

Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit

Summary of the Resource Guide and Toolkit

Easy to Read version



What is this about

This Resource Guide and Toolkit is for understanding intersectionality and using it in work.

It contains eight enablers and a framework for action to deal with intersectionality. The text is divided into four sections.

It is designed in such a way that it can be included in existing work, processes and tools. It is flexible and can be adapted to suit the local requirements. It includes useful resources and a selection of practical tools and good practice examples.

This document is a summary of the Resource Guide and Toolkit. Details can be seen in the main Resource Guide and Toolkit document.

Who is it for?

This guide and toolkit is for

- Professionals working in this field
- Policy makers
- Experts
- Advocates
- UN Country Teams and colleagues working to support Member States
- Any individual, civil society, government or private sector entity wanting to use an intersectional approach in their work.



Who created this guide

Under the leadership of UN-Women, this Resource Guide and Toolkit has been created jointly by the following.



UN Women, UNPRPD, International Disability Alliance, its members and inter-Agency joint project partners (OHCHR, UNDESA, UNICEF, UNFPA, and, UN-Women). Many persons from the disability movement across the globe have also given their inputs.



How to use the Resource Guide and Toolkit



One needs to understand Intersectionality. It is a way of thinking, reflecting and working.



Then one can use these guidelines and toolkit in their policy and program development and in their institutions.



Section 1: Introducing Intersectionality

What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality is a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power.

People's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors. These combine to create advantages and disadvantages depending on a person's situation.

Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.

Social factors such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism affect the individuals.

Why does it matter?

Intersectional approach is required in development work for the following.

- Ensuring equality for everyone.
- Considering people's unique experiences of discrimination and oppression for better assessment

- Creating policies and services that take care of needs of everyone.
- Making better use of resources
- Fulfilling the global pledge to leave no one behind.
- Achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Intersectionality has been given importance in international human rights law. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) was the first human rights treaty to recognise discrimination due to intersectionality.

Example of Intersectional discrimination: Blind woman not given family planning services due to her gender and disability.

Intersectionality is a tool for supporting equality. It rejects the 'one-size fits' all thinking.

Intersectional approach helps in making use of different human rights laws to take care of multiple forms of discrimination that people face.

Section 2: Eight Intersectionality Enablers

The following Enablers are used to understand the situation and then decide on the actions to be taken.

1. Reflexivity

Check your own biases, beliefs, judgements and practices. Also check these of your organisation.

Do not rely only on your opinions about others. These affect how you do your work and connect with others.

2. Dignity, choice and autonomy

The dignity, choice and autonomy of all people should be respected. One should not decide for others.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Who has independence and who does not?
- Who shares their point of view and who does not?
- Who has full control over how they live their life and who does not?

3. Accessibility and universal design

Ensure ease of use that is accessibility and reasonable accommodation for everyone. This can be done by adopting universal design approach.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Have you asked people what they need to participate?
- Have you removed physical, transportation, information and communication barriers or provided reasonable alternatives?
- Have you checked the attitudinal, environmental and institutional issues of others?

Reasonable accommodation means making necessary changes so that persons with disabilities can participate, work and enjoy at the same level as others.

Universal design means designing products, environments, programmes and services in such a way that they are usable equally by all including persons with disabilities.

4. Diverse knowledges

Learn from those who are generally not given importance or not considered as experts.

Ask yourself these questions:

- How do we know what we think we know?
- Who told us? Who has not been consulted?

5. Intersecting identities

Intersecting identities means that an individual's identity consists of multiple, intersecting factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, class and religious beliefs.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the intersecting identities of the people we engage with?
- Who is missing?

6. Relational power

Relational power means that people may feel powerful in certain situations and feel helpless at some other time. You need to be aware of this, this can happen to you as well. Your decisions should not be affected by it.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Who holds power and in what circumstances?
- Who makes decisions?
- How are they answerable?

7. Time and space

Things keep changing. Nothing is fixed or permanent. A person can be at an advantage or disadvantage depending upon social position and location.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Does the privilege or benefit look different in this location? Is it the same in different age groups?
- Does discrimination or disadvantage look different in this location? Is it the same in different age groups?

8. Transformative and rights-based

You should promote human rights and equality. This can be done by changing the way resources are produced and distributed.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are we changing the way that resources are produced or distributed?
- Are these changes being helpful for promoting human rights and equality?

Section 3: Intersectionality in Practice

This section contains more information on applying intersectional approach to each stage of development planning or processes. The approach mentioned here should be adapted as per requirement. The steps listed here need not be implemented in the same order. Based on understanding of the situation you can implement them differently.

Step 1: Analyse

The first step is to identify the root causes of intersectional discrimination.

a) Check yourself using Tool 1 – Power Flower described in section 4

Check if your personal values, experiences, interests, beliefs and political commitments are influencing the policy, programme or action.

This exercise should be repeated at every step.

b) Understand who is affected, and how.

Use Tool 2 – Key considerations for creating safe spaces described in next section.

You need to ask yourself these questions.

- What is the issue or problem that is being solved?
- Is the understanding of the issue or problem based on certain beliefs?
- Was there any involvement of the people who face intersectional discrimination in identifying the issues and problems?
- Has the issue or problem been identified for a specific section of the population? Has any importance been given to differences in the groups?
- How were these issues and problems identified? Who identified them? What actions have been suggested?
- What is the response of governments and affected persons?
- How will different groups get involved in planning the policies and programs?

Remember to check who should be answering these questions but is not doing so.

c) Understand the root causes of intersectional discrimination

Use Tool 3 – Intersectional context analysis described in next section.

You should deeply study the causes of intersectional discriminations and inequalities

Step 2: Adapt

Use Tool 4 – Analysis to adaption described in next section.

How will you design or change the policy, programme or action to solve the issues and problems of people who are discriminated? This should be decided based on the concerns of those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination.

Many issues may have been identified in the first step and this second step aims to determine if and how action is to be taken on any of these issues.

Step 3: Assess

How will you check whether the policy, programme or action has met the needs and priorities of those most marginalised?

a) Check yourself, and your relationship to the context

Ask yourself these questions:

- How is your involvement, knowledge and expertise seen by others?
- How is knowledge shared?
- What else do you need to take responsibility for?
- Do you know the community or situation well enough?

b) Collect data and identify emerging themes

Refer to Tool 2: Creating safe spaces discussed in next section

Ask yourself these questions:

- How will you measure policy implementation and outcomes?
- How will you know if inequalities have been reduced?
- What intersectional factors will be measured in the monitoring and evaluation processes? Will they be measured using both qualitative and quantitative methods?

- How will affected groups be properly involved in checking the reduction of inequalities?
- What will be the measure of success?
- What are the problems that may prevent those most marginalised from participating or benefiting from the policy, programme or action?
- What are the specific actions needed to take care of these problems ?
- Which results are changing social norms?
- Do you know about the desires or ambition of those most marginalised?
- Has the policy, programme or action made anything worse?
- Are there people who did not participate in the evaluation itself?

Section 4: Menu of Services and Toolbox

Tool 1: Power Flower

Purpose

- Introduces basic intersectionality concepts
- Contextualises intersectionality in different places and spaces
- Explores the role of self in relation to power

When to use

Anytime, but ideally at the start of any new policy or programme design process.

Who should use

Anyone new or in need of refresher training on intersectionality basics. Policy makers, practitioners, workshop facilitators and all those wishing to learn more about intersectionality and relational power.

Time needed

1.5 - 2 hours

Tool 2: Creating Safe Spaces

Purpose

- Outlines key considerations for designing and maintaining safe and accessible spaces for all
- Supports a 'Do No Harm' approach that incorporates effective accountability mechanisms and risk mitigation
- Promotes self-reflection and active listening skills as core to creating safe spaces

When to use

When preparing for consultations, meetings, interviews, workshops and other forms of engagement.

It should also guide how you interact with colleagues within your workplaces.

Who should use

Practitioners and workshop facilitators.

Time needed

N/A

Tool 3: Intersectionality Context Analysis

Purpose

- An exercise that informs an intersectional approach to country analyses, strategies, stakeholder mapping and other planning processes
- Can be applied at local, national or international levels

When to use

Anytime, but ideally at the start of any new policy or programme design process.

Who should use

Policy makers, practitioners and workshop facilitators

Time needed

3 - 4 hours

Tool 4: Analysis to Adaptation

Purpose

- Physical integrity
- Access to education
- Economic participation
- Access to information
- Health including sexual and reproductive health

When to use

After the context analysis is complete (Tool 3).

Who should use:

Policy makers, practitioners and workshop facilitators.

Time needed

2 - 3 hours

This is the end of summary of the Resource Guide and Toolkit. Details can be seen in the main Resource Guide and Toolkit document - [INTERSECTIONALITY RESOURCE GUIDE AND TOOLKIT \(unwomen.org\)](https://unwomen.org/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit)