Gender in Products & Services (1 hr)

Please note that this document is still in draft mode and is being tested and reviewed by our GLIA partners in order to inform the final version. Feel free to test this workshop yourself, and send any feedback you might have to our Program Coordinator, Tishya Desai - tishya.desai@ygap.com.au

This workshop has been designed by ygap in partnership with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. It is one of many resources available through the Gender Lens Incubation and Acceleration Toolkit. It was designed for Entrepreneur Support Organisations to run with the ventures they support. The session introduces the concept of a gender lens in the context of a business' products or services. It has been designed to be run as a one hour session but

- Facilitator notes are provided in blue.
- Notes for tailoring the content to meet your local context are in red.
- Instructions/Script for the sessions are in black.

Objectives:	- Understand what it means to apply a 'gender lens' - Understand the importance of applying a 'gender lens' to the products and services entrepreneurs provide. - Learn how to apply a gender lens to products and services.
Duration:	1 hour
Format	In person or virtual
Materials:	**In person:** Whiteboard, Post-its, pens, worksheets **Virtual:** Zoom or equivalent, Jamboard,

Short Runsheet:

Timing	Session	Overview
10 minutes	Introduction	Communicate objectives of the session and understand where the group is at when it comes to applying a gender lens to their products and services. Introduce the concept of a 'gender lens'
10 minutes	Why is it important to apply a gender lens?	Introduce examples of where products & services have been designed without a gender lens and discuss the benefits of applying a gender lens to the venture.
25 min	How do you apply a gender lens?	Through a series of reflection questions, invite the group to consider gender across their customer journey.

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5 min	Close	Share key learnings and one action participants will take to apply a gender lens to their product or service.

Intro (10 min) In this session, we are going to look at how to apply a gender lens to your products and services and the benefits it has for both your impact and your bottom line.

First, we want to get an understanding of where your organisation is currently when it comes to considering gender.

I'm going to read out a few statements and I want you to give yourself a point for every statement that is true for your venture:

- Both men and women were represented on the design team for your product/service.
- You either tested your product/service with more than one gender or they were consulted through the design process.
- Your design & testing process specifically looked for differences in how each gender boys/men and girls/women experiences your product/service.
- You have created or adapted your product to specifically meet the needs of a particular gender.
- You are aware of the differences between how each gender finds and purchases your product/service.
- You have different strategies for how you attract and/or retain your male customers vs. your female customers.
- Your design or monitoring & evaluation process specifically looks for unintended consequences for different genders as a result of your work.
- When you collect data on the use or impact of your product or service you separate this data by gender.

Raise your hand if at least one of these statements was true for you. If at least three were? Four? Five? More than five? All eight?

This activity should give the facilitator a general idea of where the group is at in order to tailor any of the content or at least understand which ventures may be able to share specific experience/strategies they have used to apply a gender lens.

What does it mean to apply a gender lens?

Ask the group to contribute ideas here.

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The deliberate 'application' of a lens - for example, seeing something through the eyes of one gender and then seeing the same thing through the eyes of another.

By applying the lens, it reveals how your activities may be experienced by different gendered groups.

Applying a gender lens may reveal that your activities advantage certain gender groups, whilst disadvantaging others.

Why is it important? (10 min)

Unfortunately, when it comes to the products and services we all use every day, they are often not designed to be inclusive of all genders which can have consequences that range from being an inconvenience to half the population to being life-threatening. In her book, Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men, Caroline Criado-Perez documents the many instances where women's unique needs have been overlooked. Here are just a few examples she highlights:

Smartphone design: The average smartphone is designed to be 5.5 inches long which is too big for most women's hands, and often too big for their pockets as well. This affects how easy it is for us to use basic features and have a comfortable user experience.

Car safety: For decades crash-test dummies were modelled on a male physique, not taking into consideration women's smaller frames. As a result, when a woman is in a car accident, she is 47% more likely to be seriously injured and 17% more likely to die. While female crash-test dummies are now used in many places, they were still not required in any of the EU regulatory crash tests according to research as recent as 2018.

Toilets: Building plumbing codes typically allocate the same number of cubicles between men and women, but women take up to 2.3 times longer to use the toilet. We make up the majority of the elderly and disabled, we are often accompanied by small children, and those of us of child-bearing age may also be dealing with our monthly cycle or frequent trips to the bathroom during pregnancy. This means we often find ourselves waiting in long queues while men can get in and out quickly!

Public transport: Public transport in many places has been designed based on the typical patterns of movement for men. While men often have a direct travel journey from home to work and back again, women's travel patterns are not as predictable. As Criado Perez points out, 'women do 75% of the world's unpaid care work and this affects their travel needs'. They are often combining multiple small trips (called 'trip chaining') — dropping off children at childcare or school, doing the grocery shopping, picking up a prescription – as part of a larger journey. Understanding these more complex patterns of movement could help cities design public transport routes and pricing that more accurately meets the needs of all genders.

But it is not just about designing for women. Designing with a gender lens is about ensuring your products and services are accessible, inclusive and don't disadvantage any one gender. Applying a gender lens can help you:

- Better understand your customers
- Better meet the needs of your customers

- Achieve product-market fit
- Increase your profit margins
- Increase your impact

DISCUSS: Can you think of any other examples where products or services have disadvantaged one gender? (Group to discuss - 5 min)

How can you apply a gender lens? (25 min)

Historically, companies that wanted their products to appeal to more women have tended to leverage gender stereotypes to adapt their product, often just making it pink. (Facilitators can read more on this here.) But applying a gender lens goes beyond these superficial adaptations and actually requires a deeper analysis of how different genders experience and benefit from your product/service and what kind of design would actually add more value or make a product/service easier to use for certain gendered groups.

But I already design for one gender!
We acknowledge that If your product or service specifically targets one gender, you are likely already applying a gender lens to some degree. But the process of thinking deliberately and holistically about gender may still uncover opportunities you have not already considered or unintended consequences that may occur as a result of your work. You may also like to think about transgender individuals who may use your product/service and whether it meets their unique needs. (For example, THINX -- a company that produces period underwear -- recently included a transgender man in its print ads to bring attention to the fact that the vast majority of ads for menstrual products are only targeted towards cisgender females) Alternatively, you can think about intersectionality. If you specifically target one gender, what other factors like race, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, etc. might impact the way they experience your product/service? Can you design for more inclusivity across these various groups?

We will take you through a process of applying a gender lens to your product or service in just a minute but before we do that, there are two things your venture should be doing to better enable your ability to consider gender:

1. **Collect disaggregated data** - Across all your activities, you should be separating your data by gender so you can easily uncover differences between how gendered groups experience your product/services. Having this data is the first step in being able to answer the questions we will take you through shortly. For example, if you don't separate by gender your marketing & sales data you won't know whether more women or men purchase your product or how their pathways to finding your product differ. Likewise, if you don't separate your impact data by gender, you might not realise that men actually experience greater impact from your product than women or vice versa. This knowledge can help you improve your marketing approach or improve your product design to better meet the needs of all genders. Note that when you ask for gender - ensure that you explain why you are requesting this information (eg. to help us better meet the needs of all our customers), determine whether you want to know gender (how someone identifies) or sex (their biology/physiology), and ensure that you offer more than two options (male/female/other/prefer not to say).
2. **Have diverse representation on your team** - Including diverse gender representation on your team will help to ensure no one is forgotten and diverse perspectives and needs are considered. This will also hopefully ensure that you test the product with more than one gender. For example, Alt School - a

start-up school in Silicon Valley only tested their app with their all-male design team and designed it so teachers could tap their phone in their pocket to prompt classroom cameras to record something but what they didn't realise was that many women carry phones in their back pockets rather than their front and women probably wouldn't want to be tapping their bums to activate features in class!

Ensuring you are doing both of these things will greatly improve your team's ability to apply a gender lens. Now let's get into how we actually begin to do it. Let's start by thinking about gender differences across your customer journey:

Consider gender differences across your customer journey. Are each of these touch points providing an advantage or disadvantage to any genders? Or are they truly gender neutral?

- **Marketing & Promotion** (Language, imagery, channels, etc)
  i. Do you use **language** in your promotional material that appeals to all genders or is gender neutral ie. salesperson vs. salesman? What do different genders value - does your marketing approach take these things into consideration Eg. An event with beer & pizza is likely to appeal to more men than women!
  ii. Do your advertising **images** depict all genders in appropriate ways? Do all genders see themselves represented in your advertisements? Do your advertisements reinforce gender stereotypes? (see example images)
  iii. Are you advertising in places or via **channels** that will reach all genders? How do their pathways to learning about your product/service differ? If you are advertising in newspapers/magazines, are there any gendered patterns like illiteracy rates that might mean that one gender may not see/understand your advertisement? Can you also advertise on the radio?
  iv. Is one gender more likely to be the **decision maker** for your product/service? Who is paying for the product/service or influencing the decision? Do you cater your marketing to them?
- **Value proposition**
  i. Are there differences in the value men, women or other genders receive?
  ii. Do you specifically cater the value you offer to meet the unmet needs of one gender? Eg. a program that is increasing education outcomes for girls or health outcomes for mothers?
- **User Experience -** It can be helpful to think about this in terms of the following factors:
  i. **Biological** - Are there biological differences that will impact how your customers engage with your product/service? Will body size or muscle mass impact use of your product? Hormones? Do your customers need access to menstrual products or a room to breastfeed in order to effectively participate in your program?
  ii. **Socio-cultural** - What political, religious, or cultural considerations may impact how different genders use your product/service? Do your customers wear a hijab? How will this impact the use of your product/service? Do local cultural or religious customs (like the ability for men and women to shake hands or have lunch together) impact their ability to find or use your product? Does the timing of your activities disadvantage
  iii. **Economic** - can women and men equally afford your product/service? Does their economic status or access to capital impact how they use your product? Will women

need to convince their husbands to purchase or do they have access to the funds they need? (If so are you marketing to the husbands?)

    iv. **Environmental** - Is there infrastructure needed for different genders to effectively use your product/service. Do they have equal access to necessary childcare, education, transport, etc.? Does the timing or location of your activities disadvantage any genders? Is the location safe, appealing and welcoming to people of all genders? If you run a training program for farmers at 6pm - will women/parents who are getting dinner on the table for their families be disadvantaged?
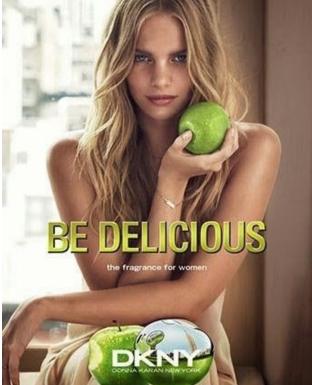
○ **Customer loyalty/retention**
    i. Are there differences in how different genders express **loyalty**?
    ii. Can you use **gender patterns or norms** to help you with customer retention? Eg. 65% of car decisions made by women, women are often caregivers - Saturn brought in play areas for women & children while they wait for their car to be serviced.
    iii. How can you use the unique needs/desires of each gender to **add additional value** to your product or customer service? Eg. Entertainment for men or children while women shop.

○ **Impact/Evaluation**
    i. What is the **impact** of your product/service on all genders? Do they benefit in the same ways?
    ii. Are there any **unintended consequences** of your work/product/service for any genders? Eg. when women's income increases, domestic violence or relationship issues may increase. Or when women have improved access to clean water, they lose and miss their daily interaction with other women walking long distances for water.
    iii. Are you collecting **feedback** in a way that all genders feel comfortable voicing their opinion?

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ACTIVITY (10 min): Identify potential gender differences across your customer journey. There may be areas you can easily identify gender differences but others you may realise you need to do some research/investigation/data collection in order to understand whether any differences exist. If so, jot these down so you know to come back to them later.

For example:

If I run a company that sells Vertical Gardens, I would ask myself:

- Where and how do we **market** our gardens? (via schools, community groups, etc.) Do men & women have equal access to those channels? Do we feature both men & women equally in our promo imagery? Are there differences in literacy rates? Do any genders require additional education to understand the value we offer? What language do we use - Can we use knowledge around what each gender values to attract them? Eg. Focusing on the benefit of healthy nutrition for children to attract mothers. Focus on the ability to provide for their family to attract more men.
- **Affordability** - Do all genders have equal access to afford our gardens? If women are our target customer, do we need to offer a payment plan or go through women's savings groups to help them afford it?
- **Training** - do all genders have safe forms of public transport to get to our training? Does the format and timing of the training appeal to or disadvantage any genders? Can mothers bring children? Does it disadvantage people who work full time? Do we have all genders represented on our facilitation team?
- **Installation process** - Are our gardens heavy and difficult to install for women? If we have men helping to install our product, are there any religious/cultural implications to women having a man who is not their husband in their home?
- **Maintenance process** - again, are there different biological or physiological differences we need to think about here? Do we need to offer any extra assistance? Does the design need to be altered so that shorter women can reach the top of the gardens to maintain?
- Our **customer service & how-to guide** - is our guide gender neutral? Does it account for differences in literacy rates? How do we provide customer service? Is it accessible to all genders? What about rural women who may not have access to a strong internet connection?
- **Getting vegetables to market** - do genders have equal access to market? Or is one gender more likely to benefit? Is there any additional infrastructure needed for any genders to successfully sell produce and profit from their vertical gardens?
- **Impact** - do different genders experience the same benefits from our product? Are there any unintended consequences for any genders? Eg. a change in power dynamics in the household for husbands of women who now have their own source of income?

ACTIVITY (5 min): Once we've done an audit of where there may be different needs/impact, we want to identify what **actions** can we take across these various touch points to make our product/service more gender neutral or better meet the needs of all genders?

For example:

- We can adjust the timing of our training so parents aren't disadvantaged
- We can change the language and imagery we use in our marketing materials to better appeal to more women.
- We can organise childcare support at our trainings so mothers are not disadvantaged.
- We can partner with a transport company to organise safe weekly transport for our women to get their products to market.
- We can involve the husbands throughout the process and stress the benefits for the entire family in order to reduce the unintended consequences of men feeling threatened by increased income/independence of our female customers.

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CLOSE (10 min)

Remember, applying a gender lens to your products and services can help you:

- Better understand your customers
- Better meet the diverse needs of your customers
- Achieve product-market fit
- Increase your profit margins
- Increase your impact

Now that you have a basic understanding of what it means to apply a gender lens and how you can apply it to your business, we encourage you to consider what you and your team can commit to doing in order to integrate this lens into your design process and customer experience.

SHARE: Invite the group to share the biggest learning or one of the actions they will take to make their product more inclusive.