



GENDER-SMART ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION & TRAINING PLUS GEET+

Dr. Barbara Orser & Dr. Catherine Elliott



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Finally, the authors wish to acknowledge Dr. Margo Thomas, Founder and President of [Women's Economic Imperative](#) for her advice on knowledge mobilisation and advocacy. Established in 2018, Women's Economic Imperative (WEI) responds to the call to action of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. The panel identified entrepreneurship as one of the seven drivers of women's economic empowerment. WEI advocates for policy change, particularly in G20 economies and Think Tank (T20) that is associated with the G20, and with partners on global initiatives to create and grow sustainable economic opportunities for women.

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Foreword

The roles of enterprise and of entrepreneurs as engines of innovation and economic growth are well established. Research also highlights the contributions of women's entrepreneurship and the economic value lost when women are discouraged from business start-up and scaling their enterprises, are under-valued, or simply not counted. These are not just women's issues. Society as a whole is impacted negatively in terms of human capital investment, innovation, and economic growth. "Women's economic empowerment is not just a moral imperative, it is an economic no-brainer," according to Christine Lagarde, former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the structural, economic and social inequalities that increase the costs and risks of health and environmental shocks for vulnerable populations, including women and girls. Women's Economic Imperative (WEI) is committed to inclusive economic growth and sustainable development to benefit all—women, men, boys, and girls. Our strategic focus is on entrepreneurship as an essential element for the economic empowerment of disadvantaged, marginalised, and vulnerable populations within which women and girls are disproportionately burdened.

In this context, WEI is honored to collaborate with Dr. Barbara Orser, Dr. Catherine Elliott and partners of Gender-Smart Entrepreneurship Education & Training Plus (GEET+) to adapt and translate this work in a range of economic and social contexts with the goal of reducing "gender, racial and occupational stereotypes and unconscious biases associated with entrepreneurship education and training." This report is an important and practical tool that can be applied as an integral part of the COVID-19 pandemic response, recovery, and resilience action agenda.

Dr. Margo Thomas

Founder, CEO of Women's Economic Imperative
2018 Co-Chair, T20 Task Force on Gender Economic Equity
2019 Co-Chair, T20 Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Former Chief of Secretariat, United Nations Secretary-General's
High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced small business support organisations and educational institutions across the globe to re-think how they deliver entrepreneurship education and training. The crisis has amplified structural inequalities. Women entrepreneurs, for example, are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic compared to men entrepreneurs,^{2,3} and under-represented among the beneficiaries of COVID-19 small business relief measures.⁴ Women are also under-represented as participants in entrepreneurship and small business support training programs and advisory services.^{5,6} The unprecedented transition to online delivery methods presents an opportunity to create more inclusive entrepreneurship courses and programs.

Gender-Smart Entrepreneurship Education & Training Plus (GEET+) translates academic research and evidence-based insights into practical applications to support the development of inclusive entrepreneurship education and training. The GEET+ framework, rationale, principles, action strategies, GEET+ Scorecard®, tips, and case-based illustrations are presented.

The overarching goal of GEET+ is to reduce gender, racial and occupational stereotypes and unconscious biases associated with entrepreneurship education and training. The entry point of GEET+ is gender, with the understanding that gender is one identity attribute that interacts with others, through venture creation, small business management and entrepreneurship education and training. Women entrepreneurs are not a homogenous group. Consistent with the 'plus' of gender-based analysis (GBA), Gender-Smart Entrepreneurship Education and Training Plus acknowledges that gender-based analysis goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences, to include multiple identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability.

GEET+ can be used by instructors and trainers to assess the status of equity, diversity and inclusion in entrepreneurship courses and programs and to develop gender-smart curricula. Activities are provided, such as an inventory of phrases and attributes to examine gendered language in course descriptions. Program managers can use the GEET+ scorecard to determine the degree to which courses and advisory services are inclusive, and to construct action plans to address program and/or organisation-level gaps. Action plans can be tailored to leverage good practices and prioritize components of the GEET+ framework that need development. Illustrative performance indicators can be used to direct and monitor interventions. Policymakers, funders and advocates can draw on the GEET+ scorecard to design inclusive policies, and hold delivery agencies accountable for inclusive practices.

GEET+ is relevant across international contexts. The framework and scorecard can be customized to reflect the learning needs of diverse entrepreneurs and the socio-cultural contexts in which they live and work. Illustrative case applications of the GEET+ framework in Canada and Jordan are described.

It is our hope that the GEET+ report will facilitate conversations about the challenges and vulnerabilities of advancing inclusive entrepreneurship. These insights will enhance entrepreneurs' and students' learning by bolstering course and program relevance, market readiness, and awareness about the barriers to venture creation and small business management. Content also informs the professional development of practitioners who contribute to entrepreneurial ecosystems.

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Gender-Smart Entrepreneurship Education & Training Plus GEET+



Introduction



Gender-Smart Entrepreneurship Education & Training Plus (GEET+) is a purpose-built framework and scorecard that enables educators and trainers to adopt inclusive perspectives and content within entrepreneurship, small business management and new venture courses and programs. GEET+ complements Gender-Based Analysis Plus, organisation-level frameworks and innovation and gender evaluation resources.

Building an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem is predicated on having strong educational institutions.⁷ Entrepreneurship education and training organisations include post-secondary educational institutions as well as social enterprise and small business/innovation support intermediaries (e.g., accelerators, incubators). Most offer a range of advisory and ‘wrap around’ services, including training courses, programs, networking events, mentorships, clubs, technology-transfer offices, business pitch competitions, etc.

Inclusive entrepreneurship education and training is focused on equity.

Inclusion means responding to the learning needs and lived experiences of all entrepreneurs, regardless of biological (sex), economic and socio-cultural (gender) differences and identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability. It means creating a learning environment where all participants feel that they belong.

Inclusive entrepreneurship education and training is associated with innovation and economic development. Education and training positively impact participants’ attitudes towards entrepreneurship⁸, including entrepreneurial mindsets, capabilities (knowledge, skills, competencies),⁹ start-up intentions,¹⁰ and firm performance.^{11,12}



Why is gender-smart entrepreneurship education and training important?

Evidence suggests that women are under-represented as participants in, and staff of many entrepreneurship and small business support programs and advisory services. Barriers reflect recruitment and selection biases; organisation culture; the absence of metrics, reporting and accountability; masculine content, language and imagery of entrepreneurship; and limited knowledge about equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) among program managers.^{13,14} Many EDI initiatives remain pilot, ad hoc, or single events that are token efforts to include diverse women entrepreneurs.¹⁵ Few organisations support strategies to attract and retain diverse women entrepreneurs. Biases are also reflected in program design, development and delivery, including assumptions about who is an entrepreneur, and what it means to be entrepreneurial.

A (2016) study of high-tech incubators and accelerators across the United States, for example, found that women and racialised (minority) entrepreneurs are not participating at the same rates as their white, male counterparts. Unintentional barriers to more diverse participation reflected limited or ineffective recruitment, biased selection processes, program designs that failed to accommodate the needs of entrepreneurs, and organizational culture that was unattractive or intimidating.^{16,17}

Many EDI support initiatives remain pilot, ad hoc, or single events that often showcase diverse entrepreneurs. Few organisations support strategies to attract and retain diverse women entrepreneurs.

Similarly, a (2019) Canadian survey of small business support organisations found the majority of EDI initiatives were informal, in development or aspirational: 68% of intermediaries did not provide EDI training for staff or clients and only 27% considered gender and diversity in selecting and assessing clients.¹⁸ A (2014) study found that publicly-funded small business programs in Ontario (Canada) favour established and larger enterprises, “companies least likely to be in need of support.”¹⁹ This excludes many women-identified entrepreneurs who, on average, own and operate less established enterprises compared to men-identified small business owners.

At program level, gendered language and stereotyping are reported. A cross-cultural (2018) study of 86 course descriptions from 81 universities in 21 North American and Western European countries, found gendered language and subjects. This included a 1 to 9 ratio of feminine to masculine phrases in course descriptions, reinforcing masculine conceptualisations of entrepreneurship.²⁰ The study concludes that sexist language and imagery signal who will succeed in the course, and the intellectual, competitive, and visionary capacities needed to be a successful entrepreneur.

It is not surprising that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reports that entrepreneurship education and training programs have less impact on women compared to men.²¹ At the same time, women-focused interventions are seen to strengthen participants’ entrepreneurial identity, increase engagement in auxiliary programs, and bolster learning outcomes through enhanced program relevance, market readiness, and awareness about the barriers and opportunities associated with entrepreneurship and small business management.²²

As the COVID-19 pandemic has forced small business support organisations and educational institutions to transition quickly to online learning, adapting content for new delivery methods presents the opportunity to assess the gendered nature of education and training curricula and programming. It is important to ensure that readily available course content does not amplify gender, racial and occupational stereotypes, including masculine/feminine language about who is an entrepreneur, what constitutes entrepreneurial knowledge, and who is invited into the digital classroom as role models and experts.

To the best of our knowledge, GEET+ is among the first conceptual framework and scorecard to inform entrepreneurship and small business programs and courses. This is an important contribution to global index building. GEET+ scorecard criteria can be customised to reflect the learning needs of diverse entrepreneurs, and the socio-cultural contexts in which they live and work. This report can be used to motivate and inform conversations about the challenges and vulnerabilities of advancing inclusive and diverse entrepreneurship and in EDI training. GEET+ complements other purpose-built entrepreneurship indices, such as [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor \(GEM\)](#) and [Global Entrepreneurship Index](#). Researchers are encouraged to collaborate in order to strengthen GEET+ assessment criteria and to establish context and country-specific performance benchmarks.

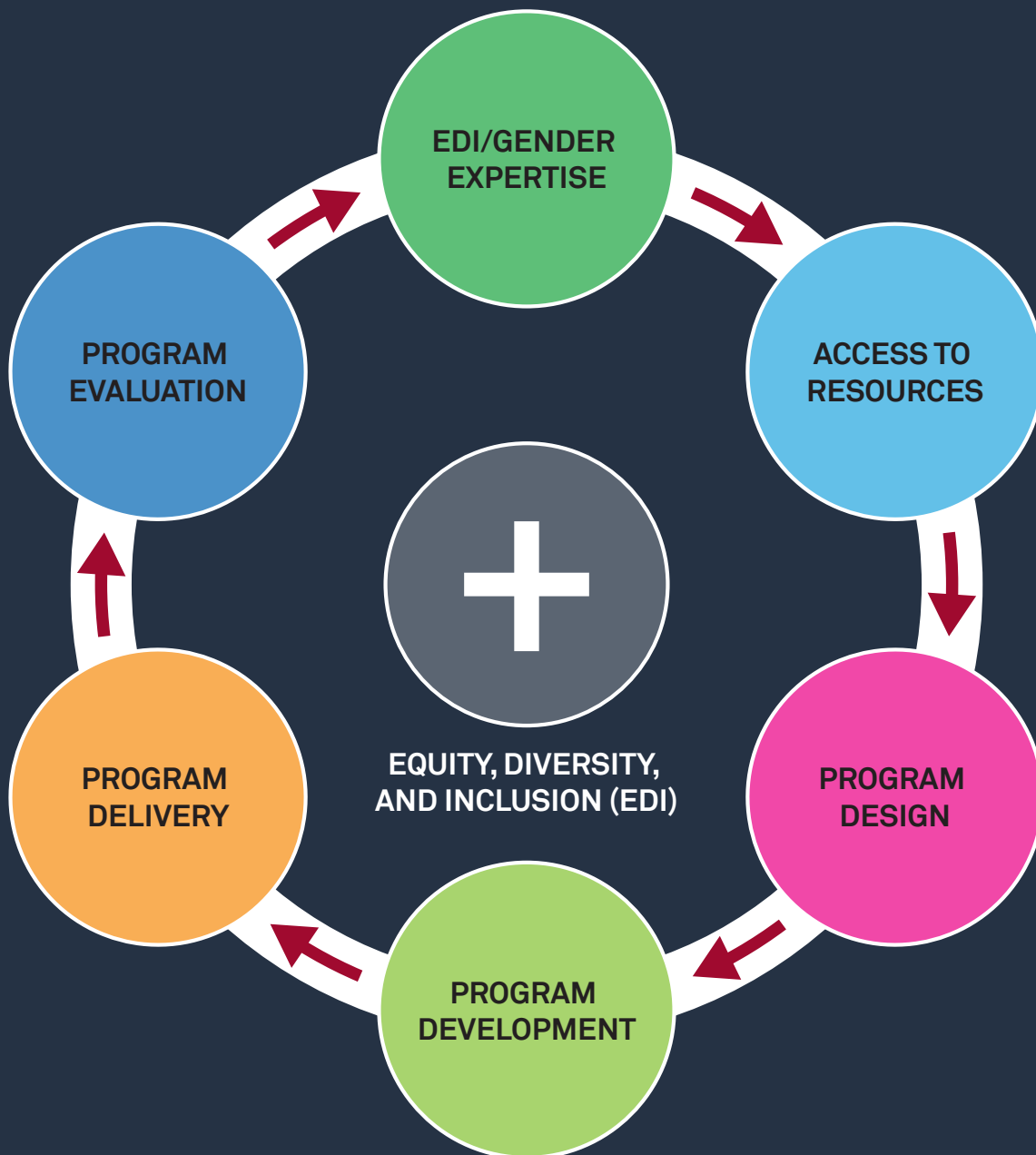
Mandate and Guiding Principles of GEET+



-
- + Centre entrepreneurship education and training focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.
 - + Identify and address unconscious biases, including gender, racial and occupational stereotypes that impede equality and economic security.
 - + Enhance access to resources such as capital, markets, technology, and talent.
 - + Respect multiple and diverse entrepreneurial identities.
 - + Advocate for inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems, such as support of grassroots, women-focused and feminist enterprise and networking organizations.
 - + Ensure physical and psychological safety to, from, and within learning environments.
 - + Engage women in the design, development, and delivery of entrepreneurship education and training.

GEET+ Framework

The GEET+ framework consists of six components of entrepreneurship education and training. Each is situated around the central mandate of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).



Components of the GEET+ Framework

EDI COMMITMENT



To drive positive and sustained change, leadership commitment to EDI and a clearly defined mandate to promote EDI are essential. Commitment infers embedding inclusive outcomes within the organisation's mission and within education and training objectives; and this helps to build a culture of EDI.²³ Positive indicators include a common understanding of and commitment to gender inclusion:

- Champions are identified and given resources to support GEET+.
- Leaders use their positions of power to demonstrate support of under-represented entrepreneurs.
- Staff perceive that leadership “walk the talk” by integrating gender equality in programming.

EDI/GENDER EXPERTISE



Management and staff, including curriculum developers and instructors, are trained in, and are able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and technical capacity to support EDI. For example:

- Instructors contribute to and receive continuous EDI training in the context of small business, entrepreneurship, and innovation—not ad hoc, generic EDI training.
- Instructors are comfortable with inclusive metaphors, role models and language, such as, recognising that entrepreneurs are change makers, activists, artists, and community-builders.
- Program managers, staff, instructors and trainers are knowledgeable about research related to women's entrepreneurship, including identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability, and how these can influence access to resources and enterprise performance. This knowledge is shared in programs and courses.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES



Programs are designed to increase participants' access to resources. For example, lead customers, financial and social networks and business support services (e.g., talent, technology, mentoring, advice). This includes, for example:

- Program design provides on and off ramps of complementary services, from start-up to scale-up, and bridges to support intermediaries for underrepresented small business owners.
- Referrals to women-focused, feminist, racialised (minority), Indigenous peoples, entrepreneurs with disabilities, veteran, youth, elder and other expert small business support organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and industry networks and associations.

Components of the GEET+ Framework

PROGRAM DESIGN



Program design and learning objectives explicitly reference the importance of EDI and acknowledge the gendered nature of entrepreneurship, innovation and small business management. Program design, for example, incorporates:

- Attention to the needs of diverse women in terms of social, cultural, geographic and political contexts in which they live, including gender role expectations and constraints.
- Gender influences on start-up and scale-up at the individual, firm, industry, and ecosystem levels.
 - At the individual level, examples include gender differences in self-confidence or entrepreneurial self-efficacy, financial knowledge, experience, and social network composition.
 - At the firm level, examples include access to, and types of financial capital employed and the likelihood of being a discouraged borrower (defined as a business owner who would otherwise qualify for funding but does not apply for fear of being turned down).
 - At the industry level, illustrative influences include occupational stereotypes, and the tendency of women business owners to enter low margin, crowded industry sectors.
 - Within entrepreneurial ecosystems, lower participation of women compared to men in publicly funded small business and innovative support intermediaries is reported.
- Multiple forms of innovation, including marketing, process, organisational, and product innovations; alternative business models (such as, social, peace, entrepreneurial, and green enterprises); and alternative enterprise ownership and governance structures (such as, for-profit corporations, partnerships, co-operatives, non-profits, hybrid organisations).
- Women in non-traditional entrepreneurial sectors and roles, such as, high-tech, construction, community development and engineering, women inventors and social innovators.
- Household and commercial budgeting and associated risks to financial security and well-being.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



Content is developed in detail, following the above program design guidelines. For example:

- Gender-smart content is prototyped and tested with input from participants to validate relevance. Participatory methods to gather feedback from diverse entrepreneurs are also recommended.
- Time is allocated to introduce gender, equity, diversity and inclusion concepts and to ensure that content is absorbed and applied in the learning process.
- Experiential activities are employed that explore gendered constraints and impacts on personal lives, family finances, and care-giving responsibilities.

Components of the GEET+ Framework

PROGRAM DELIVERY



Programs are delivered and revised to ensure that the learning needs of diverse women entrepreneurs are met. For example:

- Delivery methods recognise the need for accessible and flexible learning formats, such as, just-in-time (as needed) webinars and online content.
- Program managers consider the benefits and limitations of women-only, hybrid and alternative gender-based program options.
- Infrastructure considers participant safety and access to public transportation.
- Tertiary services, such as, daycare and ICT learning support, are offered when applicable. (Note: participants may not ask for childcare, if they are seen to be contradicting social norms).²⁴

PROGRAM EVALUATION



Stakeholder feedback is gathered and performance outcomes are measured, reported on, and monitored using gender-disaggregated data that recognise multiple gender identities. Considerations include:

- Assessment criteria that measure different definitions of “success,” such as, change in entrepreneurial mindset, women’s economic empowerment and security, family and community contributions, health and well-being.
- Assessment criteria include increased participant knowledge about gender influences in venture creation processes.

How to use the GEET+ framework and scorecard[®]

What gets measured gets done. To operationalise the GEET+ framework, a scorecard was developed (page 17). The scorecard provides an assessment tool and performance metrics against which to measure progress; and this increases commitment to EDI. Performance metrics also help to distinguish aspirational intention versus evidence-based practices.

There are several ways to use the GEET+ framework and scorecard. This includes customising the scorecard assessment criteria to fit your organisation’s program needs.

STEPS TO GET YOU STARTED

1

Review the components of the GEET+ framework and scorecard evaluation criteria.

2

Use the GEET+ Scorecard[®] to assess programs and courses. Tally the score.

3

Construct an action plan to address the gaps. Include mechanisms to support ongoing assessment.

4

Seek input from experts with knowledge about intersectional influences in venture creation.

5

Pilot test the program and course changes, reevaluate and revise.

How has the GEET+ framework been used?

The following cases demonstrate the application of the GEET+ framework in different cultural contexts and program formats.

Women's Start-up Network, University of Ottawa, Canada

This innovative university course combined peer mentoring with instructor-led classroom learning. Targeted at women engineering and computer science students, the overall goals were to increase students' entrepreneurial skills and knowledge and instill an entrepreneurial mindset. Measurable objectives were to²⁵:

- Increase entrepreneurial intent and confidence.
- Increase the number of women students in entrepreneurial events and competitions on campus.
- Build students' social capital by establishing a community of like-minded engineers who were interested in entrepreneurship.²⁶

Components of the GEET+ framework were applied in several ways:

● **EDI commitment:** The Dean of Engineering was an enthusiastic sponsor and provided financial support for the program.

● **EDI/Gender expertise:** The program was led by three professors from diverse backgrounds with complementary knowledge about EDI women's issues, entrepreneurship, engineering, and computer science.

● **Access to resources:** An objective was to build participants' access to resources including broadening social networks into the local community and beyond. Women entrepreneurs and community leaders were involved as speakers, mentors, coaches, and advisors.

● **Program design and development:** Gender issues were embedded in all content, starting with gendered language in entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial identity, and participants' diverse perceptions of success. Participants developed enterprises to commercialise an array of products and services, such as wearable technology, Indigenous jewellery, biotechnology, 3D printer and online applications. Consensus was achieved among the instructors regarding the program philosophy and design. The book *Feminine Capital. Unlocking the Power of Women Entrepreneurs* helped to guide the course curricula.²⁷

● **Program delivery:** Leveraging a flexible structure and experiential learning approach, the program enabled participants to develop their own entrepreneurial identity, skills, and competencies in a supportive community.

● **Program evaluation:** Data was collected before, during and after the course to assess program design and support evidence-based outcomes. Results demonstrated significant increases in entrepreneurial identity, self-confidence and intent to become an entrepreneur among participants.²⁸ The program had a positive impact on participants' awareness of gender issues, connectedness to entrepreneurs and women in engineering/computer science (e.g., the representation of women who participated in university-based business pitch competitions increased from 0% to 24% to 33% in 2016, 2017, and 2018, respectively).

Launching Economic Achievement Program (LEAP) in Jordan

Funded by Global Affairs Canada, and managed by the Canadian Bureau for International Education in partnership with Ryerson University and INJAZ, this multi-year, large-scale program sought to increase women's economic empowerment in Jordan.²⁹

The overall goals were to:

- Address high unemployment rates among Jordanian women.
- Improve the enabling environment and culture regarding entrepreneurship and women in the workforce.

LEAP consists of three activity components: 1. the establishment and operation of a business incubator focused on women-led teams; 2. development, enrichment and delivery of gender sensitive-entrepreneurship curriculum and initiatives at Jordanian universities and schools, and; 3. stakeholder capacity building campaign. These components are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, as they work to bolster a cultural and institutional environment supportive of women entrepreneurs. For illustrative purposes, the case focuses primarily on the delivery of gender-sensitive entrepreneurship curriculum at Jordanian universities and schools.

Components of the GEET+ framework were applied in several ways:

● **EDI commitment:** LEAP was championed by the Chief Executive Officer of INJAZ—a Jordanian, non-profit organisation with a mission to inspire and prepare youth to become productive members of society and to accelerate the development of the national economy.

● **EDI/Gender expertise:** LEAP assembled an advisory committee comprised of private sector companies, multi-country government agencies, and donors that met on a quarterly basis to discuss the project and advance recommendations to strengthen women's economic empowerment in Jordan. An international team of consultants from Jordan and Canada was also assembled. Workshops engaged local professional women's groups to ensure content was culturally appropriate and addressed local barriers and challenges. 'On-the-ground' expertise was available to address questions from trainers, educators, and curriculum developers.

● **Access to resources:** LEAP facilitated the establishment of an incubator program exclusively for women-led start-ups that is housed at INJAZ's mySTARTUP incubator space. Linkages were made to women's professional and small business groups in Jordan. Working simultaneously, another component of the project was applying pressure to create a cultural and institutional environment that is supportive of women entrepreneurs.

● **Program design:** To inform program design, an introductory workshop ("Gender 101") was held with participants, partners, trainers, curriculum developers, entrepreneurs and local women's organisations. Facilitated by gender and entrepreneurship advisors, workshops set the stage for determining a shared vocabulary and understanding of what it means, in Jordan, to strive for 'gender justice' through entrepreneurship and to apply a gender lens to entrepreneurship education and training.

● **Program development:** Advisors worked with Jordanian curriculum developers to co-construct gender-inclusive entrepreneurship curricula for elementary and secondary students. This consisted of a detailed review of content, module-by-module, line-by-line, to discuss in what ways a gendered understanding of entrepreneurship could be infused into curricula to create a gender-inclusive learning experience for young women and men.

Gender-smart content included Jordanian examples that related to girls' and women's entrepreneurial experiences and ways of knowing, business models that speak to broader economic and social values and interests (e.g., social enterprises, sustainable and feminist enterprises), and exercises to raise entrepreneurial confidence, financial literacy and awareness of systemic barriers that women entrepreneurs can face in starting and growing an enterprise.

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● **Program delivery:** To ensure high quality delivery of gender-inclusive learning, a 'training of trainers' seminar was undertaken. Master trainers were selected to participate in training 'boot camps' where they were introduced to foundational concepts and terminology of GEET+. New gender-smart instructional manuals were co-created and pilot tested.

● **Program evaluation:** All elements of LEAP were monitored for impact, and evaluated against the results-based management framework (key performance indicators) before, during and following interventions. Project partners and advisors from Canada and Jordan performed informal 'check-ins' to garner feedback, identify areas for improvement and ensure a 'gender lens' was applied. A local gender advisor monitored programs and instructors on an ongoing basis, and provided recommendations for improvement that were immediate and culturally relevant. Program outcomes included cultural and institutional environments that are supportive of women entrepreneurs; business incubator supporting multiple women-led startups; and the development and delivery of gender sensitive-entrepreneurship curriculum and initiatives at Jordanian universities and schools.



Action strategies to support GEET+

The following action strategies have been formulated to assist in supporting the application of GEET+. Most are based on our experiences in developing and employing GEET+ in different cultural and education or training contexts.

Begin entrepreneurship curricula and program development with an objective to support the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.³⁰ Too often, these goals are an afterthought. A consequence is the need to retool content to address these goals, rather than building the goals into participants' learning outcomes.

Don't assume that colleagues and participants understand the influences of sex, gender, diversity and gender-identity in venture creation processes. Address foundational concepts first and tackle the 'elephants in the room'—such as, concepts and terminology (e.g., gender, sex and social norms) and gender-based stereotypes—before discussing entrepreneurship. Take time to inform participants about issues and answer questions and concerns, such as: What is sex? What are gender influences? Why are these important? Why should I care?

Provide opportunities to examine the language, imagery, and metaphors used in small business and entrepreneurship training materials. Such influences stymie the best intentions to support GEET+. Agree upon language that is inclusive, respectful, and culturally appropriate.

Consider a broad definition of entrepreneurship. The pandemic, for example, identified new heroines. Draw on news stories about COVID-19 responders, for example, to stimulate discussions about opportunity identification and ways in which entrepreneurial action is demonstrated.

Seek external expertise if your organisation lacks knowledge about EDI. Work as a team to co-create content and response strategies. Make sure that your organisation does not undervalue EDI expertise!

Help participants understand how gender influences entrepreneurial and engineering processes, users, customers, technologies, and science. Influences vary based on the period of time, culture, socio-economic factors, industry, and other contexts. Not recognising such influences within entrepreneurship education and training can have negative consequences. For example:^{31,32}

- Case studies document that within engineering processes, a masculine default can produce errors in machine translation and differences in safety of seat belts.
- Within science-based ventures, failing to use appropriate samples of male and female cells, tissues and animals can yield faulty results and hence, impact commercialisation.
- Conversely, recognising women's lived experiences is associated with FEMTECH products, services, processes, and organisational structures. Beware of reproducing female stereotypes and images in the creation of 'feminine products'.

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Recognise that "process matters": collaboration provides opportunities for EDI experts to work with program staff and other stakeholders to better understand organisational context.

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Research on the effectiveness of diversity training in corporate settings provides insight for entrepreneurship educators and trainers. Diversity programs have the most positive impact when:³³

- Program managers, staff and participants work collectively in solving problems related to diversity and inclusion.
 - Participants increase their on-the-job contacts with "diverse" individuals and groups.
 - Management promotes "social accountability—the desire to look fair-minded."
 - One or more individuals are held responsible for diversity programs, such as, mentoring, cross-training or gender equality task forces.
 - Programs are voluntary and emergent rather than top-down and mandatory.
-

Expect resistance: Introducing GEET+ challenges deeply held cultural values, social norms, and occupational expectations. GEET+ is intended to change mindsets, challenge the status quo and confront stereotypes about diverse groups of entrepreneurs.

Use multiple approaches to respond to participants' concerns and counter resistance. For example:

- Evidence-based arguments: Employing EDI data at the organisational, regional, country and international levels (e.g., Global Entrepreneurship Monitor).³⁴
 - Experiential exercises: Activities that enable participants to visualise and experience the challenges of gender-related barriers to venture creation.
 - Story telling: Diverse role models who describe personal entrepreneurial journeys.
 - Problem-solving: Just-in-time problem-solving including addressing barriers faced by women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial leaders.
 - Encouraging resistors to assume leadership roles (as some may become champions).
 - Building in time to respond to difficult questions about sex, gender, equality, etc.
-

Communicate impact: There remains an absence of EDI performance metrics and reporting within entrepreneurship and small business education support organisations. Share the organisation's results to demonstrate the potential impacts of GEET+.

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Expand recruitment networks; create diverse selection committees and adjust selection process; design programs for women and [racialized] minority entrepreneurs; and create inclusive culture.

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Activity: Gender equality through online learning

To illustrate that entrepreneurship education and training is rarely gender-balanced, browse one or two online education content providers, such as, [Harvard Business Publishing Education](#), [Ivey Publishing](#) or [LinkedIn Learning](#).

Given the need to pivot quickly to digital content and remote delivery due to COVID-19, many instructors and trainers will adopt available online content. Consider these questions.

How many diverse women versus men are profiled in videos, simulations, podcasts and other learning aids? For example, how many women-owned versus men-owned small businesses are described in the case studies?

How many and how are men and women portrayed as entrepreneurial leaders (e.g. age, ethnicity, race)?

What percentage of women to men are commentators, instructors or interviewers within the digital content?

How often are potential gender influences identified in the content?

Activity: Exploring the use of language

This activity is designed to explore the use of language in entrepreneurship course and program descriptions. Words and metaphors help participants to conceptualise entrepreneurship, including what it means to be entrepreneurial and who is an entrepreneur. Some may be less willing to pursue entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship education and training, if course, program or event descriptions do not align with their gender identity or self-perception.³⁵ This infers the need to address masculine language that is often used in course outlines, particularly in practice-based course descriptions.³⁶

- Review the illustrative masculine and feminine phrases and attributes identified in entrepreneurship course descriptions.* What do you observe?
- Now, conduct a word search of your course or program description using these phrases and attributes. To what extent does the description employ gendered language?
- Having done so, replace some of the masculine with feminine phrases and attributes. To what extent do the changes reposition the concept of entrepreneurship?
- What are other ways to balance gendered language in event, program and advisory descriptions?

Masculine phrases and attributes*	Feminine phrases and attributes*
Ability to persuade	Acknowledge personal and professional life
Commitment	Adaptive
Confidence	Appreciation of different cultural values
Competitive advantage	Awareness
Critical analysis	Building trust
Emphasis on competition	Collaborative process
Logical	Collegial group activity
Need to be resourceful	Ethics
Powers of managerial judgment	Learn from others
Pro-active	Listening
Risk-seeking behavior	Sharing
Strategic	Social
Superior opportunity assessors	Trust
Technically skilled	Unstructured circumstance

*Source: Adopted from Jones, S., & Warhuus, J.P., (2018).

TIP

Using descriptors such as 'change makers', 'activists', 'artists' and 'community-builders' to describe entrepreneurs can attract students who might otherwise not consider participating in events or programs. Describing entrepreneurship as a means to effect positive change, such as solving social, medical, political or other problems, is another approach.

Online learning

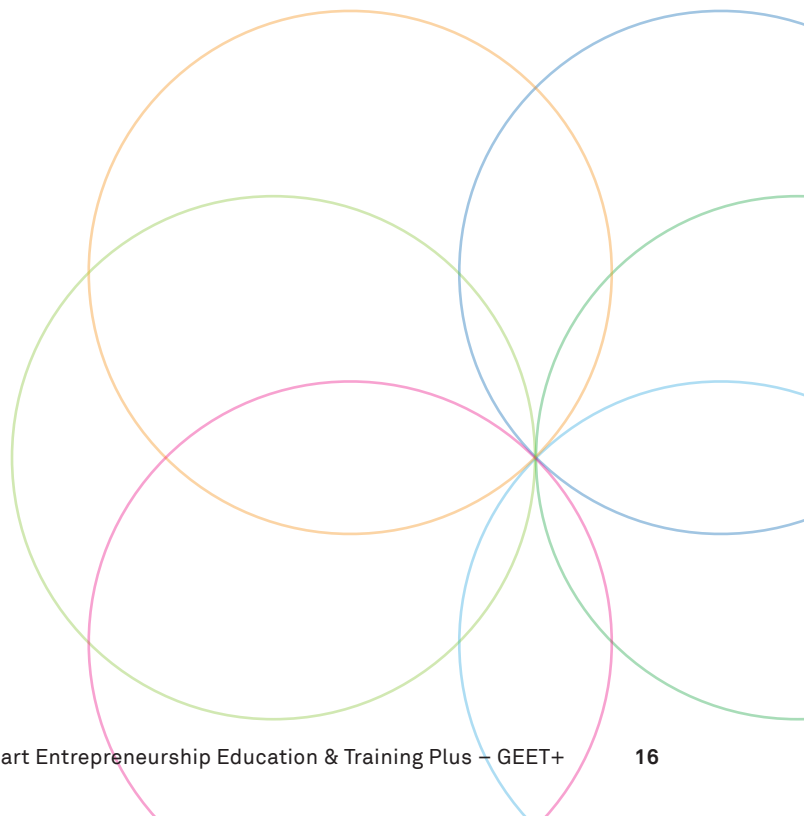
Do not assume that transitioning to online instruction means the learning environment is more democratic, less aggressive or free of the gender and cultural barriers that can plague traditional classrooms.³⁷ Monitor discussion boards, chat rooms, blogs, tweets and other digital forums to ensure that participants feel free to raise concerns and share ideas and experiences.

Ask students to create a log of speakers, role models and other experts in and outside the course or program. This activity builds social capital and enables participants to monitor influencers by gender, race, geographic location and sector. Then, undertake an audit to reflect upon potential biases in entrepreneurship learning and social capital.

Familiarize yourself with the gendered nature of online learning. Share insights in course syllabi. Discuss inclusion and gender equity through online learning in the course or program introduction. To get you started, visit [Stanford University Tomorrow's Professor Posting: Gender Considerations in Online Learning](#).

Use learning technologies to create your own content. Reach out to small business/entrepreneurship support organisations and women-focused associations to identify diverse entrepreneurs who might contribute to course content and participants' learning experience.

Do not assume that transitioning to online instruction means the learning environment is more democratic, less aggressive or free of the gender and cultural barriers that can plague traditional classrooms.





Gender-Smart Entrepreneurship Education & Training Plus Scorecard[©]



GEET+ scorecard®

The GEET+ scorecard can be used by instructors and trainers to self-assess entrepreneurship courses. Program managers can use GEET+ scorecard to assess equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in program and advisory services, and to construct action plans to address program and/or organization-level gaps. **Action plans can be tailored to leverage good practices and prioritize components of the GEET+ framework that need development.** Key performance indicators can be used to monitor interventions. Policymakers, funders and advocates can draw on the GEET+ scorecard to design performance indicators to hold delivery agencies accountable for their inclusive practices.

Instructions: Read each statement associated with the six components of GEET+. Indicate a level of agreement for the statements using the 5-point scale, where, **1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree** and **5=strongly agree**. Tally the scores at the end of each section and your organisation’s overall performance in GEET+. Then, review your total score to identify the gaps and develop an action plan. Draw on the illustrative assessment criteria and performance metrics to then construct a GEET+ program.

Components of entrepreneurship education & training	Illustrative metrics	Scoring				
		1	2	3	4	5
Commitment to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)		1	2	3	4	5
The leadership team is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in entrepreneurship programming and services.	Level of funding and other resources dedicated to GEET+	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organisation has a defined mandate for EDI (e.g., mission, vision, goals, and performance objectives).	Ability to meet timelines and anticipated outcomes for EDI initiatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders communicate the importance of inclusion and diversity inside and outside the organisation.	Public statements, associated press	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender diversity is reflected across the organisation’s leadership (different departments, committees, advisory groups).	Percentage of diverse women on leadership teams and prominent roles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender diversity is reflected among staff, administrators, faculty, instructors, mentors, and advisors.	Percentage of women in program development roles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaders ‘champion’ gender diversity within entrepreneurship programming and services.	Senior leader with assigned portfolio for gender diversity (e.g., 50% of senior leaders)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership and staff understand the business case for gender-smart programming.	Ongoing profiling of the ‘business case’ for diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership and staff have a shared understanding and vision of equity, diversity, and inclusion.	Published vision statement, code of ethics, complaint resolution process respects power differentials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Subtotal (8–40)						

Components of entrepreneurship education & training	Illustrative metrics	Scoring				
		1	2	3	4	5
EDI/Gender Expertise						
Leaders, managers, faculty, staff, and others are knowledgeable about the importance of GEET+ principles (e.g., signatory commitments to UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals)	Familiarity with legislation and national signatory commitments to support gender equality	○	○	○	○	○
Instructors contribute to and receive EDI training that is relevant to small business, venture creation and innovation, not one-size-fits-all, one-time or ad hoc support.	Completion of EDI training modules. Adhering to EDI principles and good practices ³⁸	○	○	○	○	○
Instructors are aware of related institutional initiatives and resources to support women's entrepreneurship.	Updated roster of women-focused and other small business support organisations (see resources listed in the Appendices)	○	○	○	○	○
Instructors use common terminology around gender equity, inclusion and women's entrepreneurship.	Glossary of industry terms compiled and shared with stakeholders	○	○	○	○	○
Instructors are knowledgeable about women's entrepreneurship and able to offer evidence-based advice and feedback to students and clients.	Articles, tips sheet, experts on call, Q&A, etc., for instructors	○	○	○	○	○
Instructors are comfortable with gender-inclusive metaphors, role models, and business models (e.g., recognise entrepreneurs are change makers, social activists, artists, and community-builders).	Directory of role models, testimonials, diverse business model canvases: green, feminist, social enterprise, classic, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Instructors are knowledgeable about women-focused resources, such as, supplier diversity, industry and small business owner training and support organisations.	Updated list of women leaders, and established working relationships with supplier diversity organisations (see organisations listed in the Appendices)	○	○	○	○	○
Subtotal (7–35)						

Components of entrepreneurship education & training	Illustrative metrics	Scoring				
		1	2	3	4	5
Access to Resources						
Programs increase participants' access to resources, such as, financial and social capital and other support services (e.g., lead customers, women-focused business support agencies and industry networks).	Degree to which program increases participants' access to resources Established relationships, referrals to/from women-focused agencies	○	○	○	○	○
Programs provide on and off ramps of complementary entrepreneurship support services (from start-up to scale-up or exit) and bridges to relevant intermediaries for under-represented groups (e.g., Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada).	Number of relationships, referrals to/ from small business intermediaries that support under-represented groups, (e.g., newcomers, Indigenous peoples, women in technology)	○	○	○	○	○
Programming includes a deliberate approach to expanding women's networks (e.g., group-based activities to enhance social capital (contacts, networks, referrals)).	Number and type of institutional contacts, networks, communities of practice. Changes in networks (e.g., size, scope)	○	○	○	○	○
Programming supports increased access to women and other diverse funders, including Angel and Venture Capital investors.	Level of awareness of and support for women-focused initiatives	○	○	○	○	○
Program leaders deliberately seek out diverse women to act as role models, mentors and coaches. (Creative approaches are considered due to lower numbers of women in some fields (e.g., webinars)).	Number of established relationships, referrals to/from non-traditional sources such as, agencies (e.g., crisis intervention, trades)	○	○	○	○	○
Programming addresses issues around financial literacy and self-efficacy, which may limit resource-seeking (e.g., <i>discouraged borrower syndrome</i>).	Use of assessment tools; training in access to and use of capital, small business finance (see illustrative resources in the Appendices)	○	○	○	○	○
Subtotal (6–30)						

Components of entrepreneurship education & training	Illustrative metrics	Scoring				
		1	2	3	4	5
Program Design						
Program learning objectives explicitly reference the gendered nature of entrepreneurship.	Learning objectives clearly identify gender influences (e.g., in manuals, toolkits, web content)	○	○	○	○	○
Program needs are determined by a gender-based needs assessment of target communities.	Client assessments include perceptual measures (e.g., success, intention, and access to resources)	○	○	○	○	○
Gender equality goals are integrated into program design and impact.	Written statements describing commitment to equity within education goals and outcomes	○	○	○	○	○
Gender (sex) disaggregated data is used to inform program design.	Mechanisms to gather, report and integrate into design	○	○	○	○	○
Participatory needs assessments incorporate diverse views and preferences in program design.	Program design incorporates different instructional methods and ways of gathering participant feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Content includes multiple types of enterprises (e.g., traditional and social enterprises, women- and men-dominated industry sectors).	Multiple sectors profiled, diverse entrepreneurial backgrounds recognised	○	○	○	○	○
Program design reflects clients' need to manage unpaid work, such as, family responsibilities.	Course content about cash flow management incorporates household (personal) and business statements	○	○	○	○	○
Program design addresses multiple forms of innovation, including marketing, process, organisational, and product innovations.	Increased awareness of masculine bias within traditional processes, design, and research	○	○	○	○	○
Program design addresses gender influences at start-up and scale-up at the <i>individual</i> level.	Changes in participants' entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial identity, financial knowledge and confidence, intentions and ambitions, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Program design addresses gender influences at start-up and scale-up at the <i>firm</i> level.	Changes in participants' access to and use of resources, including finance, customers, expertise and talent, ICT, industry and professional networks, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Program design addresses gender influences at start-up and scale-up at the <i>industry</i> level (e.g., tendency of women to enter low margin, crowded sectors or to assume support versus leadership roles in men-dominated sectors).	Increased understanding about and strategies to address industry-level barriers such as machoism, bro culture, occupational stereotyping, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Program design addresses gender influences at start-up and scale-up at the <i>institutional</i> level.	Increased awareness about and strategies to increase women's access to and benefits from small business/innovation/entrepreneurship support services (e.g., advocacy, outreach, community building, etc.).	○	○	○	○	○
Subtotal (12–60)						

Components of entrepreneurship education & training	Illustrative metrics	Scoring				
		1	2	3	4	5
Program Development						
Program content/curricula is prototyped and tested with diverse participants to ensure relevance and effectiveness.	Inclusive content is integrated throughout all curricula and effectiveness. Program content reflects the importance of digital literacy and on-line learning/commerce, given the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.	○	○	○	○	○
Program content and materials (textbooks, slides, online text, instructor resources) use gender-inclusive language.	Glossary of inclusive terms compiled and shared with stakeholders	○	○	○	○	○
Program content and materials use images that represent diverse groups of entrepreneurs and business owners (minority women and men, disabled peoples, different age groups, and Indigenous peoples)	Periodic audit of learning aids, websites, other content and materials to determine the extent to which content reflects gender diversity	○	○	○	○	○
Program content includes examples, cases, and experiential activities that reflect different (gendered) entrepreneurial identities and constraints.	Periodic audit of learning aids, websites, other content and materials to determine the extent to which content reflects gender diversity	○	○	○	○	○
Program content is customised, as needed, to help address unique constraints and facilitate problem-solving skills (e.g., specific cultural/gender constraints around traditional role expectations, caregiving responsibilities).	Degree to which content is culturally relevant and sensitive.	○	○	○	○	○
Content includes an introduction to GEET+ including foundational principles such as, gender and sex, intersectionality and diversity and impacts of gender on innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business.	Degree to which foundational principles are covered in course content.	○	○	○	○	○
Subtotal (6–30)						

Components of entrepreneurship education & training	Illustrative metrics	Scoring				
		1	2	3	4	5
Program Delivery						
Programs are delivered and revised to ensure the learning needs of diverse women are met.	Program impacts are measured based on instructors' and participants' diverse demographic profiles and learning needs	○	○	○	○	○
Program delivery is user-driven and flexible (e.g., part-time, modular, flexible, etc.) to ensure that scheduling considers the needs of diverse groups (e.g., multiple responsibilities).	Online content, flexible options, other scheduling options	○	○	○	○	○
Tertiary services are provided to support program delivery (e.g., onsite daycare, ICT learning support).	Support services are available and well-advertised. Additional costs borne by facility, not clients	○	○	○	○	○
Facilities for training are safe and easily accessible for clients (e.g., proximity to transit, illuminated at night, secure).	Level of participant satisfaction with training facilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Measures are in place to ensure equitable access to resources, such as, funding, access to programs and space.	Disaggregated data is used to determine diverse clients' access to resources	○	○	○	○	○
Program delivery offers innovative assistive and accommodating tools, technologies, and processes (e.g., translation or different languages, accessibility ramps, etc.)	Degree to which programs meet all accessibility standards (e.g., in Canada, see <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i>)	○	○	○	○	○
Subtotal (6–30)						

Components of entrepreneurship education & training	Illustrative metrics	Scoring				
		1	2	3	4	5
Program Evaluation						
Stakeholder outcomes are measured, reported on, and monitored using gender disaggregated data and recognising multiple gender identities.	Monitoring metrics is an ongoing activity	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluation criteria include changes in knowledge about gender influences in venture creation and innovation.	Assess pre-program and post-program levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, financial knowledge and confidence, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Leaders are held responsible for attaining gender equity targets (e.g., participants, instructors).	Targets are communicated and metrics tracked	○	○	○	○	○
Performance metrics about success extend beyond revenue growth and job creation, to women's economic empowerment, family and community contributions, health and well-being.	Diverse metrics to reflect diversity of clients and their businesses	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluation results are tracked, reported on, and discussed. Feedback loops ensure continuous improvement.	Regular reporting cycle and action planning for improvement	○	○	○	○	○
Subtotal (5–25)						

TOTAL SCORE (50–250)	
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Scoring results

<150
LOW PERFORMANCE

Your organisation has considerable work to do.

150–174
SOME PERFORMANCE

Review components of the GEET+ framework to prioritize action strategies.

175–199
MODERATE PERFORMANCE

Review and respond to performance gaps.

>200
HIGH PERFORMANCE

The organisation demonstrates progress in gender-smart entrepreneurship education and training plus.



Appendices



More resources

These resources provide more evidence-based insights, methodological approaches, and assessment frameworks to support inclusive entrepreneurship education and training, including several co-authored academic* and consulting reports.**

Assessments of ecosystem supports

- [Creating Inclusive High-Tech Incubators and Accelerators](#)⁵⁰
- [Entrepreneurship education and training programs around the world: dimensions for success](#)³⁷
- [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018/2019. Women's Entrepreneurship Report](#)⁴¹
- [Migrant entrepreneurship in OECD Countries](#)⁵¹
- [Policy Brief on Women's Entrepreneurship](#)⁴⁴
- [*Strengthening Ecosystem Support for Women Entrepreneurs](#)⁴⁵

Assessment frameworks

- [Integrating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into Evaluation: A Primer](#)⁴²
- [InterAction. The Gender Audit Handbook. A Tool for Organization Self-assessment and Transformation.](#)⁴³
- [VINNOVA: Innovation & Gender](#)⁴⁶

Case studies

- [Case Foundation Inclusive Entrepreneurship](#)

Knowledge hubs

- [Babson College Center for Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership](#) (U.S.)
- [Gender and the economy](#) (Canada)
- [International Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship](#)
- [International Labour Organization](#)
- [National Association of Women Business Owners](#) (U.S.)
- [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development](#)
- [Resources for Indigenous entrepreneurs](#) (Canada)
- [Resources for entrepreneurs with a disability](#)
- [Resources for minority entrepreneurs](#) (U.S.)
- [Resources for women entrepreneurs](#) (U.S.)
- [Resources for women entrepreneurs](#) (Canada)
- [UN WE EMPOWER](#)
- [Women's Business Enterprise National Council](#) (U.S.)
- [Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub](#) (Canada)

COVID-19 and women entrepreneurs

- [Articles on COVID-19 and gender](#) (UNESCO)
- [*COVID-19 relief measures and women entrepreneurs](#) (OECD)
- [The Impact of COVID-19 on women entrepreneurs](#) (Canada)

Entrepreneurial feminism

- [*Feminine Capital. Unlocking the Power of Women Entrepreneurs](#)³⁸
- [FEMINISM: A Key Idea for Business and Society](#)³⁹

Social enterprise

- [School for Social Entrepreneurs](#)

Supplier diversity

- [Gender-smart Procurement: Policies for Driving Change](#)⁴⁰
- [National Minority Supplier Development Council](#) (U.S.)
- [Supplier Diversity Alliance Canada](#)
- [WEConnect International](#)

Podcasts and Talks

- [Podcasts about women in business](#) (U.S.)
- [Podcasts Startup Canada THRIVE](#) (Canada)
- [Scotiabank | Forum for Women Entrepreneurs](#) (Canada)
- [TED talks on women in business](#) (U.S.)

The Scotiabank Women Initiative™ Knowledge Centre

- [**Benchmarking Financial Readiness](#)
- [**Budgeting For Success](#)
- [**Financing Your Enterprise](#)
- [**High Impact Mentoring](#)
- [**Managing Your Social Capital](#)
- [**Valuing Your Business](#)
- [**Women-focused Capital Funds](#)

Glossary

Diversity: Refers to a wide range of attributes such as, Indigenous or Aboriginal status, physical and mental abilities, age, race, ethnicity, family status, sexual orientation, and geographic location and how they can interact with gender in ways that will produce different outcomes for men and women.³⁹

Economic gender discrimination: Occurs when a person of one sex does not meet program application or usage criteria, and the reason is a lack of qualifications associated with the person's gender.⁴⁰

Empowerment: A “process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control, and to transformative action.”⁴¹

Entrepreneurial activity: Enterprising human actions in pursuit of social and economic value, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes, or markets.⁴²

Entrepreneurial feminism: A mechanism to create economic self-sufficiency and equity-based outcomes for diverse women and girls through entrepreneurship and business ownership.

Entrepreneurial identity gap: A schism between gender identity, gender (masculine, feminine, other) expression and that which is personified as being an entrepreneur.⁴³

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy: Confidence and a positive self-assessment of competencies and knowledge domains essential to creating and managing new ventures.

Entrepreneurs: Persons (business owners) who seek to generate social and economic value by identifying and exploiting new products, processes, or markets.

Entrepreneurship: The phenomenon associated with entrepreneurial activity.

Feminine capital: An aggregation of those elements of entrepreneurial capacity that incorporate “the feminine.” It is both individual and collective.⁴⁴

Feminine and masculine: Stereotypical feminine traits are typically associated with women; masculine traits are typically associated with men. Feminine and masculine traits and behaviour are reinforced through socialisation, including education and training. Women and men entrepreneurship students learn to adopt behaviours and attitudes that are not naturally or “essentially connected to either sexed bodies.”⁴⁵

Gender: is a social construction and refers to the roles, behaviour, activities, and attributes that a given society may construct or consider appropriate for the categories of women and men. It can result in stereotyping and limited expectations about what people can and cannot do.⁴⁶

Gender diversity: Typically refers to the number of women and men in an organisation or position. It can also signify an intersectional perspective taking into consideration gender in connection with other social differentiation categories such as, age, ethnicity, educational background, class, and sexual orientation.⁴⁷

Gender equity: Fairness of treatment by gender, which may be equal treatment or treatment which is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities.⁴⁸

Gender identity: A person's internal and individual experience of gender.

Gender perspective: The consideration and attention to the impact of gender on women's and men's opportunities, social roles and interactions within a policy or program. Applying a gender perspective in an innovation or entrepreneurship milieu does not necessarily lead to gender equality but can reveal inequalities and the way gender is done in that milieu. Thus, it will create gender awareness and knowledge for action.⁴⁹

Inclusion: Means that all individuals (e.g., small business support organisations' clients) feel respected, accepted, and valued. Inclusion builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution of all people.

Multipliers of bias: Replicating biases through referrals and leveraging (matched) resources from agencies that practice systemic bias in participant recruitment, selection, and support.

Sex: Refers to a person's physical characteristics.

Supplier diversity: Programs that encourage purchasing from designated groups of businesses, such as, small- and medium-sized enterprises and underrepresented business owners, such as, women, LGBTQ2+, Indigenous peoples, veterans, service-disabled veterans and businesses in economically disadvantaged regions.

International knowledge partner



Dr. Margo Thomas is the Founder and CEO of Women's Economic Imperative, Co-Chair T20 Task Force on Gender Economic Equity, Fellow of the Global Solutions Initiative, and Chatham House Associate Fellow.

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As Founder and CEO of the Women's Economic Imperative (WEI), Dr. Margo Thomas serves as a catalyst for initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities for the economic empowerment of disadvantaged and under-represented groups around the globe.

Throughout her career spanning more than two decades as a senior official at the World Bank Group, Dr. Thomas has provided policy advice to over 50 national and sub-national governments.

She successfully completed her appointment as the Chief of Secretariat for the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment in 2017. Under the Argentinian Presidency of the G20, she was appointed as Co-Chair of the 2018 Think 20 Task Force on Gender Economic Equity. Dr. Thomas was invited by the Japanese Presidency to continue her work and serve as Co-Chair of the 2019 Think 20 Task Force on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Under the 2020 Saudi Arabian Presidency of the G20, Dr. Thomas is a member of the COVID-19 Response Task Force and the Social Cohesion Task Force. Dr. Thomas has been appointed as an inaugural Global Solutions Fellow.

With a Doctoral Degree in Public Policy and Private Sector Development from the University of Manchester, Margo's areas of focus include trade and competitiveness, business environment reform, regulatory reform, investment policy, and women's economic empowerment.

About the authors



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Over the past 30 years, she has taught entrepreneurship in undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs at Ryerson University, Carleton University and University of Ottawa. Dr. Orser is the co-author of three books and investigator of over 120 academic and industry publications. She is a consultant to The Scotiabank Women Initiative™, Acting Head of the W20 (Women 20) Delegation of Canada, member of the advisory board of United Nations WE EMPOWER Canada, and member of the Board of Directors of Women's Economic Imperative. She is a contributor to the Global Women's Enterprise Policy Group. Current research focuses on a multi-country report about women's enterprise policy (OECD), book on women's enterprise policy (C. Henry & S. Coleman), gender-responsive public procurement, small business financial knowledge and confidence, and entrepreneurial feminism.

Her research is published in top-ranked journals, including: *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Small Business Economics*, *Journal of Business Ethics* and *International Small Business Journal*. In 2018, she received honourable mention by Start-up Canada Entrepreneur of the Year Award for "outstanding impact in Canadian entrepreneurship." In 2017, she was recognised among Canada 150 Women for her contributions and ground-breaking role model and feminist leader. She has also been recognised as one of Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women (WXN, 2010).

Dr. Orser holds an MBA from Schulich School of Business, York University and PhD from Bradford University (UK).



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Her research focuses on women's entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial identity, mentorship, performance management in public organisations, (including evaluation capacity building and organisational learning), and management education. Co-author of *Feminine Capital: Unlocking the Power of Women Entrepreneurs* (with B. Orser, Stanford University Press, 2015), she has developed curricula and co-directed a peer mentorship program for women engineers in entrepreneurship. Dr. Elliott has served as an advisor to women's organisations, the federal government, and international organisations including Women in Communication and Technology (WCT), Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), International Labour Organization (ILO – Better Work), Carleton University's International Program for Development Evaluation Training, and National Centre for Educational Training and Research.

Prior to academia, Dr. Elliott worked for a global consultancy, as a change management consultant and human resources manager. She has served as a witness for the Government of Canada House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women; and Co-chair of the Women Entrepreneurs Ontario Collective (2015 to 2016), a non-partisan consortium of women business owners, small business training agencies, academics, and industry associations.

Dr. Elliott holds a MA from Queen's University, and MBA and PhD from the University of Ottawa.

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