# 2. Gender-related target setting, tracking and reporting for ESOs

*Does your organization set explicit gender-related goals for your own team, programs, and/or the ventures you support? How do you define and track these objectives with specific metrics? How clearly are these communicated to external parties, such as funders and program participants, but also internally for continuous improvement purposes?*

## What do we mean by gender-related target setting, tracking and reporting?

Gender-related target setting, tracking, and reporting refers to the intentional effort to understand, measure, and improve gender inclusion across organizations and activities. Rather than treating gender considerations as an optional or compliance-driven reporting requirement, it involves defining tracking and reporting on specific objectives across four areas: a) the diversity of internal and external teams involved in program design and delivery, b) the gender composition and characteristics of program participants, c) balanced levels of participation, performance and satisfaction among program participants; d) and if possible, the level of gender inclusion achieved by program participants within their own ventures. Effective target setting then translates these objectives into specific, measurable metrics, which get tracked and reported upon regularly, enabling learning and continuous improvement, and supporting transparent communication with external stakeholders.

## Why do gender-related target setting, tracking and reporting not happen?

Despite growing interest in gender inclusion, many ESOs do not systematically set, track or report gender-related targets. Reviews of various acceleration programs highlight that even organizations or initiatives with explicit gender goals frequently lack robust data systems, methodological clarity, and internal capacity to consistently collect and use gender-disaggregated data [1]. This gap between intent and execution however shapes how gender inclusion is operationalized and experienced in practice. Such lack of rigor and intentionality is often due to the fact that gender disparities in ESO programs are often underestimated. This is compounded in organizations with superficial impact measurement and management practices, and limited staff capacity for these purposes. As a result, gender considerations are often acknowledged at a higher, theoretical level but are not translated into formal indicators, responsibilities or reporting processes, leaving gender inclusion aspirational rather than operational.

## Why is gender-related program target setting, tracking and reporting important?

Gender-related program target setting, tracking and reporting is essential because it enables ESOs to move from implicitly reproducing existing gender exclusion patterns to actively shaping more equitable participation and outcomes in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Measuring gender indicators makes disparities in access to knowledge, support, capital, and networks visible, help set clear objectives and targets against current performance, and keep the ESOs accountable on actual progress and where imbalances persist. This evidence can then be used to inform concrete operational decisions–such as how teams are composed, programs are designed, outreach is conducted, resources are allocated, and how performance is assessed, particularly in relation to entrepreneurs facing gender-specific constraints.

Ultimately, setting gender-related targets helps ESOs demonstrate the distinctiveness and credibility of their commitment and approach, and reinforces accountability towards funders and partners.

## How does one set up gender-related target setting, tracking and reporting?

To ensure your program is setting, tracking and reporting on its gender-related targets meaningfully, focus on the following four implementation steps:

1. **Assess the current state of gender inclusion in your program:** We first recommend to make an assessment of where your organization stands at various levels, by collecting 'baseline' metrics across the board. These could include:

- Diversity in internal and external teams involved in program design and delivery
    - % representation of women in leadership and senior positions

[1] https://andeglobal.org/publication/a-decade-of-learnings-on-gender-lens-acceleration-case-studies-from-asia/

    - % representation of women among staff and within teams (e.g. program vs. back-office teams)
    - % representative of women among service providers, trainers, and mentors
    - Presence of formalized HR process for promotion and performance evaluation, allowing team members from all gender to progress equally
    - Presence of workplace policies (e.g. leave, flex work, remote work, support for caregivers) that allow team members from all genders to thrive
    - Gender-disaggregated satisfaction ratings among staff members (regarding culture, work–life balance, work prospects, etc.).
  - Gender composition and characteristics of program participants
    - % of women ownership (or % of women founders) among participating ventures
    - % of women in senior management among participating ventures
    - % of women in the workforce of participating ventures.
  - Balanced levels of participation, performance and satisfaction among program participants
    - Gender-disaggregated attendance rates across program activities (e.g. sessions, mentoring, pitch days)
    - Comparative program completion rates across genders
    - Differences in milestone achievement across participant of various genders (e.g. business plan completion, pitch readiness, prototype development)
    - Gender-specific data for any other, relevant program's performance and additionality metrics which your team tracks.
  - Level of gender inclusion achieved by program participants within their own ventures
    - Proportion of women among customers/users/end beneficiaries served by participating venture
    - Proportion of women among strategic suppliers to participating venture
    - Proportion of woman customers/end beneficiaries who feel (very) satisfied/ empowered by product/ service
    - Quality employment indicators for participating ventures' staff (e.g. equal pay, satisfaction with work, etc.)
    - Gender-disaggregated data for any other, relevant metric you require the participating ventures to report upon.
2. **Define priority gaps and set measurable gender-related targets:** Once your organization's baseline information is collected, assess where the biggest gaps and improvement potential lies. This includes identifying where participation, performance, or satisfaction differs systematically, as well as where internal practices may limit inclusion. Based on this assessment, organizations should define a small number of clear, measurable short- to mid-term targets to address the most material gaps, ideally picking up at least 1 target per dimension listed above. Targets should be ambitious yet realistic, reflect the organization's sphere of influence, and be explicitly linked to program design or operational decisions.
3. **Specify tracking processes, and responsibilities:** For each target, you should clarify which indicators you will be measuring, how and how often to track progress towards set objectives, and allocate responsibilities among team members to collect, analyze and synthetize those internally, with partners or with ventures. Where possible, tracking processes should be integrated into existing monitoring and reporting systems to reduce administrative burden and increase consistency.
4. **Formalize reporting and institutionalize learning cycles:** Gender-related data should not be collected in isolation, but regularly discussed and reflected upon at team and leadership levels. Institutionalize internal reviews to assess progress against targets, interpret results, and agree on corrective actions where needed.

In parallel, formalize processes to report formally on progress to external parties, including to funders, partners, and other stakeholders. Transparent reporting helps reinforce accountability, signal intentionality, and position gender inclusion as a core performance dimension rather than an add-on.

# Case study

## Crafting more gender-inclusive entrepreneurship programs through target-setting and reporting by Irrazonables

### Irrazonables offers more gender-inclusive entrepreneur support by setting explicit gender-related program targets and redesigning its program delivery to remove structural barriers that had unintentionally excluded women entrepreneurs, while strengthening reporting to funders.

Irrazonables is an acceleration and incubation platform founded in Mexico over a decade ago, with the mission to create a world where no one is trapped by their circumstances. Through its various programs, it supports social entrepreneurs across Latin America (and beyond) with tailored workshops, one-on-one coaching, and access to a network of over 200 mentors. To date, Irrazonables has supported more than 600 ventures and over 2k entrepreneurs, 90% of whom remain active to date. Collectively, these ventures have raised approximately USD600 million in funding and generated positive social and environmental impact at a very large scale.

Despite its mission-driven focus, Irrazonables initially lacked explicit gender-related program targets. In its early years, the majority of founders selected into its programs were men, which the organization initially attributed to a limited pipeline of women entrepreneurs. The shift to online programming during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that women entrepreneurs had always been present, but that the organization's in-person, month-long program structure had unintentionally excluded many of them. This insight prompted Irrazonables to set clearer gender-related objectives and improve how gender outcomes were tracked and reported to funders. To do so, Irrazonables:

- reframed gender inclusion as an explicit and tangible objective for its programs (e.g. in terms of gender-balanced participation)
- redesigned programs to be more flexible and accessible for participants, incorporating online and hybrid formats that better accommodate the realities of women entrepreneurs' lives
- used gender-disaggregated data to challenge internal assumptions about pipeline quality and selection, informing the way outreach, pipeline building and participants' filtering was done
- rethought the way outreach and onboarding of new mentors was done, to increase the proportion of women mentors; completed this pool with an active group of more junior experts available to participants, where proportion of women was higher; and trained existing mentors, to ensure that mentors engage with participants in a more gender-aware manner

- integrated gender metrics into reporting to funders (on e.g. proportion of entrepreneurs, mentors and coaches), communicating both progress and persistent gaps as part of an ongoing learning process.

As a result, women now represent 40% of entrepreneurs in the Irrazonables network, a significant increase compared to the organization's early cohorts. Among more recent intakes, the share of women entrepreneurs has reached nearly 50%, indicating sustained progress. In parallel, one in three mentors in the network is now a woman, reflecting a meaningful shift in a historically male-dominated ecosystem. These outcomes have strengthened Irrazonables' accountability to funders while demonstrating the tangible impact of intentional gender target-setting.

Beyond these results, Irrazonables' focus on gender-related targets and transparent reporting has generated broader ripple effects. Gender considerations are now systematically incorporated into program design choices and cohort monitoring, with participation trends reviewed systematically, and reported transparently to funders. The organization has also become more vocal in advocating for gender equity across the entrepreneurial ecosystem, encouraging ventures, mentors, and funders alike to adopt more intentional, data-driven approaches to gender inclusion.