



## On the Importance of Employing a Gender Lens to Understand and Evaluate Social Innovation

Gender and the Innovation Agenda

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Social innovation is not new, but it is increasingly seen as the contemporary method for solving some of the world's most pressing social and economic problems. Despite awareness about its importance, research in the field of social innovation can be vague, and there are competing definitions and understandings of the concept. Also, despite the value of embracing gender equality for social and economic progress, there is very little research that attempts to connect the field of social innovation with the fields of gender studies, women's studies, feminist research, or men and masculinity studies. This article reviews the literature on social innovation to examine the relationship between gender equality and social innovation, and it applies a gender lens to the concept of social innovation. In doing so, it aims to develop the foundations for future research at the intersection of social innovation and gender equality. Our review of the literature on social innovation suggests that women, girls, non-hegemonic men, and boys are underrepresented and under-supported in the field of social innovation. As such, a gendered analysis will help us advance social innovation by challenging our assumptions and preconceptions about women, men, femininities, and masculinities. For social innovation to achieve its full potential and to benefit all persons, gender equality must be embraced within each aspect of social innovation.