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School of Public Leadership
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Symposium 2 on Gender Inequality and Anti-corruption

Concept note

12 to 14 August 2026

Overview

The Gender Inequality and Anti-corruption Symposium is a strategic convening that will see policymakers, development partners, civil society, academics and private sector actors examine how corruption and governance failures intersect with gender inequality and specifically gender-based violence (GBV). The symposium will generate policy-relevant insights and foster cross-sector collaboration to strengthen accountability, institutional reform and gender-inclusive and gender-responsive governance, leadership and practice.

This second symposium is timely and addresses a critical gap in current policy and practice: Despite growing attention to gender equality and GBV, anti-corruption, governance and leadership agendas are often treated as separate dimensions with incidental touchpoints. It responds by providing an integrated, evidence-informed platform to support more effective and sustainable approaches to gender equality and violence prevention, and aims to critically consider the intersectionality between gender, GBV and (anti)corruption at institutional and societal levels.

Problem statement and rationale

In June 2024, the first gender and corruption symposium brought together over 100 participants in insightful dialogue on this pressing governance challenge. It offered a powerful platform for knowledge exchange, critical reflection and innovative strategies to advance integrity and accountability.

Building on this strong foundation, the second symposium promises even deeper engagement, broader networks and more impactful discussions in the fight against gender inequality and GBV. Attendance will provide a unique opportunity to contribute to shaping transformative solutions and strengthening collective action against corruption.

The point of departure is that corruption undermines governance systems, erodes public trust and weakens/undermines institutional responses to social inequality. These effects are not gender-neutral. Gender inequality and corruption are deeply interconnected challenges that disproportionately affect women and marginalised groups, particularly in the global south. Corruption can exacerbate gender disparities by limiting women's access to justice, public services, economic opportunities and political participation. Gender inequality creates conditions where women and girls are more vulnerable to exploitative practices, including bribery, extortion and abuse of authority. At the same time, we require

accountability from women who have abused their positions or offices because of power imbalances.

A critical but underexplored intersection is the relationship between corruption and gender-based violence (GBV). Corruption within law enforcement, judicial systems, healthcare and social services can undermine efforts to prevent and respond to GBV. Survivors may face demands for bribes to file complaints, obtain medical care or access legal protection. In some contexts, abuse of power manifests in forms such as "sextortion", where sexual acts are coerced in exchange for services or opportunities.

Systemic corruption weakens institutional responses to violence against women and girls in several countries across the world. These dynamics do not only perpetuate impunity but also discourage survivors from seeking justice. Addressing corruption is therefore essential to improving accountability, strengthening institutions and ensuring effective protection mechanisms for GBV survivors.

Despite increasing recognition of these issues, research, policy dialogue and coordinated action at the intersection of gender inequality, corruption and GBV remain limited. This symposium seeks to create a platform for scholars, policymakers, civil society organisations and practitioners to examine the intersections and identify strategies for reform and advocacy in the global south. While gender equality, GBV prevention and anti-corruption are all significant priorities for governments and donors, they are frequently addressed in isolation. There is a clear need for integrated dialogue and analysis that bring these agendas together. This symposium will address that gap by supporting cross-sector learning, policy coherence and collaboration focused on governance and accountability.

Aim and objectives

The symposium's overall aim is to provide a platform for advancing integrated policy dialogue and knowledge exchange on the links between gender inequality, gender-based violence and corruption, to identify, facilitate and encourage more accountable and gender-responsive governance systems.

Specific objectives



› Analyse how anti-corruption and governance failures contribute to gender inequality and GBV.



› Explore the role of public accountability and institutional reform in preventing and responding to gender inequality and GBV in particular.



› Facilitate dialogue between policymakers, practitioners, researchers and civil society actors.



› Generate policy-relevant insights and recommendations for gender-sensitive and gender-responsive anti-corruption strategies.



› Strengthen cross-sector networks to support sustained engagement and follow-up action.

Thematic focus

The symposium will be structured around four interlinked themes:

1

Gendered impacts of corruption; barriers to women's participation in governance; institutional norms and power relations.

2

Accountability gaps in GBV responses; institutional responsibilities and accountability; GBV and sustainability of interventions.

3

Accountability mechanisms relevant to GBV and gender equality; gender-responsive anti-corruption frameworks and indicators; reform pathways.

4

Roles of civil society, academia and the private sector; policy coherence; partnership building for reform.

Approach and methodology



The symposium will adopt a participatory, multistakeholder format, combining:

High-level keynote presentations to frame policy and governance challenges

Panel discussions that integrate research, policy and practice perspectives

Thematic sessions focused on GBV, accountability and institutional reform

Structured discussions to support synthesis and policy learning

This format is designed to maximise policy relevance, encourage exchange across sectors and ensure impact (policy and practice) through focused, outcome-orientated engagement.

Participants and beneficiaries

The participants will include:



- 1** National and international policymakers
- 2** Development partners and donor organisations
- 3** Civil society organisations and advocacy groups
- 4** Academic researchers and policy analysts
- 5** Private sector actors engaged in governance and accountability

Indirect beneficiaries include institutions and communities that stand to benefit from stronger governance, improved accountability mechanisms and more effective responses to gender inequality and GBV.

Expected outputs and outcomes

Key outputs

A high-level symposium convening cross-sector stakeholders

A concise set of policy-relevant insights and recommendations

Strengthened networks and partnerships across sectors

Anticipated outcomes

-  Improved understanding of the links between gender inequality, GBV and corruption
-  Enhanced capacity among stakeholders to integrate gender and anti-corruption perspectives
-  Increased policy attention to accountability and institutional reform in GBV responses
-  Foundations for follow-up research, policy engagement and collaborative initiatives
-  The symposium is designed as a catalyst rather than a standalone activity

By bringing together diverse stakeholders and perspectives, the symposium will contribute to more integrated and gender-responsive approaches to governance, accountability and institutional reform. Addressing gender inequality and GBV through an anti-corruption lens is essential for building inclusive institutions and sustainable social outcomes.

This second symposium represents an important step towards advancing dialogue, policy innovation and collective action in this critical area. Outputs will inform future research, policy dialogue and collaborative initiatives. Networks established through the symposium will support continued engagement and knowledge exchange, maximising the longer-term value of donor support.