

# Gender concepts glossary

## Key concepts and terms to be aware of

This gender concepts glossary intended to provide an understanding of key gender concepts and their intersection with agriculture.

We encourage you to refer to a broader set of resources at the end of the toolkit to further expand your and your team's understanding of gender related concepts

### Directions to use the gender concepts glossary:

1. This tool can be used as a awareness creation document for an organization's internal training and awareness purposes. Wherever applicable, the glossary provides relevant agriculture related examples, however, to fully engage with the tool as an educational document, users are encouraged to think about applying the concepts to their own contexts.
2. This tool can also be used in a piecemeal approach by referring to relevant terms as and when confusions arise while referring to other tools in this toolkit. All other tools in the toolkit have an accompanying list of relevant concepts and explanations and for further reading users can always come back to this main glossary tool.
3. The terms and concepts in this glossary are not exhaustive and only cover the key concepts relevant to digital agriculture. At the end of the toolkit a detailed list of other public source glossaries are listed which users can refer to for further knowledge development.
4. The glossary is divided into 3 main sections: (A) core gender concepts (B) gender issues (C) gender opportunity areas, and (D) agriculture X gender concepts. Users can encouraged to start with any section that most suits their current needs. For users interacting with gender terms the first time it is recommended to study the sections in chronological order.



**Primary audience**  
All



**Tool type**  
Reading material



**Personnel**  
Any/all



**Duration**  
1-5 hours

### GOALS

(1) Understand the language used in other tools and broadly in the area of gender transformative approaches.

(2) Create a common and shared understanding of gender concepts and help cascade the same within your organization..

### REQUIREMENTS

(1) No additional investment in terms of financial, human or technical resources.

(2) To fully engage with this tool for training purposes organizations might need to devote additional time and resources into a Gender Expert or Advisor if not already available.

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## (A) CORE GENDER CONCEPTS

These are concepts which are core and central to developing any deeper insights into gender transformative approaches. If you or anyone in your organization is encountering gender concepts or gender transformative approaches for the first time, we recommend you read through these concepts at the bare minimum to develop a sound understanding.

It is also highly recommended that members of an organization discuss these concepts to test if everyone has a collective and robust understanding.

A clear understanding of these common terms among all members of an organization is also highly important to address any inherent biases which might impact interactions with various customer groups etc.

1. **Gender** refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, it varies across societies and over time. Gender is a relational concept that is best understood by examining interactions between individuals and social groups.

*For more details: [World Health Organization](#), [UNICEF](#)*

2. **Gender identity / expression** - Gender identity refers to an individual's innermost perception of themselves as either male, female, intersex, or neither. This perception could either be the same or vary from the individual's sex at birth. Gender expression is the outward appearance of one's identity through aspects such as clothing or behaviour that may or may not conform to socially prescribed gender norms.

*For more details: [Human Rights Campaign](#)*

3. **Sex** refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex. It is typically assigned at birth and refers to physical and biological indicators including hormones, sex chromosomes, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia. Sex and gender are often conflated leading to the erroneous notion that gender norms and roles are biologically determined and cannot be changed.

*For more details: [American Psychological Association](#)*

4. **Sexual orientation** refers to how an individual chooses to define their romantic and/or sexual interest and attraction to another person, who could either be of a different sex, the same sex, or more than one sex. Examples of sexual orientation include but are not limited to straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, androsexual, among others.

*For more details: [Criterion Institute](#)*

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## (B) GENDER ISSUES

These are concepts which provide a deeper understanding of the nature of gender issues and pain points that exist across businesses and society and impact all types of agriculture service providers.

A clear understanding of these concepts is especially important while trying to (re)design products and services for women smallholders, as a deeper understanding of gender issues and pain points can enable creation of solutions which eventually address issues of agency and decision making power.

1. **Gender gap** refers to the disparity in men and women's social, political, intellectual cultural and/or economic condition or position in society, often based on underlying socio-cultural norms. It reflects the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities and outcomes across genders. **For instance, women smallholder farmers have less access to digital financial services indicating a gender gap in access to resources.**

*For more details: [World Economic Forum](#)*

2. **Gender bias** refers to the conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit prejudiced actions or thoughts that could lead to unfair treatment of people based on their perceived gender. **For instance, male farm laborers hired by women farm owners are likely to be less hardworking and reliable due to the lower perceived strictness of women.**

*For more details: [USAID](#), [IPS-Inter Press Service](#), [World Bank](#)*

3. **Gender/ social norms** collectively held standards to which people are expected to conform at different stages of their lives based on their sex or gender identity. These are norms that seek to represent beliefs and values of what it means to male or female in different societal contexts. **For instance gendered expectations for women to engage in unpaid caregiving work limits their time to engage in productive agricultural activities.**

*For more details: [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) , [World Bank](#)*

4. **Gender based constraints** refer to formal laws, attitudes, perceptions, values, or practices that limit people's access to resources and/or opportunities based on their sex or gender identity. **For instance, cultural norms that limit women's ownership of agricultural land are gender-based constraints.**

*For more details: [USAID](#)*

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5. **Gender discrimination** refers to direct or indirect unfair treatment of a person based solely on the person's sex or perceived gender identity rather than merit, that prevent them from enjoying full human rights.

*For more details: [IPS-Inter Press Service](#)*

6. **Gender roles** refer to socially determined behaviours, tasks, and responsibilities assigned to different individuals based on perceived differences in their sex. These are socially-prescribed norms on how people should think, act, speak, and feel based on their perceived sex. **For instance men farmers going to the market to sell produce even if women farmers worked on the fields based on men's role to handle money.**

*For more details: [IPS-Inter Press Service](#)*

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## (C) GENDER OPPORTUNITY AREAS

These are concepts which provide details on opportunity areas and ways in which organizations can think about incorporating gender into their internal and external activities.

This set of concepts also cover the various eventual gender related social outcomes that organizations should be striving for to eventually push for increased women's agency.

1. **Gender mainstreaming / integration** is a process that involves embedding of a gender perspective into the entire spectrum of an organization's activities including its strategies, structures, policies, culture, systems and operations. It ensures that the needs and interests of all genders are included in the design, implementation, and M&E of any planned activity.

*For more details: [UN Economic and Social Council](#)*

2. **Gender lens** refers to a perspective that aims to identify and understand gendered power differences and biases among different groups in economic, social and legal contexts by analysing the relationship between different gendered groups, their access to resources and opportunities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.

*For more details: [Criterion Institute](#)*

3. **Gender analysis** refers to the critical examination of the differences between men and women, boys and girls, in their access to and control of resources, their roles and responsibilities, and the constraints they face in a given situation or context relative to each other. For instance, an assessment of the differences in access to and control of digital agricultural solutions between women and men smallholder farmers.

*For more details: [EIGE](#)*

4. **Gender intentional** refers to a gender aware organisation that designs its products, service lines, and/or investments to reduce barriers in access to resources across genders or to increase the information base and awareness around gender gaps. **For instance an agri-input loan provider designs shorter tenure loans linked to savings products to cater to the researched needs of female smallholder farmers.**

5. **Gender unintentional** refers to an organisation that does not integrate a gender lens and does not target gender gaps in its strategies, investments, product design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, internal structures and organization culture. **For instance an agri-input loan provider that does not consider the differences in borrowing behaviour and needs of women while designing credit products and acquiring customers.**

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6. **Gender transformative** refers to an organisation that aims to achieve gender empowerment and equity designs its products, service lines, and/or investments to reduce barriers in not only access to resources but also in agency and control over resources. **For instance an agri-input loan provider can incorporate strategies to reach out to include women smallholder customers to make the final decision on loan disbursement after approval without spousal consent.**
7. **Gender equality** refers to equal rights, opportunities, and responsibilities for different genders regardless of their sex or gender identity. It involves equal treatment for men and women, girls and boys, by taking into consideration their needs and priorities while recognizing their diversity.

*For more details: [UN Women](#)*

8. **Gender equity** refers to fairness in the treatment of all people, and in the distribution of resources and responsibilities among people, regardless of their sex and/or gender identity while taking into account the historical and social disadvantages that limit different genders from operating at a level playing field.

*For more details: [United Nations Population Fund](#), [IPS-Inter Press Service](#), [UNESCO](#)*

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9. **Sex disaggregated data** refers to quantitative and qualitative data collected and presented by sex that allows for measurement of socio-economic and socio-cultural differences between men and women. For example, collection of data on the number of women and men smallholder farmers that use digital tools for agriculture separately in order to measure the gendered differences.

*For more details: [European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#)*

10. **Women and girls empowerment** refers to the strengthening of women and girls' power, and agency over their own lives such that they can equally participate in decision-making at all levels. For instance, expansion of women farmers' agency in production, control over productive resources, control over use of income, social capital and leadership, agency in time use, human capital and access to and use of digital solutions.

*For more details: [EIGE](#), [UN Women](#), [USAID](#), [IFPRI](#), [Agrilinks](#)*

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## (D) AGRICULTURE X GENDER CONCEPTS

These are concepts that help contextualize gender within the various types of activities and businesses that operate in the digital agriculture sector. While this set is not exhaustive, but it aims to provide illustrative examples of what applying a gender lens might mean to agriculture value chains.

1. **Advisory and information services** refers to digitally delivered information on topics such as agronomic best practices, pests and diseases, market prices, farming techniques that are tailored to specific farmer segments and that enable farmers to make informed decisions that maximise their agricultural output. Increasing access to advisory and information services for women farmers increases their productivity.

*For more details: [CTA](#)*

2. **Digitalisation for Agriculture** refers to use of digital technologies, innovations and solutions to transform agricultural value chains and address constraints across the agricultural value chain in order to achieve greater income for smallholder farmers. **For example, digital financial services that aim to increase access to financial access for women smallholder farmers in remote locations.**

*For more details: [CTA](#)*

3. **Crowd farming** refers to use of digital platforms to link farmers in need of financing for their agricultural activities to investors who are looking to invest in agriculture. It involves sourcing of funds from several investors to invest in smallholder agricultural enterprises. **Women smallholder farmers will particularly benefit from crowd-farming initiatives given their low access to financial resources.**

*For more details: [CTA](#), [Invoice, Nigeria](#)*

4. **Digital financial inclusion** refers to deployment of cost-saving digital platforms in order to provide formal financial services to financially excluded and underserved groups. **For instance, design and offering of tailored and affordable credit, savings and insurance services to women farmers by digital financial service providers in agrifinance in order to increase their access to finance and overall financial inclusion.**

*For more details: [World Bank](#), [World Bank](#), [IFC](#)*

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5. **Financial literacy** refers to the ability to understand how money works and the ability to manage and make informed decisions about money including how to make money, how to budget, how to save and how to invest the money. **Digital financial service providers can design and implement targeted financial education programs for women smallholder farmers in order to increase their financial literacy.**

*For more details: [Annuity](#), [World Bank](#), [OECD](#), [IFAD](#)*

6. **Financial services providers (FSPs)** refers to enterprises and institutions that provide financial services and products such credit and insurance services to their customers. In agriculture, FSPs refer to institutions that offer financial services and products to farmers and they include commercial banks, microfinance institutions(MFIs), savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCOs), insurance companies, etc.

*For more details: [CTA](#)*

7. **Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA)** refers to a self-managed community group that offers savings, credit and insurance services to its members. VSLAs mainly serve economically vulnerable populations e.g. women farmers in rural areas who often lack access to formal financial services. **VSLAs increase access to financial services and social capital for women SHFs, resulting in increased productivity and income.**

*For more details: [CARE](#), [VSLA](#), [The Mango Tree](#), [Advance II](#)*

8. **Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (SACCO)** refers to a member-driven non-profit financial cooperative that offers savings and credit services to its members. **SACCOs are favoured by women smallholder farmers and increase their access to finance since they are easily accessible, have less intimidating procedures than other financial institutions and offer more suitable loan conditions.**

*For more details: [Digipay](#), [ILO](#)*

9. **Climate change** refers to the long-term shifts in global temperatures, precipitation and wind patterns caused by a rise greenhouse gas emissions. **Changing climate and weather patterns threaten agricultural productivity and food chain security, with women farmers being disproportionately affected.**

*For more details: [Climate Reality Project](#), [Root Capital](#)*

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10. **Climate change mitigation** refers to efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that cause climate change. Adoption of climate smart agricultural practices has high climate mitigation potential. **Addressing the existing gender gaps in agriculture will increase the ability of women farmers to adopt mitigation practices which further result in food security and increased resilience to climate shocks.**

*For more details: [UNEP](#), [UNDP](#)*

11. **Climate change adaptation** refers to changes in processes, practices and structures to respond to actual or expected effects or impacts of climate change. It involves sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and income by reducing vulnerability to climate change. **Increasing women farmers' access to resources such as digital finance solutions and climate smart technologies will increase their climate adaptive capacity.**

*For more details: [UNFCCC](#), [FAO](#)*

12. **Climate smart agriculture (CSA)** refers to agricultural strategies and practices that would ensure sustainable food security in a changing climate through increased agricultural productivity, enhanced climate resilience and reduced emissions. **Women farmers need to be educated on climate-smart agricultural practices such as crop diversification and manure management to increase their climate resilience.**

*For more details: [FAO](#), [World Bank](#)*