

Gender and HIV/AIDS

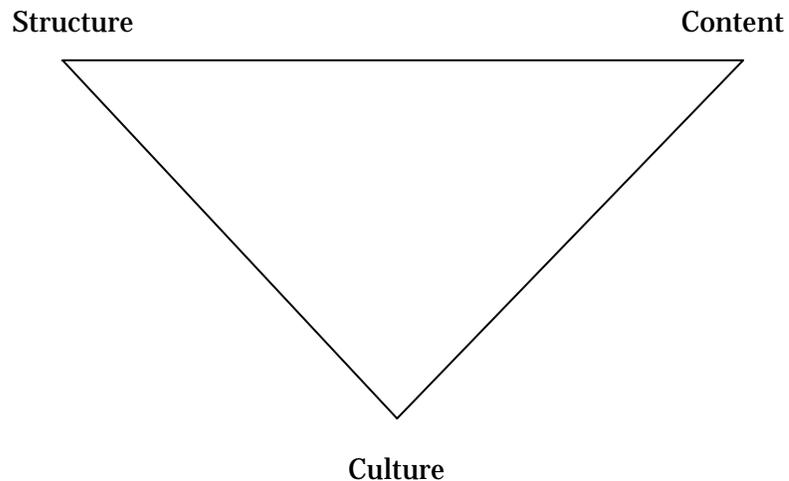


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Triangle Analysis: Analyzing Legal-Political Systems for Gender Factors

The Triangle Analysis* is a useful tool to identify specific aspects of the legal-political system that can be targeted for program development and advocacy campaigns. The legal-political system can be analyzed in three ways with regard to a gender issue.

Legal-Political System



Content relates to the written laws, policies, and budgets relevant to gender. For example, if there is no law to ensure a type of gender equity, one part of a solution may be introducing a law. Also, if there are no funding and institutional mechanisms for enforcement, the law itself will not be effective.

Is there a law or policy that contributes to the gender problem by protecting the interests of one sex over the other? Are these laws or policies funded? Are there mechanisms in the system for enforcement?

Examples: Domestic violence laws do not exist. There is no such mechanism as a restraining order. A Commission on Women is appointed but no funds are allocated. Anti-discrimination laws exist, but there are no mechanisms to hold government accountable.

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Structure refers to state and non-state mechanisms for implementing a law or policy. Such structures include the police, courts, hospitals, credit unions, ministries, and health care programs.

Do the institutions and programs that implement gender discrimination laws or policies enforce those mechanisms? Do they unfairly favor one sex and ignore the other? Are adequate amounts of the allocated funds spent by government to inform enforcing agencies on how to implement the policy or law?

Examples: The law exists but judges and police consider domestic disputes as a private matter and do not intervene. Hospitals do not report domestic violence, women have no shelters for protection, and police and courts urge couples to stay together even when a woman's life is in danger.

Culture refers to the values and behavior that shape how people deal with and understand issues. These values and behavior are influenced by such things as gender, class, custom, religion, ethnicity, and age. Part of the cultural dimension may be lack of information about laws and policies.

Are there beliefs or social norms that perpetuate the image of one sex as inferior or less advantaged than the other sex? Are both sexes aware of their rights and how to access them? Do family and social pressures prevent one sex from seeking a fair solution? Do psychological pressures play a role? Do people believe that they are worthy of equal access and treatment?

Examples: People see "wife beating" as normal, the sign of love, or the right of a husband. Women come to believe that they are responsible and feel ashamed that they are not "good enough" or they wouldn't be beaten.

*Triangle Analysis from Margaret Schuler in *Empowerment and the Law*, 1986. Text above adapted from VeneKlassen, Lisa with Valerie Miller. 2002. *A New Weave of Power, People, and Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*. World Neighbors.