

Family, Community and Sexuality Project Building a Movement

from the Ground Up

Gender Justice Criteria for Issue Development

Traditional criteria for choosing an issue often focus on winnability, coalition opportunities, and other organizational factors. When considering issue criteria, it's also helpful to take a *movement building* approach – to ask questions like “How is this issue tied to other progressive struggles? Does this issue allow us to work with partners not traditionally allied with our cause? Have we framed the issue in a way that builds solidarity with other communities affected by this issue?”

Criteria which focus specifically on racial justice, for example, are available. The following criteria specifically focus on the gender justice elements of choosing an issue:

- 1) Surface clearly discriminatory or oppressive practice or policy directing the treatment of women/girls and transgender individuals.
- 2) Offer the opportunity to use data that clearly shows discrimination and gaps by gender.
Ie. 80% of jobs at an institution go to men
- 3) Expand the rights of women and trans individuals – economic, legal, electoral, or other rights.
- 4) Use anti-discrimination handles that go beyond “disproportionate impact” or representation. They should be created at undoing the privilege that comes from patriarchy and heterosexism.
Ie. Not just calling for more women in law enforcement, but pushing for institutional changes
- 5) Challenge traditional gendered divisions in labor and societal roles.
- 6) Reinforces, rather than contradicts, the frameworks/organizing of those working on race, orientation, and class issues.
Ie. Pushing a population control approach to reproductive issues can be racist and US centric instead of a women's and family empowerment approach
- 7) Clearly articulate different experiences based on women/girl's and transgender individuals' racial and ethnic backgrounds and immigration status and orientation, while building a common approach or analysis.
- 8) Introduce or reintroduce frames which point to trans oppression, heterosexism, and sexism. The issue can introduce new language, such as “gender discrimination,” or “transphobia.” These concepts and frames that can last beyond the immediate campaign win.
Ie. Challenges “reverse sexism,” or challenges notions that sexism doesn't exist