INSIDE THIS EDITION:

- Putting On (and Taking Off) Your Gender Lens
- Inclusion Challenge! Could You “Inclusivize” a Participatory Geospatial Mapping Tool?
- What Does It Mean To Be "Other” in the Workplace?

Putting On (and Taking Off) Your Gender Lens

(Courtesy of Cristina Manfre, Cultural Practice, LLC, a small women-owned business providing practical options for social change)

I have always been bothered by how we talk about adopting a gender perspective or using a gender lens. The language does not suggest the permanency I would like. We can take off those glasses. We can change our perspective. And of course, if you haven’t had metaphorical Lasik surgery, you do take off those glasses. And, darn it, it always seems to happen when (I think) people need them the most – for example, during the design of a new project! Furthermore, these expressions fail to capture the often complex and iterative analytical process that is needed to interpret what you see. The
assumption is that with new glasses, you will automatically see a different world.

Some of the most fulfilling gender analysis workshops I've led with Cultural Practice, LLC are those that build field visits into the program. The aim of these field visits is to provide participants with the experience of a gender analysis so that they can better address issues, for example in new agriculture programs. Participants are equipped with questionnaires and their job is to collect and analyze data about gender relations. It is an opportunity for them to ask questions in ways they may not have done before; to listen to men and women describe their experiences as men and women; and, to pay attention to how those experiences shapes their lives. In preparation, we spend time reviewing the questionnaires: What is the intention of each question in the questionnaire? How does it link to our gender analysis framework? A number of interactive exercises are used to develop interviewing and listening techniques, discuss frame of reference, and remind people to be aware of the assumptions and biases we carry into every one of our interviews.

And then, at the end of every field day, it's time for the hard work. Equipped with a set of empty worksheets and flipcharts, the participants and I work through a defined analytical process in which we organize the data into different dimensions or domains, create problem trees that identify barriers for men or women and their root causes, and debate how gender-based constraints might affect agricultural program design. The process is messy. It is exhausting. It is exhilarating. We offer different interpretations of what men and women said. We argue about the beliefs and perceptions that were expressed: “When the input supplier told us women are incapable of carrying heavy loads – is that a universal truth or a belief?” In exchange for my constant questioning, participants offer me a deeper understanding of the local context.

I like to think that this collaborative analytical process gives people an appreciation for gender analysis. I believe that by working with participants through a set of data collection and analytical tools they better understand how gender analysis can contribute to program design. Perhaps I’ve created room for more complexity and an avenue for introducing more inclusive analytical approaches.

What I know for sure is that by working together with people who don’t see the world as I do, I have become a better advocate and facilitator. When I sit down to work through a gender analysis with workshops participants, I learn. I
understand how other people see and analyze the world. I become familiar with where they struggle to accept the principles of gender equality that I espouse. It reminds me that sometimes I need to take my gender lens off just so that I can put them on again and see things fresh.

*Photo Courtesy of Cristina Manfre with women farmers in Dhulikhel, Nepal and Sumana Parui from CIMMYT.*

Inclusion Challenge! Could You “Inclusivize” a Participatory Geospatial Mapping Tool?

You may have noticed that TAAP Tuesday writers seek to identify intriguing project design tools and models – and “inclusivize” them. “Inclusivizing” is the process of improving the ability, dignity, and opportunity of people, disadvantaged and/or excluded on the basis of their identity, to take part in society, and applying that inclusion-sensitive approach throughout a project cycle.

We’re using this inclusivizing process to develop a series of scenarios for the TAAP Toolkit. Thanks to partners at the Women’s Refugee Commission, we have a scenario for an inclusivized approach to gender-based violence programming in humanitarian settings. The authors recognized that persons with disabilities are often excluded from gender-based violence (GBV) response and prevention activities in conflict-affected communities. To fill that
gap, the authors worked through the TAAP phases (inclusive inquiry and reflection, inclusion analysis, inclusive design and implementation, inclusive monitoring and evaluation, and inclusive impact and sustainability) to deepen the sensitivity and responsiveness of the programs to persons with disabilities.

In this GBV and humanitarian scenario, the focus is on integrating attention to one identity group, i.e., persons with disabilities. Other scenarios for projects in livelihoods, youth, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and civic engagement are also being developed, vetted and finalized, with attention to other identity groups. (Let us know if you’d like to be part of reviewing and providing feedback on the scenarios. We’ll have a workshop in mid-February to engage with those interested. Contact taap@worldlearning.org.

This week’s challenge is to inclusivize a geospatial mapping project that was undertaken by residents of the Kibera community in Nairobi, Kenya, with support from Penn State students. Kibera, a poor community in Nairobi, was a blank spot on the map until recently. This video from Penn State Public Broadcasting’s Geospatial Revolution shows how geospatial technology enabled residents to map important resources to help their community. Residents from Kibera went out into the community with GPS devices and located areas with community resources: houses, businesses, schools, health clinics, movie theaters, mills for grinding corn, restaurants, and bars, as well as areas that needed resources. Watch the video and challenge yourself (individually or with a design team) to “inclusivize” the process shown in the video. Let us know how you do!

Photo: Erik Hersman CC BY 2.0

What Does It Mean To Be "Other” in the Workplace?

As TAAP Tuesday Newsletter readers recognize, each of us has complex social identities. This week we take the opportunity to explore how the identity as “other,” being and feeling more different, from our colleagues and work place impacts the agency, access and power of colleagues, potential colleagues, and ultimately, the organization itself.

We would like to share two resources that can be useful in exploring this topic. They also suggest
some inclusive approaches as food for thought. The two resources come from Catalyst, a nonprofit membership organization working globally with businesses and the professions to build inclusive workplaces and expand opportunities for women and business. With offices in the United States, Canada, and Europe, and more than 400 preeminent corporations as members, Catalyst is a resource for research, information, and advice about women at work.

The "Feeling Different: Being the “Other” in US Workplaces" report examines the experience of otherness in the US workplace and focuses on how people with multiple sources of otherness in a workplace are impacted in terms of their opportunities, advancement, and aspirations.

The “Building LGBT-Inclusive Workplaces: Engaging Organizations and Individuals in Change” report provides insights into the workplace experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees and supports the development of programs and practices that leverage diversity, foster inclusion, and increase awareness, accountability, and action. While protecting employees from discrimination is an essential step when creating LGBT-inclusive environments, organizations must move discourse beyond anti-discrimination policies to everyday issues facing LGBT employees.


Got Inclusion?

We want to hear from you! Please share your inclusion activities, success stories, upcoming events, and intriguing resources. Send to TAAP@worldlearning.org.