

Gender Equality & Social Inclusion



Gender equality and social inclusion are cross-cutting issues in health, economic empowerment, agriculture, and other sectors. Across its programming, Abt Associates seeks to **rigorously and consultatively identify gender and other social determinants of well-being within each local context**, integrating them into project design to address the impact of activities on all members of society. The goal is to advance gender equality, female empowerment, and social inclusion while promoting health and economic well-being for all.

A Multidimensional Approach to Equity

The concept of gender encompasses the accepted economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being identified in the broader society as a girl, a boy, a woman, a man, or as a gender non-conforming individual and the expectations of each of these as defined at the individual, family, community, and organizational levels. Gender also intersects with other forms of social exclusion, such as poverty, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, so that vulnerability or marginalization is concentrated for particular segments of the population. As such, a complex and nuanced approach that considers disadvantaged populations with multiple vulnerabilities (e.g., poverty and gender identification) is a best practice that forms the basis for Abt's gender work.

Equity and empowerment are often thought of in relation to interventions that benefit females alone. While it is true that taking a gender-equity perspective often necessitates interventions targeted at girls and women to “level the playing field,” lasting, positive results are not achievable if boys and men are left out of the equation. Males also face specific vulnerabilities related to their gender, such as norms that encourage physical risk-taking and that discourage or limit health-seeking behavior. Because of this, Abt seeks to address the integrated needs of all to promote equitable and sustainable impact.



Successful Programs

Strengthening Women-led Health Institutions

The National Association of Yemeni Midwives, supported by USAID/Yemen through Abt Associates' PHR*plus* and Health Systems 20/20 projects, has become a truly representative organization. Its role is to support the midwife profession and enable midwives to improve delivery of reproductive health and family planning services to reduce maternal and child mortality and morbidity. To better understand the needs of its members, the association surveyed midwives in five governorates and linked survey data to existing health sector geographic information system (GIS) tools and applications (see www.moh.gov.ye). The association is using this information to analyze gaps in reproductive health and family planning services to better target their assistance. Since its establishment, the association has received funding from USAID, EU, GTZ, UNFPA and others to provide midwife training in home-based safe delivery and care of the newborn as well as health awareness sessions for women.

PMI AIRS: Empowering Women as Leaders in Malaria Prevention

The PMI Africa Indoor Residual Spraying Project (AIRS) protects millions of people in Africa from malaria. The project's vector control work disproportionately benefits pregnant women and children, as they are most vulnerable to malaria. In addition, the project promotes gender equality across all 18 countries where the project operates through careful attention to gender and empowerment issues overseen

by a gender focal point in each country. To date, the project has trained over 21,000 women to support indoor residual spraying. The project is working with the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) in each country to recruit and hire more women, ensuring a sustainable approach to gender-integrated IRS after the project ends. The project's operational sites are carefully designed to accommodate both male and female employees, including separate, private bathrooms and changing areas for men and women and the distribution of menstrual hygiene products in some countries. The project's approaches have led to increased hiring of women and a dramatic increase in the number of women in supervisory roles, all while meeting or exceeding the project's IRS targets.

Australia Timor-Leste Partnership for Development

DFAT's Australia Timor-Leste Partnership for Development represents Australia's long-term version for enhancing human development in Timor-Leste. The program brings together diverse activities in health, education, water, nutrition, gender equality, and social protection into a single facility to maximize program effectiveness, relevance, and performance. Project investments in gender are focused on strengthening services for women and girls, promoting women's leadership, ending violence against women and girls, and preventing early marriage and teenage pregnancy which will support keeping girls in school. Key activities include training on 'Gender Values and Principles' for health partners and the roll out of the Gender Dialogue Manual for Government and community grow ups' focusing on ensuring improved gender focus in water and sanitation planning.

West Africa Trade and Investment Hub

Under the USAID-funded West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, Abt strategically supported female entrepreneurs in the region's traditionally male-dominated sectors. One-third of the businesses the Trade Hub supported were women-owned, and the project helped them attract a total of \$11.6 million in investment. Guided by a comprehensive gender analysis at the project's start, the Trade Hub's technical trainings helped women work through loan applications and negotiate terms and conditions with local banks. The project's #EntrepreneuriElle social media campaign spotlighted successful West African businesswomen in apparel, shea butter, livestock and grains processing. Among them was KAD Manufacturing's Linda Ampah, who with Trade Hub assistance exhibited at Sourcing at MAGIC, the world's largest apparel trade show, leading to several test orders, 50 new contracts, and thousands of dollars in new shipments.

Investing in Women

The Investing in Women program is an initiative of the Australian government to improve women's economic participation, build markets for women, and influence the private and public sector to promote women's economic empowerment in the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Indonesia. The program accomplishes this through establishing and supporting business coalitions that promote gender equality in the workplace. The program also works with impact investors to increase investment in women's small and medium businesses, partners with governments on economic regulatory reform with a gender lens, and advocates for women's economic empowerment.



U.S. President's Malaria Initiative

Contact

For more information on Abt Associates and our work in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, contact:

Abigail Donner, MSc

Associate/Scientist

+1 617.520.2655

Abigail_Donner@abtassoc.com

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