

Gender Transformative Philanthropy

A Key to Improving Program Outcome
and Impact in At-Risk Communities



Let Every Child Shine.

Contents

2	The Challenge
4	Gender Lens
7	Opportunities to Address Gender Equity and Gender Norms
9	Becoming a Gender Transformative Funder
11	10 Steps Donors Can Take
12	Additional Resources

A Gender Dictionary

“Gender” is used in multiple contexts. Here’s a quick guide.

Gender Aware

The same as “gender lens.”

Gender Lens or Gender Analysis

Being aware of the impact of gender equity and/or gender norms on a problem or issue.

Gender Expression

How we express feeling feminine and masculine through dress, hair, and adornment.

Gender Identity

An inner sense of being male or female, useful when discussing transgender individuals who feel a conflict between their sex and gender identity.

Gender Mainstreaming

Addressing disparities between women and men in policy and programs with the goal of achieving full equality.

Gender Norms

Socially-constructed ideals, scripts, expectations for how to be a woman or a man; in sex—as in partner violence—they determine who does what, to whom, when, and how.

Gender Roles

Social and behavioral norms for how men and women are expected to act: being a doctor or nurse, being martial or maternal.

Gender Traits

Physical or personal characteristics commonly considered feminine or masculine (e.g., hairy chest or hourglass figure.)

Gender Transformative

Gender transformative programs and policies highlight, challenge and ultimately change harmful norms of masculinity and femininity.

The Challenge

We would like to offer a special thank you to Jacqueline Ebanks of the New York Women’s Foundation, Stephen Foster of the Overbrook Foundation, Loren Harris of Frontline Solutions, consultant Alicia Jay, Kimberly Otis of the Center for Partnership Studies, and Susan Wefald of the Discount Foundation and for their advice, input, and guidance.

As foundations and other philanthropic institutions assess where they can maximize the social return on their charitable investments, many are looking at issues of gender norms and gender equity.

As one program officer asked, “Our grantees and staff get race and class; some are even starting to get sexual orientation. What I want to know is—what happened to gender? Where is the gender analysis?”

Part of the problem is conceptual. Most recognize what race is, and most can understand class or economic status. But how many grantees can recognize or can explain gender?

Language is part of the problem. Gender is an “overloaded” word, used in many different but very related contexts: gender equity, gender norms, gender lens, gender analysis, gender transformative.

And that doesn’t count all the gender concepts related to LGBTQ: gender identity, gender expression, transgender. How can we expect grantees to know the difference?

To complicate matters further, in the US, where there’s often a widely held assumption that women and girls already enjoy full equality of rights, grantees may not see the need to have a gender analysis at all. Or if they do have one, it is marginalized.

As one experienced program officer put it, “Grantees need to see gender and race together. Gender impacts every issue they work on. But grantees are not being challenged to do innovative work around gender [in a way that parallels their work on race or class concerns].”

Nonprofit organizations can be in very different places along a spectrum of understanding gender. Reproductive health or domestic violence organizations may instinctively get that issues of power and gender equity are crucial to condom negotiation or preventing partner abuse, but lack deeper understanding of the role played by gender norms.

Meanwhile, in the civil society arena, civic engagement and civil rights organizations may navigate largely by race and class analyses, with little understanding of why a gender analysis is important.

Such grantees, when asked, will respond to questions about their gender analysis with an answer that instead addresses diversity—“our clients are mostly women” or “our board is over half women.” Although diversity is an important goal, it does not substitute for having an understanding of the impact of gender roles and norms.

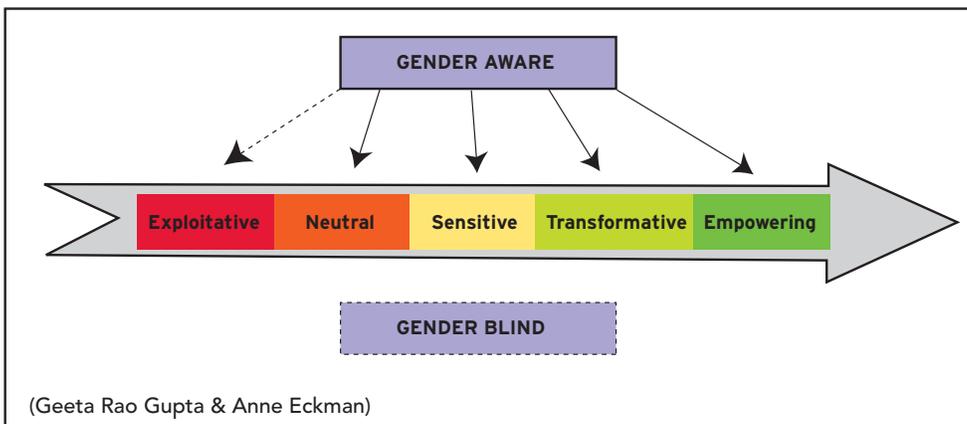
Some program officers are working quietly under the radar to do cutting edge grantmaking, but having to call it something different because, while it’s part of their personal vision, it’s not an institutional priority for management or directors.

But funders aren’t gender experts themselves. Even philanthropic officers who want to do innovative grantmaking in this area may feel they lack the time, expertise, or proper tools to assist grantees. They worry that pushing grantees for a better “gender analysis” without offering technical support may only result in cosmetic applications or grantees who respond, “Okay, so we’ll start a women’s program.”

As foundations and funders take up this charge, the progressive movement will begin to look different. Programs will become more effective because gender is a huge variable. Imagine how much less effective grantees would be if they ignored another major variable—race. As organizations take better account of gender disparities, they will be serving women, children, and men better.

But that’s not all. Gender norms are often referred to as “gateway beliefs,” because internalizing rigid gender ideals can depress life outcomes in so many common ways (as the Ford quote at left shows). The progressive movement will begin challenging harsh codes of masculinity and femininity that often leave young people vulnerable, uneducated, pregnant, abused, injured, or ill. As this becomes standard practice, it will measurably improve life outcomes for millions of young people, while making thinking critically about harmful gender ideals part of every young person’s experience.

Gender Integration Continuum



Researchers, funders, policy-makers, and organizations have formed a National Council to promote gender transformative approaches to improving life outcomes in at-risk communities.

www.gendercouncil.org



Gender Lens

A grantee who received a sizeable grant to develop a “gender lens” analysis training module produced what they thought was a very strong product complete with leave-behinds and toolkits on challenging gender norms. The donor had meant an analysis of gender equity. So perhaps a good place to start is what a gender analysis is and how it addresses gender equity, gender norms, or both.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Having a “gender lens” and having a “gender analysis” are often used interchangeably. Both refer to a critical examination of programs, policies, systems, institutions, or priorities to see how men and women might be differently affected by disparities in roles, responsibilities, power, or social expectations.

In this way, it is similar to a race analysis, which asks how participants of different races experience different social realities based on racial identity, or a class analysis that examines the impact of socio-economic level on opportunity and equity.

In an “intersectional analysis,” these kinds of examinations are connected, so that the impact of factors like age, race, class, and gender are all considered.

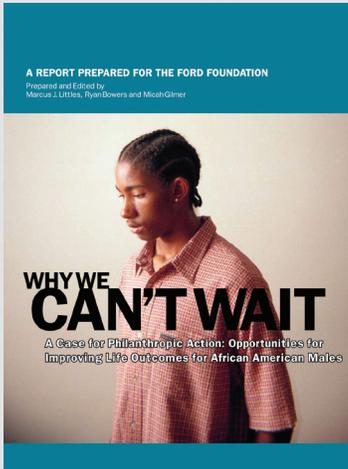
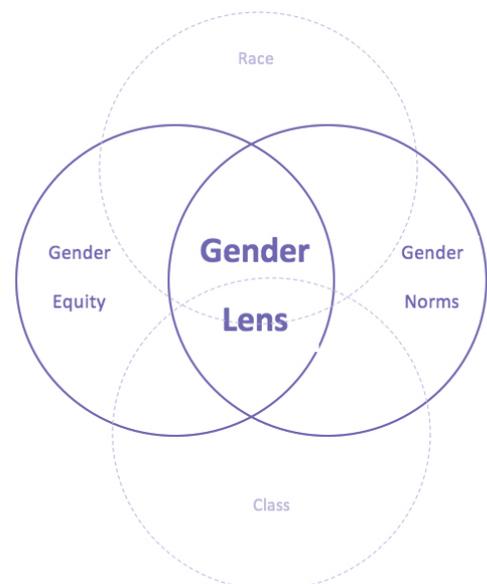
GENDER EQUITY

Despite 40 years of feminist advances, women and men still often have vastly different social roles, responsibilities, access to resources, and social expectations. Moreover, they generally have internalized very different sets of gender ideals and aspirations: femininity for women and masculinity for men.

Roles and responsibilities can be particularly important for women if an initiative encroaches on family or childcare, where women are still expected to be (and often are) primary caregivers. Or, in heterosexual relationships, where women are usually (but not always) at a profound disadvantage when it comes to power, dominance, and simple physical strength. Public systems can also function to maintain outdated gender expectations that assume women are primary caregivers to children. This can occur in child support, foster care, and public education systems that either ignore or assume the absence of fathers.

Thus, condom use, employment policy, health care advocacy, immigration, and child care are all issues where an analysis that ignores social differences between men and women—that is, *gender blind* or *gender neutral*—means being male or female by default.

Gender Analysis



“Gender roles influence the way [young men of color] understand and engage educational opportunity, labor force participation, and relationships with women and other men...[R]igid gender roles limit conceptions of opportunity and success and expose some men to stigmatization, abuse and violence.”

Why We Can't Wait – A Case for Philanthropic Action: Opportunities for Improving Life Outcomes for African American Males, Frontline Solutions for the Ford Foundation, 2006

For instance, a program whose goal is shifting welfare policy to encourage more workers back on the job—without taking into account the child care needs of women with dependent children—risks failing many, if not most, of its intended beneficiaries since most welfare recipients are disproportionately women who head households.

But insuring gender equitable treatment is not only a women’s issue. Men face their own barriers to equal treatment in other spheres.

For instance, many men associate illness with weakness, with unmanliness; they postpone seeking medical help until their bodies are in crisis, sometimes from easily preventable afflictions. Initiatives to improve community health care access that lack this gender analysis may find themselves with funding and new facilities but few male patients, and those that do show up with late-stage illnesses.

Similarly, family-oriented programs to encourage companies to create paternal leave policies need to address the ways that men who engage in traditionally female behavior, as prioritizing family involvement, are not penalized. Workplaces should be encouraged to ensure that these men are not seen as uncompetitive and less committed, shunted into the “daddy track” at downsizing time, and even teased or harassed on the job.

Despite this, gender equity is still mostly considered a “women’s issue,” for those doing choice or domestic violence work (where there is some gender equity analysis). Among social justice and civil society organizations, gender is rarely a part of the framework of analysis, and gender-blind programming and evaluation are the rule rather than the exception.

Such omissions can be especially difficult for women of color, who may find that race is equated with male, or for LGBTQ individuals, who find that along with gender, sexual orientation has been omitted.

To some, there is a crisis in civil society organizing. Race and class are understood to be primary frames for understanding and addressing a wide range of social matters, yet there is still little focus on the impact of gender.

GENDER NORMS

Gender norms are socially-constructed ideals, scripts, and expectations based on whether one is male or female. In a society that profoundly disadvantages its feminine citizens—female, gay, or transgender—challenging rigid gender norms can be considered a special part of achieving greater gender equity.

Especially when dealing with youth, gender norms can be critically important. Mastering masculine and feminine roles is a primary rite of passage for young people—especially during the *gender intensification* period of late adolescence and early teens when interest in traditional gender norms intensifies, and belief in them solidifies.

The “Man Box”

“We’re in this box, and in order to be in that box, you have to be **strong**, you have to be **tough**, you have to have **lots of girls**, you gotta **have money**, you have to be **a player or a pimp**, you gotta to be **in control**, you have to **dominate other men**, and if you are not any of those things, then people call you soft or weak or a p*ssy or a chump or a f*ggot and nobody wants to be any of those things. **So everybody stays inside the box.**”

—Byron Hurt

“Beyond Beats and Rhymes”





“The foundation for any educational curriculum for engaging young men in HIV prevention should

be critical reflections on societal constructions of gender norms and sexuality, including the impact of rigid masculine stereotypes.”



“Gender norms, inequity and power relationships increase women’s vulnerability to violence. Masculinity and male socialization promote such violence; successful interventions deconstruct hegemonic masculinity.”



“Addressing gender norms and inequities is essential to reducing HIV risk and increasing HIV prevention [be-

cause] masculine gender norms put MSM at increased risk.”

The impact of rigid gender norms can be amplified in low-income communities where codes for manhood or womanhood on the street may be particularly narrow, and punishment for transgression harsh.

Almost three decades of domestic and international research has found that rigid norms of femininity and masculinity can depress women’s and men’s health and well-being in fundamental ways.

Traditional codes of femininity or masculinity are often referred to as “gateway belief systems” because they can impact so many related aspects of health and well-ness. For instance, belief in narrow, rigid codes of masculinity is connected to a constellation of issues: HIV and teen pregnancy, infant and maternal care, premature fatherhood, partner abuse, gang and homophobic violence, substance abuse, school drop-out rates and “push-out” policies, health care utilization and access.

Prominent international donors like PEPFAR, USAID, UNAIDS, UNFPA, and WHO—and leading NGOs like CARE, EngenderHealth, International Center for Research on Women, International Planned Parenthood, and Population Council—have all created initiatives that challenge harmful norms of masculinity and femininity and found them effective.

USAID no longer funds new programs that lack a strong analysis of gender equity and norms, and PEPFAR has made gender norms central to its philanthropic support in three dozen countries in Africa combating HIV/AIDS.

In the US organizations like Futures Without Violence, Men Can Stop Rape, Planned Parenthood/LA, and Promundo/US are promoting a gender analysis that includes gender norms. A core of program officers are supporting innovative funding to address gender norms—including some of TrueChild’s own funders.

Yet this is mainly an area where the US lags behind, and few if any funders have launched specific programs or developed specific guidelines that address gender norms. However, with expanding donor interest in the connections between health and social norms (of which gender is a part), hopefully this is changing.

Opportunities to Address Gender Equity and Gender Norms

A gender equity analysis is often most useful to think about when dealing with broad-scale organizing for social change, where structural issues can be important, such as mobilizing for welfare reform, health care utilization, voter registration, or employment policy.

With such issues, although gender norms may be a factor, the fact that grantees are organizing to change policies—rather than trying to change behavior—makes it imperative to understand the different ways social structure impacts women and men. An example might be ensuring that immigration programs address the needs of women with dependent children, a concern that many programs—which focus on work and legality only, as if all immigrants were young single males—do not have.

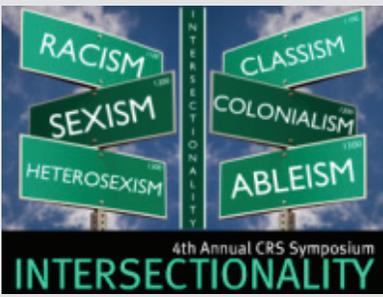
A gender norms analysis is often most useful with programs that seek to change unhealthy behaviors, such as reproductive health and teen pregnancy, gender-based violence, substance abuse, or educational under-achievement. In these areas lower outcomes are usually addressed through small group interaction—educational efforts, and social marketing—which try to change individual behaviors.

This emphasis on individual behavior—rather than organization and policy change—makes it possible to directly challenge rigid gender norms. An example might be a teen pregnancy prevention program that challenges codes of masculinity *on the street* that equate sexual conquest and fatherhood with manliness.



Gender equity is often still marginalized as just a “women’s issue” for those doing domestic violence or civic engagement work.





Intersectional Approach

Addressing different facets of oppression – race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. – as interacting in people’s lives rather than compartmentalizing and treating each as independent of the other.

But the two can and do overlap. For instance, many schools’ condom use programs target girls and boys together with similar materials, tracking condom use for both with the same metrics.

But girls don’t use condoms—they must persuade a male partner to use one. And, since they are usually at a profound power disadvantage in relationships, they may be exposing themselves to psychological abuse or even violence if they insist on condoms. Programs need to take these kinds of structural gender equity issues into account in materials and follow-up. For instance, a more effective evaluation question might be, “When did you last ask your partner to use a condom?” rather than “When did you last use a condom?”

Similarly, a popular social marketing campaign *Real Men Wear Gowns* shows male legs sticking out of a hospital gown. Many men see going to the doctor and complaining about illness as a sign of weakness and unmanliness.

The program is an attempt to rebrand seeking medical care and staying healthy as manly. In doing so, it engages structural difference between how men and women access the medical system as well as trying to change harmful masculine norms.

There are a growing number of funders—often separate from one another or soloed within common organizations—trying to build an awareness that encompasses gender norms and gender equity within an intersectional analysis that connects them to issues like race, class, age, and sexual orientation.

Grantmaking, Gender & Young Men of Color

Gender is an important dimension for grantmakers working to address the social and economic marginalization of low-income, males of color. The practical reality is both the race and gender shape the life options available to males of color, and the intersections may seem obvious for grantmaking.

Yet foundation staff are often already challenged introducing evidence of racial inequities to justify foundation investment in Latino and African-American males. Introducing an intersectional analysis that addresses being of color, male, possibly low-income, [u]and[u] gender may simply seem too daunting a task.

– Loren Harris, “Report: Gender Transformative Philanthropy,”
Frontline Solutions, 2012

Becoming a Gender Transformative Funder

Many challenges remain for philanthropic officers who want to integrate a gender analysis. As one program officer put it, “My grantees get that gender needs to be part of the domestic violence discussion, they’re just not sure how to put it into effect. And even those who try often lack the capacity.”

Another noted, “I’ve been working on this quietly for 20 years, but I still wouldn’t say it’s something the Board is totally comfortable with and it’s not anywhere explicitly stated in our guidelines.”

There are a number of steps program officers can take that will help move the ball down the field. Here is a discussion of some of the challenges and some possible solutions.

I don’t want to put something on my grantees that’s not strictly in our guidelines.

Explain your commitment. If this is coming from your own personal experience or vision, say so. Explain why you think having a gender analysis is so important, and how it could improve their work. Also, if it’s an implicit part of the foundation’s vision, but not in the written guidelines yet, feel free to share that with them and explain why the foundation is grappling with gender.

Grantees want to do more with gender but they just don’t have the capacity.

Provide support. A wealth of inexpensive trainings, webinars, and toolkits are available on how to adopt an analysis that prioritizes gender equity and gender norms. Point grantees in the right direction, and encourage them by offering additional financial support if they take advantage.

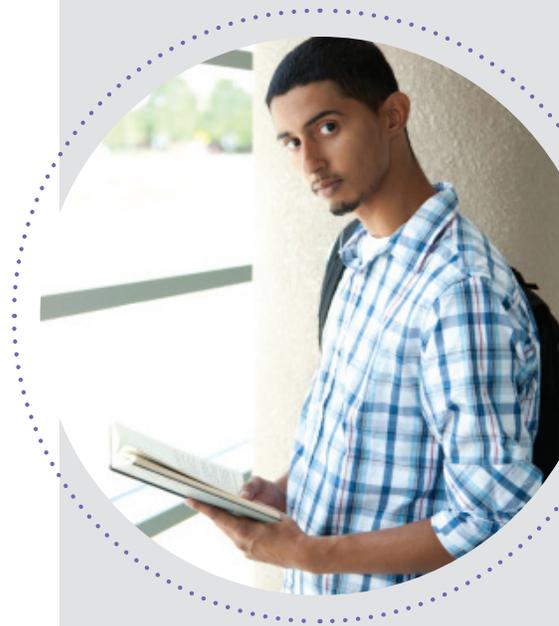
We ask about gender in our application, but it’s lost in a complex question about race, class, sexual orientation, and board and staff diversity.

A gender analysis shouldn’t be marginalized, and should be connected to issues like race and class. However, that doesn’t mean it should be buried in the mix. Be clear, and ask for what you want grantees to know. Gender is a complex issue—give it the time and space it requires for grantees to grapple with it in a reasoned and reflective way.

There’s a kind of “compassion fatigue” and I worry my grantees will feel this is just one more hoop to jump through and “fix” to get a grant.

First, start early. Invite grantees to begin engaging with gender early in their cycle. Avoid springing it on them so late that they have no time to think about it meaningfully and it becomes just another box they have to check off. Also, try not to present gender as something they’re doing wrong as opposed to something they could do better. That will make them more effective. It’s a small, but important, difference in positioning.

Emphasis on individual behavior—rather than organization and policy change—makes it possible to directly challenge rigid gender norms.



LGBTQ

Gender transformative philanthropy also engages LGBTQ issues: animus towards gay and transgender individuals is often caused by their not conforming to gender norms, either because they love the same sex, or have bodies that don’t fit gender expectations.



My grantees tell me they already have women on their board and in management, and that in any case most of their population are female.

When you get the diversity answer, that's a good sign that grantees don't really understand the gender lens. This is a good time to engage them in a deeper look at their work and where gender could make them more effective. If you don't have the time or expertise, consider bringing in a gender expert to work with them.

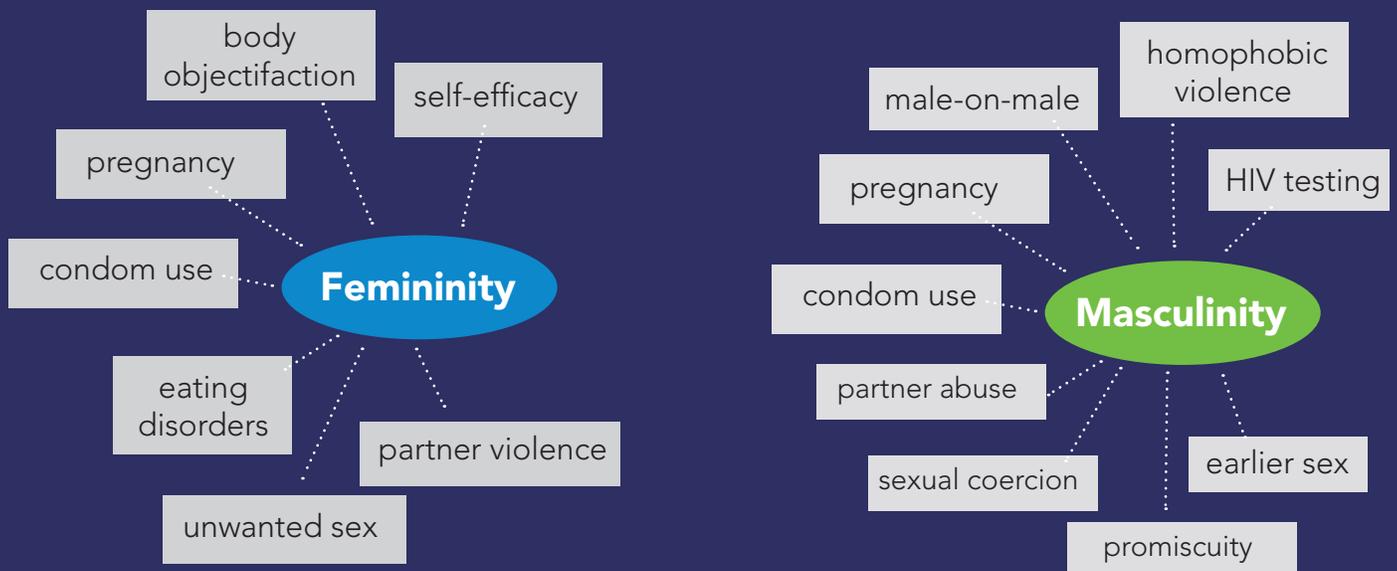
Many grantee organizations want to change, but are so strapped that they lack the capacity to do so without financial help.

Support innovative projects. Try to set aside some portion of your portfolio for new or existing projects that adopt a strong, specific focus on gender equity and gender norms. And then make sure to share the success stories with other grantees.

It's such a big area—some of our program officers simply don't know where to make a start.

This is a journey rather than a destination. Doing more gender-aware philanthropy doesn't require that you be a "gender Jedi" from day one. As with race, class, and sexual orientation, start anywhere, and keep growing your awareness and understanding.

Gateway Belief System



10 Steps Donors Can Take

*Developed by Matt Barnes,
The Houston Endowments and
Rahsaan Harris, Atlantic Philanthropies*

- 1.** Improve your understanding of the issue. Speaking to national experts is the best start. (A list of TrueChild's national advisors can be found at: truechild.org/OurExperts.)
- 2.** Bring in a representative from groups doing work on gender equity and gender norms:
 - a. Futures Without Violence;
 - b. International Center for Research on Women;
 - c. Men Can Stop Rape;
 - d. Ms. Foundation for Women;
 - e. Promundo/US;
 - f. Thinking Man Consulting; and,
 - g. TrueChild.
- 3.** Elevate awareness of the issue by hosting a local convening on the gender lens.
- 4.** Organize a workshop on the impact of gender norms and inequities at a conference.
- 5.** Ask questions about gender norms during site visits and how those codes may affect educational and social outcomes.
- 6.** Ask grantees how codes of manhood and womanhood affect young people in their community.
- 7.** Invite grantees to include a gender analysis as part of funding guidelines.
- 8.** Ask grantees to incorporate gender content in their programs, materials, websites.
- 9.** Consider funding the development of programs that include content which specifically challenges young people to think critically about gender norms.
- 10.** Familiarize yourself with findings of some of the latest studies. (A list can be found at truechild.org/ReadTheResearch).

Additional Resources

GrantMaking with a Gender Lens

by GrantCraft

<http://www.grantcraft.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&pageId=1328>

Detailed, solid guide to integrating gender equity into grantmaking, with a nod to LGBTQ and gender norms.

The Absence of a Gender Justice Framework in Social Justice Organizing

by Linda Burnham

Penetrating analysis of the lack of a gender equity analysis in current social justice organizing.

<http://cew.umich.edu/sites/default/files/BurnhamFinalProject.pdf>

Gender Analysis in Health

by World Health Organization

Comprehensive critical review of several dozen tools used in by international NGOs to address issues of gender equity

Gender Norms: A Key to Improving Life Outcomes in At-Risk Populations

National Council on Gender

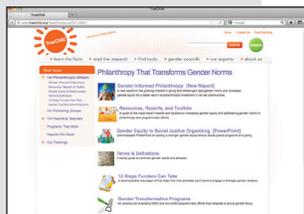
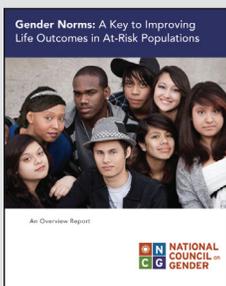
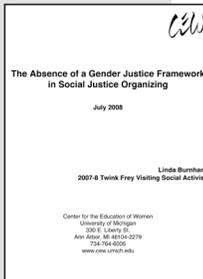
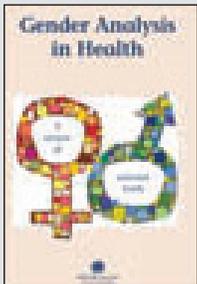
Good overview of concepts, studies, and background on gender norms.

Philanthropy That Transforms Gender Norms

by TrueChild

Online tools, including PowerPoints on gender lens and gender norms, along with a list of existing programmatic efforts that integrate a strong gender focus (includes this paper in downloadable PDF format).

<http://www.truechild.org/PageDisplay.asp?p1=8845>



TrueChild is an action tank of leading authorities that promotes gender transformative approaches to reproductive health, educational underachievement, and gender-based violence. Gender transformative approaches are those which highlight, challenge, and ultimately change harmful gender norms. TrueChild is especially interested in the challenges faced by at-risk youth, like those who are of color, LGBTQ, or in disinvested communities.

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