



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada



Test Your (GBA) IQ.

Canada

Test your knowledge!

1. **GBA is biased against men**

True

False

2. **GBA is advocacy for women**

True

False

3. **We don't need GBA; women and men are already equal**

True

False

4. **Creating a "gender-neutral" policy is good enough; it treats everyone as equals so we don't need to do GBA**

True

False

5. **GBA is only for policies that focus on women or women's issues**

True

False

6. **GBA can be used in all sectors**

True

False



Facts

1. **GBA is biased against men.** *False.*

GBA is about fully analyzing policy consequences for everyone, not about promoting one sex over the other. GBA looks at socio-economic data about both women and men to ensure that valid comparisons and conclusions can be drawn. Accurate conclusions cannot be made in a vacuum but must take into account all segments of society. A thorough GBA may show that one or both genders will be negatively affected by a policy or program. For example, a GBA of homelessness may capture the fact that men make up the majority of those affected, and while women may represent a smaller proportion of those affected, the causes are different and therefore different solutions are required. (Whereas homelessness in men is often caused by mental illness and/or addiction, women often face homelessness as a result of the violence they have experienced).

2. **GBA is advocacy for women.** *False.*

GBA is not advocacy nor is it the promotion or acceptance without question of any one view. It is an analytical tool, an important part of a comprehensive social/economic analysis of public policy. GBA takes into account social and economic differences between the sexes at every stage of policy development to ensure that potential differential impacts are discovered, and that existing and proposed policies have intended and equitable results for both sexes.

GBA uses gender relations as its analytical focus rather than viewing women in isolation from men and vice versa. GBA means working towards both woman-specific initiatives and mainstreamed policies and programs targeting gender equality as an outcome. This is the ideal situation. GBA is a sequential process. There are certain steps that can be undertaken now, while others require more time to refine or accomplish.



3. **We don't need GBA; women and men are already equal.** *False.*

Men's and women's realities are different as a result of both sex (biological differences) and gender (social differences). Women and men in Canadian society have different roles, different access to resources and benefits, and different responsibilities. As a result, a policy or program developed without taking these differences into account may not meet the needs of both women and men nor have the intended effects.

A GBA done on socio-economic data disaggregated by gender shows that men have, on average, higher incomes than women and that women face socio-economic disadvantages in part due to the social roles they perform and the value attributed to these roles. Women make up 51 per cent of the population, 45 per cent of the paid labour force, earn lower wages and do more unpaid work. Although great strides in economic and social equality have been made, substantive equality has not yet been achieved.

4. **Creating a "gender-neutral" policy is good enough, it treats everyone as equals so we don't need to do GBA.** *False.*

Gender neutrality (or gender blindness) assumes that all people are affected by policies/programs in the same way, or that policies/programs have neutral impacts on recipients. It is premised on the theory that all people are already equal and therefore that treating all people the same is fair.

A 'gender-neutral' policy is not adequate because it ignores the different physical, social and economic positions and life experiences of women and men, as well as particular groups such as persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities. This may mean that equal treatment will not necessarily produce equal results. GBA recognizes that policy cannot be separated from the social context, and that social issues are an integral part of economic issues.



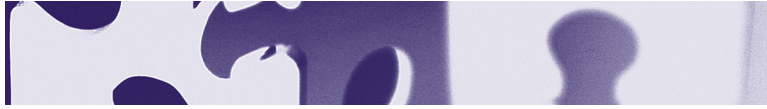
Treating women and men identically will not ensure equal outcomes because women and men do not experience the same social and economic conditions to begin with—in other words, the playing field is not level. This equal outcome approach acknowledges that because of life conditions or past discrimination, it may sometimes be necessary to treat women and men differently to achieve the same results. Equal outcomes will not result from treating everyone the same, and equal opportunity does not mean equal results. Proactive measures are necessary to overcome systemic bias. To illustrate, if you want everyone to have the same opportunity to cross the finish line, you must recognize that not everyone has the same starting line.

5. **GBA is only for policies that focus on women or women's issues.** *False.*

GBA is for all policies. Because gender permeates all facets of our lives, the need for GBA goes beyond those policies specifically targeted to women. All government policies/programs impact both women and men. GBA is about recognizing the differences in women's and men's realities and experiences, acknowledging that policies, programs and legislation may affect them differently, and admitting that these differences may be negative. GBA considers how these negative differences can be mitigated and how the policy, program or legislation can have a positive impact on all Canadians, not just a select few.

6. **GBA can be used in all sectors.** *True.*

GBA can be used in a variety of sectors such as education, transport, immigration and health. For example, in the 1980s, the transit commission of a major Canadian city was concerned that the number of passengers was falling each year. A survey of passengers showed that approximately 80 per cent were female. The commission concluded that to increase the number of passengers, they needed to find out the primary concerns of their female passengers.



When consulted, the female passengers indicated that safety was a serious issue for them.

The commission used the results of the study to adapt its operations and policies to address concerns. First, they conducted a safety audit of all their subway stations. From the audit, they found out that they needed to improve the lighting in most subway stations. They also set up “designated waiting areas” on each subway platform that ticket booth operators monitor through a video security system. These special waiting areas have intercom systems so that passengers can request help if they need it. A policy was introduced to allow bus drivers to let women off between stops after dark. This means that women have less distance to walk home alone in the dark, thus reducing their risk of sexual and physical assault. None of these changes would have taken place if gender issues had not been taken into account.

For more information on this initiative, please contact the Gender-based Analysis Directorate of Status of Women Canada by telephone at **(613) 995-7835**, or by e-mail at **gbad@swc-cfc.gc.ca**