

Professional
Development
Programme

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR GENDER TRAINERS

OUTLINE

KIT Royal Tropical Institute and
UN Women Training Centre
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KIT Royal
Tropical
Institute



Introduction

In 2015, the UN Women Training Centre hosted an Expert Group Meeting on Training for Gender Equality focused on advancing the field of training for gender equality. One of the recommendations is to visit and review the way gender trainers are trained and developed. Together with the Gender Team of the KIT Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), based in Amsterdam, the two organisations aim to develop and pilot a professional development programme for gender trainers.

This paper presents UN Women Training Centre and KIT's outline for a professional development program for gender trainers.

Problem statement

Gender training has become one of the key tools for promoting gender equality, particularly in the context of gender mainstreaming. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and even more so now with the SDGs, gender training remains a key policy and programme response to address a wide range of perceived needs to make gender mainstreaming happen. In many respects, it has become a cure-all to address the many challenges gender mainstreaming entails. Seen as a missing element, repeated calls for gender training reflect a 'more of the same but better' approach to addressing the limitations of gender mainstreaming (Milward et al., 2015).

What has now become evident is how complicit gender experts (Prügl, 2013) and the gender knowledge they broker is, under the auspices of gender mainstreaming and gender training, in contributing to undermining the transformatory aims originally envisioned. As gender experts, including trainers, and gender expertise have become embedded in development cooperation, it has "not always [been] in the ways that feminists would have liked" (Mukhopadhyay, 2016).

In part, this has been how gender training has been approached (Lazreg, 2002), as a singular short-term event (Mukhopadhyay, 2014) with little room for reflection, which would otherwise allow for participants to "make choices about their gendered behaviors" (Albury and Laplonge, cited by Laplonge, 2015). In this context, gender is presented as a "set of skills, which can be straightforwardly delivered and reproduced" emphasizing 'knowing that' rather than 'knowing how', and "encourage[ing] the parroting of slogans rooted in frameworks disembodied from lived experience" (ibid: 362).

Learning about gender concepts has often relied on memorization of definitions (Alkire, 2007), which only reinforces gender and development as a hegemonic discourse. The emphasis on memorizing pre-defined concepts leaves little room for individual interpretations or applications. Even if more enlightened training adopts "participatory" methods, where trainees are encouraged to "apply" gender concepts to their particular contexts, this approach is limited within the confines of the "right" understandings of the gender concepts being discussed (Standing, 2004). The underlying assumption

of learning correct definitions is “hierarchical skills transmission” (Parpart, 1995), which has “limited transformative impact” (Ferree, 2015).

Relatedly, gender analytical concepts are applied in rigid ways, both in terms of their communication and definition. What were relational concepts are now taught and, therefore understood, as binary opposites that has robbed them of their analytical potential. The process of categorizing something as “either-or” focuses attention, again, on definitions, not the inherent value of understanding something as a particular category in relation to another. This discourages relational, fluid and polymorphic understandings of gender categories and how and why gender concepts can be simultaneously described in more than one way. Lastly, in reproducing binary and positivist categories, gender training has perpetuated technocratic notions of development itself where “development is not theorized, it is a given, a field of knowledge acquisition” (Lazreg, 2002: 134).

The ways in which “feminist knowledge” has been translated into ‘gender expertise’ and how feminist agendas have been taken up for governmental purposes have put many feminists in a state of unease (Prügl, 2013). Their concerns lie in how gender equality is positioned as a goal for achieving other ends in international development (Ferguson, 2015). Moreover, the way gender is translated in policy and practice combined with the interpretation of its meaning is a source of much dissatisfaction for many feminists. For this would not be the first time that feminist concepts are re-appropriated to fit a neoliberal understanding of empowerment and the role of women (Cornwall 2007). With this process of appropriation, gender knowledge has been “instrumentalised, rid of political content, adapted and adopted by national and/or global projects not necessarily concerned with equality issues – this goes against the ideal transformational aspect of gender training” (Mukhopadhyay, 2014). As Mukhopadhyay (2014) concludes “The representation of gender as something other than structural inequality has had consequences for how development programmes address inequality.”

As a key response to gender mainstreaming policy and practice, gender training has surprisingly been under studied and researched (Mukhopadhyay and Wong, 2007, Bustelo et al., 2016b). Similarly, but to a greater extent, there has been very little research on gender trainers.

Rationale

Gender experts should have appropriate “professional” qualifications (Berg, 1994), such as specialized training (Beveridge et al., 2000). Academic qualifications, however, do not ensure that “gender experts” possess the manoeuvring, networking and persuasive skills required of them (Standing, 2004). Bustelo et al. (2016) note the relevance of experts and trainers’ backgrounds and standpoints. So how are trainers qualified?

Within the international development context, there is very little systematic analysis of gender trainers' backgrounds. The 2013 study of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) database, with its 160 self-proclaimed gender trainers (data from 2012), is one of the few. The study report concluded:

- The backgrounds of trainers vary to a large degree and come from a wide range of sectors and organisational affiliations.
- Most trainers have at least advanced education in a variety of areas related to social sciences with some having a degree in gender studies.
- Most trainers have followed different professional development paths, with a number having gained experience from learning-by-doing.
- Most trainers indicate expertise in other gender-related areas such as gender analysis, research gender budgeting, project management etc. (EIGE, 2013).

The findings of the EIGE study echo that of the Graduate Institute in Geneva (Thompson and Prügl, 2015), which undertook a survey of 118 gender experts, 79% of whom work for the UN. In terms of professional backgrounds, the survey found that 92% have graduate degrees, 72% with PhDs mostly in social sciences with very few in gender/women's studies. While 61% of the respondents claimed a feminist heritage, 40% did not. A major source of knowledge are employers, who provide both on-the-job and formal training, with on-the-job being the main path to becoming an expert. Unsurprisingly, the approach, understanding and priorities of their organisation had been influential in how trainers learned to integrate a gender perspective, which has implications for how they work. As Mukhopadhyay (2015) writes

Gender knowledge and expertise is groomed to fit the purposes of the organisation to which the particular expert belongs, which cannot be good for the gender field as a whole as it lacks the authority of an independent knowledge base from which to hold policies and programmes to account.

It is within this context that the UN Women Training Centre (UNWTC) and KIT proposed in 2017 a **certificate professional development programme for gender trainers**. This was then and more so today given the COVID-19 pandemic, especially timely and critical given the changing landscape of development assistance, the shifting (and sometimes declining) role of the nation state along with the conflation of aid and trade in many foreign policies. Relatedly, the rising predominance of new private sector and philanthropist actors working in the name of development has demonstrated a further need for preserving and protecting autonomous spaces for feminist knowledge production, such as gender training (Cornwall, 2016). Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals challenge development policymakers and practitioners to re-think how to address social and gender inequity to ensure that indeed, "no one is left behind". And now with the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to re-imagine how inequalities will be addressed in development has become paramount as we see all forms of inequality, including gender inequality, exacerbated during this period. The pandemic has also revealed the significance of social care and the care of the environment in promoting human well-being. It has highlighted that human well-being cannot be furthered without considering care as a primary goal of development.

It is in this context that the transformative vision of gender and development needs to be re-energised. In order to make gender training fit for purpose in this time we propose an approach to training for gender equality as a feminist project that builds on the professional course that we initiated in 2017 and amplifies the learnings.

Programme Purpose and Learning Objectives

Overall purpose

To reposition training for gender equality as strategy to challenge and engender mainstream development and support the achievement of SDGs.

Specific objectives

To offer a professional development programme for gender trainers that:

- Re-thinks training for gender equality as feminist knowledge transfer and creation.
- Re-claims training as a catalyst for gender transformation.
- Develops a cadre of gender trainers equipped with feminist pedagogy.

Learning aims

At the end of this programme, participants will:

- Have sharpened their training skills and knowledge of gender and development concepts as a gender equality trainer.
- Be able to better employ learning and knowledge strategies.
- Be able to re-claim training for gender equality as a political feminist process.
- Have renewed energy as a gender equality trainer and commitment to gender training as a transformative process.

Approach

A new way of thinking about and doing gender training requires a new way of working as gender trainers. The basis of this new way draws from the UN Women Training Centre's overall approach of training for gender equality as a feminist project and concerns feminist knowledge transfer. Bustelo et al. (2016b) and Prügl (2010) suggest that this entails an understanding that:

- Gender inequity is structural.
- Knowledge contributes to social transformation with the aim of "changing the world, fighting against social injustices and redressing unequal power relations" (Bustelo et al., 2016b).
- There is a plurality of feminist knowledges, given that feminist knowledge is situated knowledge and concerns different ways of knowing. Some ways of knowing are privileged over others.
- The contexts in which feminist knowledge occurs are inherently political and sites of contestation.
- Power operates in different ways and is relational, such as between the "object of knowledge" and the way knowledge is generated, both which are "complicit in the production of reality" (Prügl, 2010).

- Reflexivity is critical in order to “acknowledge biases and limitations and allow for the recognition of multiple perspectives” (ibid).
- Knowledge creation is a collective and inclusive process in order to acknowledge the diversity of knowledges and how these are positioned differently.

With this understanding, the professional development programme also draws upon these ideas as a basis for strengthening gender trainers. These include:

- Professional development as a process of co-creation.
- Deepening understanding and strengthening approaches and skills of trainers where participants are also programme implementers.
- Employing different approaches to professional development that allows for action and reflection.

Programme Overview

This section describes the programme’s targeted audience, domains, design and management and coordination.

Target audience

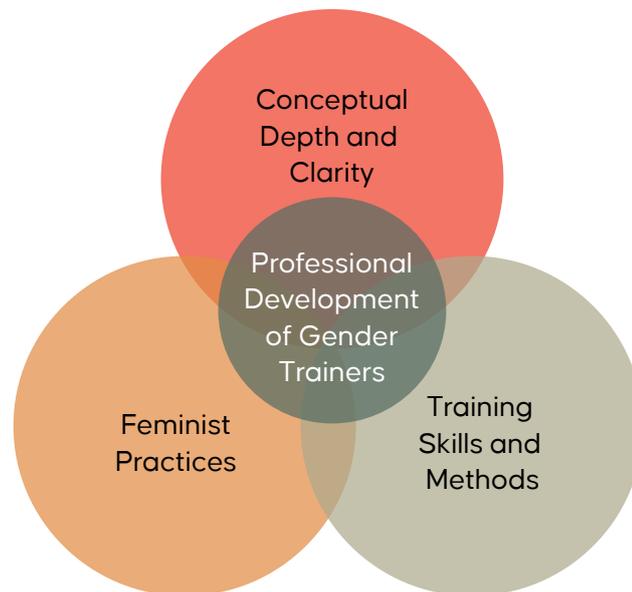
The programme works in a co-creation process with experienced gender trainers from both the global south and north. The following criteria will be applied for the selection of participants:

- This is a course for trainers with experience. Participants will have to reflect and share knowledge and experience on gender and development and training on social issues more broadly and on gender specifically. They should have a minimum of 3-5 years of training experience on gender issues.
- Participants should have knowledge of gender and development and gender in public policy and so their educational background should include gender studies, public policy, development studies, and other applied social sciences etc.
- Participants should be working in a variety of institutional affiliations: UN, international and national NGOs, national governments, etc.
- Participant selection should reflect diversity of regional and national backgrounds.
- Will include both men and women.
- Participants should show interest and commitment to completing the one-year process of training.

Programme domains

The programme aims to professionally develop participants in three inter-related domains: Conceptual Depth and Clarity, Feminist Practices, and Training Skills and Methods (see Figure 1). Each of these domains has its own specific aims and competences.

Figure 1: Programme Domains



Conceptual Depth and Clarity

Most training for gender equality tries to find a fit between gender analytical concepts and the mainstream discourse of the development sector or programme so that trainers end up providing training on “Gender and something”. This domain aspires to develop considerable conceptual and analytical depth so that instead of treating gender as a tool to reinforce the mainstream rationale of the development sector or programme, gender trainers develop the critical ability to question how and whether gender relations is constitutive of the programme rationale. Furthermore, training for gender equality content is mostly developed without any reference to the structural and institutional issues that produce and reproduce gender and other inequalities, and which have become more complex in the present globalised world. This domain will develop conceptual clarity on the institutional framework of gender relations and inequality keeping global, national and local institutions in the frame. It will achieve this by ensuring a foundation of conceptual knowledge but also by updating participants’ familiarity and understanding of current critical thinking of gender in development.

Under this domain, the learning objectives are to:

- Ensure a solid foundational base of gender and development theory.
- Develop conceptual understanding of gender as a social relation and interface with development.
- Enable participants to critically engage with development programmes.
- Develop knowledge and practice skills in key areas of gender and development theory and practice.

Under this domain participants will cover the following topics:

- Gender Relations and Development (historical and present perspectives).
- Position and location and the universal subject of development: gender as binary vs gender as fluid and polymorphic.

- Discourses of immutability: Gender, culture and tradition.
- Gendered silence: Economic growth and gender; gender, social care and well-being.
- Institutional Construction of Gender Inequality.
- Men and masculinities in Gender and Development.
- Including gender or governing gender? Dilemmas of success.
- Gender in development sectors.

Feminist Practices

Gender trainers are brokers and translators of gender knowledge where training for gender equality is a conduit for such knowledge. This process of knowledge translation is not a neutral process but a political and interpretive one as trainers are embedded in the development contexts and processes that they are trying to change. As such, they need to be constantly aware of their position within this process and require strategies to negotiate and navigate the conditions that tend to constrain rather than permit social change.

Under this domain, the learning objectives are to:

- Understand the politics of knowledge production.
- Strengthen critical self-analysis skills.
- Develop skills to navigate insider-outsider status of gender trainers.

Trainers will develop knowledge and practise skills in working with and applying feminist concepts of:

- Gender knowledge and knowledge making and power.
- Explicit and implicit theories of change
- Reflexivity
- Change and resistance
- Global governance of development and client relations

Training Skills and Methods

Training for gender equality is performance, and trainers require advanced skills that allow them to effectively work on a feminist project in mainstream development. This requires being able to make complex ideas and concepts intelligible and meaningful to participants without overly simplifying and de-politicizing them. Consequently, trainers need to possess effective facilitation and communication skills as well as knowledge of effective methods to manage different training contexts and scenarios. While the programme targets seasoned trainers, well experienced with facilitation and training, this domain aims to refresh and extend their base of skills and knowledge.

Under this domain, the learning objectives are to:

- Strengthen specialized training design, delivery and evaluation skills.
- Strengthen communication skills to convey complex concepts intelligibly.
- Deepen understanding of learner-centred pedagogy.
- Become fluent with an array of case studies and examples for practical application.

Trainers will deepen training skills and become versed in various methods such as:

- Adult centred pedagogy
- Training needs assessments
- Training design and curriculum development
- Training and facilitation approaches and tools (including multi-media)
- Activism and advocacy
- Addressing resistance
- Designing, planning and facilitating virtual training
- Evaluation.

Programme Design

The programme employs inter-related and mutually-reinforcing face-to-face and virtual approaches: professional development workshops, networking and mentoring. The methodological approach aims for experiential learning, co-creation, building on real-life experiences and grounded case material. It offers exposure to new ideas, new ways of working, and seeks to inspire participants to step out of their comfort zones and experiment, all in a safe and reflexive environment.

The programme is organized in three modules (see Figure 2 for programme curriculum). These modules are organised in both face-to-face workshop and virtual learning sessions and will be dedicated to discussing the content of the module and on practice and delivery. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have opted for a more hybridised version where two of the modules will be virtual with the concluding module being face-to-face.

Each module will be prepared for during the Virtual Learning and Mentoring events and will have assigned homework to co-create the module for the context of their institutional environment and theme.

The first, *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*, covers the theoretical underpinning of feminist epistemology and method and uses this to elaborate on the concept of gender and how it was related to development; show how positionality and difference challenge universalistic concepts of gender; problematize notions of culture and tradition in development and the assumed relationship to gender; and examine how key concepts in development are gendered especially economic growth, which remains the main goal of international development.

The second module, *Development Sectors from a Gender Perspective*, introduces the institutional framework to understand gender and development and explain how the governance of development has changed in the last three decades. It will examine how men and masculinities are treated in the context of gender and development, and will examine some key sectors relevant for participants. We are currently in the process of updating the material to make awareness of the impact of COVID-19, climate change and economies of care central in our understanding of development sectors.

The third module, *Policy and Practice in International Development*,¹ provides a brief historical and critical overview of gender and development approaches focussing on the current agendas in international and UN policy and programme and how these have informed the practice of gender in development worldwide; reflects on the dilemmas posed by success of the gender agenda, on the one hand, and its transformation from one that was about social change to one that is about governance, on the other. It will discuss how training for gender equality can critically engage with these dilemmas as well as new challenges created through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2 Programme Overview

This outline is indicative and the course material is currently being updated.

Module I: Theoretical perspectives on Gender and Development Virtual workshops. Spread over three weeks (21 February – 11 March, 2022)					
Orientation	Session 1: Programme overview and approach, objectives of module Session 2: Feminist Epistemology and gender relations in development	Session 3: Position and location and the universal subject of development Intersectionality Session 4: Practice: Navigating hierarchies of gender knowledge	Session 5: Discourses of immutability: Gender, culture and tradition Session 6: Practice: Meanings of gender in development	Session 7: Gendered silences - Economic growth and gender Session 8: Practice: Understanding and Working with resistance	Session 9: Practice: Training delivery Session 10: Review of Module I, Understanding and addressing sticky issues Introduction Module II and homework assignments
Module II: Development Sectors from a Gender Perspective Online moderated sessions and Homework Assignments 1 and 2 (14 March 2022 - 12 August 2022)					
Module III: Policy and Practice in International Development Preparatory phase online (early August) Face-to-face workshop 6 days (21-26 August 2022)					
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
To be confirmed	Session 1: Module overview and objectives Session 2: Policy & Practice in International Development	Session 3: Including gender or governing gender? Dilemmas of success Session 4: Practice session	Session 5: Gender and development at crossroads: Back to theory Session 6: Practice sessions	Session 7: Peer review of assignments Session 8: Peer Review of assignments	Session 9: Peer review of assignments Session 10: Review of Module III Back to the Future Evaluation & Certificates

1. This will include critical review of the following: International Framework, Human Rights framework, Democracy and Governance, Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda

The programme will be delivered through three modalities held over the course of six months duration of the programme.

1. Virtual workshops (M1) and moderated online sessions (M2).
2. Face-to-Face workshop (M3).
3. Ongoing virtual Peer Learning, Mentoring and Networking: throughout.

Module 1 will take place online and will be spread over three weeks to accommodate different time-zones and to build in sufficient time to accommodate online-learning and rapport. It will comprise a series of core plenary sessions with all participants and separate smaller tutorial groups.

Module 2 is virtual. It consists of regular formal virtual events including guest lectures and thematic specialists. The modality of interaction focuses on and facilitated e-discussions to support the completion of participant assignments.

Module 3 will conclude with a six-day face-to-face workshop in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Both Module 1 and 3 serve as basis for developing knowledge and skills, but also offer opportunities for knowledge and experience sharing. They use a variety of learning methods such as presentations, participatory activities, case studies and audio-visuals.

Participants will be given practical homework assignments (such as developing new training modules of their choice) which they undertake in between workshops and deliver as part of workshops. They receive support from peers through Virtual Learning and Mentoring as well as on-line support provided by programme trainers.

The workshops also offer an opportunity for participants to engage in practice and reflection by co-training as a way of gaining practical experience with new training methods and skills.

Participants' learning will be supported virtually through three ongoing mutually-reinforcing activities:

- *Virtual Peer Learning*: participants will be paired to form "Learning Teams" throughout the programme and especially during the two interim periods between workshops. Learning Teams are expected to be in regular contact to share learnings and reflections about the course material and provide mutual support. They are encouraged to share and exchange about:
 - Their reflections from their practice.
 - Challenges they experience from integrating into practice what they have learned conceptually and how they have overcome these.
 - Opportunities to changing how gender is understood and how they can adapt their training.
- *Peer Mentoring*: each Learning Team will be assigned a Programme Co-convenors who will virtually support the teams and their learning and reflections. Webinars will be facilitated by co-conveners to address and discuss common issues among participants.
- *Virtual Networking*: the programme e-platform provides a basis for participants to informally connect with each other and start discussions and exchanges.

Programme Assessment and Certification

Participants are assessed for their demonstration of mastery of the three domain areas in terms of knowledge, understanding and practice.

Assessment is based on:

1. Demonstration of successful completion of assignments.
2. Peer review of demonstration of competence in the three domain areas.
3. Final presentation assessed by co-convenors and an external reviewer.

Rather than an accreditation model, the UN Women Training Centre and KIT opt for a certification process that includes a peer process where participants are accountable to their peers for their own professional development. This not only ensures a system of mutual accountability for upholding the training for gender equality values established in the programme by participants, but also engenders a community of practice that survives the completion of the programme.

At the end of the programme, participants are eligible to receive for one of three certificates:

1. Certificate of participation for those who have attended all modules.
2. Certificate of completion for those who have attended all modules and completed all assignments.
3. Certificate of successful completion for those who have attended all modules, completed all assignments and demonstrated learning in each of the programme's domains.

About UN Women Training Centre and KIT

UN Women Training Centre

The UN Women Training Centre (<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/>) is the training arm of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It is dedicated to supporting the UN and other stakeholders to realize commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights through transformative training and learning. Its vision is to become the leading UN Centre that contributes, through training for gender equality, to building a society that respects and promotes human rights for all women and men. The UN Women Training Centre, based in New York, serves government counterparts, the UN system, civil society organisations, and everyone who is interested in gender equality and women's empowerment.

KIT Gender

KIT Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), founded in 1910 and based in Amsterdam, is a center of knowledge and expertise that works on both policy and practice where we bring practical field experience and analysis to policy making and implementation as well as theory into practice.

KIT Gender (<https://www.kit.nl/gender/>) is an international team of gender specialists that focuses on gender and rights. As a multi-national team, KIT Gender has a long history of gender and development theory and practice, particularly in capacity building for gender equality. KIT Gender has been a pioneer in gender training research, design and delivery, building from seminal global gender and rights training programs first established in 1989. Today we offer organisational-wide gender training initiatives as well as stand-alone training activities, as part of wider programs in support of gender mainstreaming, for government, international development, and research agencies as well as NGOs.

KIT Royal Tropical Institute
P.O. Box 95001
1090 HA Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Visiting Address
Mauritskade 64
1092 AD Amsterdam
The Netherlands

www.kit.nl
pdpgt@kit.nl

UN Women Training Centre
220 East 42nd Street
New York,
NY 10017

www.trainingcentre.unwomen.org
info.trainingcentre@unwomen.org
T: +1 646 781-4400



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Tropical
Institute

