Pre-interview Information Sheet No 5: Social Inclusion – a Development Principle (GEDSI)

What about GEDSI?

Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) (often referred to as just *Social Inclusion*) is about not leaving anyone behind. It is a central theme that underlines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015.

Social Exclusion vs Inclusion

Social exclusion: These are laws, policies, decisions, institutional behaviours, and structures that systematically exclude entire communities or groups of people from rights, opportunities, and resources that are available to most other people in society. Being poor can lead to exclusion but it is so much more than just being poor.

Social inclusion (GEDSI) entails ensuring that excluded groups and the processes of exclusion - geographic, social, political, and economic - are recognised, understood, and addressed so that all can participate and progress equally and fairly in society.

Why GEDSI?

Inclusive development should be an objective for every organisation and its activities. Inclusion creates a society that upholds fundamental human rights and principles of equality and equity. It supports human rights; and is essential for sustainable economic growth and development[1].

Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Principles:

- Improved access to services, resources, and benefits of development for the most disadvantaged.
- Meaningful participation in decision-making for the most disadvantaged.
- Removal of institutional and social barriers to the above.

Barriers to GEDSI

Some of the causes of exclusion are:
- Institutional and/or organisational barriers-culture and practices
- policy barriers
- attitudinal barriers to those who are perceived as 'different'
- discrimination
- stigma
- environmental and physical barriers
- communication and information barriers.

Linking GEDSI to development

Reflect on your country, workplace, and community context:
- Who do you think is marginalised/left behind in development, and how?
- Have you considered incorporating inclusion or equal opportunities in your plans for when you return?
- your government's national development goals?

Reflect on your workplace and sector:
- Are there individuals/groups who are excluded from the work process or from the benefits of your work?
- What can you do to promote inclusion in the above scenarios?

Prepare a response that links the above points to your preferred course of study.

> **Be Inspired…**
> An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.
>
> **Martin Luther King Jnr**

Linking GEDSI to your professional field and your plans when you return

When reflecting on the development contribution you intend to make think of the social inclusion principles mentioned.

- Are there groups that are excluded from accessing services and resources you provide or from decision-making?
- Are there inherent barriers at your workplace or community?
- What can you do about this that is within our scope of influence or ability?
- How will my new skills, knowledge, and attitudes contribute to gender equality?

Three levels of influence of a change agent:

1. **Can you influence policy?**
A policy is a course of action adopted or proposed by a government or an organisation on how it intends to conduct business.

2. **Can you influence practice?** Not everyone develops policy - most people implement policy directives.

3. **Are you able to promote a *culture* that supports inclusion?** You can be a change agent who is able to foster positive and inclusive cultures.

Be prepared

Be ready to demonstrate that you have a good understanding of the GEDSI challenges faced at the country, sector/ workplace, and community levels. Reflect on what role or action you can take to overcome barriers to GEDSI.

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[1] Analysing and Measuring Social Inclusion in a Global Context, UN 2010