

The Thinking Behind the Wall Workshop: Why Gender and Poverty?

Gender analysis involves using a new “lens” to look at how men’s and women’s experience differs.

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities that men and women commonly learn to play in our society.

Many of the differences in roles and experiences of men and women are rooted in history, in longstanding assumptions, and values. These have evolved in relation to social, economic and political conditions and have resulted in fundamental inequalities. Generally speaking, many of the learned roles that women play are undervalued, underpaid, and/or unpaid.

Looking at our communities and the world around us using a gender lens means looking at situations in our daily lives, societal events, policies and actions, to see how these impact and are impacted by men’s and women’s differing roles and responsibilities.


When we apply this lens to our work in poverty reduction and community action, the gender lens helps us consider how men and women are affected differently by the conditions of poverty and by the work we do to reduce poverty and increase access to jobs and social programs.

While all men and women living in poverty experience huge challenges, our research tell us that women as a group are most negatively affected. This is particularly true in their experience of violence, harassment, and lack of access to services such as daycare that would enable them and their children to move out of poverty.

Poverty reduction from a gender perspective calls us to account for the differences between men and women roles and experiences – to plan programs and policies that value women’s roles, while also addressing men’s specific experiences of poverty and the conditions that cause them.

We have learned from development work around the globe that adopting ways and means of supporting women’s work, and attending to the differences between men’s and women’s experience in our policies and programs, can have a positive overall effect on the health and well being of a whole community.

- Adapted from Starting with Women’s Lives: Changing Today’s Economy

 [Click here to visit the Tamarack website for more engaging content! www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca)