthening the quality of their data. The following table shares examples of participatory methods that can be employed in MEL for gender and nutrition smart programs.

### Examples of participatory methods used in MEL for gender or nutrition programs<sup>vi</sup>

MEL Stage	Illustrative methods and case studies
<b>Design</b>	CARE used outcome mapping to construct a common set of gender equality indicators for their <b>Pathways to Empowerment program</b> in five countries.
<b>Testing</b>	Oxfam used focus group discussions and “think aloud” exercises to develop and test a <b>gender equality index</b> for its impact evaluation.
<b>Data collection</b>	<b>FAO and the Government of Malawi</b> used focus group discussions, spider diagrams, and direct observations to measure the quality of ongoing Farmer Field Schools and suggest improvements.
<b>Data analysis</b>	The <b>FuelUp&amp;Go! Program</b> used community-based participatory research methods, including forming an advisory group of children and adults to undertake an evaluation of a food literacy program.
<b>Data validation</b>	The <b>Heart Healthy Foods program</b> worked with residents of a low income community to use photovoice to validate their findings on how the local food environment influenced their diets.

<sup>vi</sup> Adapted from the KIT Royal Tropical Institute’s paper, **What Do Participatory Approaches Have to Offer the Measurement of Empowerment of Women and Girls?**

## Where can I learn more?



- **Feminist Approaches to Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning: Overview of Current Practices** by The Equality Fund and GENESIS defines feminist MEL, offers a framework for implementing feminist approaches within MEL, and shares case studies of 11 different practical examples.
- CARE's **Measuring Gender-Transformative Change: A Review of Literature and Promising Practices** discusses approaches for measuring gender transformative change and suggests related indicators.
- KIT Royal Tropical Institute's **What Do Participatory Approaches Have to Offer the Measurement of Empowerment of Women and Girls?** provides insights and guidance on the value of participatory approaches.



## Steps 9–10

# Communicating and influencing to deliver the double dividend

Most barriers to gender equality, as well as to good nutrition, are structural barriers. There are deep inequities held in place by long-standing beliefs and exclusions that must be tackled to create lasting change. To truly achieve the double dividend of gender equality and a well nourished world, your work as a funder should also contribute to the broader landscape of evidence and action.

Steps 9–10 ensure that your efforts, and the efforts of your partners, to disseminate learning, influence, and mobilize others are impactful, responsible, and additive to the wider global movement for equality.

# ↘ Step 9

# Communicating learning



## How do I implement this step?

Understand the current evidence landscape, as well as key data gaps.

Prioritize learnings and develop resources that streamline access to your findings.

Strengthen your gender and nutrition smart communications for a wider audience.

To ensure your **evidence is contributing to sector learning**, it may be appropriate to engage another institution, such as **IFPRI's Gender, Climate Change, and Nutrition Integration Initiative (GCAN)**, to support you and your grantees in the development of your learning agenda. These actors will be well positioned to advise on where your data and learning can contribute to broader sectoral evidence, as well as how best to position **the value-add of new and innovative findings**.

Think about **your strongest learnings**, both in your journey of gender and nutrition smart grantmaking, and in the impact of your investments. What has challenged previous gendered misconceptions? What sex-disaggregated data have been generated? What new alliances have been formed? Formalize and **translate these insights into learning products** – such as briefs or reports – that succinctly and engagingly capture the key points you seek to communicate.

## What might this look like in practice?



Nourish Equality A Philanthropic Guide to the Double Dividend of Good Nutrition and Gender Equality

The Eleanor Crook Foundation and Conrad N. Hilton Foundation co-funded the **EFFECTS study** to fill important evidence gaps around the role of **engaging fathers in nutrition** and early childhood development programming. Where much research in the nutrition sector focuses on the role of mothers, EFFECTS explored the impact of fathers' involvement and found that their participation in programs improved the diets of both the mothers and children in their homes.

The study also uncovered that this approach led to greater acceptance of equitable attitudes toward women, an increase in fathers' daily time spent on domestic chores, and an increase in women's decision-making power: all critical factors defining how well-nourished a woman may be. The findings from the study were disseminated through a series of **webinars** and **op-eds** to ensure these **insights informed sector learning** and development of best practice in this area.

### Where can I learn more?

- The Emergency Nutrition Network's **Summary of Evidence, Policy, and Practice Including Adolescent and Maternal Life Stages** provides an overview of existing evidence relating to women's nutrition, as well as the important data gaps that exist that are hindering sector coherence.
- The Equal Measures 2030 **SDG Gender Index** provides insights relating to the gendered dimensions of all SDGs, including SDG 2 – Nutrition. This data and analysis is provided in visual formats that can be used in compelling data-driven advocacy to track government performance on key nutrition goals and indicators. This global data can provide a helpful accompanying framing for presenting your own more localized grantmaking data.

# ↘ Step 10

# Influencing and convening

## Why is this step important?

Once you have identified the most relevant evidence from your grantmaking, you will be in a stronger position to work with your partners to target key decision makers, including national governments and intergovernmental bodies, and make the case that gender equality and good nutrition are pivotal to a country's overall health, economic growth, and development.

## How do I implement this step?

Identify platforms and coalitions for joint advocacy.

Identify key moments and processes to influence global policy and practice.

Support local and national-level influencing.

There are many philanthropic networks and convening bodies that offer opportunities for influencing and partnership building. For instance, nutrition and women's rights-focused philanthropic networks like **Stronger Foundations for Nutrition**, **Prospera International Network of Women's Funds**, or **Co-impact** may provide spaces to identify allies and develop shared advocacy agendas. Beyond the philanthropic community, other initiatives promoting cross-sector dialogue include the **Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Consortium**, the **SDG 2 Advocacy Hub**, and the **Anemia Action Alliance**.

Promote your learnings or **convene others in joint influencing** around annual global influencing opportunities such as the World Health Assembly (WHA), the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), and UN General Assembly (UNGA). You may also want to consider opportunities for influencing that are more specifically relevant to the gender community, such as the annual **Commission on the Status of Women** (CSW) and global conferences such as **Women Deliver** or the **AWID Forum**.

At local and national levels, work alongside your grantees and partners to **encourage cross-sectoral dialogue** and policy coherence. For instance, you could bring together Ministries responsible for Nutrition and Gender to review and harmonize policies, leveraging tools such as the OECD developed **Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development and Gender Equality**. Your influencing could focus on the integration of nutrition considerations into national strategies relating to gender equality and women's empowerment, or the integration of gender-transformative actions into National Nutrition Plans.



## What might this look like in practice?



Nourish Equality A Philanthropic Guide to the Double Dividend of Good Nutrition and Gender Equality

The **Gender Nutrition Gap Action Coalition** is an example of cross-sector advocacy on gender and nutrition.

Launched in 2023, the **Gender Nutrition Gap** is a campaign focused on unpacking the ways in which women's and girls' unique biological needs, disparities in access to food and services, and harmful social norms have a bearing on their health and economic outcomes.

To support this work, a coalition of **'Gap Closers'** was formed, made up of leaders in both the nutrition and gender equality communities. These actors have developed a shared **Action Agenda**, made up of eight actions to close the Gender Nutrition Gap, a set of principles to guide all actions, and four priority action areas with specific policy and program recommendations. The coalition is now working to translate this action agenda into influencing work at the national, regional, and global level, as well as continuing to share resources and learning.

### Where can I learn more?

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Network's **Gender & Nutrition Communications Toolkit** provides practical resources such as key messages and social media graphics to highlight the intersections of gender equality and nutrition. It also proposes ways in which your advocacy work can directly support the double dividend, such as supporting girls and women to have a voice at nutrition-focused influencing opportunities.

## Conclusion

Though the links between gender equality and nutrition are increasingly clear, up until now action in the philanthropic community has been relatively small and fragmented due to a lack of practical guidance.

**Nourish Equality** outlines the simple yet transformative steps that all donors – private and public – can take to tailor their grantmaking to support the double dividend of a more equitable and better nourished world.

From unpacking the evidence base on gender equality and nutrition through to gender inclusive approaches for evidence generation and advocacy, this resource provides actionable guidance to move the philanthropic community towards more gender and nutrition smart grantmaking.

This step-by-step guidance serves not only as a resource for grantmakers in their individual giving strategies, but also as a strong foundation for an upcoming third and final section of **Nourish Equality**, which will present specific catalytic investments at the intersection of gender equality and nutrition.

**Nourish Equality** is a call to action to the global community to turn the vicious cycle of gender inequality and malnutrition into a virtuous one. When we nourish equality, we build a stronger world for all.

# Further resources

# Key gender terms and definitions

**This section outlines common gender terms and concepts, which are important to understand to be able to implement the steps in this guide effectively.**<sup>vii</sup>

## Definitions

**Gender** refers to the social, cultural, and behavioral aspects associated with being male or female. Unlike sex, which is biologically determined, gender is socially constructed, differs across time, location, and context, and is not fixed.

**Gender dynamics or relations** refer to the power relations between people based on their gender identity. This correlates strongly with social norms that influence individuals' access to and control over resources, which in turn results in hierarchies of power and privilege that typically advantage cisgender, heterosexual men.

**Gender equality** is the state of equal status for all people, regardless of their sex or gender identity. Gender equality is a fundamental human right and recognizes that all people should be valued equally – free of gendered stereotypes, norms, and prejudices. Gender equality does not mean women and men, girls and boys should be treated the same, or that they are the same, but that their rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and outcomes should not be dependent on their gender identity.

**Gender equity** is the process of being fair to individuals in a way that is differential and positively redresses historical, gendered biases and disadvantages. It refers to the fair and just treatment of all gender identities, by taking into account different needs, preferences, and experiences. Equitable treatment is how equality of outcomes can be achieved.

**Gender lens** refers to the process of applying gender analysis, to bring into focus and identify gendered differences, needs, assumptions, and biases.

**Gender mainstreaming** is a globally agreed framework resulting from the 1995 UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It seeks to achieve gender equality by integrating the needs, experiences, and priorities of women and men, girls and boys into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs and policies. As highlighted in detail in the first section of this toolkit, gender mainstreaming is an essential component of eliminating malnutrition because of the complex gender dynamics that interact with and influence nutrition outcomes.

**Gender norms** refer to the accepted attributes, characteristics, and behaviors associated with female and male gendered identities in a particular cultural context, at a particular point in time. They describe the standards and ideas to which women and men are expected to conform and form the basis of gender stereotypes.

<sup>vii</sup> Definitions drawn from [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Gender Equality Lexicon](#) and [UNICEF's Gender Equality Glossary of Terms and Concepts](#).



## Root cause analysis – 5 Whys<sup>viii</sup>

Why are rates of anemia among women in the target population not improving, despite overall income levels increasing?

Because women in this community are less likely to be the earners of this income and because they often lack control over household expenditure decisions. This undermines their ability to direct increased resources to purchasing nutritious foods and the supplements they need.

Why are women less likely to earn income and control expenditure decisions?

Because they are expected to fulfill many, often unpaid, caring duties that limit their time for paid labor. Also, men in this community traditionally control household finance decisions because of their higher social status.

Why do women do unpaid care work and men control income?

Because social and cultural norms influence gender roles and behavior in the household and community, defining the work that is done and who has power.

Why do cultural norms influence gender roles, behaviors, and power dynamics in the community?

Because they are replicated and perpetuated by communities, institutions, and individuals.

Why do communities, institutions, and individuals replicate and perpetuate inequalities?

Because those that hold power are reluctant to change a structure that serves them.

Asking ourselves “But why,” as children do, is an **effective way of conducting root cause analysis**. Typically, around 5 “whys” are required to reach an understanding of the root of an issue, but this can vary. By asking these questions with a gender lens, funders are able to identify the gender norms and beliefs that might influence the issues you are seeking to address.

This simplified example indicates that effective behavior change nutrition interventions must identify and address the gender norms that govern nutrition behaviors at a household level, as well as the individuals and institutions that influence how those norms are perpetuated.

<sup>viii</sup> Adapted from Tableau, [Root Cause Analysis Explained: Definition, Examples, and Methods](#).

# Feminist funding principles

A few principles to support feminist funding practices that grantmakers can adopt include:

- **“Nothing about us without us.”** Center girls’ and women’s voices, experiences, and leadership in design, implementation, and monitoring processes. Facilitate continuous feedback mechanisms and ensure data is disaggregated by different identity markers as well as by gender (e.g. age, ethnicity, location, disability).
- **Provide direct funding to women’s rights and feminist organizations and movements.** WROs and feminist movements tend to be underfunded in comparison to traditional INGOs. However, evidence shows that they can make invaluable contributions to the evolution of our understanding and pursuit of gender equality. Investing in them through direct grants or through facilitating connections between WROs and movements in target geographies is a way grantmakers can contribute to the enabling environment and advocacy agenda to support gender equitable nutrition outcomes.

- Ensure interventions take a **holistic approach, considering their interrelation with other related topics**, such as women’s economic empowerment and sexual reproductive health.
- Consider how investments can prioritize the **development of different kinds of knowledge**. For instance, training content should not be purely technical, but also include “soft skills” such as goal setting, negotiation, decision making, problem solving, and communication.
- **Fund experimentation** through models such as challenge funds, which can encourage innovative solutions to entrenched gender inequalities.

To learn more about feminist funding principles, refer to the following resources and organizations.

- FRIDA: **Resourcing Connections: Reflections on Feminist Participatory Grantmaking Practice**.
- Association of Women in Development: **Toward a Feminist Funding Ecosystem**.
- Astraea Foundation: **Feminist Funding Principles**.
- The Social Investment Consultancy: **Becoming Locally Led as an Anti-racist Practice – A Guide to Support INGOs**.
- Population Services International: **Designing Integrated Economic Empowerment and Sexual and Reproductive Health Programs for Adolescent Girls: A Knowledge Brief for Practitioners**.

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### About Stronger Foundations for Nutrition

Stronger Foundations for Nutrition is the global philanthropic community for ending malnutrition. We believe a nourished world is a stronger world and are bringing together a diverse network of private donors in support of true transformational change:

- We support philanthropies in their efforts to direct funding toward the highest impact and most cost-effective nutrition interventions.
- We deepen relationships between our members, encouraging coordinated action to raise malnutrition up the global agenda.
- We streamline access to evidence through our **Resource Center** and other tools to make malnutrition understandable and actionable.

To learn more about our work and join our community, visit [www.stronger-foundations.org](http://www.stronger-foundations.org).

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