Integrating Gender Considerations in VillageReach Program Design

Overview

In line with VillageReach's mission to provide access to quality healthcare to the world's most under-reached communities, we acknowledge the significance of gender considerations in the design and implementation of our programs. This document outlines a comprehensive approach to integrating gender analysis in program design, aimed at ensuring equitable health outcomes and transforming harmful gender norms. The aim is to ensure that all VIllageReach programs are gender-sensitive or gender-responsive.

Steps to Gender Integration in Program Design

1. **Complete Gender analysis:** To examine and understand how gender-related factors could be incorporated in the activities, and how gender dynamics could impact the project's goals, outcomes, and implementation.
2. **Identify Gender-Specific Barriers and Opportunities:** Use gender analysis findings to identify gender-specific barriers and opportunities.
3. **Articulate Synergy Between Gender, Health, and Development Goals:** Clearly express the interconnection between gender considerations and health and development objectives within program goals.
4. **Address Harmful Norms, Behaviors, and Structures:** Determine specific strategies to mitigate detrimental gender norms, behaviors, and structures, and encourage the equitable participation of all genders in programs.
5. **Incorporate Identified Strategies in Program Design:** Integrate the chosen strategies into the program design, activities, and work plan.
6. **Measure Impact on Gender Equity and Health Outcomes:** Define mechanisms to assess the influence of these strategies on gender equity and health outcomes.

In collaboration with the program's implementation partner(s) and beneficiaries, design strategies and activities that are locally relevant and appropriately address gendered structural issues (e.g., policies and health systems) as well as gender norms at the community and individual levels. This process can foster awareness and dialogue around gender issues in the broader community.

Reviewing Program Design

Upon designing the program, it should be reviewed to determine the potential effects of proposed activities on existing gender norms, behaviors, and structures. Use the Gender Integration Continuum (CARE/FHI 360) as a guide in assessing the quality of the programmatic processes associated with gender integration, leading to desirable outcomes. Consider whether the activities might inadvertently reinforce norms preventing women's empowerment, promote gender equity, enhance the status of women and girls, or present new gender challenges.

GENDER SENSITIVITY IN PROGRAM MATERIALS

By utilizing the Gender Integration Continuum, ensure all program materials, including training, communication, and educational tools, are tested for gender sensitivity and revised accordingly. Aim to promote gender-transformative strategies whenever possible. Please consult a gender expert for support in reviewing materials.

MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR PROGRAMS

At the very least, programs should be gender-aware and avoid reinforcing or exploiting harmful norms. Please refer to the Gender Continuum for more details.

Guidelines For Gender Integration in Program Design For VillageReach

This set of instructions is designed to assist you in integrating gender equity into your planning at each stage of the process.



1. Program Design Team: Identify those on your program design team with specific expertise in gender issues. These individuals will be responsible for targeting significant gender disparities in the program design and establishing indicators to track gender-related outcomes. If the team does not have gender expertise, consider bringing on a gender expert on the team either internal or external to VillageReach.
    - Who on the design team has knowledge of the gender issues relevant to the proposed program?
    - If the design team lacks expertise in gender issues, what strategies are in place to obtain the necessary technical assistance?
2. Gender Analysis and Review of Available Knowledge: Your program-level gender analysis should detail the disparities between men and women's statuses that could impact the program outcomes and be addressed through the program design. Refer to Guideline 2 for details on Gender Analysis. At a minimum, this analysis should include:
    - An assessment of the status of women and men, and their differential access to/control over resources relevant to the program.
    - The potential impacts of the program on men and women, including unintended or negative consequences.
3. Problem Statement and/or Key Issues: Utilize the gender analysis guideline to identify disparities between men and women that are relevant to the program.

- Are there specific subsets of males or females who should be specifically addressed in the program?
- Determine the primary gender disparities relevant to the program and the key population groups that should be included in the program.

4. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis: Engage experts, advocates, and individuals in the program target area with knowledge and experience on gender and inclusiveness issues. Use stakeholder analysis and mapping tools to better understand, discuss, and enhance situations where various actors influence outcomes.
5. Drafting The Theory of Change: Leverage the insights from the gender analysis to inform the design of the program.
    - How can the draft Theory of Change be designed to reduce identified disparities and meet the needs of both men and women?
    - How can the theory of change incorporate gender in the activities and process?
    - Will the intended outcomes empower women and/or challenge harmful gender norms?
6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: Address gender disparities throughout the program lifecycle. Collecting sex-disaggregated baseline data for planning and monitoring over the program cycle is crucial.
    - Do the illustrative indicators capture changes in the identified gaps and desired outcomes over time as the program unfolds?
    - Can the program incorporate any gender equity, health indicators?