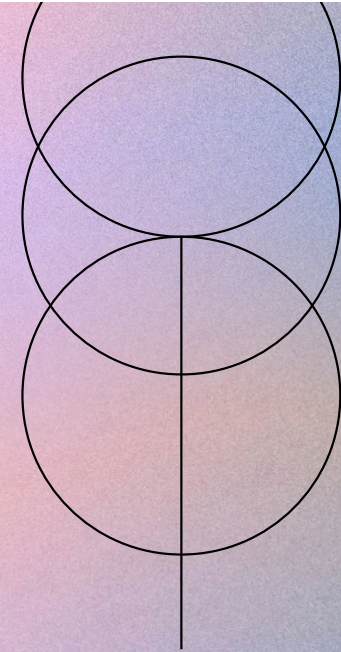


Identifying Leverage Points for Design

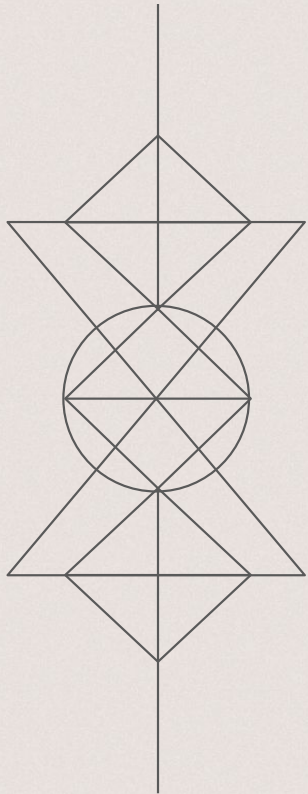
SUMMARY REPORT OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
SPRING 2022



the
Chroma
collective



NUANCE, TANGIBILITY, PIN-POINTING LEVERAGE POINTS FOR DESIGN



FOCUS GROUPS	DEEPENING OUR HARD PROBLEMS	
	GOVERNMENT BI-LATERALS GLOBAL AFFAIRS Canada NORAD SIDA	
	FEB * 2022	

WHY?

As we prepared for our second design sprint in spring of 2022, we realized that there was another layer of nuance - beyond just understanding our Hard Problems generally - that was necessary to understand in order to effectively pinpoint where we innovate next (and how!). We wanted to understand not just the Hard Problems themselves, but where within these challenges there were the most significant barriers (sticky spots) affecting your ability to do this work well. We called these the **leverage points for design**.

We also wanted to understand the nuances between how these challenges were experienced within certain institution types - be that lending banks or field offices of multilaterals - and give Collective Members the space to learn more about / reflect on these challenges within groupings of like-structured, peer organizations. The outputs of these conversations show the nuance of our Hard Problems, beyond the broad themes that we know apply to everyone.

The nuance is what makes these barriers more tangible, and allows us to uncover details/impactful opportunities for design.





STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH

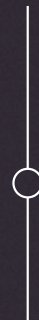
The next page of this report shows a few snapshots of what our design research and focus group discussions looked like: we spent the month of April in smaller, more intimate focus group discussions with each of our Collective members. Feedback was framed within the systems conditions model (structural, relational and mindset conditions)*, which allowed us to more deeply understand where within a system the most frustrating barriers to effective Gender Mainstreaming exist.

Of course, we are not the first Collective to capture data around challenges. But, we believe capturing the nuances of this data, and anecdotes that represent the complex experiences of this work - from the mouths of Gender Mainstreaming experts themselves - is incredibly important.

This practice allows us to move from theory and data to actual application.

Moreover, it's valuable for members to see their own challenges reflected back in an organized structure, with nuance and detail included. Our goal was to also build a report that may be valuable for members to share back within their own organizations and organizational leadership, as an illustration of what's happening across the sector, and an argument for further support/resourcing.

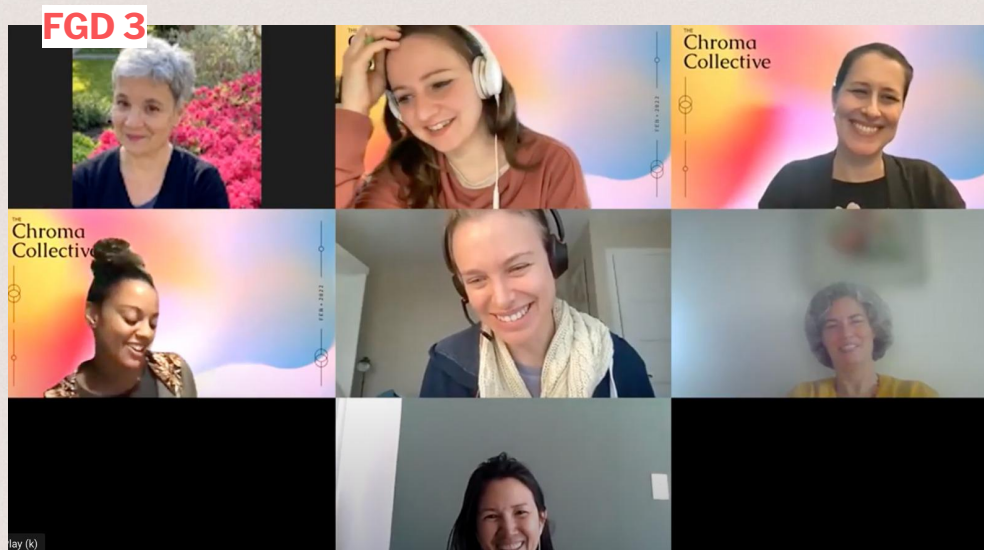
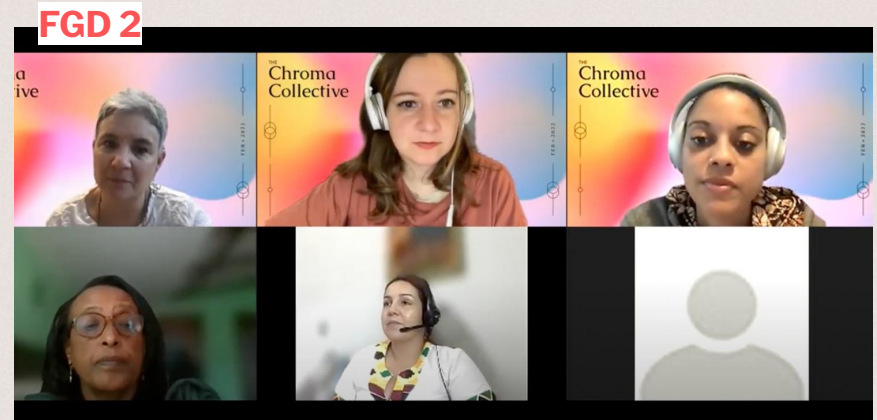
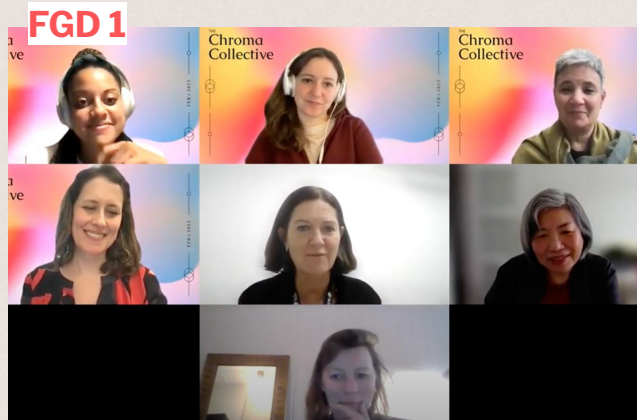
** learn more about the systems conditions model in our appendix*



Divided by like organizations

Intentionally smaller # of individuals in the conversation

Feedback framed within the systems conditions model (structural, relational, mindsets)



WHAT WE LEARNED

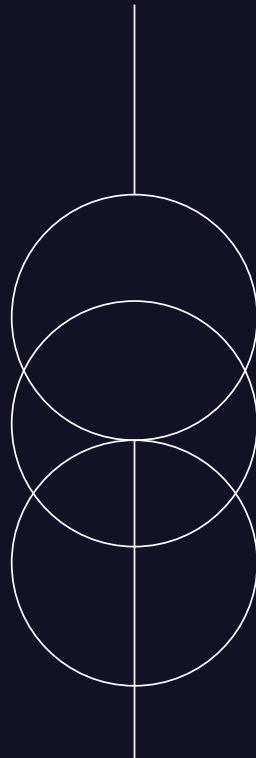
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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
ACROSS THE COLLECTIVE

Comprehensive Synthesis



IDEO.ORG



APR * 2022



Insight One | HQ Leadership Challenged by Geographic Distance from Implementation

Leadership has the power to influence accountability to gender mandates or gender mainstreaming. But they sit in HQ offices, removed from local realities and program implementation.

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership & Measurement

Insight Two | Optics Confounding Data, Diminishing Impact

Leaders are pressured to show the value of investing in Gender Mainstreaming through impact metrics; this pressure leads to figures that are often inflated or not entirely inclusive. Consequently, gender specialists are left to report data that may not accurately reflect the results of investments.

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership & Measurement

Insight Three | Inconsistent, often Competitive, Resourcing

There is constant competition between different teams (gender vs. climate, for ex) and functions (specialists vs program management, for ex) for leadership attention and commitment. Often, trends in national policy or public focus influence what leadership decides to resource; gender – often ambiguous nor as “hot” as other sectoral issues – is left behind rather than being integrated into funding commitments going towards other sectoral teams.

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership, Strategy & Measurement

Insight Four | Centering on Effective Storytelling

Influencing resource flows and institutional policy on gender has been most impactful for Collective members when paired with effective storytelling; for the public at large, and for leadership. “Things tend to move when you touch a personal nerve – for the public at large and leadership, speaking from the heart, using human narratives or adding context to impact stories; things tend to move further and faster when the personal is enmeshed into the political.

relevant in focus groups: FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Measurement, Org Structure, Leadership & Strategy

Insight Five | Program Teams in the Field are Disadvantaged by Inadequate Tools at Point of Data Collection

A lack of tools and resources provided by leadership to support impact measurement at the local level & at the time of execution, results in GM experts building ad hoc, decentralized support systems for local partners. When M&E tools are disjointed and not standardized across partners and program teams, the results lead to unclear narratives of “what matters”, and consequentially misaligned and confounded priorities between leadership & local staff.

relevant in focus groups: FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Measurement, Org Structure

Insight Six | Tangible Incentives as a Necessary Part of GM Strategy

Incentives (for management and also for program teams), were noted over and over again as an integral component of effective GM strategy implementation. Organizational peers respond to two types of incentives: prize based and impact potential based. Prize based incentives include awards for departmental execution of GM, org wide spotlights on project specific integration of gender, or competitions to “put forward the best gender project”. Impact potential based incentives are case studies and snapshots of current projects that have effectively integrated GM, shared with management and program teams to tangibly illustrate “how” gender can support or improve a program/project.

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership, Measurement, Gender Strategy, Org Structure

Insight Seven | Policy Fails without Infrastructure & Accountability

Policy without a framework for ensuring accountability and tracking implementation cannot support gender commitments, and follow up is necessary at every level. Without this infrastructure for accountability, program teams often do the minimum to integrate GM mandates in the interest of only showing where money is going and how it is being used – without being accountable to its impact.

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership, Measurement, Gender Strategy, Org Structure



significant root causes & leverage points for design

ONE

HMW more effectively connect leadership to field offices & partners who work on gender, bridging local realities with HQ decision makers?

Insight: Leadership has the power to influence accountability to gender mandates or gender mainstreaming. But they sit in HQ offices, removed from local realities and program implementation.

Structural, Relational & Mindset Levels | Institutional Practices, Power Dynamics & Mindsets

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3
surfaced within Hard Problems: Leadership & Measurement

TWO

HMW promote and incentivize cross-sectoral collaboration on gender mainstreaming?

HMW reduce the friction of resource competition (headcount, unrestricted funding, publicity, etc) between sectoral teams?

Insight: There is constant competition between different teams (gender vs. climate, for ex) and functions (specialists vs program management, for ex) for leadership attention and commitment. Often, trends in national policy or public focus influence what leadership decides to resource; gender - often ambiguous and not an external area of focus - is left behind rather than being integrated into funding commitments going towards other sectoral teams.

Structural Level | Institutional Practices, Resource Flows

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership, Gender Strategy & Measurement

THREE

HMW involve country level experts and advisors in the process of defining gender indicators (including a spotlight on what data they already collect, and why)?

HMW thoughtfully build continuity of impact indicators while gender strategies are re-thought or changed over time, prioritizing standardization and accessibility of tools?

HMW leverage the collective's data & knowledge base to build a case for gender mainstreaming?

Insight: A lack of tools and resources provided by leadership to support impact measurement at the local level & at the time of execution, results in GM experts building ad hoc, decentralized support systems for local partners. When M&E tools are disjointed and not standardized across partners and program teams, the result is a misalignment of priorities between leadership & local staff, as well as an unclear narrative about 'what matters' for those collecting the data.

Insight: Leaders are pressured to show success in Gender Mainstreaming through impact metrics; this pressure leads to figures that are often inflated or not entirely inclusive - poorly capturing gender realities. Consequently, gender specialists are tasked (and struggle) to illustrate a more accurate and realistic picture of outcomes, so that the work is resourced seriously and meaningfully.

Structural Level | Institutional Practices

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership, Org Structure & Measurement

FOUR

HMW equip GM practitioners with templates and methodologies for more effective storytelling, amidst bias and across institutions?

Insight: Influencing resource flows and institutional policy has been most impactful for Collective members when paired with effective storytelling (and broadening our understanding of 'legitimate' evidence); for the public at large, and for leadership. Whether "Things tend to move when you touch a personal nerve - for the public at large and leadership, speaking from the heart, using human narratives or adding context to impact stories; things tend to move further and faster when the personal is enmeshed into the political.

Structural & Mindset Levels | Institutional Practices, Resource Flows & Mindsets

relevant in focus groups: FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Measurement, Org Structure, Leadership & Strategy

FIVE

HMW build effective incentive systems that can be adjusted, replicated and tailored for specific institutions and GM challenges?

HMW uncover & systemize the most important details within examples of tangible GM impact, in the interest of providing a template for specialists incentivizing via case studies of "what's possible"?

Insight: Incentives (for management and also for program teams), were noted over and over again as an integral component of an effective GM strategy. Organizational staff respond to two types of incentives: prize based and impact potential based. Prize based incentives include awards for departmental execution of GM, org wide spotlights on project specific integration of gender, or competitions to "put forward the best gender project", being publicly praised for high GM performance/impact through case studies.

Structural Level | Institutional Practices, Resource Flows

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership, Org Structure, Gender Strategy & Measurement

SIX

HMW stimulate accountability to GM by increasing collaboration with internal institutional actors and departments, as well as external stakeholders?

Insight: Policy without a framework for tracking accountability cannot support gender commitments, and follow up is necessary at every level. Without this infrastructure for accountability, program teams often do the minimum to integrate GM mandates in the interest of only showing where money is going and how it is being used - without being accountable to it's impact.

Structural, Relational & Mindset Levels | Institutional Practices, Power Dynamics, Mindsets

relevant in focus groups: FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4
exists within Hard Problems: Leadership, Org Structure, Gender Strategy & Measurement



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most influential systems conditions across our Hard Problems

SUMMARY

Across all Focus Group Discussions, we observed a highest number of barriers noted by Collective Members at the **Structural Conditions level**: policies, practices and resource flows. Specifically, Members noted stickiest challenges around our Hard Problems influenced by institutional practices and resource flows, with a most significant experience of structural barriers highlighted by our multi-lateral and philanthropic members working at the HQ level.

At the Relational Conditions level (Relationships and Connections & Power Dynamics), significantly fewer barriers were noted across Focus Group Discussions. However, members working at the field office or country level of multi-laterals & philanthropies touched on power dynamics as the most disruptive systemic challenge for their work. Interestingly, those representing lending banks, also noted power dynamics as a lesser, though still consistent, barrier.

Lastly, across all Focus Group Discussions, **Mindset Conditions** played a consequential role in member experience of the respective Hard Problems. From leadership that does not believe in CM, to program partners who assume CM is a "nice add on" - most mindset barriers were repeated across FGDs, regardless of the different member institution profiles. Many barriers at the Mindset Conditions level of our systems model influenced or were influenced by barriers at the Structural or Relational levels - indicating the impact of mindset barriers (often deeply rooted) across an entire system.

Overall, institutional practices, resources flows, power dynamics and mindsets proved to be the types of systems conditions within which barriers are most deeply rooted and disruptive to our members' goals of effective Gender Mainstreaming. We will further explore these system conditions in the interest of identifying design opportunities (and thus prototypes) with the highest probability of impact across Collective membership and institutions.



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WHAT WE LEARNED

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ACROSS THE COLLECTIVE

Individual Group Summaries



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APR * 2022



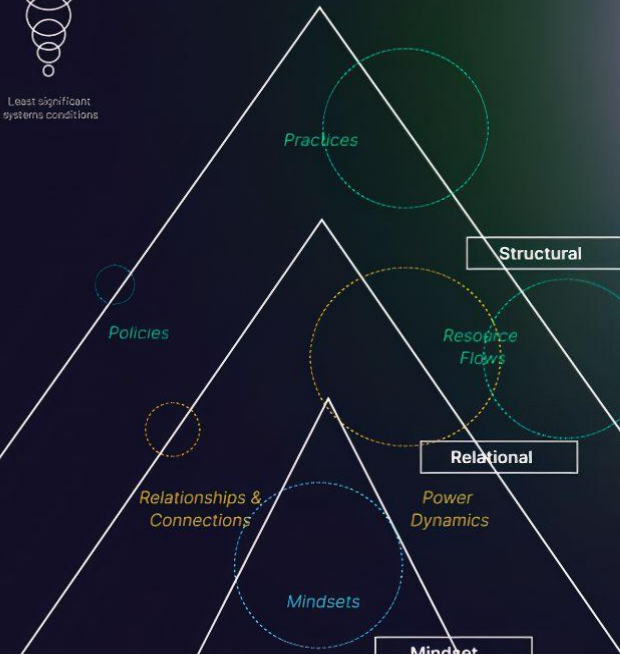
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group two | strategy & measurement

Multilaterals & Philanthropy (Local Offices) | BMGF, UNICEF, WHO



KEY



Measurement

Lack of rigorous impact data is a barrier to making the case for gender mainstreaming.

Insights

Lack of Role Clarity & Responsibility Leads to Little Synergy

There is a lot of good work being done across the board in terms of gender programming, but there is a lack of coordination and synergy between different actors. This is often due to a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities, and a lack of ownership for gender work across different departments and levels of the organization.

Leadership Lacking Proximity & Context

Senior leaders often lack proximity to the ground and do not have a deep understanding of the local context. This can lead to a lack of buy-in and support for gender programming, as well as a lack of resources and attention for these issues.

Strategy

When the gender strategy is peripheral to the organization's core strategy, or lacks clarity, it's difficult to implement and get traction.

Insights

GM seen as an "add on" and valued as such. "Without addressing the right areas, we will not reach our target, especially as we have increased the number of countries we are working in. Gender work is important for us, but it is not always seen as a core part of our strategy."

Lack of HQ & Local Alignment = Strategy Inefficiencies

There is a disconnect between the strategy developed at the HQ level and the implementation at the local level. This can lead to inefficiencies and a lack of progress, as the local teams may not have the resources or support needed to implement the strategy effectively.

Policy without Implementation Infrastructure

Leadership is not always clear on what is needed to implement the strategy. This can lead to a lack of resources and support for the implementation, as well as a lack of accountability for the results.

“Indicators aren't always contextualized for realities of the country (thus, many unexpected results not included in indicators). And when I try to include some of these important results in the annual report, they don't fit in a “particular” indicator decided by HQ.”

Gender is Cross-Cutting but Accountability Falls on Specialists

Gender is a cross-cutting issue that affects all areas of the organization. However, accountability for gender work often falls on specialists, who may not have the resources or support needed to implement the strategy effectively.

Deferral of Accountability to Implement GM

There is a tendency to defer accountability for gender work to other departments or levels of the organization. This can lead to a lack of ownership and support for gender programming, as well as a lack of resources and attention for these issues.

Strategy as a Solution

Having a clear strategy is essential for the successful implementation of gender programming. This includes defining the goals, objectives, and key performance indicators, as well as identifying the resources and support needed to achieve these goals.

“Technical (HQ team) has more resources than implementation (country) level - so you have documents, policies, and strategies - but they are not well implemented because lack of resources at the local level.”

Structural Conditions Highlighted

- Gender Strategy**
- Inconsistent consideration for local or country policies & realities
 - Upstream & downstream delivery > GE not often considered at the point of upstream research
 - GM specialists in country have to be okay and opportunistic about funding, responsibility to avoid budget funds on their plates
 - Confined to HQ, country offices are not staffed sufficiently in terms of gender expertise, big specialists and lack of experienced operations
 - Lack of clarity on organizational architecture for effective implementation

Measurement

- Data collection often across countries and not just at the country level, but at the local/organizational level. This can make it hard to contextualize and interpret the data
- HQ-based accountability > no clear lead > poor reporting of impact measurement
- Donors/clients are willing to invest resources in the collection of this type of data around GE
- There is no data regularly or consistently that tracks over time

Relational Conditions Highlighted

- Gender Strategy**
- Weak accountability of sectoral teams for gender equality reports
 - Several program areas with different ways of reinforcing accountability > different thresholds by discipline
 - Inadequate lower level influence on strategic direction and implementation
- Measurement**
- We don't collect data directly, we support country partners to collect it - and often this process isn't streamlined or always effective, it can also negatively influence our relationships with local teams.

Mindset Conditions Highlighted

- Gender Strategy**
- Misunderstanding of gender equality added value. General belief that gender mainstreaming is an add on
 - "Anyone can do gender"
- Measurement**
- "Not all data is good data" - we don't always understand why we are collecting certain data - to what end.
 - Data collection around GE is relatively new.
 - Indicators are not always contextualized for the realities of the country



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APPENDIX

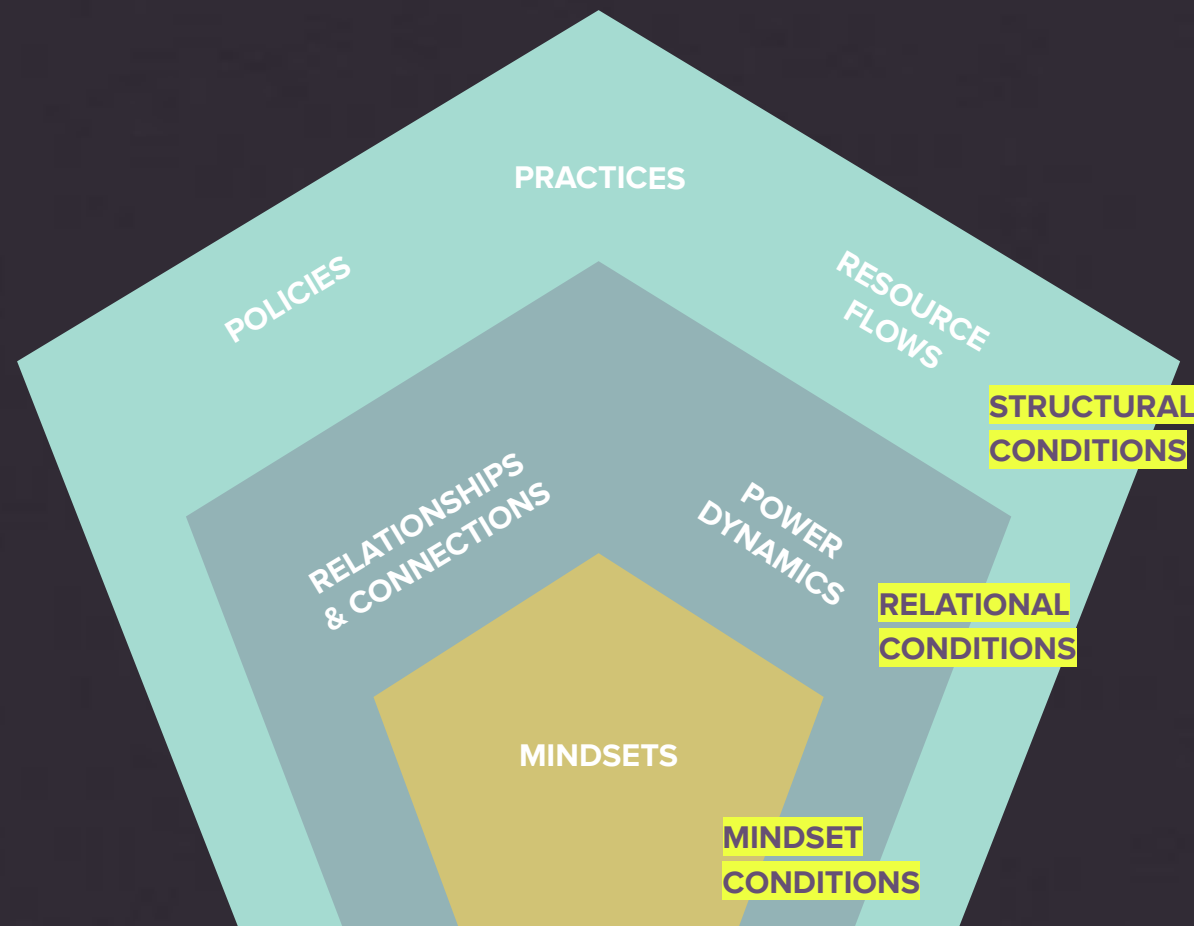


Systems Conditions Model

This model is a research tool used to better understand system dynamics, major influences and present stakeholders. We will use it to explore the deeper dynamics within each of our assigned Hard Problems, and the systems conditions which most affect each Hard Problem.

The model allows one to:

- See a problem and solution from multiple perspectives and levels, rather than just that of immediate users or a single organization, so that we better understand the conditions for success.
- Seek opportunities to influence the underlying dynamics of the system, such as power dynamics, mindsets, and structures.
- Focus on the root causes of an issue, rather than solving for just the symptoms or what is right in front of us, so as to design for lasting change.



Systems Conditions Model

STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

These are conditions that exist at the organizational structure or resourcing level. These might include: top down policies, resource flows, historically embedded practices, organizational mandates, to name a few.

Example: No resourcing is allocated to Gender Mainstreaming leadership positions (at the executive level)

RELATIONAL CONDITIONS

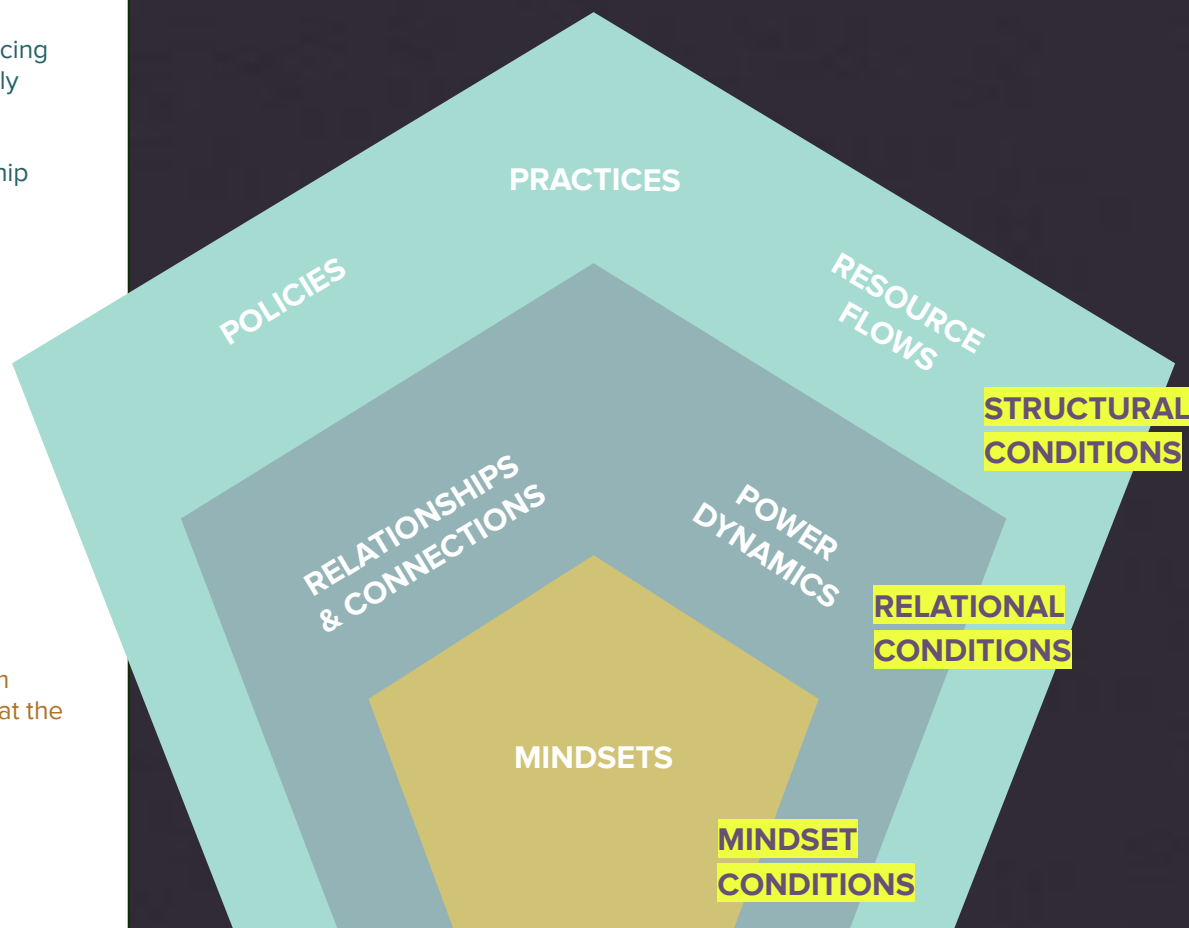
These are conditions that exist at the interpersonal or relational level. These might include: leadership and communication across units and individuals, power distribution between HQ and regional or country offices, collaboration between GM teams & program implementation teams.

Example: Decision making between HQ and regional/country offices suffers from relational power dynamics, limiting the voice of gender specialists closest to local communities.

MINDSET CONDITIONS

These are conditions that exist at the ideological, belief and social norm level. These might include: values, beliefs, political ideologies, biases (at the individual, program or organizational level).

Example: Your CEO does not believe wholeheartedly in GM, thus it is prioritized in theory but not at all in practice.



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APRIL * 2022

