

Creating an Intersectional Gender Architecture

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Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw affirms that intersectional identities such as race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics need to be considered to understand power patterns such as racism and sexism. This entails understanding that, for instance, the lived experiences of an indigenous woman living in rural Bolivia will be substantially different from those of a white woman living in urban Scotland.

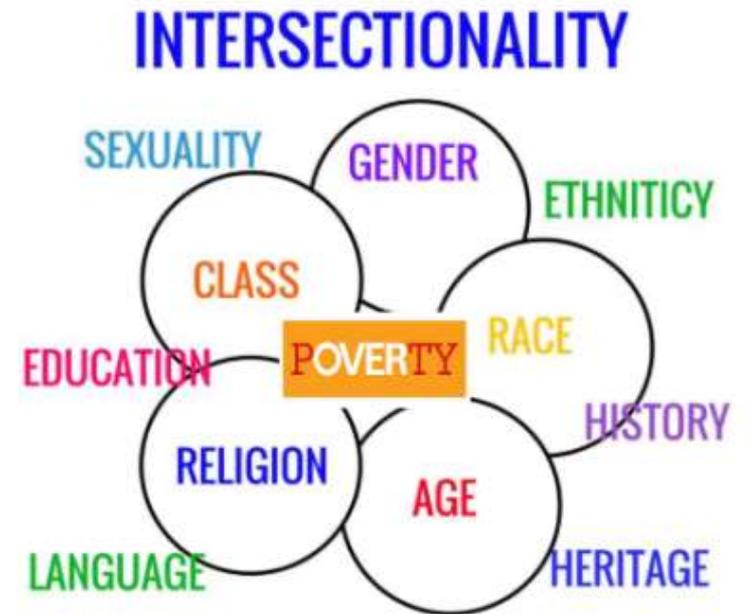


We often find that **certain groups are often further left (or rather kept) behind, notably, but not exclusively, women and ethnic or religious minorities**. This means that they often are 'racing against the clock' to catch up with the rest.



Systematically Intersectional

What an intersectional gender architecture would look in practice? It means we need to challenge our assumptions and untangle definitions of vulnerability to **be aware of language and labels which stigmatise and disempower**. It also means we must disaggregate data - using a least a minimum threshold such as sex, age and disability - in a way to flesh out the different levels of vulnerability experienced by individuals and communities.



"overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination."

Intersectional Gender Architecture

- Analyses how inequality generates/sustains poverty and vice versa
- Recognises poverty as multidimensional (i.e. freedom from want)
- Applies a people-centred human rights approach
- **It uses gender as an entry point**
- Understands how the different levels of vulnerability compound marginalisation
- Uses transformative political economy analyses as a cornerstone
- Proactively challenges inequality through affirmative action and targeted programmes, indicators, social policy and social protection



What does it mean to people?



Ex. [Wealthy individuals demand more taxes](#) to fund COVID-19 recovery

- **Be aware of your own privileges** and, to the extent possible, use them to challenge the *status quo*
- Whenever you can, **give away power** (or '[pass on the mic](#)'), and help others, in particular women of colour, reach *unlikely* power positions
- **Denounce abuse and discrimination** and support whistleblowers
- Think how you are personally contributing to transformative change and make sure to have an **active engagement in tackling oppression**

What does it mean to the Private Sector?



Ex. Business roundtable *Purpose of a Corporation* statement urging corporates to move from shareholder to stakeholder model

- Looking at the **root causes of inequalities** such as neoliberalism, colonialism and patriarchy.
- Actively promoting and **strengthening the role of the State** and State-led institutions such as the UN which is fundamental in addressing inequalities and providing social protection.
- **Funding initiatives** that analyse and challenge intersecting inequalities such as those supporting the disaggregation of data.
- **‘Do No Harm’** by preventing practices and/or actively restraining itself from engaging with practices that take away essential resources from those most marginalised. This means not contributing to issues such as climate change, tax avoidance and illicit financial flows.

What it means to development?

- Sustaining #BlackLivesMatter



- Politicising #MeToo



- Decolonising development by: (i) addressing the **north-south divide**; (ii) enhancing **intersectional representation** in boards, senior management positions and staff recruitment; (iii) adopting **anti-racist policy and training**; (iv) creating a robust **accountability** system to guarantee policy is implemented; and (v) **systematically analyse the root causes** of poverty and inequality from an intersectional lens.

Ex. [Statement](#) issued by the Women of Colour Forum of the UK Gender and Development Network

What does it mean to governments?

- Decolonise public policy & praxis:
 - Analyse how (neo)colonialism, patriarchy and neoliberalism affect outcomes at national and sub-national level
 - Research blueprints that appropriately tackle inequality
 - Create roadmaps with clear short/medium/long term deliverables, deadlines and responsibilities
 - Lead in an inclusive way and make sure women, in particular, women of colour, are in the 'driving seat' of these initiatives
 - Champion intersectionality sub-nationally, nationally and overseas



Ex. [Student quota system](#) created for Afro descendants and pupils attending government funded schools under the Lula government in Brazil

Good (but Incomplete) Practices

- New Zealand under Ardern administration (anti-discrimination law)
- Bolivia under the first half of the Morales administration (decolonising agenda and cosmovision)
- Brazil under the Lula administration (affirmative action and quota system)

What does it mean to Scotland?

- Celebrating considerable achievements – having a female First Minister, a Cabinet that is 50% women and purposeful councils such as [NACWG](#) and [EHRC](#).
- Be vigilant of *macho* culture, racism/xenophobia and backlashes against gender equality and women's rights
- Focus on what is yet to be achieved as a way to reach a fully diverse and inclusive society and systems



Ex. The progress amongst people of colours is too slow – many are still being left behind. It is important to create affirmative action to *reach the furthest behind first* (Intersectional wheel from Simpson, 2009).

What is already in place?

- Policy coherence efforts focusing on intersectionality and beyond
- NACWG policy coherence and systems mapping analysis oriented advice given to the First Minister on gender inequality
- Use of systems theory and thinking to challenge multiple discriminations
- Strong and vibrant feminist civil society organisations
- EHRC with youth participation and interaction with civil society
- National Performance Framework (NPF) – measures progress against National Outcomes such as those focused on SDGs 5 & 10
- Positive trends in climate justice / COP26 (ex. Gender Action Plan)
- Clear support for International Human Rights Law and frameworks
- Equally Safe National Strategy to prevent and eradicate VAWG
- Equality Unit upgraded to a Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Directorate
- The Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010

What is not in place yet?

- **GESI integration** (instead of gender-only mainstreaming)
- A clear decision on inclusion **entry point** (ex. Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People)
- **Explicit recognition** that gender-only structures and policies are not enough to tackle intersectional inequalities
- **Coherent approach** to gender moving away from binary women/men
- **Non-prescriptive** list of social markers (ex. Equality Act 2010)
- **Coherent direction** of travel on GESI/intersectionality

Assessing the system in Scotland

- Fraternity and solidarity needs to be improved (ex. access to social protection services)
- Must think globally and act locally (i.e. vertical alignment)
- Fully embed and implement a policy coherent approach (i.e. horizontal alignment)
- Need to practice what is being preached (concrete roadmap with indicators, responsibilities and accountability measures)
- Improve new and existing tools to develop, scrutinise and evaluate legislation, policy and *praxis*
- Transparent learning and adaptive programmes that are localised and context-driven
- Remove the issue of intersectional gender equality from a women-only silo
- Address lack of services and barriers to access for BME, disabled and lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women
- Give voice and power to women of colour and other ethnic minorities

Measuring and reporting

- Review all NPF indicators from an intersectional gender lens
- Combine quantitative and qualitative methods
- Recognise non-mainstream knowledge
- Ensure gender experts are aiding and/or collecting disaggregated data to monitor progress
- Systematise learning and adapt accordingly
- Hold open, democratic and honest conversations about progress

Box 2: Case study – beyond gender to age and disability inclusion, Christian Aid

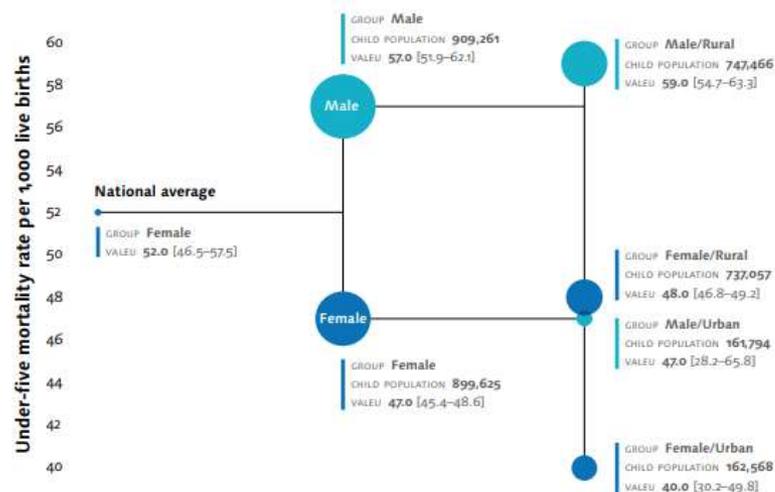
Christian Aid's inclusion advisers have introduced age and disability inclusion strategically, using an intersectional approach and building on the organisation's primary work on gender. Initially, there was some resistance, particularly from gender focal staff. Questions included: 'Why do you want to water down our gender work? Is it strategic to include age and disability if we don't have enough capacity? We are not specialists... Historically, we haven't invested in these issues even though

there have been a few projects with a disability focus.' The advisers responded by emphasising that the aim was not for Christian Aid to become experts on a wide range of identities, but rather that the agency's gender work would be strengthened using an intersectional approach to development and humanitarian work. Since then, training and webinars by inclusion advisers have taken a 'gender plus' approach, by including age and disability.

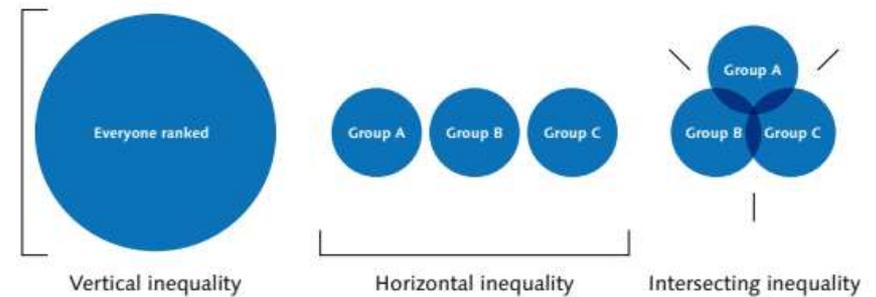
Source: ADCAP (2018a).

Criteria and assessment frameworks

Figure 3: Child mortality rate in Uganda disaggregated by gender and location



Source: Save the Children (2018).

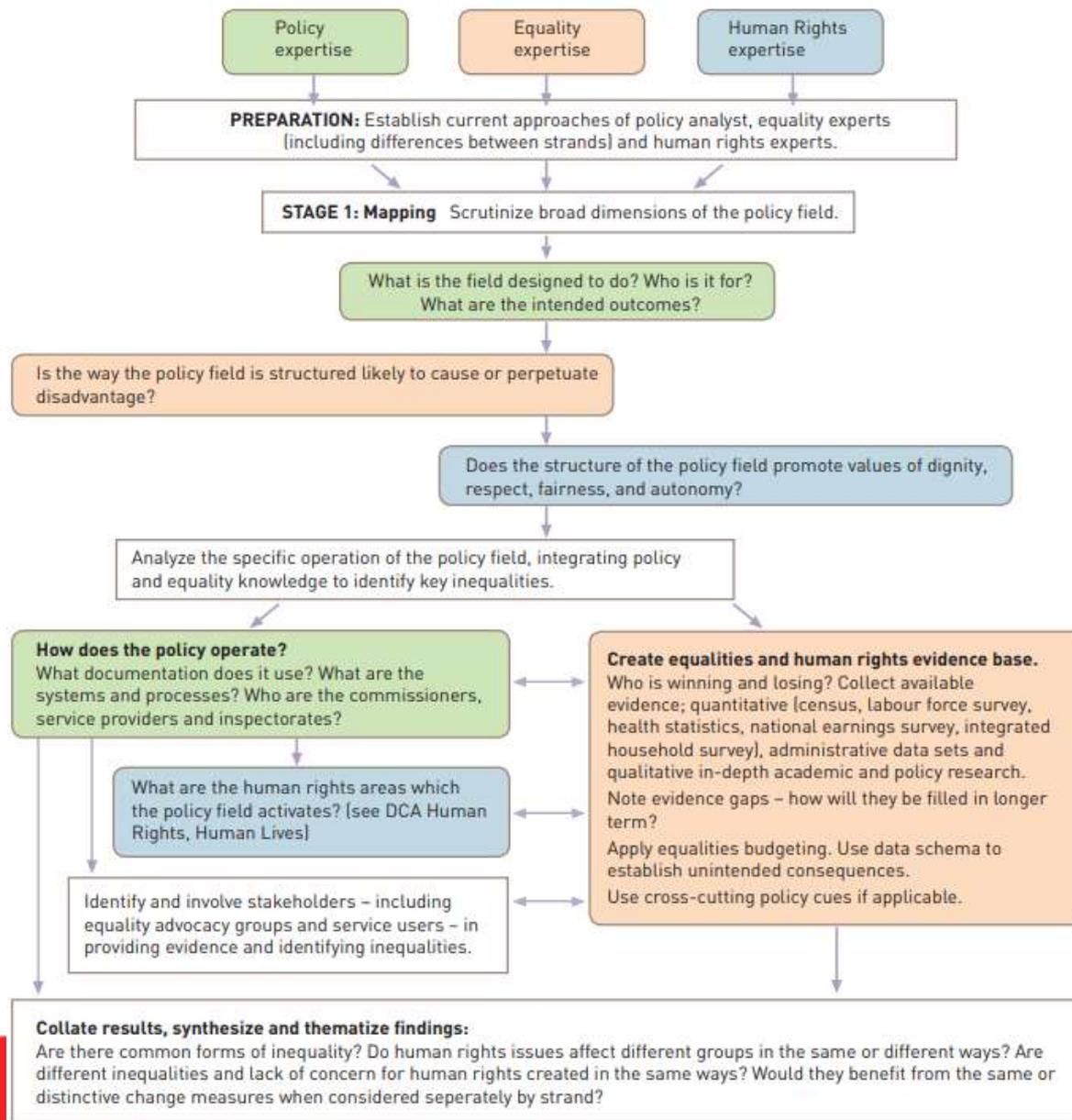


Source: Lenhardt and Samman (2015).

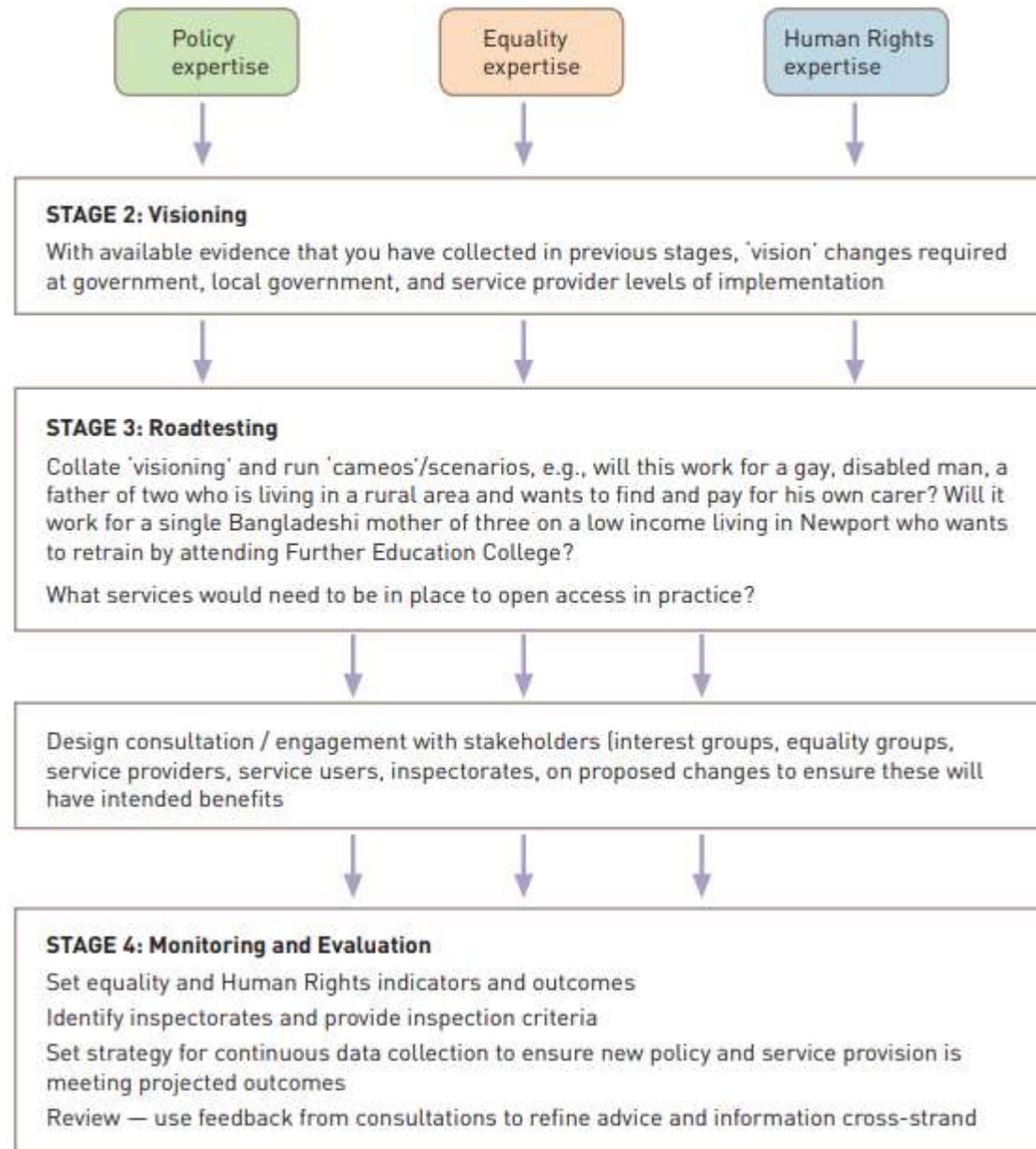
Figure 1. The Multi-Strand Model

Source: Parken & Young, 2007. Used with permission

PREPARATION AND STAGE 1



STAGES 2, 3, and 4



High Level Provocations

- Reflect on **colonial past** and ensure in-depth colonial history is part of curricula and training for public officials
- Create **quotas** for people of colour in public administration and education
- Promote **quality leadership**
- Address inequality and **correlated issues** such as VAWG from an intersectional lens
- Ensure **holistic action** by, for instance, ensuring intersectional approach to the gender pay gap and COVID-19 recovery
- Substantially **increase resources** available to assist with intersectional mainstreaming/integration



Forget the *magic bullet!* Tackling intersectional injustice takes effort, political will and time, and, most importantly, requires context-specific research, analysis and action.

Specific Provocations

1. Build knowledge, transform mindsets and **shift social norms**
2. Incorporate analysis of gender, identity-based inequalities and power and conflict sensitivity at all points of development **programme cycles**
3. Promote inclusion and participation of marginalised women, and **address root causes** of their vulnerability in development, humanitarian and peace building efforts
4. Develop/Review **national plans, policies and legislation** to better address intersecting issues faced by women and marginalised groups including a review of government bodies
5. Gather **disaggregated data** to make visible context-specific axes of inequality related to gender, identity and power
6. Collaborate, **share expertise** and promote multi-sectoral approaches
7. Promote **civil society** participation to ensure SDGs are delivered for all
8. Invest in **leadership and capacity building** for **human rights** claiming
9. Promote measures to **prevent and address** violence against marginalised women and girls
10. Encourage a **transformative agenda** in the private sector

Examples re. Ethnic and Racial Discrimination

- A re-prioritisation of spending on basic services to give higher priority to welfare in areas where ethnic groups live.
- Urgent measures to address the unacceptably high levels of chronic malnutrition among children from ethnic groups.
- Investment in the disaggregated data required to track progress on the SDGs and development of national ‘leave no one behind’ action plans, including the setting of ‘stepping stone’ equity targets.
- Long-term, publicly funded initiatives to encourage attitudinal and behavioural change in relation to the social norms that reinforce racial discrimination.
- Establishment of National Standards for Policymakers

The bottom line is that we must all strive for a more inclusive world where identity – gender, ethnicity, caste, religion, class, sexual orientation, disability, age and other social markers – is no longer a barrier to equal treatment.



Questions and/or Comments?



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