



GLOSSARY OF GENDER TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Equality means that males and females have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development.¹ It means society values males and females equally for their similarities and differences and the diverse roles they play. It signifies the long-term outcomes that result from gender equity strategies and processes.

Equity strategies refer to the processes used to achieve gender equality. Equity involves fairness in representation, participation, and benefits afforded to males and females. The goal is that both groups have a fair chance of having their needs met and that they have equal access to opportunities for realizing their full potential as human beings.

Gender refers to a set of qualities and behaviors expected from males and females by society. Gender roles are socially determined and can be affected by factors such as education or economics. Gender roles may vary widely within and between cultures, and often evolve over time.

Gender dynamics refers to the relationships and interactions between and among boys, girls, women, and men. Gender dynamics are informed by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Depending upon how they are manifested, gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms.

Parity in education refers to equivalent percentages of males and females in an education system (relative to the population per age group). Parity is essential but not sufficient for achieving gender equality.

Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females. Sex differences are related to males' and females' physiology and generally remain constant across cultures and over time.

¹ Adapted from Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation*. Paris: OECD, 1998.

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