

Why do we need Gender-Responsive Event Management (GREM) in IKI Projects?

The IKI aims at implementing a gender-responsive approach to project planning and implementation to prevent gender-based discrimination and achieve gender justice. At the core of many IKI projects is the hosting of events to enable knowledge exchange, conduct trainings or to support policy makers in the field of climate action, adaptation to climate change and biodiversity conservation. Considering that those topics are not gender neutral, the aim of gender-responsive event management is to achieve not only numerical gender parity an inclusive environment for transformational exchange that is just and sustainable. This starts by connecting the event topic to gender, including more women and non-conforming gender identities as speakers, to planning an inclusive event that considers different needs of participants. This checklist offers IKI projects tested practical examples and a suggested step-by-step approach to gender-responsive event management.

Phase 1: Planning of the event

Topics and Content

Considering gender justice as a cross-cutting, side or main topic in an event is a great way to raise awareness on the issue. For many people working in the climate and biodiversity sector, the connection to gender justice is not self-explanatory. Addressing the topic during an event is a possibility to change that, as well as to drive discussions on the nexus of climate/biodiversity and gender forward.

Checklist:

Become aware of the linkages between the topic of your event and gender justice.
Consider aspects like women's representation in the sector (*who decides?*), sex-disaggregated data (*who is considered?*), effects on women and minorities (*who benefits?*).

In case you are not organizing the event yourself, consider if and how you are able shape it towards including a gender justice perspective. Do you need the buy-in of partners?

Consider discussing content with your political or event partner(s) early on to gain a common understanding regarding the integration of gender justice issues.

Define a specific goal you want to achieve with the event with regard to gender justice.


Have you determined the level to which you want to address gender during your event (e.g. gender as cross-cutting or key topic)?

Does the content of your event reflect the realities of diversity by considering different aspects of people's identities (race, ability, age, socio-economical background etc.), for example in illustrations, examples and pictures? Gender is an important topic and should always be reflected in an intersectional way.

Use gender-inclusive language and visuals from the start and avoid stereotypes in publications, announcements, speeches or ice-breakers. How to use gender-inclusive language differs from language to language. For English, you can find an inspiration [here](#).

Consider using methods and learning approaches that are inclusive, participatory and gender transformative.

Gender-transformative learning:

Includes trainings and discussions on stereotypical views and gender norms to provide learners with alternative case studies and role perceptions 

Intersectionality:

US lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term intersectionality. It describes a “cross-roads” or intersection model representing multiple forms of discrimination. The individual standing in the middle of the intersection can simultaneously be confronted with many types of discrimination from different directions. For example, a person’s ethnicity, class and gender may lead to them experiencing overlapping discriminatory practices. Alongside these are countless other areas of injustice. The intersectionality concept is unique in that it does not simply produce a list of individual forms of oppression, but also calls for an analysis of how they interact and overlap. (*IKI Gender Strategy 2021*)



Logistics and Processes

Considering an intersectional gender perspective while organising the logistics of your event can have a significant impact on people’s ability to attend it. Considering participants needs while planning can increase the diversity among participants and in turn enrich the perspectives on your events topic. Sometimes it is simple measures that can make people feel more comfortable, e.g. to exchange the male restroom sign with “bathroom with urinal” and the women’s restroom sign with “bathroom without urinal”.

Checklist:

When choosing a venue consider accessibility, safety and the connection to public transport. If lacking, consider a pick-up service.

Include a query about specific needs and time constraints in your event invitation.

Check whether the venue is equipped to accommodate specific needs of participants (e.g. nursing rooms, prayer room, all-gender washrooms, childcare services, wheelchair accessibility, lighting etc.).

Check whether you have financial resources to provide certain services yourself (e.g. contact a sign language interpretation, designate certain rooms to a certain purpose and equip them accordingly).

Consider offering a schedule that works around care work obligations (e.g. start with a networking lunch instead of dinner, avoid ending too late); if it fits the event concept consider offering digital or other forms of participation (e.g. through pre-recorded sessions that can be watched in different time zones and match different work-schedules).

When deciding on methods, keep in mind to create a setting that invites everyone to actively participate (e.g., working in smaller break-out-groups, using online tools to include introverts).

Consider including a declaration on respectfulness or an anti-harassment policy in your event invitation and materials and placing a shorter printed version visibly at you event location. Such an anti-harassment policy could include: an indication on behaviour that is not tolerated in your event, how and where people can report, in case they feel uncomfortable, important phone numbers (e.g. hotel, local police service, local taxi service, contact person in the organizers team) and how you are planning to enforce the policy. You find an example from the Global NDC Conference 2019 [here](#).

Depending on the size and the approach of your event, consider creating a gender taskforce or designating gender focal points that can be approached for any issue related to gender discrimination, harassment or violence. Ideally, this is a mixed group representing different perspectives. Inform participants accordingly.

Offer gender registration to monitor the gender ratio of your event (if possible, offer non-binary categories and a field for participants to include further terms to identify themselves or opt out). Gender registration should always be voluntary.

Consider sustainability while planning your event (*Do your participants really need that gimmick? Do you need to print all the material, or could you use QR-Codes?*). A healthy planet benefits all genders.

Online or in person?

Online and in-person events often follow different dynamics. Here are some potentials and challenges to consider with regard to gender justice and diversity:

- Could an online or hybrid event increase equal participation by avoiding travel time or other time constraints, e.g. for persons that provide care work?
- Are you aware that different groups have limited internet or computer access?
- Who checks contributions for respectful content?
- Are the conference and web-tools you are using sensitive to personal data and information?
- Can participants include their personal pronouns in their nametags during the call?
- How important is anonymity online? Is it an option given to include avatars or exclude video functions?
- Could collaborative tools such as surveys, voting or chat functions be implemented? Could they increase inclusiveness?



Speakers and Participants

Gender representation matters. People's needs and interests are as diverging as their individual experiences. Including the voices of people who are often underrepresented (e.g. African and indigenous women) is a form of empowerment and can bring often overlooked knowledge and solutions to climate and biodiversity problems. Furthermore, other people who see themselves reflected can be encouraged to go into a similar professional direction.

Checklist:

Consider the gender ratio among the participants and speakers, aim for gender parity and analyse how it might affect your event (in terms of the events atmosphere, the motivation to participate).

If possible, choose a gender-sensitive chair/moderator/facilitator or provide guidance to them and the panellists on how to identify and avoid (gender) stereotyping.

Brief speakers and facilitators/trainers on guidelines for GREM and encourage them to include them in their training or facilitation – for example when it comes to the use of gender-inclusive language or avoiding stereotypical examples etc.

Try not to reinforce stereotypes (e.g., a male facilitator „runs the show” with a woman assisting with the catering in the background).

Have you considered nominating or seeking ambassadors for the event to advocate for the gender topic? Ambassadors could function as “gender voices” to bring the topic of gender in every session or discussion to the table and make the respective links.

Phase 2: Implementation

Gender mainstreaming in your event mainly happens in the preparation phase, during the conceptualization of the workshop or conference. However, there are some aspects that are still relevant during the implementation that should not be forgotten!

Checklist:

Make sure that everyone who is involved in the implementation of the event knows about your gender-responsive concept and how to “make use” of it in their respective roles.

Make the declaration on respectfulness or the anti-harassment policy available to participants before the event starts and/or ask the facilitator to introduce it together with the ombudsperson.

If your event covers several days, make gender aspects part of your daily debriefing sessions (What is going well? Do we need to change something?).

Consider gender-based needs when arranging rooms and seats (e.g., mixing or separating by gender or other factors, depending on the context) or off-site activities.

If possible, provide a variety of participatory means to encourage all participants to engage (e.g., include online tools or ensure equal representation of gender when collecting verbal statements).

Phase 3: Follow-up

Considering gender during the follow-up phase of the event is essential for the learning-process. Only by evaluating the implementation of your gender-responsive event management, will you know if it made a difference and where you can improve.

Checklist:

Include gender aspects in the analysis and report of the event: who participated, which roles did participants take, if you identify imbalances, how can you explain and possibly overcome them in future?

Consider including different voices in the report to display the variety of perspectives.

Collect feedback and possible recommendations on how gender-responsive the event has been perceived, by including it in the general feedback form of the event (e.g., *Were all your needs met during the event? Did you feel comfortable to participate? If not, why?*).

Share your success and learnings: Highlight the importance of gender-responsive event management by including your learnings and success in an event report or follow up.

Consider being transparent about your failures: If you realize during the evaluation that something went wrong regarding gender-responsiveness consider apologizing openly to participants or including your learnings within the event report to prevent others making the same mistake.