



Fund for Innovation
and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation
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FIT Gender Equality and Testing Business Case



Gender Equality and Testing

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) aims to contribute to advancing gender equality in the Global South by supporting the testing of innovative solutions that seek to empower women, girls, and vulnerable communities. To do this, it is important that small and medium organizations (SMOs) ensure gender is taken into account throughout the design and testing of innovative solutions.¹

The first step is to develop a gender sensitive testing framework (and theory of change), which will help to define the outcomes of the innovative solution. For FIT, a testing framework is a set of guidelines that are used to design, execute, and report on innovation testing. Importantly, a gender sensitive testing framework implies that all components of the framework take into account the different roles and needs of women and men, the different constraints they face, and strive to foster equal participation and contribution across the testing process.

With this in mind, this document is intended to explore the business case for gender equality and testing for SMOs. This business case focuses on the rationale for being gender responsive or transformative during the testing of an innovative solution. Firstly, this business case will discuss the importance of gender equality for the testing environment. Secondly, it explores a case study example.

¹ Note: To integrate gender equality into testing, FIT requires findings from a Rapid Gender Scan (RGS) at the proposal submission step, at a minimum. However, it is recommended that SMOs conduct an In-Depth Gender Scan (IGS) prior to submitting a proposal to FIT, where feasible. An IGS helps to ensure that the innovative solution and its testing framework is gender sensitive (or responsive/transformative). More information about how to conduct a RGS and/or IGS can be found in FIT's Rapid Gender Scan and FIT's Gender Equality Strategy resources, respectively.



The Importance of Gender Equality

Gender equality is important for many reasons. At the center of equality, it is vital for the realization of human rights.² Research also shows that gender equality is intrinsically linked to sustainable development, social progress, and long-term economic growth.³ Unpinning these reasons is the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals⁴ (SDGs), which are an urgent call to action for countries to tackle issues spanning poverty, inequality, health, education, and climate change, for instance. Specifically, SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls globally.⁵

The importance of gender equality for testing

Related to the testing of innovative solutions, there are several reasons why gender equality is important. Consequently, it is critical that a SMO's testing framework takes into account the following:

1. The **existing differences** between the roles of women and men and consequently, those differences may require different testing approaches.
2. The fact that **innovative solutions can impact women and men (and all genders or vulnerable populations) differently** and so, testing of these solutions can be harmful to some groups or even reinforce gender inequalities in the testing location.
3. The influence of gender includes **varying power dynamics** and gender relations can affect testing results positively or negatively, thus work must be done beforehand to understand the stereotypes and gender-based constraints that the target population faces.
4. **Other identify factors** (such as ethnicity, age, and disability, for instance) can also play an important role in the success of failure of innovative solution testing.

The importance of gender equality for testing

Integrating gender into an innovative solution involves the development of a gender sensitive testing framework (and theory of change). The primary expected benefit is a more equitable innovative solution with improved social and economic impacts. Additional benefits include:

1. **Improved effectiveness** of the innovative solution because it takes into account the needs of women, men, girls, boys, and all genders and the testing framework will consider relevant gender-based constraints.

2 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2020). [Frequently asked questions about gender equality.](#)

3 UNFPA. (2020). [Frequently asked questions about gender equality.](#)

4 United Nations. (n.d.). [Sustainable Development Goals.](#)

5 UN Women. (2016). [SDG #5: Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.](#)

2. An improved ability to develop a **gender sensitive testing framework** that ensures the needs, priorities and interests of women and girls, men and boys are taking into account at all stages.
3. A gender responsive (or gender transformative) innovative solutions will have **greater sustainability** due to improved gender outcomes.
4. **Equal participation and contribution** from women, men, girls, boys, and all genders across the testing process including design, implementation, and evaluation.
5. The **capacity to develop genuine opportunities** that advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Potential risks

On the other hand, there are many potential risks if gender is not integrated appropriately into the testing framework. The risks include:

1. Being an **ineffective innovative solution** that is gender blind⁶ because if you do not consciously aim to integrate gender, you risk not transforming unequal gender relations or reinforcing existing inequalities.
2. **Struggling to advance gender equality** and the empowerment of women and girls in a meaningful way.
3. Having an **ineffectual innovative solution testing** and potential for failure of the testing, which results in the failure of solution testing and/or the testing framework.
4. **Fostering unequal access** to the innovative solution's products and services.
5. Developing an **innovative solution that is unresponsive** to women's or other vulnerable population's needs.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to test an innovative solution that advanced gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, without considering the influence of gender equality in both the design and testing of the innovative solution and its testing framework.

⁶ As defined by the [European Institute for Gender Equality](#), gender blind includes a “failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of women/girls and men/boys are ascribed to, or imposed upon, them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts. Gender-blind projects, programmes, policies and attitudes do not take into account these different roles and diverse needs. They therefore maintain status quo and will not help transform the unequal structure of gender relations.”



A Case Study: Incorporating a Gender Approach

Embrace International Foundation

The overall aim of the 12-month pilot project is to test a self-directed E-Learning platform to improve learning outcomes for rural Ugandan children, especially girls and children living with disabilities. Self-directed E-Learning was introduced to grade five and six students in order to move towards bridging the education inequality gap, especially for girls and children living with disabilities.

General approach:

- Conducted a gender analysis to inform the solution and the testing framework.
- Collected gender sensitive baseline data.
- Mainstreamed gender equality across all interventions.
- Utilized a gender equality advisor to ensure gender integration.



Gender equality outcomes for girls and those living with disabilities:

- Increased safe, equitable access to inclusive, gender sensitive, quality, educational opportunities through self-directed e-learning.
- Improved quality of inclusive education for primary students, through the use of innovative, technology-facilitated, self-directed e-learning.

Gender sensitive testing measures:

- A minimum of 50% female field researchers and education assistants.
- Discussions on the importance of education for both boys and girls with parents and community members.
- Ensure that girls and children with disabilities can input, participate and contribute to testing activities.
- Provided gender equality capacity building for partners, staff and teachers.
- Ensuring E-Learning Labs are a safe space for girls and children with disabilities to take advantage of learning opportunities.

Gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation measures:

- Disaggregated all data by gender, age and type of disability.
- Utilized gender equality indicators such as self-esteem and girl's perception about quality of the e-learning approach and of peers' attitudes toward female peers and children with disabilities.
- Incorporated focus group discussions that addressed gender barriers such as access to school, effective learning and pursuing education beyond primary school.

Incorporating gender benefits:

- Created a safe environment where everyone can participate and contribute to the testing design and implementation.
- Measured clear progress towards gender outcomes through gender sensitive data collation such as:
 - Increased mutual respect between boys, girls and children with disabilities.
 - Increased knowledge and understanding of gender equality in the local community, and
 - Equitable access of e-learning tablets for all students.



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