GENDER BLIND: The specific issues affecting different genders are not identified by project documents or stakeholders. They may only refer to issues affecting ‘people,’ ‘communities,’ ‘youth,’ ‘audiences’ etc., rather than breaking these groups down by gender. Gender blind documents have no gender analysis of the wider context for the work, or of the differing barriers to free expression faced by people of all genders.

In some contexts, there are issues around girls accessing education. For instance girls may not be allowed to attend extra-curricular activities because of domestic responsibilities, or because of safety concerns. A project activity which delivers creative writing workshops to students after school without considering these issues would be considered gender blind.

A project can also be gender blind in relation to its content, for instance if the material used to teach creative writing reproduces unequal gender relations: books or stories which exclusively portray women as mothers and carers or with passive roles in the story and men as decision makers, heroes, problem solvers.

GENDER NEUTRAL: The different needs of all genders are acknowledged by project documents and/or stakeholders but are not addressed in the project activities.

For example, a project which runs an online platform addressing freedom of expression issues acknowledges that indigenous women and girls are one of the most marginalised groups in society and therefore face multiple challenges to their right to free expression. The project intends to address these issues by informing this group about their rights and dedicates one of the issues of the blog to freedom of expression issues for indigenous women and girls. However, the project fails to take into account that these women and girls have limited access to the internet.
GENDER SENSITIVE

Sex disaggregated data is used in project documents as part of a gender analysis to understand the different needs of girls and boys and women and men. Specific solutions to address these different needs are included in the project activities and outcomes. Activities focus on women’s and girls’ practical needs to improve their daily condition: they tend to include measures to increase women’s participation in the project such as the provision of child care, transport or costs towards chaperones for women who can’t travel on their own. The content of the project tends to reinforce women and girls’ existing socially accepted roles – i.e. doesn’t challenge their subordinate position in society. In general the project focuses on short-term, immediate and practical assistance for women.

Using the same example as above, a gender analysis would help identify the barriers that girls face in accessing extra-curricular activities. For example, in some contexts travel to a workshop after school may be deemed too risky/prohibited for unaccompanied girls and the timing may clash with their domestic work. The project could respond to this by changing the time of the creative writing workshop to lunch times so that safety and workload are no longer an issue.

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE

There is an attempt to challenge the root causes of gender discrimination by addressing discriminatory gender norms, stereotypes and unequal power relationships. Activities focus on more strategic needs which improve women’s position in society. Project activities aim to highlight and debate the fact that unequal gender relations affect women’s and girls’ right to free expression and seek to have these issues debated by communities as a way to help shift negative attitudes and behaviours.

The content of the project will highlight issues that have been identified by women and girls themselves that require strategies to challenge male dominance and privilege, for example violence against women and girls access to education, online harassment, ownership and control of resources, sexual and reproductive health and rights, the care economy etc. Project activities will make use of more balanced and positive materials which illustrate how women and girls have taken charge of their own lives, thereby challenging stereotypes that see women in purely traditional roles. In the long term the project aims to challenge existing gender roles and achieve gender equality.

Extending the same examples, the project will seek to go beyond ensuring that students can attend the workshops, but also focus on their content: highlighting issues of importance to women and girls and creating space to discuss them within the community, eventually leading communities to examine and challenge inequality and discrimination.