



Gender Management Systems An introductory framework

Enhancing Nigeria's Response to
HIV and AIDS Programme (ENR)





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Background

The HIV & AIDS epidemic is now in its fourth decade, having emerged in the 1980s. Women's and men's differential vulnerability, the impact of the epidemic, and levels of access to treatment have been demonstrated by available statistics. The most recent Joint United Nations Programme on HIV & AIDS (UNAIDS) report names HIV as the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age globally; those aged 15-24 face infection rates that are double those of males of the same age. According to the report, an estimated 1.2 million women and girls in Africa were newly infected with HIV in 2011.¹

Gender inequality is one of the key driving forces of the epidemic. In addition to key drivers like socio-cultural, religious, economic, political, and environmental factors, gender norms and values often result in behaviours that put girls/women and boys/men at risk of HIV infection. Gender norms related to masculinity within patriarchal structures can encourage men to have multiple sexual partners, putting them at high risk of infection.

In many cultures in Africa, constructs of masculinity can also encourage older men to have sexual relations with much younger women. This contributes to higher infection rates among young women (15-24 years) than among young men. Violence (physical, sexual, and emotional),

experienced by 10-60% of women (aged 15-49 years) worldwide, increases their vulnerability to HIV. Societal constructs of masculinity and femininity impact the ability of different sub-groups of girls/women and boys/men to access prevention, care, treatment, and support services.²

Nigeria's political commitment to gender mainstreaming in the national HIV & AIDS response is expressed in several documents, including the National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV & AIDS (2010-2015), the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS, and the National HIV & AIDS Policy. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) reports show that gender mainstreaming in all components of the national response is yet to match the commitments made in the different documents. A unique feature of NSF II is its recognition of the need to establish Gender Management Systems (GMSs) as part of the institutional architecture for the national response.

This publication was commissioned by the Enhancing Nigeria's Response to HIV/AIDS (ENR) Programme, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). It seeks to clarify the concept of GMSs and their rationale, and provides concrete guidelines for their institution and operationalisation.

What is a GMS?

A GMS is an integrated web of structures, mechanisms, and procedures put in place within a given institutional framework for the purpose of guiding, managing, and monitoring the process of gender integration into mainstream culture, policies, and programmes in order to bring about gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development.³

¹ UNAIDS, 2012, <http://www.starafrica.com/en/news/detail-news/view/unaid-report-shows-critical-gaps-in-wor-243581.html>

² Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG), 2004, How to Integrate Gender into HIV/AIDS Programme: Using Lessons Learned from USAID and Partner Organisations, Gender and HIV/AIDS Task Force, IGWG, United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

³ Matlin, S., 2011, Gender Management Systems in the Health Sector, Human Resource Development Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

Why Do We Need to Establish GMSs in the National HIV and AIDS Response?

Mainstreaming gender in HIV/AIDS plans and programmes promotes the overall achievement of results. A UNAIDS study reveals that HIV & AIDS programmes that address gender equality as a central goal maximise overall effectiveness.⁴ However, sustaining the gains of gender-sensitive programmes requires an overhaul of the systemic inequalities that engender the vicious cycle. GMSs offer a holistic and systemic approach to changing the course of the epidemic sustainably,

through transformation of gender relations, alterations in systems and institutions, equitable distribution of resources, and social justice. Experience has shown that piecemeal solutions to gender inequality are not sufficient. The establishment of GMSs seeks to place gender on the agenda at all levels, targeting gender-based discrimination and injustice on all fronts simultaneously.⁵

Components of a GMS

A typical GMS has four key components: the enabling environment, GMS structures, GMS mechanisms, and GMS processes. The four key components and their individual elements are represented in the figure below.

The enabling environment - A gender-sensitive national HIV & AIDS response does not happen in a vacuum. The contexts within which well-designed programmes are implemented are as important as the programmes themselves. Societal-level factors determine the extent to which women and men can access benefits even if they seem available to everyone. Factors that contribute to providing an enabling environment include:

- Political will and commitment to gender equality and equity at the highest levels, as expressed in national and state-level documents, including the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the National Gender Policy, State Gender Policies, and sectoral policies including all policies of critical sectors such as agriculture, health, education, etc.
- Commitment to international and regional gender equality instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and

People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and a host of others; and

- The presence of a critical mass of women in decision-making positions, including elective and appointive posts in government and the private sector at all levels as well as the active involvement of civil society – an active civil society helps strengthen the enabling environment through ongoing advocacy and lobbying.

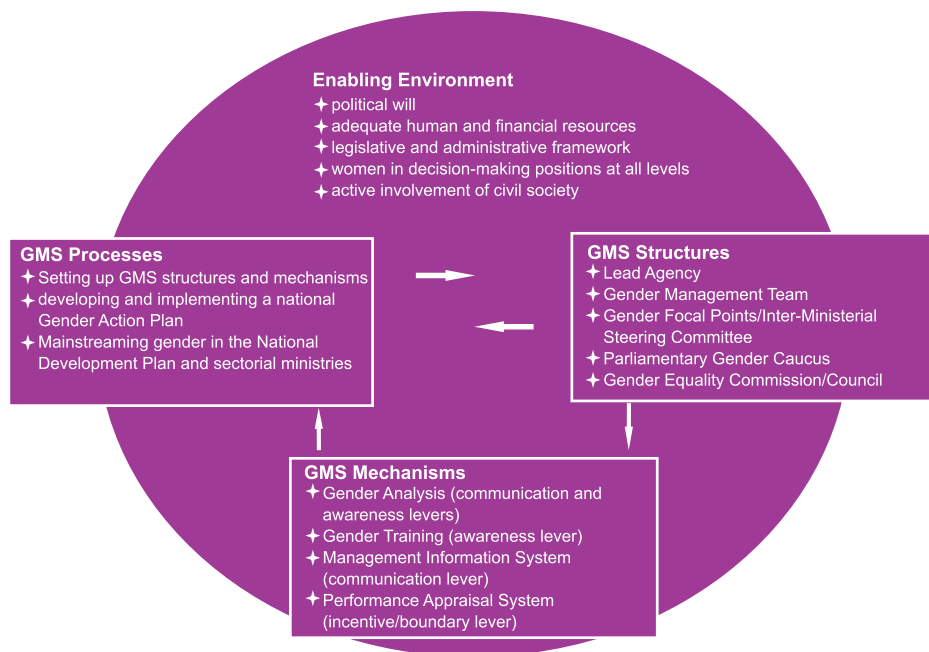
In Nigeria, elements of the enabling environment exist at all levels. However, there is a need to organise these into mutually reinforcing and coherent architecture for gender mainstreaming.

GMS structures – These are structures required to coordinate and drive the functioning of the GMS. The core elements include a lead agency, a Gender Management Team (GMT), Gender Focal Persons (GFPs)/Inter-ministerial Committees, a Parliamentary Gender Caucus, and a Gender Equality Commission/Council. The lead agency initiates and strengthens the institutional arrangements, works to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all policies, plans, & programmes, and that the core programmatic elements – the goal, objectives, and indicators – are gender-sensitive. Communication and coordination are part of the core mandate of the lead agency.

⁴UNAIDS, 2004, Report on the global AIDS epidemic

⁵Commonwealth Secretariat

The Gender Management System



The Gender Management Team (GMT) is constituted by key officers representing critical sectors, including Line Ministries (LMs), the private sector, Development Partners (DPs), and civil society. It is important to include persons who firmly believe in gender equality, understand the gender dynamics of the HIV & AIDS epidemic, and have the political clout and influence to engender change.

Gender Focal Persons (GFPs) are desk officers charged with the day-to-day responsibilities of gender mainstreaming and drawing attention to marginalisation and gender gaps. They serve as advocates, lobbyists, and resource persons, working to garner support for gender mainstreaming and disseminating information within their institutions.

Some elements of GMS structures exist at state and national levels. These can serve as entry points for institutionalising GMSs.

GMS mechanisms – As presented in the above figure, GMS mechanisms have four core elements – gender analysis, gender training, Management Information Systems (MISs), and performance appraisal systems. Gender analysis is the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, which reveals the differential impact of development activities on women and men, and the effect of gender roles and responsibilities on development efforts.

It is important to develop standard training modules on gender and HIV & AIDS for ongoing training of stakeholders. In addition, the lead agency needs to maintain a central Management Information System (MIS) that serves as a clearing house for information and analyses on gender and HIV/AIDS. Institution of a gender-aware performance appraisal system that tracks progress at all levels – individual, organisational, and the entire national response – is crucial. This ensures accountability for all players.

GMS processes – GMS processes entail setting up GMS structures and mechanisms, developing and implementing a national gender action plan, and mainstreaming gender in the national, sectoral, and organisational plans.

Critical Levers of Change

Change is a slow process. It requires strategies to dispel myths and change mindsets. It also requires the acquisition of new skills to promote and cope with change. Three key levers are important in the process of GMS implementation: the communication, awareness, and incentive /boundary levers.⁶

- The Communication Lever – Timely and effective communication keeps partners together, promotes trust, and reduces resistance during the change process. Two key GMS mechanisms – gender analysis and MIS – provide useful information that feeds the communication lever.
- The Awareness Lever – Change management requires ongoing engagement. This can be achieved through the gender training mechanism.
- Incentive/Boundary Lever – A gender-aware performance appraisal system that rewards the achievement of set goals and defines boundaries for acceptable behaviour is key to managing and sustaining change.

Evaluating the GMS

The Gender Management Team is charged with the responsibility of evaluating the Gender Management System. The Commonwealth Secretariat suggests that questions that need to be asked include:

- Are all the GMS structures in place and functioning correctly?
- How often do they meet?
- Are the desired results being achieved and do they satisfy the indicators of effectiveness?

- To what extent do these results contribute to the long-term goals of the GMS?

A Generic Guide for the Institution of GMSs

One of the key lessons learned from ENR's support to State Agencies for the Control of AIDS (SACAs) to institutionalise GMSs is that there are no hard and fast rules. The process thrives on flexibility and ownership. Rather than creating a parallel system, it is often advisable to incorporate GMS within existing systems.

The following generic steps⁷ are recommended: identify a lead agency (e.g. the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), State Agencies for the Control of AIDS (SACA) or other similar bodies, etc.); conduct both situation and stakeholder analyses to identify existing structures that could serve as entry points; review national, state, and sectoral policies and plans to ensure that they are gender-sensitive; set up the GMS structures as described above; strengthen the National Women's Machinery; develop a gender training programme; build gender analysis and planning expertise in the various sectors; establish or strengthen linkages between key stakeholders; establish Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and reporting mechanisms; network with donors and other partners to identify resources to drive the process & programmes.

⁶ GMS Handbook, Commonwealth Secretariat, op. cit.

⁷ This was developed by harmonising steps used by various players including the Commonwealth Secretariat.



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