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TAAPing Inclusion in Moldova

Around the world, public libraries serve as community hubs offering vital services and access to information. This is certainly true in Moldova, where IREX has been implementing the [Global Libraries - Novateca](#) program since 2012 with support from the Gates Foundation and in partnership with the US Agency for International Development. To date, Novateca has modernized over 1,000 libraries and

[revitalized](#) the role of this essential community institution with locally-driven new services, from health clubs and job skills training to digital security and horticulture classes.

[Research](#) shows that public libraries are often preferred over other venues offering access to online information, particularly among those who perceive them as safe and neutral spaces. The new Moldovan library law adopted in July 2017 recognizes this important role, mandating that libraries will address social inclusion by developing services for persons with disabilities and ensuring ethnic minorities and all citizens have access to book collections in their native language.

Moldovan society experiences issues of inclusion familiar around the world: marginalization of LGBT individuals, ethnic as well as religious and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities, and a large population of older persons who are disproportionately female and poor. As a founding partner of TAAP, IREX was keen to collaborate with World Learning to implement a week-long inclusion training for a cohort of librarians with which the Novateca program has been working. In December 2017 two TAAP trainers from World Learning traveled to Moldova, where they [visited libraries](#) and worked with Novateca staff and librarians to explore inclusion in their communities and their work.

The purpose of their trip was two-fold. Firstly, to serve as a fourth in a series of pilot trainings to test-drive elements of the TAAP Toolkit and Guide for Inclusive Development, and secondly to broaden and deepen the librarians' understanding of inclusion as it applies to their workplaces and the services they offer in their communities. The sixteen TAAP inclusion training participants represented small local libraries, larger urban libraries and the National Library of Moldova.

The trainers were very impressed by the level of commitment of the librarians, who indeed are providers of a wide range of responsive community services, far beyond the concept of the traditional library. Their commitment to inclusion was also highly impressive, and many of them had already taken steps – as part of the professional development support provided by Novateca – to enhance the level of inclusion within public libraries, such as the program ["Sound and Colour for Everyone"](#) for people with special sensory needs in 7 libraries from Cahul, Leova and Cantemir. At the same time, the librarians identified areas for improvement. In the words of one participant, "When creating new library services, I will try to make sure I don't exclude some groups, because during this workshop I realized that we often unintentionally exclude many people from library activity."

During the week, it was clear that the focus of inclusion to date had tended to be on older persons, persons with disabilities and other very visible groups in the community. The trainers worked with the participants to develop awareness of obstacles to inclusion (the TAAP approach refers to these as "barriers"), of ways of enhancing inclusion of minority groups (the TAAP approach refers to these as "boosters") and of the complexity brought about by 'intersectional' exclusion factors (e.g. older persons who are wheelchair bound). Awareness of less visible groups in the community was also developed, with participants identifying children whose parents live outside the country, former drug addicts, Roma adults and children, and LGBTI community members as cohorts whose inclusion requires additional effort.

In reflecting on insights gleaned from the workshop, participants indicated that the concept of intersectionality helped them to consider activity planning in a new light that would reach more people and bring more people together with one effort. And thanks to the extensive network of modernized

Moldovan libraries, there is strong potential for the training to have a positive ripple effect throughout the library sector. As one librarian stated, “I changed my personal view on some community groups and I hope to help change the perspectives of my colleagues, too.”

Photo: Courtesy of IREX, Global Libraries, Novateca, Moldova.



Moving Beyond Theory: The Challenges of an Intersectional Approach

In the field of gender and development, *intersectionality* has emerged as a new framework for understanding oppression and building inclusion—but it has proven a difficult concept to put into practice. The [Gender & Development Network \(GADN\)](#), a London-based network with more than 160 members, has recently released a thinkpiece aimed at engaging the UK development sector in a conversation about intersectionality as a tool for policy and practice. “Intersectionality: Reflections from the Gender and Development Network” marks an effort by GADN to distill current debates amongst its membership and offer practical ways to make use of this important but challenging concept for more inclusive development practice.

With roots in Black feminist thought and activism, and especially the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins, an intersectional approach emphasizes that women’s particular experiences of violence and discrimination are the result of multiple oppressions—and that these oppressions are structural rather than individual. Gendered inequalities thus *intersect* with other aspects of oppression, resulting in unique constellations that include not just gender but race, sexuality, ability, age, social class, caste, appearance, marital status or position as a citizen, indigenous person, refugee or asylum-seeker. Such a lens is critical for understanding the complexity and particularity of inequalities in the lives of women and girls. [Marai Larasi and Dorett Jones of Imkaan](#), a Black feminist organization in the UK, argue that “to ignore these intersections, is tantamount to prioritizing a single aspect of a girl/woman’s reality at the expense of others”, effectively rendering other elements invisible and unaddressed.

In an effort to move beyond theory, GADN argues that an intersectional approach should begin with listening to the experiences of women themselves. While most of the mechanisms we have for combatting discrimination tackle each element in isolation—as the result of race *or* gender *or* ability, for example—intersectionality shows us that identities and experiences do not fit into such neat categories, and nor do transformative solutions. As the [Association for Women’s Rights in Development](#) observes, “something unique is produced at the intersection point of different types of discrimination.”

With that in mind, GADN's thinkpiece puts forward strategies for an intersectional approach to gender and development:

- Get the full picture—not just a snapshot—of the social, political, economic and legal context for each individual case of discrimination or violence.
- Conduct power analysis to see how individuals experience oppression and privilege at the same time and in sometimes unexpected ways.
- Always view oppression as political and structural, not individual—and use intersectional analysis as a tool for social justice and coalition-building across the women's movement.
- Consider our own social positions and relationships as advocates for gender equality and women's rights, which can never be simply left at the door.
- Support core, rather than project-based, funding for women's organizations to support complex, longer-term change.
- Ask questions—and listen to the answers—about power and marginalization when we work with local partner organizations and marginalized communities.

GADN's thinkpiece can be accessed here:

<http://www.gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/2017/11/20/intersectionality-reflections-from-the-gender-development-network>.

Photo: Courtesy of Gender and Development Network, 2018.

Celebrating Inclusion in USAID's New Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya

USAID's new [Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya](#) is impressive on many levels, ranging from the wide range of contributing partners (Government of Kenya, energy sector parastatals, power project developers, Kenyan and international finance institutions, civil society, and representatives of Kenya's many diverse communities) to its' inclusive approach to genuine, robust community engagement. The authors establish this commitment to inclusion early on, recognizing that "the work of increasing access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa involves a diverse array of participants, from power project developers and financiers, to local government agencies, civil society organizations, and the everyday users of electricity themselves. Often, the most successful power projects are those that streamline the path to financial close by ensuring that the concerns and needs of all parties are heard and addressed at every stage of the development cycle."

This comprehensive guide provides development practitioners with best practices for building strong and transparent relationships with Kenyan community members throughout the power project process. It integrates community engagement through three phases of the project cycle: planning, engagement and M&E, all of which are grounded in 12 principles for community engagement, including "Gender Equality and Female Empowerment," "Inclusive Participation," "Do No Harm" and "Sustained Engagement Throughout." The guide highlights the necessity for *sustainable* relationships between developers and

the communities they work in, which relies heavily on continuous feedback between parties throughout the project cycle and at every decision-making stage. There is an emphasis on ensuring integration of measures to promote gender equality in community engagement activities, including promoting women as leaders and integrating considerations for marginalized groups within the community, including ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, vulnerable women, and children.

CONDUCTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

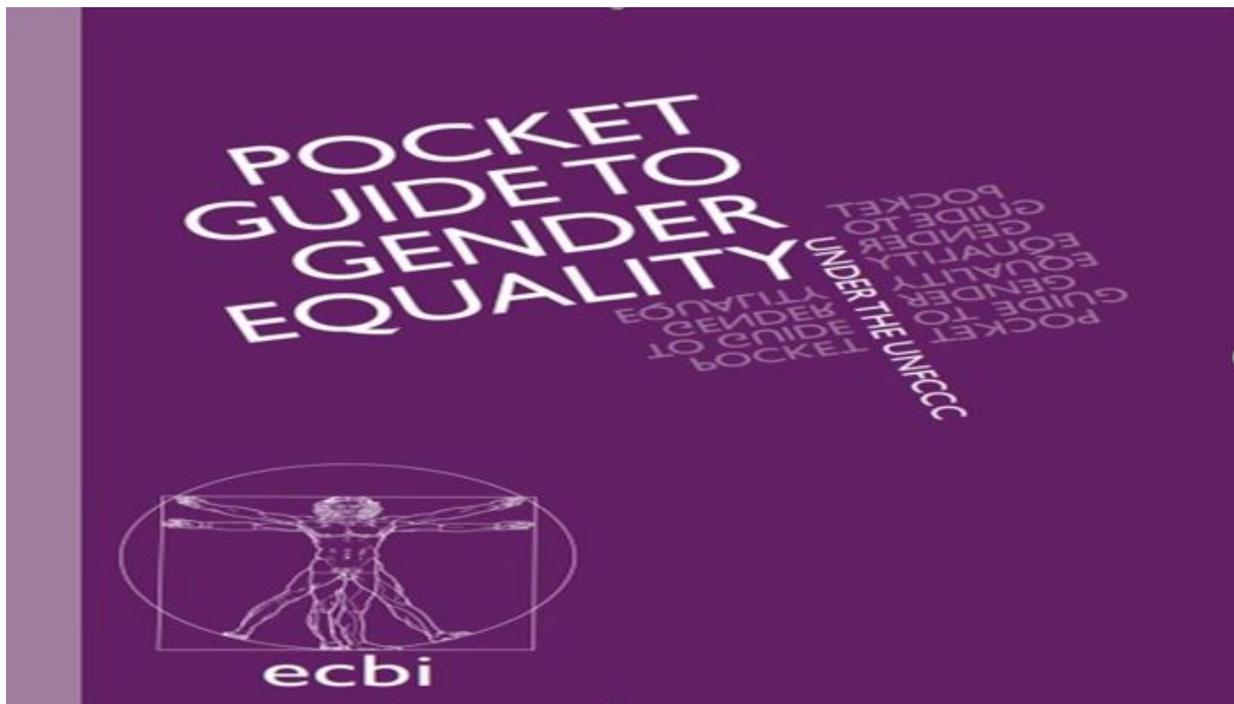
Conducting a strong community engagement program begins with an adherence to a core set of principles:



The authors note that “basic levels of community engagement do not go far enough to capture the level and comprehensiveness necessary to engage the community in a way that truly respects their history, traditional knowledge, cultural norms, relationship with the land on which they live, the natural resources they utilize, and their legal and human rights.”

Practical recommendations include allocating a gender specialist to the team to ensure that gender considerations are successfully integrated into the community engagement process; holding all project staff responsible for gender equitable programming and implementation; conducting stakeholder mapping and gender analysis; and disaggregating all stakeholders in the database by gender. Page 26 calls out the need for considerations to be made for marginalized groups to eliminate the barriers to effective participation, and recommends specific interventions be designed (based on an informed analysis and additional resources set aside to facilitate effective participation by these groups) that recognize participation disparities based on gender, minority language, religion and traditional and cultural requirements. **Well done!**

Graphic: From the USAID's new Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya, 2018, 2018.



New Pocket Guide for Gender Equality and Climate Change

The [*Pocket Guide for Gender Equality under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)*](#) was developed by the European Capacity Building Initiative to highlight the importance of gender in climate change discussions. The guide offers a powerful statement that “gender” must not be conflated with “women” and that gender analysis cannot be analysis solely focused on women. Without considering all people and stakeholders, programs run the risk of missing key social dynamics and the needs of specific populations, which impact project outcomes.

The guide provides the basics – “What is Gender? Why does Gender Matter to Climate Change” – while also providing substantive details toward an understanding that while climate change is indiscriminate and affects everyone, differing social roles, access to resources, justice, and mobility often mean that men and women *experience* climate change differently. Since women on average make up 43% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries, it is imperative that their voices be heard in the climate impact debate and for laws and social norms to change about land ownership.

Change is often incentivized by economic impact. The guide points to reports and studies containing examples of how gender roles intersect with climate impacts, including one study that found that Malawi loses \$100 million each year from gender inequalities in agriculture practices. The guide offers resources across a range of thematic climate issues to address gender mainstreaming in collaboration with other efforts from international climate action stakeholders.

Photo: Courtesy of UNFCCC, Pocket Guide for Gender Equality, 2018.

This Week's TAAP Staff Picks:



Assessing Our Progress Towards Lasting Social Justice (IYF Blog)

In this [IYF blog](#) Matthew Hobson contributes to the honest conversation about the necessary steps to creating lasting and transformative social change. To embark on the journey of understanding that ultimately concludes with empathy requires engaging young people where they are, empowering their generation to be agents of social change and for each individual to embody the change they want to see.

Photo: Matthew Hobson - December 11, 2017 - Posted In Social Innovation.

Gender imbalances in senior global health roles (New academic paper)

Using a literature review and two gender analyses, the authors of a new paper titled "[Reasons behind current gender imbalances in senior global health roles and the practice and policy changes that can catalyze organizational change](#)" probe how gendered workplace dynamics and practices create a revolving door or "privilege, status, and opportunity" and offer strategies for how to create more accessible opportunities for women to work in senior positions. This paper recommends four areas of practice and policy changes: 1) Practice participatory organizational gender analysis; 2) Identify and name stereotypes and their harms; 3) Operationalize substantive equality principles in organizational governance and human resources management policies; and 4) Put in place special measures and enabling conditions to promote substantive equality and dismantle the mechanisms that contribute to women's gendered disadvantage in gendered organizations.



GENDERED DEVOLUTION:

WHY IT MATTERS, HOW TO DO IT



Gendered Devolution (ICAN video) Check out ICAN's **Gendered Devolution** [video](#). The International Civil Society Action Network presents "Gendered Devolution: Why it matters, how to do it" as the third thematic animation in the Better Peace Initiative series. It explores why gender sensitivity and inclusivity in devolution processes matters and how it can be done in very practical ways. *Image: "Gendered Devolution: Why it matters, how to do it", Video, ICAN, Feb 2, 2018.*



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.

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