PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
GENDER AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY UNIT

Virtual Course on
Gender and Health Within a framework of Diversity and Human Rights

First Edition

General Course Program

2013
Washington D.C.
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Foreword

“PAHO’s Gender Equality Policy calls for organizational support for advancing knowledge and skills of staff for efficient gender mainstreaming ...”

Critical Lines of Action:
Develop tools and build capacities in PAHO’s Secretariat and Member States for the integration of a gender equality perspective in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs.”

The Virtual Course on Gender and Health from a Diversity and Human Rights Perspective (VC-GDR) is an initiative of the Pan American Health Organization, Regional Office of the World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). The aim of this online course is the development of human resource (HR) competencies in health, by integrating the gender perspective into policies, programs, and projects—all within a framework of diversity and human rights (DHR). In PAHO/WHO’s work over the past 25 years, human resource training in gender and health can be visualized as a crosscutting axis, which has become operational by holding both on-site and virtual courses, as well as developing manuals and other learning materials on gender mainstreaming, prevention of violence against women, gender analysis, and health sector reform, among others.

In early 2010, to complement interventions oriented at integrating the gender approach within the Organization, PAHO’s Gender and Diversity Unit (GD) launched a strategy of continuing education through PAHO’s Virtual Public Health Campus (VPHC). This included the implementation of the VC-GD, a capacity-building training course designed to incorporate the gender perspective into the work plan of PAHO Member States. The following activities carried out in 2010 served as a basis for the development of this course:

1. A survey on needs for training in incorporating a gender equality perspective into health, with responses from 65 people in 16 countries representing the national health sector, universities, and national mechanisms for the advancement of women and/or gender equality.2

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2. A virtual course on gender and health directed to tutors (‘training-the-trainers’), in coordination with the VPHC.

3. A VC-GD Expert Meeting, to define,
   i. Core competencies/capacities
   ii. Priority subjects/content
   iii. Educational alternatives
   iv. Evaluation, monitoring, and sustainability of the proposal

In 2011 the first edition of VC-GD was implemented with 65 participants from the five PAHO priority countries for technical cooperation (Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Paraguay) as well as from the United States, El Salvador, and Panama. In order to adapt this course to the context and the specific needs of the Caribbean, in 2011 GD carried out a survey to PAHO staff in the Caribbean, Women’s organizations, and the Ministry of Health. The questionnaire asks questions about:

   i. Required competencies for gender mainstreaming
   ii. Most relevant gender & health issues to be addressed in relation to Conceptual frameworks, human rights and gender equality, Gender analysis, and Policy development and programming
   iii. Duration and time intensity of the course
   iv. Preferred types of learning activities and assignments.

Fifty-one completed questionnaires were received from thirteen (13) countries from the English Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Trinidad & Tobago), one from the Dominican Republic and one from South America (Suriname).

In April 2012 the survey results were revised in a multi-sector virtual dialogue with the purpose to prioritize actions regarding the issues addressed in the survey.

The present version of the course draws on the recommendation made at this meeting with PAHO staff and key partners and other counterparts in the Caribbean. It also includes adjustments made on the basis of the implementation of the first and second editions of this course, which were offered in the years 2011 and 2012 in the Latina American Sub-region.

With the launching of the VC-GD the intent is to create a critical mass of human resources trained to promote the integration of a gender perspective into health services at the local, national, and regional levels, ensuring its sustainability in both the medium and long term. The course offers evidence-based decision-making to ensure the elimination of gender-based inequalities articulated through other health determinants.

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1. **Purpose**

- Strengthen the capacities of PAHO/WHO and its Member States toward mainstreaming the gender equality perspective into the formulation, implementation, surveillance, and evaluation of their health policies and programs.

- Initiate a process of continuous sub-regional education on gender and health through the VPHC, with the intention of improving access to information, evidence, and tools among PAHO/WHO partners and counterparts; sharing experiences; and building cooperation networks that will enable them to integrate the gender perspective progressively into the field of health.

2. **Objectives**

a. Build a common conceptual basis for the gender perspective that includes key concepts and explains both the dynamic relationship among them and how to apply them in the field of health within a framework of human rights and diversity.

b. Review existing theoretical and methodological frameworks to analyze differences and disparities in the roles socially assigned to women and men, viewed from their multiple and overlapping identities, imbalances in their power relations, their needs, and the constraints and opportunities they face. As well as the impact that these differences have on their lives and health; and on this basis, design practical strategies to address the gender inequities that have been identified.

c. Design an intervention proposal aimed at integrating the gender and human rights perspective into the student’s specific work environment.

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4 Approved at the Expert Meeting on Gender and Health, Virtual Course on Gender and Health (29–30 March 2010). Washington, DC: PAHO/WHO.


5 Adapted from: i). Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. *Guidelines for the Analysis of Gender and Health.* http://www.lstmliverpool.ac.uk/groups/gender_health/index.htm

3. Core and transverse competencies

There are three core competencies:

1. **Knowledge, comprehension, and analysis** of the conceptual framework: key concepts and connections between the concepts, principles and characteristics of perspectives on gender, human rights, and diversity—as well as articulations among these.

2. **Knowledge, understanding, analysis, and application of Gender-Sex Analysis (GSA):** Principles, definition of the problem, fields of analysis, establishing health priorities, integrating the gender perspective within a framework of human rights and diversity.

3. **Knowledge, understanding, analysis, and application of gender integration into programs, projects, and policies:** Principles, phases of the project cycle, indicators for integrating gender into projects; and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

These cognitive fields are in turn articulated into attitudinal and affective fields to ensure meeting the educational objectives by instilling in the participants sufficient levels of motivation, responsibility, and skills so that they can influence the changes that will be brought about by applying a perspective of gender, human rights, and diversity in health.

### Transverse competencies

- Gender Perspective, Human Rights and cultural Diversity
- Team work
- Critical Review of individual and institutional practices
- Problem solving and positive attitude to influence change
- Cross sector perspective

4. Participant Profile

The course is open to participation by institutional representatives from the ministries of health, health services, bodies that deal with women’s affairs, universities, research centers, nongovernmental organizations (organizations addressing issues related to indigenous populations, women, sexual diversity, and persons with disabilities), and international agencies, in addition to sub regional mechanisms such as CARICOM and PANCAP.
5. Participants’ Roles

The linchpin of the VC-GD is made up of the health professionals who participate in the course and their needs vis-à-vis the learning process. Tutors, academic coordinators, invited experts, and VPHC staff all work together so that each participant can meet the proposed objectives. In turn, each participant has responsibilities that he or she should fulfil to ensure his or her active and full participation in this initiative:

- **Organizing her or his time.** This will make it possible for him or her to participate effectively in the course, help boost motivation, and keep assignments from piling up.

- **Carrying out the proposed activities indicated in the guides for each module, according to the timetable established.** The course structure develops in a cumulative way, which means that performing each of the activities in every module is essential for successfully completing all subsequent modules. Carrying out each activity as planned in the course will enable the participant to apply his or her knowledge more effectively in the context of her or his job, since the exercises and assignments represent the basis on which the theoretical aspects of the course will be transformed into daily practice. Each participant will receive support from his or her tutor to empower her or him to complete the activities at the pace set for the group.

- **Actively participating in opportunities for exchange** as provided in the forum, as well as feeling free to make contact with the rest of the course participants.

- **Sharing any information** that she or he considers relevant, either with participants, tutors, or academic coordinators.

- **Using the resources available** in the course whenever necessary: One of the fundamental tasks of tutors, academic coordinators, and VPHC staff is to provide support to each participant by addressing his or her needs concerning what is being taught in the course.

- **Maintaining an attitude of respect for diversity** in her or his perspectives, experiences, and assessments of the topics to be addressed.

- **Requesting assistance from the tutors** in the event that he or she encounters any difficulties in the context of the course or in handling her or his own personal experiences or relationships with members of his or her working group.

- **Completing the evaluation forms.**

6. Coordination and academic staff

Esmeralda Burbano, specialist in gender and ethnicity from the office of gender, diversity, human rights and bioethics at the OPS/OMS in Washington D.C. is responsible for the general

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coordination of the course. The tutors teams comprises Denise Chevannes-Vogel, Crystal Brizan, Karen Hull, and, Peggy Antrobus. Carlota Ramirez, specialist in gender and health, from CIEE, Flacso Argentina is the Academic Coordinator and Ing Edgardo De Gracia is responsible for the technical assistance at the VPHC.

7. Course Structure and Content

The course is organized into four modules addressing the following subjects:

a. Conceptual framework on gender and health
   • Introductory briefing on the mandate for gender mainstreaming
   • Definitions and characteristics of sex and gender, as well as the relationships between them
   • Conceptual definitions and scope of gender equality, gender equity, and empowerment
   • Value added by the gender perspective in health

b. Gender equality within a framework of diversity and human rights (DHR)
   • Concepts of health and gender equality as a human right
   • Programming in health and the gender equality, diversity, and human rights (GE-DHR) approach
   • The principles of DHR and their application in the context of gender and health
   • Complementarities between a DHR-based approach and cross-sectional integration of gender equality
   • International instruments to protect human rights, gender, and diversity
   • Value added by the human-rights approach in the context of gender, diversity, and health

c. Gender-sex analysis (GSA): conceptual and methodological bases
   • Definition and objectives of GSA
   • Elements to include when preparing a health problem profile from the gender perspective
   • Steps to take in GSA over the different phases of the programming cycle and applying these steps in the field of health
   • Concepts, methodologies, and lessons learned from experiences in applying GSA to health
   • Contributions made by GSA to health policy development, planning, and programming
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d. Designing policies and programs from the perspective of gender, diversity, and human rights

- Integrating gender into health: key concepts and principles
- Integrating gender, diversity, and human rights into project design: identification, design, implementation, M&E

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation on the platform, introductory module, and formation into working groups as set by the tutor</th>
<th>Module 1: Conceptual framework for gender and health</th>
<th>Module 2: Gender equality within a framework of diversity and human rights</th>
<th>Module 3: Gender-sex analysis: conceptual and methodological bases</th>
<th>Module 4: Designing policies, programs, and projects from the perspective of gender, diversity, and human rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intervention Proposal**
(Individual or group activity per country)

Process evaluation and final evaluation

The course design is based on the development of continuous activities, both for the analysis and debate of topics addressed in the modules and the sharing of experiences. This design addresses conceptual, methodological, and organizational issues linked to integrating gender perspective into the field of health. It includes permanent forums as well as individual and group activities, so as to ensure interactivity and exchange between tutors and participants, as well as among the tutors and students themselves. The learning environment incorporates resources that participants can explore and utilize throughout the course: e.g., a glossary, recorded Blackboard sessions with experts, databases, relevant links, and other information resources.
8. Educational Approach

“The notion of learning as [an] active construction enables the understanding that learning is a process that receives input and is done through exchanges with others: the instructor, the group, knowledge tools. In this process, explicit knowledge (information, texts, databases, etc.) and tacit knowledge (that which is in people’s “minds,” as a result of their experience) are integrated, producing individual and collective learning. Furthermore, this learning structure gives participants autonomy and gives workers the flexibility to adapt their studies and participation to their individual circumstances."

The course has been designed with the intent of articulating a combination of identified contents as priorities in the analysis phase, through the use of a pedagogical focus based on the constructivist theories on learning that have been adjusted to distance. Recognizing that, just like the present modality, long-distance education has its own specific limits as well as potentials, the course design takes into consideration some fundamental elements in the creation of a successful formative proposal of this nature, particularly: a) contents that have been adapted to the diverse needs of formation and interest, b) tutoring, c) access to materials and support from fellow participants, d) interaction, e) an appropriate technical support system for participants and teachers.

The educational approach to the course is consistent with the VPHC’s educational framework for network learning. It is designed to facilitate change—both organizational change and changes in health and its practices. It states the following premises:

- Quality information is a strategic tool for learning and a mediator for reflexive analysis, promoting change in different contexts.
- Learning is the main axis through which educational activities intersect, such as building active knowledge, making use of interactivity facilitated by the environment, and strengthening the exchange of experience and knowledge and of collective, collaborative learning.

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9 Ibid.
• Thinking and problematization (the ability to see issues as problems) are the motor that propels us to understand what we learn and to transfer knowledge into practice.\textsuperscript{12}

• It is good strategy to work towards changes in both work practices and organizational practices,\textsuperscript{13} through intervention proposals aimed at improving the specific contexts of the students’ work and their work environment.

¿How the course is implemented? 11,12

a) Recognizing that participants contribute new knowledge through their own unique experiences and expectations; instilling their own meaning in accordance to their individual sense of reality and varying educational context. The participants relate this new knowledge to other areas of their daily life and apply it in their respective fields.

b) Striving to attend to all the varying individual needs, taking into consideration the learning rhythm and previous experience of each participant.

c) Integrating a set of activities in which active methods for the development of creative thinking, problem solving, conceptual compression, maintaining interest and articulation of both theory and practice are applied.

d) The contents are based on axes of reality, focusing on real problems and cases present in the process of gender integration in politics and programs.

e) Interaction between participants through forums and other activities allows for sharing and negotiation to take place, promoting the examination of their own conceptual ideas and practices, and simultaneously acquiring new knowledge.


9. Duration and dedication

The course will be offered virtually (online) and depends on the support of facilitators during every module and the development of the intervention proposal (final project). The duration time will be of fourteen consecutive weeks, including the initial two weeks designed to familiarize everyone within the VPHC. This will be a total of 140 hours (approximately 10 hours a week). The distribution of modules, organized by period and time, are described in the following graph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Module/activities</th>
<th>Dedication (hours per module)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>Orientation Program</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and 6</td>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 and 8</td>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9, 10 and 11</td>
<td>Module 4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Evaluation and certification

The course uses the evaluation and certification guidelines set by the VPHC, which incorporates the following rules:

10.1. Performance evaluation

The role of each course participant is fundamental not only to the individual learning process, but also to the success of the course in its entirety, since one of the central sources of knowledge and learning are the very experiences and reflections shared by everyone in this learning environment. These shared stories and opinions facilitate further exchanges between participants. This is why the participation in group debates and group exchanges in the forums are mandatory, along with the completion of the exercises given which should be done with dedication.

Both participation (in the forums) and exercises are graded, unless otherwise specified. Each participant will receive an individual, group and general grade from his or her tutor. These grades will later be the basis for a final grade. Any class work that has not been handed in will be considered an incomplete assignment, and affect the final grade of both the module and the course.

Since the groups “Intervention Proposal” project integrates all the material covered during the duration of the course, it is a mandatory project that stands for an important part of the general grade. It is not possible to pass the course if this proposal is incomplete or missing, and it requires equal participation from all group members, without exception. There will be an
individual grade for the advancements made in each module during the development of the Intervention Proposal, but the final project’s grade pertains to the entire course.

Finally, the final grade will be the sum of each of the grades obtained in each individual module.

Next we will state the qualitative criteria that will be valued during the execution of the diverse learning activities.

Readings

Each participant contributions to the forum dialogues and classwork should reflect both reading and comprehension of the basic and complementary readings of each module.

The ability to identify fundamental themes, connection to individual countries, acknowledgement of new sources/contributions to their performance and bibliographies, themes and unsolved problems, will all be analyzed.

Participation during the exchanges/sharing is essential. Comments are expected to be related to the specific learning activity/subject at hand and the adequate extension.

Tasks and exercises

During the evaluation of the course’s various tasks/projects, the following will be taken into consideration:

- Ability to understand and follow the guidelines provided.
- Showing comprehension of the course bibliography and taking advantage of it in the completion of homework.
- Ability to make a critical and reflective analysis of the complexity of the problem and the multiple factors involved.
- Ability to offer problem-solving alternatives to the present context
- Ability to link the assignments to the reality of their country and work environment
- Respect for guidelines regarding due date and length
- Ability to incorporate suggestions made by the facilitator in order to better their work
- Ability to write in their own words and quote appropriately in order to avoid copies or plagiarism.
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Forums for Group exchange

- The forums are spaces for the creation of dialogues between the participants and tutors of the course. It is the place for meetings, exchanges and collective construction of new knowledge and practices.
- A space that encourages the articulation, reflection and debate of theoretical aspects in relation to the group’s experiences.
- Participation in the group/module forums is mandatory to pass the course.
- This activity is graded in each module. In the evaluation, respect for both the guidelines/requisites given and the incorporation of constructive criticism by peers will be taken into account.
- It is recommended that the interventions in the forums be brief in order to facilitate the reading and enrich the exchange.

General Grading by the Tutor

In reference to the progress of each participant, the tutor will take into consideration the following:

10.2. Self evaluation and evaluation of each module and the course.

The participants self evaluation in relation to their progress is taken into account via the participant-tutor exchange and as the feedback given to exercises and intervention.

At the end of each module the participants must complete the questionnaire that has made available for those means.

The participant’s ability to acknowledge their starting point, their achievements and their difficulties with the course’s subject and virtual modality will be valued.

All participants will be requested to complete the Final Evaluation questionnaire upon completion of the Intervention Proposal, the last assignment of the course. This information will be useful in crediting the participants with a course certification as well as feedback/suggestions for future modifications for the course, with regard to the achievement of goals, foreseen or not.

In each exercise and tasks

**VG:** Very Good (3) **G:** Good (2) **F:** Fair (1)

If the participant does not complete the task:

**I:** Incomplete (0)

General Grading in each Module

**VG:** Very Good (3) **G:** Good (2) **F:** Fair (1)
10.3. Certificate of approval

Dedication and completion of the proposed activities, in the established time frames, is essential to passing this course. Once it has been concluded and approved, the OPS will certify if as such. The following graph will be used in the final grading:

- Approved with excellence
- Approved with distinction
- Passed

The final evaluation of performance will be a direct consequence of the participant execution during varying moments throughout the course and will be ultimately decided by the tutors and general coordinators of the course.