GBA Plus 101: Resource for Immigrant and Refugee Service Providers

This resource provides a brief overview of GBA Plus and its use for developing programs and services at community organizations in the im/migrant and refugee serving sector.

What is GBA Plus?

Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus is "**an analytical tool used to support the development of responsive and inclusive policies, programs, and other initiatives**" developed by the Government of Canada in 1995.[1]

GBA Plus was initially designed to assess for the differential impact of policy and programs on women and girls, however, in 2011, the "**plus**" was added in recognition of other diverse identity factors, such **as age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, education, economic status, religion, race, language, indigeneity, and geography** that also intersect with sex and gender to reinforce inequities.

Many organizations within the im/migrant and refugee serving sector already use a diverse number of equity-building practices and frameworks that have emerged from Black, Indigenous, intersectional feminist, Queer, (dis)abled and other equity-seeking (equity-deserving) perspectives and communities. **As an analytical tool, GBA Plus shares similarities to other frameworks and practices designed to challenge and remove systemic barriers, however, each framework has their own unique histories, objectives, and foci**.

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1 https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/what-gender-based-analysis-plus.html

For example, OCASI has a stated commitment to Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression (ARAO) and uses an intersectional ARAO framework where race or racialization are the starting point for analysis. In comparison, GBA Plus begins with an analysis of sex and gender. Both approaches can be used to assess for gaps and barriers for specific groups of equity-seeking groups, and to create equitable programs, policies, and outcomes for clients or individuals.

How can I integrate GBA Plus into Program and Service Design?

It is important to remember that GBA Plus is an analytical tool that can be applied to a wide variety of scenarios, and that there is no single step-by-step 'formula' that will fit every application. Rather, according to Women and Gender Equality Canada, GBA Plus is an adaptable process consisting of the following core elements:

- Identifying Issue(s)
- Challenging Assumptions
- Gathering the Facts: Research & Consult
- Developing Options & Making Recommendations
- Monitoring and Evaluation

The above **core elements can be applied in tandem with other approaches to better fit the context and goals of the analysis**. For example, some Indigenous organizations will incorporate Indigenous values, teachings, and knowledge into their application and use of GBA Plus to ensure that it is relevant for needs and priorities of Indigenous communities.[2]

No matter the context, a GBA Plus approach to developing programming requires showing: **(1) who is impacted by an initiative across multiple intersecting characteristics and factors; (2) why the initiative meets diverse needs of the people most impacted; (3) how to mitigate any barriers to accessing or benefitting from the initiative**.[3] This analysis may illustrate the need to develop either targeted or flexible programming:[4]

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2 Government of British Columbia, Indigenous GBA+ toolkit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/minister-s-advisory-council-on-indigenous-women-maciw/gender-bases-analysis
3 https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/what-gender-based-analysis-plus.html
4 https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/mod03/mod03_06_01.html

Targeted: GBA Plus analysis may reveal the need to prioritize services for specific groups of people facing systemic marginalization and oppression. Examples: Mental health programming for racialized transgender migrants; Reproductive health campaign targeting francophone youth.

Flexible: GBA Plus analysis may reveal the need to create flexible or universal programming that can respond simultaneously to the diverse needs of many different individuals or groups. Example: Drop-in support services for immigrant parents; Public awareness campaign on anti-racism.

What are some best practices for implementing GBA Plus?

Successfully integrating a GBA Plus approach requires ongoing effort! The following 'Do's and Don'ts' are recommendations based on Women and Gender Equality Canada's GBA Plus online course to support successful implementation.[5]

5 https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/modA3/modA3_01_01.html

Do create a committee or unit with decision-making power to lead, support, and monitor the implementation of a GBA Plus framework.	**Don't task Human Resources to be responsible for leading GBA Plus!** Put in the work to establish a group, such as a strategic policy unit with a broad reach at the organization.
Do undertake an organizational needs assessment to identify GBA Plus and equity related strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities. Gathering information on past or existing initiatives, including gender-equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression, accessibility, truth and reconciliation, etc. and examining best practices and disaggregated data is a part of the overall assessment.	**Don't ignore organizational strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities.** Implementing a GBA Plus framework requires honest and open discussions with organizational leadership, management, staff, and clients/service-users about equity, accessibility, anti-racism, anti- oppression, truth and reconciliation, etc. within the organization.
Do use training and tools to develop GBA Plus organizational capacity and mainstream processes designed to promote equity. Simple tools like guides, manuals, and checklists can strengthen GBA Plus application across the organization.	**Don't assume all staff and management to have the same knowledge, experience, and perspectives on GBA Plus and other strategies to build equity.** Training and tools can establish baseline practices and knowledge for the organization.
Do test a GBA Plus "pilot" initiative! Identifying an existing or upcoming initiative to use as a "pilot" can make the GBA Plus implementation process concrete and gather important data for future reference.	**Don't expect GBA Plus to happen without adequate resources and support!** This includes adequate time, financial resources, training and support, collaboration, as well as allowing people to learn from mistakes.
Do develop a policy statement, or statement of intent which clearly articulates a commitment to GBA Plus or EDI, ARAO, etc. This policy should also provide a mandate to proceed with building structures, policies, and activities to support equity across the organization.	**Don't underestimate the significance of a clearly articulated policy which affirms and communicates commitments to equity, GBA Plus, or ARAO, etc.** This should be communicated and accessible to staff and leadership, as well as community partners, funders, and other groups.
Do ongoing monitoring of GBA Plus progress - both successes and failures! Capture data and information or generate disaggregated data using a GBA Plus lens.	**Don't miss out on documenting your efforts!** This is important institutional knowledge and will help to establish a record of valuable information which can be used in funding applications, employee onboarding, shifting organizational culture, etc..

Key Takeaways:

- GBA Plus is an analytical tool that can be adapted to fit different contexts; it is not a single "formula' or 'recipe."

- Programs and services designed with a GBA Plus analysis should:
  - **Apply an intersectional** approach to all aspects of the development, delivery and evaluation;
  - Seek to **remove barriers**, and **challenge assumptions** and biases;
  - **Use data**, including disaggregated data, and/or **collect evidence and feedback**;
  - Demonstrate **diversity**, **equity**, **inclusion**, **accessibility** and **authentic connections** to the communities and clients it aims to serve;
  - Engage in **respectful and meaningful consultation and/or outreach** with specific equity-seeking communities or individuals, particularly for Indigenous communities or people living with disabilities;
  - Use **gender-inclusive language**.

Questions or comments?

Visit the Enhancing National Sector Gender-Based Analysis Plus Capacity program page on OCASI's website.