GENDER EQUALITY LENS

Promoting Equality and Inclusion for the full diversity of women in the City of Ottawa

CITY OF OTTAWA
CITY FOR ALL WOMEN INITIATIVE
2008
Acknowledgements:

Production of this guide has been a collaborative effort coordinated by Community and Protective Services (CPS) and the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), a partnership between the City of Ottawa and women representing diverse communities and organizations. A Gender Equality Reference Group comprised of community and city staff from 3 departments contributed their time and expertise.

Community members:
Geneviève Allard, City for All Women Initiative
Sultana Husne Ara, City for All Women Initiative
Caroline Andrew, University of Ottawa
Cathy Thornley, Ottawa Women's Training and Employment Network
Valerie Collicott, Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments (WISE)
Deb Chansonneuve, Consultant on Aboriginal Culture and Gender Equality
Suzanne Doerge, City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
Janet McInnes, The Well
Hindia Mohamoud, Social Planning Council of Ottawa
Maria Cristina Serje, Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
Sara Torres, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW)
Beth Woroniuk, Gender Equality Consultant
Elisabeth Wilson, City for All Women Initiative

City Staff:
Kim MacEwen and Nathalie Rochefort, Mary Jane Coburn, Community and Protective Services
Janet Onyango, City Manager's Office
Lois Emburg; Business Transformation Services.

Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres, PSAC Regional Women's Committee, Status of Women Canada, and United Way Ottawa contributed financial support.

Design and Layout: jwalkerdesign.ca
Translation: Célyne Malette, Michèle Clermont

For more information, visit www.cawi-ivtf.org
Table of Contents

Why This Lens ........................................................................................................... 5
How to Use This Guide? ............................................................................................ 6
What is a Gender Equality Lens? ............................................................................... 7
Differences and Inequalities to Consider ................................................................. 8
We are the diversity of women experiencing the city of Ottawa today ................. 10
Quick Reference Tool for Using a Gender Equality Lens ................................. 12

Ensuring Gender Equality in Policy, Planning and Practices ............................... 13
  • Research/ Information Gathering ...................................................................... 14
  • Consultations ................................................................................................... 16
  • Policy Development ......................................................................................... 18
  • Project/ Program Development ...................................................................... 20
  • Communication ............................................................................................... 22
  • Service Delivery .............................................................................................. 24
  • Evaluation ...................................................................................................... 26

Annex A: City of Ottawa's Commitment to Gender Equality ......................... 28
Annex B: Terms in this Guide .................................................................................. 29
Annex C: Web-sites on Women and Gender Equality Issues ............................. 30
Annex D: Sources Used in this Guide ..................................................................... 31
Why This Lens

Women experience cities differently than men because traditionally they have assumed different roles and responsibilities. In spite of gains made by women, inequalities between women and men still persist. These differences and inequalities are even greater for women who are part of other social groups that also face discrimination (Aboriginal people, visible minorities, people living with disabilities, francophones, people living on low-income, youth and seniors, single mothers, recent immigrants, lesbians, transgendered and rural residents).

Women, in all their diversity, have unique perspectives and insights to contribute to effective city planning and decision making. As Aboriginal people and recent immigrants move to Ottawa in increasing numbers, the need to have specific strategies in place to ensure these women are considered is all the more important.

The City of Ottawa Equity and Diversity Policy, adopted by City Council in 2002, designates women as one of the five equity seeking groups, along with visible minorities, persons with disabilities, members of the GLBT community and Aboriginal persons. The City of Ottawa has made a commitment to gender equality, (See Annex A: City of Ottawa’s Commitment to Gender Equality), but has lacked a consistent, systematic way of ensuring that city services and programs address differences and inequalities.

This guide is designed to help make this possible.

This guide is a practical tool for considering differences and inequalities between women and men (girls and boys) at every stage of the planning and service delivery process. It brings focus to the experiences, perspectives and potential contributions of the full diversity of women which might otherwise be overlooked. This way, we help to ensure inclusion of the full diversity of women and men as both decision makers and recipients of city services.

WHY USE IT?

- To be more effective
- To identify gaps that may otherwise be overlooked
- To reduce cost and time by getting the full picture from the beginning.

WHO IS IT FOR?

- Management staff
- Research Officers
- Program Managers
- Consultants
- Communications/Public Information Officers
- Front line staff
- Community Organizations

'Local government is ...the level of government closest to the citizens. Therefore, it is in the best position both to involve women in the making of decisions concerning their living conditions and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable development.'

(IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, adopted by Ottawa-Carleton Regional Council 1999)
How to Use This Guide:

For a quick overview of a Gender Equality Lens and why it matters to the City of Ottawa, see pages 7 to 13.

You will have best results when a gender equality lens is used at every stage of the policy, planning and service delivery process. It is a thread that flows through your work from inception to evaluation.

However, the process may already be underway or you may have responsibility for only one area or component of the work. If this is the case, after reviewing the aspects of a Gender Equality Lens, go directly to the component(s) that correspond with your work:

- Research/Information gathering ................. p. 14
- Consultations ........................................ p. 16
- Policy Development ............................... p. 18
- Project/Program Development ................. p. 20
- Communication .................................... p. 22
- Service Delivery ................................... p. 24
- Evaluation ......................................... p. 26

To look back on your work to consider if you have incorporated a gender equality lens, consult page 12 “Quick Reference Tool for Using a Gender Equality Lens”.

For additional information on gender equality issues, you may choose to consult the web-sites listed in Annex C, page 30.

We hope you find this useful. We welcome your feedback (info@cawi-ivtf.org)
What is a Gender Equality Lens?

A gender equality lens is a way of looking at the work we do so as to identify ways of supporting the well-being of women and men (girls and boys); taking special care to ensure inclusion of the full diversity of women.

**USING A GENDER EQUALITY LENS, WE ASK:**

**STEP 1**

- Are women and men (girls and boys) affected differently by the need or social problem, policy or service?
- How do we address these differences and reduce inequalities?

**STEP 2**

- Are some groups of women (girls) more acutely affected or at-risk of exclusion according to their:
  - Aboriginal ancestry
  - income
  - race or ethnicity
  - language
  - physical and mental ability
  - marital status
  - family status and dependents
  - age
  - religion/culture
  - geographic location
  - length of time in Canada
  - sexual orientation or identity
- How do we address the differences and reduce inequalities these women (girls) experience?

**STEP 3**

- How do we reflect this in our work?
Differences and Inequalities to Consider

One size does not fit all. By using a gender equality lens to examine differences and inequalities between women and men (girls and boys), and among women, we take a practical step forward in correcting systemic prejudices or discrimination. Below are key gender equality concerns to consider:

**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

As gender roles change, men are more involved in the home. However, women still have primary responsibility in caring for home and family members - children and vulnerable adults, including the sick and the elderly. Canadian men do a half hour more of housework each day than they did 20 years ago, however, women are still doing nearly twice as much as men. (Statistics Canada, 2006)

**UNPAID WORK**

In the home and as community volunteers, women do 2/3 of all unpaid work in Canada. (Statistics Canada, 1999) As social programs were reduced in the 1990’s, women’s unpaid work increased as they were more likely than men to assume the extra tasks that needed to be done in the home and community (ex. care for the elderly, health care, school monitors, care for persons with disabilities).

**IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Research has shown women were adversely affected by cuts to social services in the 1990’s in Ottawa. This is because women rely on social services to meet the needs of their families, they are more likely to live in poverty, and they live longer. (Working Group on Women’s Access to Municipal Services, 2001)

For this reason, it is important to address barriers that women may experience in trying to access services. In cases where men are the minority of users, such as services for seniors where the ratio of women to men is 2:1, program development has to ensure that the model used appeals to men as well.

**INCOME**

- Women are more likely than men to occupy low-paying jobs, be in part-time or temporary positions, and interrupt their careers due to family responsibilities, such as child care and elder care and then experience barriers when re-entering the workforce. All of these factors contribute to women, on average, making less than men – for full-year, full-time work, women earn 71% of what men earn (Pay Equity Task Force, 2004).

- Recent immigrant women, women with disabilities, visible minority women, and Aboriginal women are particularly disadvantaged in obtaining jobs and a decent living wage. Women in each of these equity seeking groups earn less than men in these population groups. Many professional immigrant and refugee women (and men) are unable to work in their fields. (SPC, 2004)

“Asking women about city services is one stop shopping, because, in their role in caring for the family, women are most likely to have a handle on how the web of city services is working.”

Barbara Carroll, Coalition of Community Houses
POVERTY
Women are more likely to live in poverty than men as they are more likely to be single parents, work part-time, have lower salaries with fewer benefits and live longer than men. In Ottawa, one-third of all lone-parent families, most of whom were women and children (83%), lived on low income in the year 2000 (SPC, 2003). In Canada, the populations of women over-represented at the extreme end of the poverty continuum are women with disabilities, women of Aboriginal descent and visible minorities.

TIME USE AND MOBILITY
As women juggle family responsibilities, volunteer work and paid work, their schedule is very full. A woman is likely to be doing multiple errands at one time. Women are more likely to be traveling on public transit with children or an elderly, disabled or ill family member. This makes inflexible day-care, rigid operating hours and bus connections all the more challenging.

SAFETY
Violence against women, and the fear of it, plays a significant role in limiting women's choices and expectations in their homes, workplaces and communities. Women are more likely than men to be injured, fear for their life and be killed by their partner. The rate of spousal assault among Aboriginal women is three times higher than non-Aboriginal women. In 2003, girls were the victims in 8 out of 10 family-related sexual assaults. Senior women are twice as likely as senior men to be assaulted by a family member. (Status of Women, 2005)

DISCRIMINATION
Women (girls) may experience unfair treatment in the form of prejudicial attitudes, practices of service providers, sexual harassment, or hiring practices in a male dominated field. A woman (girl) may be doubly or triply discriminated against according to the colour of her skin, language, place of origin, ancestry, marital status, same sex partner status, sexual orientation, age, disability, citizenship, family status or religion.

PERSPECTIVES NOT HEARD
Women are experts in day-to-day living, as a large majority of them juggle family and work demands. Women from equity seeking groups have particular perspectives to bring in creating a more inclusive Ottawa. The expertise of the full diversity of women and their organizations will not be fully considered unless specific steps are taken to ensure their inclusion.

LIMITED ACCESS TO DECISION MAKING
Though gains have been made, women are still less likely to hold key management positions and sit on City Council (FCM, 2004). When visible minority women, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities do not see themselves represented among decision makers, they question whether their views are taken into account. (CAWI, 2004)
We Are the Diversity of Women Experiencing the City of Ottawa Today

Aboriginal youth learning about life in the city:
My grandmother said I was a bright shining star for our Cree community. But when I arrived in Ottawa to study, it was so confusing. A whole new culture where people don't look like me, act like me or talk like me. Things just started to go wrong. I dropped out of school, lost my scholarship and my place to live. It made a big difference when the case worker referred me to Tewegan Lodge where I am able to get support from other Aboriginal women who know my people’s ways.

Mother accessing services in rural area:
I love living here with my family in this old farmhouse where I grew up. But it has its challenges juggling the kids and work while trying to access recreation, health care and get book loans to our library in time for school projects. City Hall is so far away. How can I let them know the ideas I have for improving services for families like ours?

Senior woman giving and receiving care:
After 40 years of a loving marriage, he took ill. He didn’t want anyone else to care for him and I felt so guilty whenever I left him alone. It was the support I received in the Caregivers Support Program that really helped me to get through it. Now, I see my daughter caring for me and know how hard that can be.

Woman in poverty seeking exercise:
My children and I take advantage of the many free recreation activities in the summer, but to stay active, we need indoor recreation in the winter. Once I pay the rent, I can't afford it. I would find it humiliating to ask for a subsidy.
Immigrant, sole support mother planning a brighter future:
When we arrived in Ottawa, my husband and I were so certain we would find a job in our professions. After two years, my husband gave up and went back to our country. Looking after the kids, it is almost impossible to volunteer to get more Canadian experience. I wonder if I would get a job sooner if I were white. As a Muslim, I cannot take out a loan to pay for education for myself or my children. Women in my community talk about what is needed in the city to ensure a brighter future for us, our men and our children.

Woman with a disability returning home from work:
I thought Para-transpo would be here by now. I hate waiting alone at night, but I hate asking others to wait with me. My accessible apartment is so far away from my work. OC Transpo accessible buses are great, but I can't count on one going to my neighbourhood. On my salary, I can't afford a taxi. Sitting here, I can't help but fill with fear remembering that one incident that I have told no one about. At last, the bus is here! I roll onto the ramp filled with relief.

Francophone professional fleeing partner abuse:
I never imagined that I, a professional, would be fleeing my home with my children. I was afraid my husband would hurt the kids this time. When I called the City for help, I was too scared and nervous to talk in English. It was so important to get a worker who spoke in French and could refer me to francophone services for women.

Lesbian mother facing prejudice:
I saw the way they looked at us when they saw two mothers walk into the day care with our child. Will their attitudes affect my son?
QUICK REFERENCE TOOL
for Using a Gender Equality Lens

- Identify differences and inequalities between women and men (girls and boys) on the issue.
- Identify additional differences and inequalities that women (girls) in equity seeking groups experience on the issue.

GROUPS IN THE CITY OF OTTAWA, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY
- Aboriginal women
- Visible minority women
- Women with disabilities
- Lesbians
- Transgendered

OTHER GROUPS THAT RISK EXCLUSION
- Francophone women
- Rural women
- Young women
- Senior women
- Recent immigrant women
- Women living on low-income

- Identify ways that inequalities or differences can be addressed.
- Draw upon sources, individuals and organizations with expertise in women and gender equality issues.
- Use a gender equality lens at every step of the planning and service delivery process.
  - Research/ Information gathering
  - Consultations
  - Policy Development
  - Project/ Program Development
  - Communication
  - Service Delivery
  - Evaluation
Ensuring Gender Equality in Policy, Planning and Practices

Utilize the questions on the following pages to consider differences and inequalities between women and men; and ensure inclusion of the full diversity of women in everything we do:

- **Research (Information gathering)**
- **Consultation**
- **Policy Development**
- **Project/Program Development**
- **Communication**
- **Service Delivery**
- **Evaluation**

**WHY THIS MATTERS**

**Differences and inequalities between women and men**

- It is often assumed that a given policy/program/service is gender neutral when, in reality, it has a differential impact on women and men.

- Women have specific barriers to participating due to family responsibilities, limited time, lack of experience/comfort with the kind of setting or safety concerns.

- By collecting disaggregated data (data that is broken down by gender and other equity seeking groups), it is possible to have a fuller picture.

- It is not enough to look at the way a specific population (e.g., newcomers) experiences a program; the experience of an immigrant woman may differ from that of an immigrant man.

**Differences and inequalities among women**

- Depending on a woman's ability, race, income, ethnicity, first language, age, sexual orientation, geographic location and experiences of discrimination, she will experience city decisions differently. For example, a visible minority immigrant living in the suburbs will experience a program differently than a Caucasian immigrant living downtown.

“…all departments within the City to embrace the spirit of equity and diversity in the development of their policies and programs that impact the delivery of City services, the use of City facilities, grants to external agencies and other outwardly focussed activities.”

City of Ottawa, Equity and Diversity Policy, 2002
Questions to Consider

- Are the research questions relevant to both women and men (girls and boys)? Are there gender equality concerns related to this issue, i.e. safety, family responsibilities, unpaid work, and access to decision making (see pg. 8-9).

- Would women face specific barriers or have a unique perspective on this issue according to their age, sexual orientation, income, Aboriginal ancestry, race, ethnicity, language, marital status, ability, length of time in Canada or distance from the urban centre?

- Are the groups of women and men most affected by this issue involved in designing and analyzing the research? If not, how will you ensure their perspectives are included (i.e. reference group, seek feedback)?

- When using gender neutral language (people, head of household, the homeless, sole support parent, immigrants) are you still distinguishing differences between women and men in that specific group?

- Will data be collected so as to make differences visible (disaggregated), for example: on the basis of sex, ethnicity, age, ability or race?

- Are you ensuring that stereotypes are not being used?

- Have you sought out sources sensitive to gender equality concerns? (i.e. local and national women’s organizations, internet searches, academics and community leaders with expertise in a given area) (See Annex C: Web-sites)

- Are the views of the full diversity of women and men who have participated in the research reflected in the findings and subsequent recommendations?

- How will you report back the findings to people involved in the research?
EXAMPLE: GENDER EQUALITY LENS ON RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GATHERING

In developing seniors programming, the Gender Equality Lens enabled staff to look at work already underway so as to make corrections for inclusion. In strengthening the analysis of demographic data to include gender, they were more prepared to consider how male and female seniors tend to experience services differently and thereby, avoid a negative impact on either gender. At the same time, it helped to systematically consider the needs of specific groups of male and female seniors (e.g., income, language, etc). By using the Lens at data analysis stage, they were better able to plan programs and services that were inclusive of the entire population.

EXAMPLE: GENDER EQUALITY LENS ON RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GATHERING

In preparing the report “Profile of Rooming House Residents”, using the Gender Equality Lens alerted the researchers that gender differences needed to be considered. Without applying the Lens, research would have focused on men as the predominant users of rooming houses, leaving invisible the specific concerns of women living in rooming houses, e.g., safety and isolation issues. Women were over-sampled in order to ensure that there would be enough data for analysis of their issues and an effective gender comparison. Follow up focus groups included women and service providers with knowledge of women’s concerns. As a result, the Housing Branch has funded two collaborative community pilot projects for case-management based, support services that consider the differing needs of women and men so as to create a positive living environment and promote independent living skills for both genders.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICE:

✓ Collected and analyzed data that was disaggregated by gender, as well as other areas of diversity.
✓ Recognized not only gender differences, but the full diversity of male and female seniors.
✓ Made adjustments on work underway, where needed, in order to ensure inclusion.
✓ Systematically applied the learning from that data collection through all the stages of program development.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICE:

✓ Challenged an assumption that the issue or project was only relevant to one gender.
✓ Took measures to ensure that data collected would consider both genders.
✓ Included participants and questions in focus groups that drew out women’s experiences.
✓ Ensured that needs of both women and men were included in pilot project.
CONSULTATIONS

Questions to Consider

- Have you included both women and men who have an interest in this issue?
- Is your consultation team representative of the groups of women and men you will be consulting? If not, how can you ensure their perspective is included (i.e. reference group, work with a community partner, seek feedback)?
- Have you reached out to specific communities/groups of women who would not otherwise have participated in the consultation?
- Have you taken steps to remove barriers to women’s full participation (i.e. childcare, transportation, safety, language, cultural traditions, accessible location and time, and using a variety of outreach mediums)?
- Have you considered using an innovative format to draw out participants during the consultation sessions?
- Have women’s organizations been consulted?
- Are the voices of women, including women in equity seeking groups, reflected in the final report?
- Have the results of the consultation influenced the initiative’s focus or design?

For more indepth information, see
Planning an effective consultation: A guide for including the full diversity of women.

SOME TIPS: ENSURING INCLUSION OF THE DIVERSITY OF WOMEN

- Go to group settings where women gather.
- Let them know how you will use the information.
- Create a safe and comfortable environment.
- Provide supports (childcare, bus tickets).
- Make it relevant to their lives; ask questions inclusive of women’s experience.
- Consult in the language or medium accessible for participants.
- Include their ideas in your final report and report back the results.
EXAMPLE: GENDER EQUALITY LENS ON CONSULTATION

When the Children and Youth Agenda Team members were preparing for consultations with children in their middle years, youth and their parents, they used the Gender Equality Lens to plan the engagement strategy. Using the lens as a reference tool, they realized it would be important to use multiple strategies to ensure inclusion of the full diversity of the population. They went to community dinners and various events that were already taking place and talked to those present. They went with youth to meet with the youth in the schools. They contacted organizations working with immigrants to ask for assistance in reaching out. This helped them to ensure that children, youth and their parents across their diversity were included in having input into the creation of the Children and Youth Agenda's Framework for promoting the healthy development of children and youth in Ottawa.

Often when we get more diversity around the table, we think it will be reflected in the decision-making, but the meeting structure, questions and discussion styles are all determined by the dominant culture(s). To ensure inclusion for all participants, care needs to be taken to facilitate the input of individuals of minority cultures.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICE:

- Considered the diversity of the population (women and men; girls and boys) and who may be excluded.
- Developed multiple strategies for reaching specific groups of children, youth and parents.
- Went to group settings where people were already meeting so as to meet them on their terms.
- Reached out to community organizations with knowledge of specific communities.
- Built upon the learning to ensure inclusion in their communication.
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Questions to Consider

• Do women and men have different perspectives on this policy issue? How will this policy improve the well-being of both women and men (girls and boys)?

• How high of a priority is this policy for women who are part of one or more equity seeking groups (persons living on low-income, Aboriginal, visible minorities, francophone, rural, youth and seniors, persons with disabilities, criminalized women, recent immigrants, lesbians, transgendered)? How will it improve their well-being?

• Are those determining the policy representative of the groups of women and men most affected by this policy? If not, how can you ensure their perspectives are included in your decision making (i.e. effective consultation, informing of results)?

• Does this policy relate to a difference or inequality between women and men (ex. family responsibilities, safety, unpaid work)? (See pg.8-9) Does it relate to a difference or inequality of women in equity seeking groups (i.e. accessibility, affordability, culturally appropriate)?

• Have you tried to develop innovative solutions to the gender and diversity issues you have identified?
EXAMPLE: GENDER EQUALITY LENS ON A POLICY

Women's organizations and shelters that form the Ottawa Committee To End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW, previously RCCEVAW) were seeing that women will often remain in a violent relationship, because they lack the money needed to leave. Working with the community, Employment and Financial Assistance (EFA) developed a policy that persons experiencing partner abuse can access funds to make it possible for them to leave. Funds can be used for such things as securing door frames, changing locks, moving out of the area, paying arrears in shelter. Women's shelters and organizations report this has been key in making it possible for women to leave their abuser. In turn, it has increased city awareness on the issues of partner assault and the difficulties women face in these situations.

It is often assumed that a given policy is gender neutral when, in reality, it has a different impact on women and men.
MISSION

EQUITY LENS PROJECT/PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Questions to Consider

• Who most needs this project/program? What are the potential barriers they face?

• Are those developing the project/program representative of the groups of women and men who will be the primary target? If not, how can you include them in your decision making (i.e. reference group, community partner, consultants hired)?

• Do the objectives of the program or initiative make assumptions about the social roles of women and men (girls and boys)? If so, could this result in unintended impacts on either women or men (girls or boys)?

• Are there strategies in place to address any differences and inequalities between women and men (girls and boys) in relation to this project or program?

• Will both women and men in equity seeking groups benefit from this project/program? If not, why?

• Are there strategies in place to address any differences and inequalities among women on this issue?

• Does the project minimize vulnerabilities as well as recognize and build on specific women’s strengths and assets? (ex: an Aboriginal woman may struggle with poverty and violence but can draw upon a rich culture)

• Can you partner with a women’s organization to draw upon their expertise? Women’s organizations face reduced funding. Can funds or cost-sharing be made available to make collaboration possible?

• Are there things in the program design that will place a greater burden on women or men assuming family care responsibilities?
EXAMPLE: GENDER EQUALITY LENS ON PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

When facilitating the development of the next three-year Homelessness Action Plan, the Housing Branch commissioned separate reports on women’s and men’s homelessness, rather than assuming the situation was the same for both.

In gathering input for the women’s plan, care was taken to ensure input from a wide range of key informants from service providers and clients. For example, client focus groups were held at nine locations including women’s drop-in centres, supportive housing, and sites where homeless women receive support specific to mental illness, AIDS/HIV, fleeing violence, or transition from prison.

The specific needs of the following sectors of women at risk were explored, namely Aboriginal, youth, young mothers, older women, recent immigrants, homeless women, women fleeing violence, women with mental health issues and/or addictions, and low income. Some of the issues specifically considered were safety at service locations, safety planning, the appropriateness of women-only vs. mixed-gender services, access to income, access to services and appropriate housing, meeting basic needs while homeless, mental health supports and aging.

To ensure that the consultants had heard and interpreted the messages correctly, they held a consultation meeting to verify the results, inviting service providers, planners and funders from all aspects of women’s homelessness services to participate. After the report was complete, an ongoing implementation committee, representative of services to the full diversity of homeless and at-risk women, was formed and staffed.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICE:

- Took into account differences and inequalities between women and men.
- Held focus groups where women gather.
- Took into account the diversity of women at risk of homelessness.
- Considered gender equality issues: safety, family responsibilities.
- Considered barriers women may experience.
- Took steps to verify findings with those who have expertise on the issue.
- Included women’s organizations and service providers in implementation.

A good practice is one that takes gender equality concerns into account at every stage of the policy, planning and service delivery process.
COMMUNICATION

Questions to Consider

• Given differences and inequalities between women and men, are specific communication strategies needed to ensure that both are reached?

• Are those designing the communication representative of the groups of women and men in your target audience? If not, how can you include them in your decision making (i.e. reference group, meaningful consultation, work with community partners)?

• Are specific strategies needed to reach women in equity seeking groups (i.e. using minority language radio programs and print press; organizations and programs that work with women in a given population)?

• Is the language and medium gender sensitive and easily understood by the target population (i.e. plain language, mother tongue, graphics, and accessible formats)?

• Are the graphics or images reflective of the diversity of women and men (girls and boys) who will utilize the service?

• Is the information communicated in a respectful, non-obtrusive manner so as to respect the dignity of those accessing a service? (ex. many parents will not request a recreation subsidy for their children, as they feel ashamed)?

• Are there women’s organizations or community groups working with specific groups of women who can help to distribute the information to women?
EXAMPLE: GENDER EQUALITY LENS ON COMMUNICATION

The Women’s Health Program of Ottawa Public Health was hearing from women they found it difficult to make the time to seek out programs and information on women’s health. Many women, especially low-income and elderly, were not able to access information on the city web-site. Women wanted something printed with an overview of information all in one place.

So the Women’s Passport to Health was created in consultation with women including francophone and anglophone women of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. Women provided input into both the content and design of the Passport through focus groups.

The passport was very successful, but it was recognized that it was not accessible for women with limited English or French literacy skills. Women in the community suggested that they create a one-pager. A poster was then created with 12 key healthy tips and distributed around the city.

Based on the success of the Women’s Passport to Health and the fact that most men tend to not access health care, a Men’s Passport to Health, Bodyworx, was developed. In practice, Bodyworx is frequently picked up by women who take it home to the men in their lives.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICE:

- Recognized specific strategies needed to reach women.
- Involved women in equity groups to identify and decide what was needed.
- Checked back with women to see if it was helpful.
- Identified a format that was accessible; then adjusted as realized something else was needed to reach a specific population of women.
- Worked with women and community organizations to distribute.
- Recognized that men were also not informed; experimented with a specific strategy for reaching them.
SERVICE DELIVERY

Questions to Consider

• What is needed to ensure the service will contribute to the well-being of both women and men (girls and boys) in the specific population you are targeting?

• Are there differences or systemic barriers that need to be addressed for women and men in equity seeking groups?

• Are service providers representative of the specific groups of women and men you serve? If not, how can you include them in your decision making (i.e. involve community partners, reference group)?

• Has front-line staff developed the competency to work sensitively and effectively with the specific populations of women you serve (i.e. sole support mothers, sex trade workers, criminalized women, francophone women, women with disabilities, Aboriginal and recent immigrant women, lesbian, transgendered, elderly, youth, or visible minority women)?

• Are there institutional practices and attitudes that block staff from demonstrating such sensitivity and competency (i.e. workload, administrative requirements)?

• What supports or accommodations need to be in place to ensure the full diversity of women can access the service, taking into consideration family responsibilities, safety, ability to pay, difficulty of requesting subsidy, age, accessibility, language, cultural attitudes and practices, sexual orientation, distance?
EXAMPLE: GENDER EQUALITY LENS ON SERVICE DELIVERY

Woman Alive: Physical Activity Program for Low Income Women

The Woman Alive project began in 1999 to provide affordable physical activity programs for women on limited incomes in the City of Ottawa. Women participating in the program are educated and motivated to make healthy lifestyle choices that will enhance their own health and the health of their family.

Barriers to participation in physical activity for women on limited incomes include: childcare, transportation, equipment needs and program costs. These barriers are reduced or removed in the Woman Alive program.

The program has spread when women have initiated a project in their community.

EXAMPLE: COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING

The 2005 funding criteria prioritized equity seeking groups including women.

• Provides services to low income families, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities and women.

An additional criteria focused on addressing systemic barriers.

• Promote conditions of equality on the basis of race, ethnicity, income, gender and ability.

An allocation committee comprised of community representatives of Advisory Committees informs the selection process. They considered which groups were missing (ex. francophone) and invited new members to achieve diverse representation.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICE:

✓ Identified what was needed to help women on limited income access recreation.

✓ Staff demonstrated sensitivity to the specific groups of women.

✓ Recognized barriers and provided supports to address them.

✓ Encouraged women to take leadership and listened to their interests.

WHAT ABOUT THIS IS A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICE:

✓ Women were included as a prioritized group, along with other equity-seeking groups.

✓ Prioritized groups that address inequalities.

✓ Used a decision making process that drew upon the expertise of diverse women and men representative of the target population.
EVALUATION

Questions to Consider

DESIGNING YOUR EVALUATION:

• Are those designing and implementing the evaluation representatives of the target groups of women and men who will participate in the evaluation? If not, how can you ensure their perspective is included?

• Are your data sources and methods inclusive of specific groups of women or girls (ex. some immigrants are more comfortable with oral communication than written)?

• As evaluators we can never be neutral. Have you taken steps to validate your findings with the community so as to minimize any biases?

• Are you able to disaggregate the indicators on the basis of gender and other equity groups (i.e. Aboriginal, recent immigrants, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, low-income, etc)?

SAMPLE EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

• Do the goals, objectives and delivery process take into account differences and inequalities between women and men; and among the diversity of women and men affected by this initiative?

• Does the project promote equal opportunities and benefits for diverse groups of women?

• Are there assumptions about gender roles and expectations that affect project achievements?

• Does staff have capacity to identify and address issues of gender and diversity?

• Are costs and benefits equitably allocated for women and men; and the diversity of people served by this initiative?

• Will achievements in gender equality be sustainable once the process has ended?

FOLLOW UP TO EVALUATION:

• If diverse groups of women have been included in the consultation phase, are you able to share the findings with those participants?
SOME TIPS: AN INCLUSIVE EVALUATION

• Review your program, policy and services to ensure you are moving toward gender equality (barriers reduced, discrimination addressed, specific needs included). (see pg. 8-12).

• Collect and analyze data so as to determine how specific groups of women and men were affected.

• In your interviews, include those who stopped using the services and potential clients who never used it.

• Complement the quantitative data with qualitative data.

• Hold interviews or focus groups in the environment where the target population is most comfortable. (eg. Aboriginal women at an Aboriginal women's centre)

• Make it easier for women to participate by using female interviewers, providing transportation, childcare and an honorarium for focus groups. In promotion materials, site the bus routes.

• Use methodologies that ask the same questions and gather comparable data for people who are literate and not, while making the experience equally comfortable for both.

• Take measures to ensure women and men with disabilities can participate.

• Interview in the language which those being interviewed are most comfortable or able to understand.
ANNEX A:
City of Ottawa’s Commitment to Gender Equality

INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY INTO STRATEGIC PLANS, 2005
In May 2005, City Council passed the following motion: “That the City of Ottawa and Community and Protective Services, as the lead department, work with the City for All Women Initiative/Initiative une ville pour toutes les femmes to ensure that the goal, of implementing practices and strategic plans that increase gender sensitivity and enhance gender equality, is realized.”

INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY INTO CORPORATE PLAN, 2005
In September 2005, City Council accepted amendments to the Corporate Plan to include the implementation of the Gender Equality Guide city wide (2007), based on the learning from the pilot in Community and Protective Services (2006).

COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES PLAN AND CORPORATE PLAN (2007-2009)
INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

“This involves giving priority to initiatives that will ensure full diversity of women and men are able to participate wholly in the economic and social life of the community. It relates to funding, programs and policy. Implementation of this plan will take into account what is needed to promote social inclusion and address existing inequalities.

This will include considering the specific needs and contributions of equity seeking groups designated in the City of Ottawa Equity and Diversity Policy (visible minorities, Aboriginal people, women, people with disabilities and GLBT community), as well as other groups whose inclusion is important to ensure quality of life for the full diversity of citizens (people living on low income, new immigrants, francophones, and people living in rural communities).”

CITY OF OTTAWA, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY, 2002
In 2002, City Council adopted the Equity and Diversity Policy which recognizes women, visible minorities, people with disabilities, GLBT and Aboriginal people as designated groups. In addition, to requiring diversity in the city workforce, the policy aims to “establish a framework that requires all departments within the City to embrace the spirit of equity and diversity in the development of their policies and programs that impact the delivery of City services, the use of City facilities, grants to external agencies and other outwardly focussed activities.”

CITY OF OTTAWA, GENDER EQUALITY RESOLUTION, 1999
In 1999, the former Regional Council of Ottawa-Carleton adopted the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government. By adopting the IULA Declaration, a municipality supports:

• Strengthening efforts to make equal the number of women and men in decision-making bodies in all policy areas.
• Integrating a gender perspective into all polices, programs and service-delivery activities.
• Looking at new ways to ensure women are represented and actively participate by formal as well as informal means in local governance.
Annex B: Terms in This Guide

**Aboriginal peoples** include Inuit, Métis and First Nations people.

**Equity seeking groups** refers to the groups designated in the City of Ottawa Equity and Diversity Policy (visible minorities, Aboriginal people, women, people with disabilities and the GLBT—gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgendered - community), as well as other groups whose inclusion is important to ensure quality of life for the full diversity of residents (people living on low income, new immigrants, francophones, and people living in rural communities, seniors and youth).

**Discrimination** – unfair treatment because of a person’s sex, race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, marital status, same sex partner status, sexual orientation, age, disability, citizenship, family status or religion. Systemic discrimination refers to unequal distribution of power reinforced by institutional practices, policies and procedures which support unfair treatment.

**Diversity** is about valuing the perspective and interests of different groups of people. It takes into account for example gender, culture, age, language, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, income, physical and mental ability, marital status, length of time in Canada and geographic location.

**Gender** refers to the set of qualities and behaviours expected from a male or female in a society; and the relationship between women and men. Gender relations change over time and across culture.

**Gender disaggregated data** are statistics and other data that are gathered and analyzed on the basis of sex.

**Gender Equality** is achieved when the full diversity of women and men (girls and boys) have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential. The City of Ottawa recognizes that simply giving women and men the same opportunities will not necessarily lead to gender equality – thus **gender equity** – being fair to women and men – may require special measures, or different treatment, to yield equality of outcomes.

**GLBT** includes Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgendered persons.

**Full diversity of women or All women**: Women are not a homogeneous group. Just as men, women live multiple, layered identities with differing amounts of power and privilege in accordance with one’s race, class, language, age, ability, cultural/ethnic background, level of education, citizenship status, and sexual orientation. For example, an older immigrant woman would encounter discrimination differently than a younger immigrant woman who is also a lesbian or sole support mother.

**Inclusion** takes place when groups, who are usually excluded, are able to enjoy equally the social and economic benefits of society. It requires that decision makers, planners and service providers be prepared to shift their way of thinking or the way they work to incorporate new perspectives.
**Annex C: Web-Sites on Women or Gender Equality Concerns**

**Centres of Excellence in Women’s Health**
Health research centres that address the myriad of social and economic factors affecting the health conditions and needs of Canadian women. [www.cewh-cesf.ca](http://www.cewh-cesf.ca)

**CRIAW, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women**
Fact Sheets and Research: Women's poverty and exclusion, violence against women, refugee and immigrant women. [www.criaw-icref.ca](http://www.criaw-icref.ca)

**Francophone Women**
Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne. Francophone women’s rights, poverty, and violence against women. [www.franco.ca/fnfc](http://www.franco.ca/fnfc)

**Métis National Council of Women**
Research and documentation on the reality of Métis women and their families. [www.metiswomen.ca](http://www.metiswomen.ca)

**Native Women’s Association**
Reports and links to resources on the reality of Aboriginal women. [www.nwac-hq.org](http://www.nwac-hq.org)

**Pauktuutit, Inuit Women of Canada**
Association representing all Inuit women in Canada. Encourages Inuit women’s participation in social, cultural and economic development. [www.pauktuutit.ca](http://www.pauktuutit.ca)

**Status of Women Canada**
The federal government agency which promotes gender equality, and the full participation of women. Provides statistic and analytical reports on women's condition in Canada. [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca)

**Womennet.ca**
A Canadian Women’s Information Centre with information and resources on issues facing the diversity of women. [www.womennet.ca/resources.php](http://www.womennet.ca/resources.php)

**WOMEN AND CITIES**

**Federation of Canadian Municipalities:** Programme on increasing women’s access to municipal decision making includes report and tool kit. [www.fcm.ca/english/policy/women.html](http://www.fcm.ca/english/policy/women.html)

**Femmes et Ville:** City of Montreal’s women’s equality program. [www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/cmsprod/femme_ville/accueil](http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/cmsprod/femme_ville/accueil)

**Women in Cities International:** A network for women changing their cities and communities. [www.femmesetvilles.org](http://www.femmesetvilles.org)

**City for All Women Initiative:** This site provides information to city staff, politicians and the community on issues of concern to the diversity of women in the City of Ottawa. [www.cawi-ivtf.org](http://www.cawi-ivtf.org)
Annex D: Sources Used in This Guide


City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) and City of Ottawa, *Planning an Effective Consultation*, Ottawa, 2006, [www.cawi-ivtf.org](http://www.cawi-ivtf.org)


Greckol, Sonya; *Gender Mainstreaming in Local Governments*, Women and Environments, Toronto, 2005. [www.twca.ca/documents.htm](http://www.twca.ca/documents.htm)


Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPC), *Socio-cultural Composition and Socio-economic Conditions* (December 2004), Hindia Mohamoud. [www.spcottawa.on.ca](http://www.spcottawa.on.ca)


We welcome your feedback on this guide: info@cawi-ivtf.org