

Making^adifference



Gender Equality in Bilateral Development Cooperation

Why is equality between women and men on the development cooperation agenda? What impacts or results are we seeking to achieve? How can agencies such as Sida work constructively in promoting gender equality in partner countries to reduce inequality? How can agencies develop their own capacity for effective action on gender equality?

This booklet seeks to provide answers to these questions. Prepared as a companion to the Sida publication, *Striking a Balance*, it is concerned with how development cooperation can promote gender equality within a partnership framework. It starts, however, with a consideration of why gender equality is an issue and what it means. It is important to keep the what and the why in focus because the how can only be identified effectively once there is a clear vision of the results sought. In considering the how, the document looks first at the initiatives formulated jointly with partners – how issues of gender equality can be brought into dialogue and how different types of cooperation can contribute. The discussion then turns to the demands this places on development cooperation agencies to strengthen their own knowledge, mechanisms, and strategies in order to be responsible partners.

Partnerships among actors in different parts of the world working to achieve gender equality provide new opportunities for exploring what gender equality means and how best to achieve it. Equality between women and men has been established as a goal of development in all regions. Advocacy of gender equality through development cooperation aims to ensure that the issue is seriously discussed and solutions are sought – but it does not prejudge the form that gender equality will take or the strategies to achieve it in specific contexts.

Ann Stödberg
Head of Sida's Policy Secretariat

1.0

Equality between women and men
in partner countries as a goal of
development cooperation

1.1 Equality between women and men

Why focus on gender equality?

Equality between women and men is now recognised as critical to the achievement of improved quality of life for all, human freedom and dignity, legitimate and accountable government, and environmental sustainability. There is worldwide agreement on the importance of gender equality, thanks to international discussions among governments and the increased profile and effectiveness of gender equality advocates.

In 1996, the Swedish Parliament provided an important political signal when it endorsed the promotion of equality between women and men as one of the overall goals of Swedish development cooperation. In Sida, all departments collaborated in preparing the Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries (1997).

The focus on gender equality is based on a number of factors:

Concern with *sustainable and people-centred* development:

The concept of “development” means little if it is not concerned with a better quality of life for all people – providing not only the necessities for survival, but human dignity, social justice, and more power over the shape of their societies and their own lives. Inequality between women and men is a barrier to achieving these ends.

Lessons of experience:

There has been a steady accumulation of evidence that gender differences and inequalities affect the impact of development strategies and the achievement of overall development goals. Differences in the position of women and men can mean that women may bear more of the costs or gain fewer of the benefits of economic policies. This has costs for women and for society as a whole. Women represent half the human resources and half the potential of every society – a potential that remains unrealised when women are constrained by inequality and discrimination.

Activism:

Over the last two decades, there has been an enormous expansion of the women's movement in all regions of the globe. Through activism and networking at the national and international level, women are claiming respect for their rights and their visions of development. Although not at the same scale, there has also been more awareness, commitment, and active engagement by men. Equality between women and men is both an end in itself and a means to achieve other development goals.

What do we mean by development? Can development be achieved if women and men do not participate equally in shaping and benefiting from it? These statements about development by Sida and other organisations are concerned with improving the quality of life of people in partner countries, both women and men, girls and boys.

.....

Sida Mission Statement

“Sida’s mission is to support the processes of change in partner countries which create the conditions necessary for sustainable growth and improved living standards for poor women, men and children. Democracy and social equality, peace and security shall be promoted both as objectives and as the basis of development supported by Sida.”
Annual Report 1995/96, p. 13

.....

UNDP

“The four critical elements of the human development concept – productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment – demand that gender issues be addressed as development issues and as human rights concerns. The compelling reason: development, if not engendered, is endangered. Only when the potential of all human beings is fully realised can we talk of true human development.”
Human Development Report 1995, p. 23

.....

OECD – Development Assistance Committee

“... a higher quality of life for all people [women and men] is the goal of sustainable development. A higher quality of life means that people [women and men] will attain increased power over their own future.” Shaping the 21st Century: the Contribution of Development Cooperation, 1996

What is “Equality between women and men”?

The definition of gender equality formulated by Sida points out both what it is and what it is not:

“Equality between women and men refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.”

“Equality is not a “women’s issue” but should concern and engage men as well as women. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.”

“Gender equality includes both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative aspect concerns the equal distribution of women and men in all areas of society. The qualitative perspective refers to the need to give equal weight to the knowledge, experience and values of both women and men as a means of enriching and directing all areas of social development.”

“Equality between women and men is seen as both a human rights issue and as a precondition for and indicator of effective sustainable people-centred development.”

(Sida’s Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries, 1997).

Many organisations and governments use the term “gender equality” interchangeably with “equality between women and men.” “Gender” is a word that does not translate easily into Swedish (and most other languages). In English the term “gender”, initially a grammatical classification, was adopted by academics and activists to emphasise the social and cultural nature of the attributes and expectations associated with being male or female. As these ideas are socially created rather than “natural” or biological, they can change as ideas and societies evolve. In these discussions the term took on new meaning and helped to articulate this perspective.

Several questions that are often raised about gender equality strategies provide a useful framework for further exploring what gender equality implies.

Why do gender equality strategies focus on women?

Organisations such as Sida and many partner countries have formulated gender equality policies and strategies precisely because gender equality does not exist. Since women rather than men are those generally excluded or disadvantaged in relation to social and economic resources and decision-making, efforts to identify and redress imbalances have focused on women’s situations. However, it is increasingly recognised that strategies must focus on men as well as women and on the relations between them, in order to achieve real change.

Don’t men have gender too?

Gender is often overlooked as an aspect of men’s social identity. This stems from a tendency to consider male attributes and characteristics as the norm, with those of women being variations on the norm. But the lives and activities of men as well as women are strongly influenced by gender. Cultural norms and practices about “masculinity” and expectations of men as leaders, fathers, husbands, sons, and lovers – in other words, gender – are important in shaping the demands on men and their behaviour.

What do men have to gain from gender equality?

Men also bear specific costs as a result of prevailing gender relations and the division of labour between women and men. Although modern warfare has tremendous costs for women, children and the elderly, it is primarily men who are expected to bear arms and defend the nation or community. Men face demands to concentrate on paid employment, which can limit their ability to form close relationships with their children. Men are diminished in their own eyes when they fail to meet expectations to be protectors and providers, even when social and economic circumstances make these expectations impossible to meet. Shaping new and rewarding images and expectations of men must be an important aspect of creating a more equal society that allows human dignity to both women and men.

“The duties of a father – both actual and expected – vary greatly throughout the world. Fathers’ contributions to the direct care of their children, particularly when children are very young, is critical. Nonetheless, a review of research in 186 societies found that fathers have ‘regular, close relationships’ with their children during infancy in only 2 per cent of these societies.”

- United Nations Fund for Population Activities, *A New Role for Men: Partners for Women’s Empowerment*.

What is the role of men in achieving gender equality?

Although women have led efforts to address gender inequalities, attaining gender equality implies changes for both men and women. Equal relationships need to be based on a redefinition of the rights and responsibilities of women and men in all spheres, including the family, the workplace, and society at large. One of the challenges in moving forward will be to motivate more men to participate as partners in the process of defining the visions and strategies for a more gender-equal society. A key strategy is the identification and mobilisation of male allies.

1.2 Evolution of perspectives on gender equality

Consensus on gender equality as critical to development and development as critical to gender equality

The international conferences held in the 1990s have progressively built a consensus on development goals and strategies for the coming decades. Equality between women and men has been an important theme of all these conferences, culminating in the Platform for Action agreed upon at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Each of the international conferences preceding Beijing recognised that equality between women and men and women's contributions are critical to progress.

Education for All (Jomtien 1990).

The World Declaration on Education for All stated that basic education is an inalienable right for all – women, men, boys, and girls. Areas for action identified by the conference included expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, universal access to and completion of primary education, and reduction in the adult illiteracy rate with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to reduce significantly the current disparity between male and female literacy rates. Gender equality in education was also on the agenda at the Mid-Decade Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (Amman 1996). The final communiqué of the meeting stated: “The priority of priorities must continue to be the education of girls and women. Successful approaches and programmes must be identified in order that they may be replicated and expanded. There can be no enduring success in basic education until the gender gap is closed.”

Environment and development (Rio de Janeiro 1992).

The UN Conference on Environment and Development looked at a broad range of environmental problems. It proposed integrated strategies to address the growing environmental crisis. Although preparatory documents and discussions paid little attention to gender equality issues and gender perspectives, networking and advocacy among women's organisations had a significant impact on the discussions. Agenda 21, the programme adopted by the conference, recommends attention to women's rights in order to overcome both poverty and environmental degradation. It emphasises the importance of local knowledge, including that of women, in finding solutions. It recognises the structural constraints faced by women in sound environmental management. One of the guiding principles of Agenda 21 refers to the vital role of women in resource management and calls for their full participation as "essential to achieve sustainable development."

Human rights (Vienna 1993).

The understanding of "women's rights as human rights" was considerably advanced by the discussion at the World Conference on Human Rights. It has long been an established principle in international human rights instruments that women should enjoy the same civil, political, and economic rights as men. However, the Conference resulted in much wider recognition that women's enjoyment of full human rights and dignity requires attention to gender-specific rights violations. These include: institutional and systemic patterns of discrimination against women, violence against women, and cultural practices such as sex-selective abortion and female genital mutilation.

Population and development. (Cairo 1994).

The major themes of the International Conference on Population and Development included human rights, women's empowerment, the importance of choice and control, a focus on adolescents, and

sexual and reproductive health and rights – altogether, an important shift away from traditional approaches to family planning and fertility control. The approaches adopted recognise the reproductive and sexual rights and responsibilities of both men and women, and the link between gender equality and the ability to exercise these rights.

Social development (Copenhagen 1995).

The last of the series of conferences before the Beijing meeting focused on the linkages between economic and social development, and particularly on the key problems of poverty, unemployment, and social marginalisation. The Social Summit aimed to “place people at the centre of development and direct our economies to human needs more effectively.” Throughout, the discussion emphasised the impact of gender differences and inequalities, and the importance of women’s empowerment in meeting the objectives set.

This was a cycle of conferences with unprecedented NGO participation, including a high level of participation by women’s organisations and gender-equality advocates. Their preparatory work and interventions had a significant impact in bringing women’s perspectives and concerns from the margin into the mainstream.

Women’s organisations influencing the agenda: the Rio experience

“Women’s groups were extremely active, to great effect, in the build-up to the [Rio] conference to ensure that women’s issues and, if possible, a gender perspective were incorporated in discussions and the final text. From only a handful of references to women in the first draft, they achieved recognition in a key principle, an entire chapter on women and sustainable development (Chapter 24), and even the word gender in several places. Agenda 21 contains hundreds of references to women and makes a concrete allocation of resources. While “women” are regularly referred to as a vulnerable group, they are also portrayed as capable and constructive.”

Gender and the Environment in Development Cooperation: An Assessment of Agenda 21 and the Platform for Action. (Prepared for Sida by Irene Guijt, 1997.)

Beijing Platform For Action: weaving the threads together

When the world's governments met again in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, they built on the perspectives developed and the commitments made at the preceding conferences. The Beijing conference, however, is specifically focused on women's position and on the link between gender equality and development.

Through establishing strategic objectives to address 12 "critical areas of concern," the Platform for Action (PFA) adopted by the Conference provides a comprehensive framework for action in the next decade.

Several themes from the discussion in Beijing and the PFA deserve to be highlighted:

Decision-making and empowerment.

A central theme of the PFA is the empowerment of women, as individuals and collectively, to define their interests and visions and to participate in decision-making that affects their lives. Much consideration was given to ensuring equal partnership between women and men in shaping the social and economic choices of the future.

Mainstreaming as a strategy to support gender equality.

Women's concerns have often been relegated to separate compartments where they receive little attention and few resources. The Conference acknowledged that this approach was inadequate and ineffective. It was agreed that it was vital to bring a gender perspective to all structures, institutions, and policies. The "mainstreaming paragraph" included in each major section of the PFA states:

"...governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively."

Government responsibility.

The PFA points to the responsibility of governments to promote equality between women and men and to formulate national plans to implement the Beijing commitments. Of course governments are not the only actors at the national level. The PFA highlights the contributions of non-governmental organisations and encourages governments to work more closely with them. It also outlines the responsibilities that should be taken on by research and academic organisations, the media, trade unions, and the private sector. Finally, the PFA sets out roles and strategies for international partners, including the UN and its development agencies, multilateral institutions and bilateral development cooperation agencies.

Human rights perspective.

Following on the agreements in Vienna and Cairo, the PFA grounds its approach to equality between women and men in a human rights perspective.

Role of men in the achievement of gender equality.

The need for greater involvement by men in defining and pursuing gender equality was recognised. Gender equality will not be achieved if men do not change. But further than that, any vision of a more equal future must be constructed jointly by the women and men who will share it.

Recognising and valuing women's contributions.

This was not a conference about women as victims – but about the real economic and social contributions women make and the benefits of greater gender equality.

The PFA reshapes the strategies formulated at the earlier world conferences on women in light of these themes. It also addresses a number of new

concerns. Armed conflict and the participation of women in conflict resolution is a major issue that has been added to the agenda, reflecting both the extent to which the world is ravaged by conflict and the realisation that women as well as men can make positive contributions to building peace. Another issue that received explicit attention was the rights and situation of girls. By developing a set of strategies focused on the girl-child, the Conference recognised the importance of eliminating discrimination against women in the earliest stages of their lives.

Beijing Platform for Action: Critical areas of concern

- The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women.
- Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training.
- Inequalities in and unequal access to health care and related services.
- Violence against women.
- The effects of armed and other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation.
- Inequalities in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources.
- Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.
- Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women.
- Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women.
- Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communications systems, especially in the media.
- Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and the safeguarding of the environment.
- Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl-child.

For an overview of each critical area of concern that includes a consideration of the possible roles for bilateral development cooperation, illustrations of initiatives undertaken, and references to further resources, see: *The Beijing Platform for Action & Bilateral Development Cooperation: A Guide* (Sida, 1998).

Mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality

The Beijing conference promoted mainstreaming as a strategy to pursue gender equality. “Mainstreaming” was subsequently given a concise definition by the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC), a body of government representatives from all regions.

ECOSOC statement on mainstreaming:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. **The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.**”

[ECOSOC, July 1997]

Three key points on mainstreaming are worth highlighting:

- Mainstreaming is a strategy to achieve gender equality, not an end in itself. A mainstreaming strategy will only be effective if choices about actions are made in light of the goal of achieving equality between women and men.
- Mainstreaming is concerned with the systematic consideration of gender equality perspectives in all decision-making. Mainstreaming has been adopted as a strategy because of the recognition that all institutions have a responsibility for serving women as well as men and for contributing to the achievement of gender equality.

- Mainstreaming also means participation by women as well as men in defining issues and solutions. Mainstreaming strategies have a technical or analytical dimension – the application of gender equality perspectives to policy and programme analysis requires data and skills on the part of decision-makers and their staff. But they also have a political dimension – efforts to enable women as well as men to formulate their interests and views and to participate in the decision-making process.

The emphasis on mainstreaming reflects many lessons of experience. In particular:

- The problem is not “women” and what they lack, but the social structures and processes that create inequality. While there is a need to direct resources (such as education, training, land, and credit) to women, there is an even greater need to look at the framework of policies and institutions that reproduce inequality and limit women’s ability to use or benefit from those resources.
- Increased “integration” or “participation” of women in policies, institutions, and programmes developed without regard to gender equality is unlikely to mean real long-term change in their situation. Change is required in mainstream development directions and processes to reflect the visions, needs, and interests of women as well as men and to support gender equality.
- Women-focused initiatives reach relatively few and have a limited impact on the social and economic processes that structure inequality. In order to achieve widespread change, attention must focus on the broad policies and programmes that shape people’s lives.

- Gender equality perspectives are relevant in all sectors and areas of policy, not only those that are “social” or “community-oriented.” Choices about economic strategies that affect trade and production patterns, for example, can have different implications for women and men (because of differences in their economic activities and access to productive resources) and thus for gender equality. All such decisions must be considered from a gender perspective if progress is to be made toward achieving gender equality.

In short, the mainstreaming strategy represents a shift in thinking away from women as a target group to gender equality as a development objective.

Sida resources on mainstreaming:

Mainstreaming: A Strategy for Achieving Equality Between Women and Men, A Think Piece. (Prepared by J. Schalkwyk, H. Thomas, and B. Woroniuk, 1996.)
Gender: The Concept, Its Meaning and Uses. A Think Piece. (Prepared by B. Woroniuk, H. Thomas, and J. Schalkwyk, 1997.)
Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy. (*Briefing prepared for Sida by Zoe Oxaal with Sally Baden, BRIDGE, 1997.*)

1.3 The momentum for change

In the Philippines gender equality advocates prescribe the “*bibinka approach*” for maintaining pressure for social change. A bibinka is a snack food that is cooked by *applying heat on the top and heat on the bottom*.

Progress toward gender equality calls for changes in societal institutions, attitudes, and practices. Pressure for action from below is vital if change is to be initiated and sustained in the long term. Also important is the role of governments to provide effective leadership on gender equality issues. The heat from both sources fuels the momentum for change.

Pressure from below

Since the 1970s there has been rapid growth in the women’s movement throughout the North and South. Women’s organisations and networks have identified issues, delivered services, undertaken research, and formulated alternative strategies. Their activism has helped to change attitudes of governments and the public on critical issues.

For example, two decades ago violence within the family was not seen as an issue for public policy attention. This was not because women were not at risk, but because domestic violence was seen as a private matter. Limited assistance was available from the law enforcement system and there were few services. Women’s organisations in the North attempted to bridge this gap by providing services such as hotlines and shelters. Those in the South tried to find community-based solutions, such as shelter with neighbours. This work produced considerable evidence about the prevalence of domestic violence, fuelling advocacy to provide better protection for women and changes in public attitudes. As the issue gained visibility, many countries made major strides in redefining domestic violence as a criminal matter requiring the attention of the law and

the police. Governments are now involved in important public education campaigns to increase awareness of women's rights, to equip women to exercise their rights, and to discourage those who would violate these rights.

The two decades of activism since the first UN world conference on women have been accompanied by a maturation of the women's movement. "Unity in diversity" is a theme in many regions as the women's movement encompasses a wide range of organisations and views. Just as a group of men may have different priorities, women are not always unanimous on questions of policy and ideology. Discussion and debate on priorities and strategies has generated a healthy process of testing ideas and seeking the best means to move forward.

As a result, women's organisations and gender equality advocates have developed stronger networks and more sophisticated means for holding governments and other actors accountable for their responsibilities toward women. In many countries activists demanded a role in national preparations for the Beijing Conference (and for the other conferences of the decade on environment, human rights, population, and social development). Since then they have been active in maintaining momentum for implementation of the Platform for Action and other gender equality initiatives.

The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (the CEDAW Convention)* is also used by women's organisations as a tool for advocacy for legislative and programme changes. Although equal rights without discrimination on the basis of sex were set out in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, activists worked throughout the next decades to clarify the specific forms of discrimination facing women. The CEDAW Convention was passed by the UN General Assembly in 1979. One year later, Sweden became the first country to commit itself to the Convention.

Obligations under the Convention are more formal than those made in the PFA. Signatories are required to make periodic progress reports and appear before the UN Committee that oversees the Convention. This reporting requirement provides an opportunity to raise public awareness and put pressure on governments – one that women's organisations in many countries are using with increasing effectiveness.

CEDAW: "The importance of reporting in a nutshell"

Initial report

- comprehensive review of the situation of women, consisting of two components:
 - assessment of the conformity of domestic guarantees for equal rights of women within the international legal framework,
 - development of baseline data (quantitative and qualitative) concerning the factual position of women with regard to all internationally guaranteed rights and freedoms;
- identification of obstacles to the implementation of CEDAW Convention as the background to the formulation of strategies, policies and specific projects, including priority-setting and time-frame, to address and gradually overcome identified obstacles;
- assessment of the needs for specific development cooperation projects to facilitate domestic compliance with the CEDAW Convention.

Subsequent reports

- regular monitoring of progress or retrogression in women's enjoyment of the internationally guaranteed rights as the basis for elaborating corrective interventions where and when necessary;
- identification of difficulties in securing the enjoyment of all rights by women due to changing circumstances – domestic and international – and elaboration of strategies for their overcoming;
- basis for public scrutiny – domestic and international – of governmental performance in the implementation of its human rights obligations.

Quoted from: *A Primer on CEDAW for International Development Cooperation Personnel*. Prepared for Sida by Katarina Tomasevski, 1998.

Individual organisations have been strengthened through formal and informal coalitions; joint action has enabled them to maximise their impact on specific issues. Networking at the regional and international levels has been a valuable means of benefiting from the experience and ideas of others. Further, regional and global networks provide a forum to address issues that may be politically difficult at the national level, such as responses to fundamentalist political movements that threaten women's rights.

The potential to use these networks effectively to exchange information and mobilise for action has been enormously enhanced by new information technologies. Despite difficulties of access in many areas – due to factors including unreliable or distant telephone services, the costs of equipment and connections – gender equality advocates are making increasing use of e-mail, on-line conferences, list-serv mechanisms, and websites.

Increased visibility and sophistication of the women's movement can also be observed in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where independent organisations are largely a phenomenon of the last decade. The women's movement there has expanded greatly in a very short time and now includes activist organisations concerned with research, advocacy about policy and legislation, the provision of employment and training services, rape crisis centres, and a range of other matters. In these countries, women's organisations play a critical role in representing the concerns and aspirations of women and in generating public debate about women's rights and gender relations. This role is particularly important because of the sharp fall in the number of women in legislative bodies in many countries in the region at a time when major decisions about economic and social development are being taken.

As evident from this discussion, most of the pressure from below on gender equality is from the women's movement. Although other organisations such as trade unions, human rights activists, and local development organisations have pursued gender equality issues to some extent, the women's movement still faces the challenge of developing

stronger coalitions with organisations that also have interests in equity and social justice but may be giving only limited attention to gender equality. Many of these organisations have traditionally been led by men, who to date have been involved rather marginally in the struggle for increased equality between women and men. Academics and equality advocates have recently begun to devote more attention to exploring men's gender identities and interests and to defining approaches to addressing men and their interests in strategies for gender equality. In several countries, men's networks concerned with gender equality are also appearing. Focusing on issues such as ending violence against women, these organizations seek to engage other men in the search for more equal gender relations.

The White Ribbon Campaign

"If it were between countries, we'd call it a war. If it were a disease, we'd call it an epidemic. If it were an oil spill, we'd call it a disaster. But it's happening to women, and it's just an everyday affair. It is violence against women. It is sexual harassment at work and sexual abuse of the young. It is the beating or the blow that millions of women suffer each and every day. It is rape at home and on dates. It is murder..."

Men have been defined as part of the problem. But the White Ribbon Campaign believes that men can and must be part of the solution. Confronting men's violence requires nothing less than a commitment to full equality for women and redefinition of what it means to be men, to discover a meaning to manhood that doesn't require blood to be spilled."

- From: Breaking Men's Silence to End Men's Violence, The White Ribbon Campaign

The White Ribbon Campaign was conceived in Canada in 1991 and has now spread to many countries around the world. Its mandate is to encourage men and boys everywhere to think about their responsibility to end violence against women. Men are asked to speak out against violence, wear a white ribbon, and help raise funds to support anti-violence programmes. More information can be found at the Campaign's website: <http://www.whiteribbon.ca>

Pressure from above: leadership by governments

Governments have recognised that critical problems can only be addressed effectively if they take account of women's situation as well as men's. Strategies to reduce poverty are a key example. Discrimination against women in legislation, institutional practices, and access to resources (including education, health services, and productive resources such as land and credit) mean that women face much greater difficulties than men in surviving and surmounting poverty. This applies to women in poor households as well as women heading households on their own. Given the number of women among the poor and the high risk of poverty among women, strategies that do not address gender factors are unlikely to achieve poverty reduction objectives.

There have been many demands on governments to provide leadership in efforts to achieve gender equality. Leadership by governments involves establishing the necessary policy framework, but also generally providing social legitimacy for women's human rights and equal participation. The UN world conferences for women have helped garner government commitments to gender equality goals and to specific strategies. As preparatory processes for the conferences have generated stronger links between governments and gender equality activists (and increased public awareness of the issues), the commitments made are much more likely to remain on the public agenda. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which has been signed by three-quarters of UN members and clearly sets out state obligations to protect and promote women's rights, also requires leadership by governments.

Within many governments, efforts to promote the PFA mainstreaming approach are under way. Actions include efforts to promote more systematic attention to gender perspectives in decision-making about policies, resource allocations, and programmes by all agencies, with ministries of

women's affairs acting as catalysts and supporters. However, while this strategy may be clear, implementation remains difficult. It is generally easier to formulate a programme for women with a list of specific legislative and policy measures and specific women-focused programmes than to develop the capacity for systematic and on-going attention to gender equality perspectives in the process of policy formulation.

The PFA highlights the importance of central government ministries such as finance and planning ministries, and major line ministries. Although the national women's machinery is expected to play a catalytic role, other ministries are expected to be involved in and responsible for policies and programmes that support gender equality.

Northern governments are also grappling with the challenge of implementing systematic approaches to applying gender perspectives in government decision-making. Indeed, initiatives taken by several Southern governments have in some cases led the way in suggesting what might be done. As illustrations of innovative approaches, consider the following:

Philippines: development of an enabling framework for gender mainstreaming

In the Presidential Executive order adopting the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025, all government agencies were directed to mainstream gender and development concerns in their regular planning and budgeting processes. Since 1996, all agencies are required to allocate at least 5% of annual budgets for initiatives to address gender issues. Agencies are encouraged to draw up a Gender and Development Plan to determine how to use the 5% allocation strategically. A pamphlet of Questions and Answers on the Implementation of the GAD Budget Policies, prepared by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, suggests strategic uses for the 5% allocation to make agency plans and programmes gender-responsive:

- advocacy and training activities that increase awareness and skills for gender mainstreaming in the agency;
- development of gender-responsive data and information systems for policy, planning, and monitoring purposes;
- establishment of gender and development focal points or other mechanisms to ensure that gender concerns are identified and addressed.

Bangladesh: examining capacity within government to implement gender equality commitments

In 1995 the Government of Bangladesh embarked on a broad review of whether the commitment, mechanisms, data, and skills to implement gender equality commitments were in place in government agencies. The review considered the capacity of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in its role as national focal point as well as the capacities of other bodies. The final report, entitled: Mainstreaming Women's Development: Institutional Review of the WID Capability of the Government of Bangladesh, makes in response to broad questions about the different mainstreaming capacities required by various agencies:

- is the national focal point for women's development able to provide effective leadership and to motivate and support other agencies in fulfilling their responsibilities on women's development?
- is the central planning authority able to incorporate issues of women's development into national policy frameworks and its guidance to sectoral ministries?
- are sectoral ministries able to ensure that their strategies and programmes serve women and men equitably?
- are government training institutes able to support government officials in increasing their skills on women's development issues?

Namibia: mainstreaming a gender equality perspective into the government budget

In 1998, Swedish support enabled the Namibian government to embark on the first phase of a process “to develop methods and tools to facilitate the examination of the Namibian national state budget from a gender equality perspective.” The initiative aims to identify the impact on women and men of different categories of public expenditure (and eventually, public revenue as well). This initiative is interesting as it lodged inside government in contrast to the South African initiative that comes from outside government. The initiative involves both the Namibian Ministry of Finance and the Department of Women’s Affairs (Office of the President). The goal is to make the exercise a regular part of the traditional budget process. With the assistance of Swedish consultants, this first phase set out a theoretical framework and examined several sectors from the 1997 budget (basic education, higher education and agriculture). The consultants’ report is available from Sida: Agneta Stark & Stefan de Vylder (1998). *Mainstreaming Gender in Namibia’s National Budget: Prepared by Consultants to Sida on behalf of Department of Women’s Affairs, Office of the President and the Ministry of Finance, Namibia.* Sida: Department for Africa.

PFA on the allocation of government responsibilities for gender equality:

All ministries have a role: Governments agreed to:

“Give all ministries the mandate to review policies and programmes from a gender perspective and in the light of the Platform for Action...”

Ministries for women have a specific role as catalysts:

Governments agreed that:

“A national machinery for women’s affairs is the central policy-coordinating unit within government. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.”

Platform for Action, paras. 204(a) and 201.

2.0

Equality between women and men:
the role of development cooperation

2.1 Development partnerships to support national efforts

Building on local ownership and momentum

Development cooperation approaches are increasingly oriented toward **partnerships** in support of strategies developed at the national level and toward **building national capacity** to implement those strategies. The emphasis on partnerships and capacity-building recognises the right and responsibility of each partner country to chart its own development path. It reflects a dose of humility about the role of development cooperation as but one factor shaping the lives of women and men in partner countries.

The role of development cooperation is to support initiatives for which there is local ownership and momentum. In this supportive role, there is a strong basis for development cooperation agencies to build partnerships for work toward gender equality:

Commitments to gender equality have been made by partner governments.

The Beijing Platform for Action was adopted by the international community – by governments in the South as well as the North. Many countries have formulated national Beijing follow-up plans and most countries are also party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Organisations in civil society (including NGOs, women's networks, and, even in some areas, men's networks) are demanding accountability on commitments.

The increasing strength of groups advocating gender equality - organisations focused on policy advocacy, research, services for women, public awareness - is an indicator of the demand for change in the situation of women and relations between women and men. These organisations can benefit from support in their efforts to hold governments accountable.

Increased awareness of gender equality issues means a broader range of partners.

Potential partners for action on gender equality issues include not only government ministries and agencies, but also unions and professional associations, academic and research institutes, advocacy and community organisations...

In short, partner governments have made commitments and momentum exists in partner countries – and the challenge for development cooperation agencies is to be effective and responsible in working with partners in support of gender equality.

The Development Assistance Committee on nationally-generated strategies and local leadership as essential components of sustainable development.

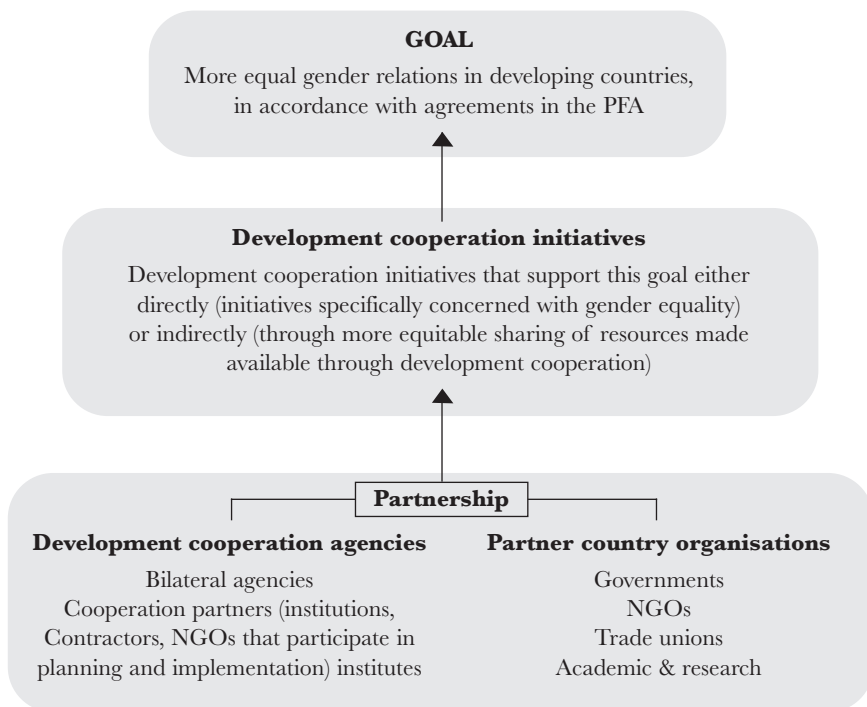
“...each developing country and its people are ultimately responsible for their own development. Thus, the developing country is the necessary starting point for organising cooperation efforts, through relationships and mechanisms that reflect the particular local circumstances.” Generally, approaches should “complement and enrich efforts to strengthen national capacities for sustainable development.”

[OECD/DAC, *Shaping the 21st Century: the Contribution of Development Cooperation*, 1996.]

Collaboration to achieve gender equality objectives

What is required to work effectively with partner governments and institutions to mainstream gender equality? The graphic below presents a view of this relation that emphasises that:

- the goal is to work toward equality between women and men in the partner country, to make a difference to their lives;
- the “product” of the partnership is development cooperation initiatives identified and designed to support the goal of gender equality.



The following sections consider two complementary strategies to support gender equality objectives: initiatives specifically concerned with gender equality, and the systematic application of gender equality perspectives to all development initiatives.

National commitments – information on the Internet

An easily accessible source of information on national gender equality commitments is the WomenWatch website established jointly by UNIFEM, UNDP and the UN Division for the Advancement of Women. It also includes the text of the PFA and information about UN follow-up. For CEDAW, it provides links to the text of the Convention and the list of signatories to it.

See: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>>

Sida Country Gender Profiles

Sida is currently revising and updating country gender profiles. Up-to-date profiles for Kenya, Eritrea, South Africa, and Cambodia are now available. They contain gender-specific information on the following themes (including specific attention to girl-children where relevant):

- a) the three other priority areas within Sida (democracy, human rights and conflict; poverty; and environmental sustainability);
- b) other issues such as the economic situation, socio-cultural situation, political situation, conflict, and media;
- c) national policies and inputs on the promotion of gender equality;
- d) inputs by external agencies; and
- e) key problems and opportunities.

Other development cooperation organisations have also developed gender profiles and analyses. The World Bank, for example, posts their country-specific gender analysis on their website.

See: <<http://www.worldbank.org/gender/tools/genpro.htm>>

2.2 Specific initiatives to support gender equality

Equality-focused vs. women-targeted – what is the difference?

Initiatives specifically concerned with gender equality can make significant contributions to addressing gender equality issues. This does not necessarily mean initiatives targeted to women. Indeed, equality-focused initiatives may include men as the primary participants. And initiatives in which most of the participants are women do not automatically advance equality objectives. It is because of the long-term *impact sought rather than the immediate benefit to participants* that such activities can be considered “equality-focused.”

Because the difference between equality-focused and women-targeted initiatives is important, we will explore it through several examples.

First, even though an initiative targets women it may not contribute to equality objectives. For example:

- *Women’s components within larger projects, where the women’s component is not related to the main project objectives.* There have been many examples of projects aimed at rural economic development or increased agricultural productivity in which the women’s component has focused on home economics or family planning – ignoring women’s agricultural and economic activity and their efforts to increase productivity and income. With this approach, most project resources bypass women. Where *women receive some* benefits but *men gain most* of the resources and opportunities provided by initiatives, the effect could ultimately exacerbate inequalities.

- *Small projects undertaken because of the “need to do something to reach women.”* These include many examples of income-generating projects that supply women with, for example, sewing machines, or small livestock, or subsidised credit for micro-enterprise. In some cases, such projects have done little to improve women’s situation as they resulted in increased workloads for very limited return. In most cases, they reach comparatively few women. Generally they have limited impact on the structure of constraints that limit women’s opportunities and income, including factors that restrict access to institutions (such as banks, cooperatives, and schools), to markets for their goods, and to services to relieve domestic responsibilities.

There are also initiatives that are in effect women-targeted as they deal with roles and responsibilities generally assigned to women, or target sectors in which women predominate. Whether or not these initiatives have a positive impact on gender inequalities depends on how the specific initiative is structured. For example:

- In mother and child health programmes (MCH), women are highly visible as clients. This is also the case in family-planning programmes. The targeting of women reflects the reality that the care of children is a responsibility generally assigned to women. The need for programmes to serve the needs of children and parents is clear. However, the predominance of women among the clientele does not necessarily mean the initiative is serving gender equality objectives. Indeed, the Cairo and Beijing Conferences advocated a rethinking of MCH and family planning programmes within a broader human rights framework and greater attention to the reproductive rights and responsibilities of men as well as women. Such approaches would broaden the clientele of these programmes to include men and broaden their objectives to include gender equality.

- Initiatives related to sectors such as the garment industry, electronics assembly, or export processing zones are likely to affect women more than men due to the large presence of women in these sectors – compared, for example, to the transport and construction sectors where men tend to predominate. A similar gender-specific effect may occur with agricultural initiatives as in many areas women and men are concerned with different crops or livestock. Initiatives aimed at sectors dominated by women can make a contribution to redressing inequalities, as many of these sectors have long had a lower priority for resources and attention. However, this type of initiative must be accompanied by measures to ensure that women also have access to resources in other sectors in which they are active.

By contrast, **equality-focused initiatives are aimed at redressing gender inequality or enhancing capacity on gender equality issues.** For example:

- a capacity-building initiative with judges that includes sessions on women's rights issues (such as the interpretation of gender equality in national law and in light of international standards, ways in which judges can identify and avoid biases against women arising from court processes);
- cooperation with a national statistics agency on the information systems and skills required to produce sex-disaggregated data for policy analysis and planning;
- a public awareness and health education campaign that has as one of its major themes the responsibility of men toward the sexual health of their partners;
- support for regional networking among women's organisations to enable them to exchange experiences, develop strategies and improve advocacy.

It might be noted that men are the immediate targets of many initiatives of the type outlined above – judges tend to be men, and many planners and statisticians will also be men. But the impact sought by the activity is a positive impact on gender equality and the activities are targeted those who need to act to achieve this impact.

Targeted inputs to support equality

Sida's *Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries* (1997) clearly points out that there is no contradiction between a mainstreaming strategy and specific inputs to promote gender equality: "Where gender disparities are identified it is important to address these disparities. Special inputs to promote gender equality will be targeted at the structural causes of inequalities and not only at symptoms and effects of inequalities."

These 'targeted inputs' take a variety of forms. One focus is human rights and democracy with attention to issues of political participation, power-sharing and violence against women. Another important area is the involvement of men and the identification of allies. A third type of input is capacity development: gender training, methodology development, and investments in sex-disaggregated statistics.

The Beijing *Platform for Action* defines areas where specific targeted inputs could be effective. It stresses that methodologies, tools and an information base are required to move ahead. Specific areas mentioned in the PFA include:

Methodologies and tools for economic analysis:

- Devise suitable statistical means to recognise and highlight the full extent of the work of women and all their contributions to the national economy, including their contribution to the unremunerated and domestic sectors (PFA para. 68(b)). Improve data collection on the

unremunerated work already included in national accounts (especially subsistence agriculture and other types of non-market production activities), and improve methods to accurately assess and reflect the value of unremunerated work in satellite or other official accounts that are separate from but consistent with core national accounts (PFA para. 206 (f) and (g)).

- Develop conceptual and practical methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives in all aspects of economic policy-making, including structural adjustment planning and programmes (PFA para. 67(a)).
- Develop qualitative and quantitative statistical indicators to facilitate the assessment of economic performance from a gender perspective (PFA para. 68(a)).
- Improve concepts and methods of data collection on the measurement of poverty among women and men, including their access to resources (PFA para. 206(h)).

Resources on gender equality and health:

- Support and fund social, economic, political, and cultural research on how gender-based inequalities affect women's health, including etiology, epidemiology, provision and utilisation of services, and eventual outcome of treatment (PFA para. 109(f)).

Resources on violence against women:

- Conduct research into the causes, nature, seriousness, and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and redress violence against women (PFA para. 129(a)).

Resources on gender and armed conflict:

- Develop research on the physical, psychological, economic, and social effects of armed conflicts on women, particularly young women and girls, with a view to developing policies and programmes to address the consequences of conflicts (PFA para. 146(c)).

Resources on gender and the environment:

- Develop gender-sensitive databases; information and monitoring systems; and participatory action-oriented research, methodologies, and policy analyses on:
 - woman's knowledge and experience concerning the management and conservation of natural resources;
 - the impact on women of environmental and natural resource degradation;
 - the structural links between gender relations, environment, and development;
 - measures to develop and include environmental, economic, cultural, and social gender-sensitive analyses as an essential step in the development and monitoring of programmes and policies (PFA para. 258 (b)).

Developing resources to support gender equality strategies: tools for analysing government budgets

Drawing on innovative work in Australia, pilot initiatives to analyse budgets from a gender equality perspective are now being undertaken in a number of countries, including South Africa, Sri Lanka and Barbados (with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat) and Namibia (with Sida support). Methods and tools developed through these pilots will be important resources for assessing the distribution of government resource allocation between women and men and their impact on gender equality.

A 1997 workshop hosted by Sida summarised the “what” and “why” of paying attention to government budgets.

What does it mean to mainstream gender equality into government budgets?

Mainstreaming gender equality into government budgets does not mean “adding on women” or presenting a separate budget for women. Rather, a gender budget looks beyond the resources used for specifically targeting women to disaggregating all votes in the budget and assessing their likely and actual impact on women and men.

A gender budget tracks both the expenditure and the revenue side of the ordinary budget: from the appropriation to the actual use of funds (delivered services or income transfers) and from the raised funds (taxation, user charges, etc.) to actual incidence of payment. This exercise reveals the amount government spends on its declared policies of gender equality, as well as whether the way the government raises that money supports gender equality. By making use of previous years’ findings from gender budgets, future government budgets should be adjusted, designed and implemented in a way that improves gender equality and supports both women’s and men’s priorities.

Why should gender equality be mainstreamed into government budgets?

Given the great impact of government budgets on individuals’ lives, the mainstreaming of gender equality into budgets is an important gender equality issue. Social justice (in terms of equal access to social services) is an important objective in its own right. Formulating policies on the basis of an analysis which considers all people’s needs ensures a more efficient management of resources and improves the effectiveness of macroeconomic policy in achieving wider objectives for society. Since gender budgets involve follow-up of government’s declared, planned and delivered services, it also supports accountability and good governance.

From: Sida, Workshop on Mainstreaming a Gender Equality Perspective into Government Budgets. (Prepared for Sida, Secretariat for Policy and Corporate Development, by Charlotta Adelstal, 1998.)

Targeted inputs to support advocacy

If governments are to be held accountable for their international commitments to gender equality, advocacy by civil society organisations promoting gender equality is vital. International, national, and local organizations all play a role in both putting gender equality issues on the government's agenda and ensuring that resources are allocated. Issues such as violence against women have achieved prominence only because women have drawn the spotlight to these problems and pushed for alternative agendas. In some regions, men are also rallying around gender equality issues.

International development cooperation agencies have a role to play in supporting these organizations as advocacy groups often lack resources and technical assistance. In the years leading up to the Beijing Conference, organizations such as Sida helped enable them to participate in the debates in preparation of the national reports.

In order to be effective advocates, women's organizations require lobbying skills and the capacity to develop concrete policy and programme options to present to government officials. They need to conduct research (or have access to research conducted by other organizations such as women's studies/gender studies units in universities) in order to ground their analysis in a solid empirical base. They need to develop good relations with the media and to get their messages across to a wide public. They also need to build good communications skills so they can listen to their local memberships.

International and regional networking – both south-south and north-south – has been invaluable. Through conferences, meetings and, increasingly, electronic forums, organizations can share strategies, lessons, and information, and can provide moral support.

2.3 Mainstreaming: applying gender equality perspectives in all areas of development cooperation

Equality perspectives are relevant to all initiatives

Most development cooperation resources are devoted to initiatives whose primary aim is not equality between women and men. Most programmes have a sectoral focus: education, health, agriculture, economic stability... Most agencies have broad mandates with other development goals such as poverty eradication, democracy and human rights, good governance, economic growth, and social development. At the same time, Sida and other agencies have identified gender equality as a “crosscutting” or “overall” goal – that is, a goal that is to be taken into account in all initiatives, whether or not they are primarily concerned with gender equality.

Experience suggests that this systematic approach can strengthen development cooperation in a number of ways:

Meeting social justice objectives:

The values of social justice and equity motivate many development workers in bilateral agencies and NGOs, as well as public support for development cooperation. Working for social justice and equity requires consideration of inequality between women and men. While gender is not always the most important ground of social division – consider South Africa in the apartheid era -- few (if any) societies are free of gender inequality.

The evidence accumulated since the mid-1970s shows that differences and inequalities between women and men result in differences in the

impact of development cooperation. Women have often not benefited to the same extent as men – and in some cases development cooperation has exacerbated inequalities. Meeting social justice objectives requires efforts to ensure that development cooperation resources and opportunities are equitably distributed between women and men, thereby diminishing gender disparities.

Focusing attention on the human dimension of development:

One of the difficulties of implementing policies on women and development in the past was the tendency to approach development initiatives in a technical or output-oriented way – to focus on the initiative as an activity to build a bridge, or improve management capacity in the education sector, or establish a functioning cadastral system. However, the development impact sought is generally a change in people's lives. For example, the point of building the bridge is to increase the mobility of people and goods, and thus to increase access to schools, health services, markets and economic opportunity as a means of increasing the well-being of women and men in communities.

Agency policies that required consideration of impacts on women also served to refocus attention on the human dimension of development – it is not possible to consider gender issues if we do not focus on people. This closer attention to the impacts of initiatives supported through development cooperation is essential to assessing whether approaches are valid and where adjustments are required.

Increasing the effectiveness of investments:

Experience has also demonstrated that use of a gender perspective enhances project quality. Where planning is based on undifferentiated categories of target groups – “farmers” or “elementary students” or

“water users” – important differences within these groups are masked. Planning processes that analyse similarities and differences between women and men are necessary for an adequate assessment of problems, potential solutions, and project opportunities. Incorporating the needs and interests of women as well as men in project design helps to anticipate problems that could otherwise impede implementation or diminish sustainability.

Having a real impact on equality between women and men:

Equality between women and men is itself a development goal identified by both bilateral agencies and partner governments. A real contribution through development cooperation can only be achieved if this goal is systematically taken into account. Lack of attention to gender differences and inequalities can have the inadvertent effect of exacerbating disparities. For example, existing gaps in workloads, income, and resources may be increased if the effects of an intervention disproportionately favour men. If gender equality issues are only considered in relation to equality-focused initiatives or project components, the major part of development resources may continue to bypass women – and the overall impact of development cooperation on gender equality will be limited or negative.

Mainstreaming and initial choices

All too often the consideration of gender equality issues comes after all major decisions have been made. Faced with a project that is already designed, development cooperation staff are often met with the challenge of fiddling at the edges to see how they can bring in gender equality perspectives.

The PFA challenges this sequence of events. It urges planners to conduct a gender analysis **before** major decisions are taken. For people

working in development cooperation agencies, this means that gender equality considerations should influence not just project design, but broad policy directions. Sida's *Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries (Action Plan)* (1997), points out that:

Mainstreaming implies that attention to equality between women and men should influence:

1. the choice of sectors in a country programme;
2. the choice of activities to support within each sector; and
3. the strategies and methodologies utilised in the chosen activities in each sector.

Broad investment decisions implicit in country programming strategies will influence the possible scope for positive action on equality issues. The decision to focus on one sector may open or close possibilities. For example, the decision to focus on supplying hardware to extend the electrical grid or to give priority to the expansion of ocean-going port facilities can limit the potential to consider equality issues. On the other hand, a country programme strategy that highlights governance issues, human rights, and education reform provides greater scope to support equality between women and men.

Getting the analysis right

Many development workers who support gender equality goals still have trouble identifying how these goals are relevant in a specific situation. What does gender equality mean in relation to the development of a cadastral system? Or for the development of solid waste treatment systems? Or for the management information system for a ministry of health? Yet all such initiatives have implications for women, men, and the relations between them.

A preliminary identification of issues and opportunities requires thought, but it is not necessary to be a gender specialist. Given that programme officers working in development cooperation agencies like Sida only indirectly support the efforts of their partners to develop projects (rather than develop the project themselves), their role is often one of asking questions and providing analytical support. There are two important starting points for the analysis: 1) what does the project hope to achieve (what are the expected results or impacts)? and 2) is there an understanding of the specific issues and circumstances in this situation (in other words, is the analysis based on an understanding of the concrete situation rather than general assumptions which may or may not hold in this case)?

First, a gender analysis involves a review of the rationale for the overall initiative. What is the *development impact* the initiative seeks to achieve? What is the *impact on the population* of actions by the partner institution, and how will this be affected by the initiative? Applying what you know about the *situation of women and men*, what gender equality issues or concerns could arise in relation to these impacts?

Consider, for example, an initiative related to **decentralisation and provincial planning**. The national government of a partner country is seeking assistance to increase the capacity of provincial planning departments. Provincial governments are being given more authority and responsibility under the government policy of decentralisation. The downward shift of responsibilities to the provincial level is intended to promote more effective responses to the needs of the population, more effective use of development resources, and more participation by the populace in governance. The national government has recognised that provincial governments will need to develop new skills and mechanisms to take up these responsibilities. It has therefore proposed a project that includes training and technical assistance for provincial planning departments.

Questions to be asked include:

- *What is the proposed development impact of the initiative?* Through decentralisation, the government seeks to achieve more responsive and participatory government and more effective use of resources – and thus improved well-being of the population. A more responsive government must be responsive to the priorities and concerns of women as well as those of men. Participatory approaches will only be achieved if women participate on an equitable basis.
- *What is the mandate of the partner institution and what impact does its work have on people – women and men?* Planning departments generally do the analyses, consultation, and planning that precedes the proposal of a development project. These projects, in turn, distribute resources and opportunities. This work has a major impact on WHO gets WHAT.
- *Given the institution's mandate, what gender equality issues could arise?* Depending on the decisions made by planners, resources and opportunities could be equitably or inequitably distributed. If planners do not consider differences in the situation of men and women, they may propose initiatives which limit women's access to resources and opportunities. If planners do not ensure that women as well as men are consulted, women's views may not be heard.
- *What gender equality issues could be addressed by the project?* Taking account of the points above, the proposed training of planning staff should include components on how to include gender perspectives in the analysis of problems, consultation with local populations, assessment of design choices, and project evaluation – areas in which planning staff require skills in order to serve the needs of women as well as men. Such training would need to be provided to all staff, as male planners as well as female planners must be able to address gender equality issues and to take responsibility for doing so. Transitional

technical assistance teams should be able to explain and demonstrate how to apply gender perspectives to mainstream activities.

A second important element is a careful consideration of the specific circumstances of the initiative. Although gender inequality tends to be the norm around the world, the situation of women and men varies from place to place. Furthermore, although gender is an important social division, other social, cultural, and economic factors should also be incorporated into the analysis of the situation: are there important divisions among women and men on economic, ethnic, religious, or age lines?

Each country strategy and each project must be based on a solid understanding of the actual reality. Country gender profiles provide good starting points to understand important national issues. What has the government done in follow-up to the Beijing Conference? Who are the important gender equality advocates? Which organisations have the capacity to support the incorporation of gender equality perspectives into sectoral projects? Are there organisations with gender expertise in education or health planning or water resources management? What gender divisions and inequalities are particularly relevant? (For example, in an agriculture project unequal access to land or extension services may be particularly important or in a public administration project, gender differences in educational achievement may assume prominence.)

Sida handbooks for identifying gender equality issues and opportunities

Gender Equality and Swedish Non-governmental Organisations: Overview (1996)

Handbook for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Agriculture Sector (1997)

Handbook for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Health Sector (1997)

Handbook for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Rural Transportation Sector (1997)

Handbook for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Water Resources Management (1997)

Overview: Gender Equality and Emergency Assistance/Conflict Resolution (1997)

Handbook for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Education Sector (1998)

Mainstreaming Equality Between Women and Men: Handbook on Gender Perspectives in Energy Sector Development (1998)

Equality Between Women and Men: A Handbook on Mainstreaming in Contract-Financed Technical Cooperation (1998)

Participation: who is consulted on what?

Participation and participatory processes are an important element in mainstreaming strategies. If women's experience, knowledge, and values are to be reflected in development initiatives as well as men's, then the participation of women is vital.

Yet participation remains one of the difficult development issues: everyone is in favour of participation, but it continues to be elusive to ensure in practice. This is particularly true in initiatives supported by development cooperation that have only indirect linkages with the eventual beneficiary population – for example, capacity-building for government ministries, support for improved management information systems, or research into a new seed variety.

Until recently many people assumed that a participatory process would capture all the perspectives in a community. Now the evidence clearly shows this not to be the case. Power differentials can influence how people participate. Not everyone may feel comfortable voicing concerns in front of a large group: they may not have experience in talking publicly or may not know how their intervention will be received. Some people may not have had the opportunity to work through their own position on an issue or they may not have all the relevant information. For example, people may rank improved drinking water supply higher on a list of local priorities if they know that the current well is contaminated.

There can be other obstacles to equitable participation. For example, not everyone may have the time to participate. Women rarely have 'leisure' time given their domestic responsibilities.

When the focus of an initiative moves away from the community level to more national or policy level activities, participation is even more difficult to ensure. At this level, special care must be taken to encourage the involvement of a wide range of organisations (including gender equality advocates). Often staff of development agencies say that there is no 'domestic demand' for the consideration of gender equality issues. What they really mean is that there is no 'demand' among the people they have consulted. The 'demand' is often there: among grass-roots women, in women's organisations, in the national women's machinery, in women's studies/gender studies units, and in other groups that support gender equality. A participatory approach calls for the building of networks that include these organisations, support their ongoing capacity development, and make use of their expertise.

Making effective use of major opportunities

While all development cooperation initiatives offer some opportunity for positive impact on gender equality, some initiatives offer much wider scope for impact than others. Two that have the potential for broad and long-term impacts are sector programme support and capacity-building with key government institutions.

Sector programme support is often provided in connection with a broad review of sectoral policies and institutions. These reviews can set new policy directions and determine major budget allocations. Sector programme support also targets improved planning capacity and overall capacity development. These reviews are important discussions with decisions that determine who will get what in the future.

Such broad reviews – which do not occur frequently in sectoral decision-making cycles - open possibilities to discuss issues that may otherwise be difficult to get on the agenda. Once decisions have been taken, the policies and practical strategies agreed upon will govern action for some time. Sector reviews thus provide an ideal opportunity in the planning cycle to address gender equality issues and to make progress on the sectoral concerns outlined in the Platform for Action. If such openings are missed, the opportunity for significant (as opposed to marginal) changes will not arise again soon.

Capacity-building of national institutions has become a major focus of development cooperation. However, institutional capacity to address gender equality issues is rarely a priority unless the initiative focuses on women or on gender equality. But when a development cooperation organisation supports capacity-building for policy analysis and planning in agriculture or for developing reliable economic data - and fails to address the relevant gender equality issues - it is difficult to repair this later with a separate initiative to build capacity on gender equality issues.

For reasons of policy coherence and legitimacy, it makes more sense to incorporate efforts to build gender capacity into initiatives aimed to improve overall capacity. On a practical level, general capacity-building is a first step to building the capacity to work with a gender equality perspective. Initiatives to build gender capacity have often found that little can be done without broader shifts and improvements in overall capacity that are beyond their mandate. For example, abilities to conduct gender analysis will be weak as long as overall analytic capabilities are weak. Likewise the likelihood of sex-disaggregated information in impact assessments will be negligible where mechanisms for impact assessment are weak.

In relation to both sector programme support and capacity-building, constructive dialogue with partners on gender equality aspects is more likely to succeed if priorities and potential opportunities and constraints are identified in advance. This preparatory work requires a good knowledge base and strong networks. It could include:

Knowledge of relevant national commitments.

The Beijing *Platform for Action* likely includes elements relevant to the initiative (in addition to the broad commitment to mainstreaming a gender perspective in decision-making in all sectors, it specifies issues and strategies in a range of sectors). The national Beijing follow-up plan may make specific commitments related to the sector or institution targeted by the initiative. If the partner country is a signatory to the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, this too can provide a useful reference point in policy dialogue.

Consultation with gender equality advocates inside and outside of government.

There are often women's organisations and gender equality advocates in the partner country active in the sector concerned. They may have

collaborated with other NGOs and with government in Beijing preparatory and follow-up processes and thus have an understanding of the key issues from the perspective of women and of the possibilities of government action. Most governments also have ministries or bureaux for women's affairs that should also be brought into the consultative process.

Identification of local expertise.

Local expertise can be drawn on in preliminary discussions. Advisory and working groups could include women's research and advocacy organisations, women's studies/gender studies centres, and individual gender equality experts and consultants.

Identification of potential allies within partner institutions.

In most partner institutions it will be possible to identify units or individuals that are already working on gender equality issues or have the potential to do so if given legitimacy and support. These internal advocates are key to defining appropriate strategies and sustaining the institutional momentum on gender equality beyond the specific initiative. Male allies can play a key role in supporting and facilitating the process when internal resistance towards gender equality is to be handled.

Sector programme support: mainstreaming a gender equality perspective

Sector programme support is often provided in conjunction with a broad review of sectoral policies and institutions. Taking the example of the health sector, issues to be addressed include:

- What gets resources? Decisions about priorities and sectoral allocations (i.e., how much to focus on primary health care and prevention? on services to treat complications in childbirth?) set the framework for the sector as a whole and the scope of possibilities for addressing women's needs and gender equality approaches.
- Who pays? Different financing mechanisms such as user fees, insurance, or community contributions may have different consequences for women and men and for their access to health services.
- Who delivers? Strategies that rely on community mobilisation may implicitly rely on unpaid female labour and may result in heavier burdens on women.
- Are women's health advocates recognised? In many countries, women's organisations have been vigorous advocates of policies for women's health or innovators in providing services to women.
- Do decision-makers have the required skills and information? National staff at policy, planning, and management levels need the skills and capacity to address gender equality issues related to health status, health services, and the management and evaluation of health programmes.
- Are data systems adequate? Data on health, ill health, and use of services must be disaggregated by gender to provide the basis for planning and management processes that support equality between women and men.

Adapted from: Handbook for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Health Sector, Sida, 1997.

Capacity-building: gender equality aspects of planning

Aspects of planning capacity related to the ability of an institution to serve women as well as men in carrying out their mandates include:

- Data and information systems. These may require modification in order to generate the gender-specific data required for policy and planning purposes.
- Analytic skills of planners. Planners within institutions need to have the skills for the analysis of gender equality issues relevant to the institution's functions in order for the institution to be able to pursue equality issues consistently and systematically.
- Decision-making processes. These may need modification to ensure that gender issues are addressed in project and programme formulation (e.g., formats used to present proposals to decision-makers can require an analysis of the implications for gender equality or for women);
- Participatory mechanisms. Consultative processes may need to be strengthened with strategies to ensure that the views of women as well as men are expressed about planning priorities and choices.
- Research. Basic and policy research on gender equality issues may be needed to support planning by the institution (whether undertaken by the institution itself or in collaboration with others).

Taken from: Equality Between Women and Men: A Handbook on Mainstreaming in Contract-Financed Technical Cooperation, Sida, 1998.

Where to go for support

Working with a gender equality perspective can be challenging. Staff often require additional support and resources to be effective. Luckily there are numerous supports and resources that offer assistance. Here are just a few:

Sida publications: This document highlights reports, handbooks, and other ‘tools’ readily available at Sida. These publications offer information, tips, lessons, and other valuable resources and are often a good starting point for a staff member interested in pursuing a particular issue further. Some are country-specific (like the Country Gender Profiles), while others explore individual sectors (for example, the Handbooks and the Gender Equality Prompt Sheets).

Internet resources: There is now a wealth of information available via the Internet. Organisations as varied as the United Nations and local women’s organisations have websites that provide official policies, research papers, and access to ongoing discussions. The ‘further resources’ listing at the end of this document identifies websites that provide a launching pad to extensive exploration of what is available on the web.

Swedish organisations and consultants: Sweden holds a comparative advantage in gender analysis in many areas. For example, its statistical analysis and work on sex-disaggregated statistics has been held up as a model around the world. Both Sida and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are identifying national resources and consultants with specific experience in this area.

In-country organisations: Local consultants and organisations can often provide high-quality support services. They may offer specialised technical expertise that combines gender analysis with experience in a specific sector (such as water resources management or curriculum development). They may also have experience in participatory processes and can advise on the best ways of ensuring that both women and men are involved in community-based initiatives. Ideally the Swedish embassy will have good local contacts; otherwise it might be necessary to consult with other donors for recommendations.

International consultants and organisations: In recent years Sida has developed an extensive network of consultants and organisations. These groups and individuals have designed tools, carried out research, and assisted with building staff capacity. The Gender Equality Unit has an informal roster of potential supports in areas as diverse as macro-economic planning, education policy, and evaluation. The Unit is also in the process of developing an inventory of gender training available internationally.

International resources – manuals and guides: In addition to the handbooks and tools produced by Sida, there is a multitude of materials produced by multilateral organisations and other bilateral agencies. For example, the Canadian International Development Agency produced a handbook on gender-sensitive indicators; the World Bank developed guides for working with a gender perspective in the water and agriculture sectors, and the Dutch have invested in materials to support impact assessment. Many of these tools are available electronically.

Sida Gender Equality Prompt Sheets (1998)

1. *Cadastral systems and equality between women and men*
2. *Social insurance and equality between women and men*
3. *Labour standards and equality between women and men*
4. *State support for families and equality between women and men*
5. *The police and equality between women and men*
6. *Micro-credit and equality between women and men*
7. *Waste disposal and equality between women and men*
8. *Biodiversity and equality between women and men*
9. *Energy policy and equality between women and men*
10. *Participation and equality between women and men*
11. *Electoral support and equality between women and men*
12. *Coastal zone management and equality between women and men*
13. *Irrigation and equality between women and men*
14. *Housing programmes and equality between women and men*
15. *Organisational change and equality between women and men*
16. *Globalisation and equality between women and men*
17. *Post-conflict initiatives and equality between women and men*

3.0

Strengthening the capacity of
development cooperation
organisations

3.1 Development cooperation agencies as responsible partners

Building constructive partnerships

While respecting the principle of leadership by partner countries in setting goals and priorities, development cooperation agencies must also be active participants in the relationship. They are accountable to the government and population in their own country, which finance development cooperation initiatives and want to ensure that these serve particular values and objectives. They also work within an internationally-agreed framework for efforts on gender equality based on the Beijing *Platform for Action* and other international commitments, and have reached agreement on approaches through the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. They have internal policies and domestic commitments on gender equality. Lastly development cooperation agencies have a moral responsibility to ensure that strategies serve the populations of partner countries as effectively as possible.

In order to hold up their side of the partnership, development cooperation agencies should pursue constructive dialogue with partners and find common ground for joint action, taking into consideration the values and priorities each holds. This places a number of demands on development assistance agencies.

Advocacy of gender equality.

Development cooperation agencies have a responsibility to undertake advocacy on gender equality issues, in response to international consensus on the contribution of gender equality to progress on the major development challenges as well as the gender equality commitments undertaken by partner countries. Agencies must demonstrate a

serious commitment to gender equality issues in policy dialogue, collaborative planning, participatory processes, and the selection of experts and contractors. Advocacy is based on international agreements and national partner commitments rather than the policies of individual development cooperation agencies. Advocacy can focus on ensuring that the issues are seriously discussed; it does not necessarily mean the prescription of particular solutions.

Pro-active steps to identify priorities, allies, and room for manoeuvring on gender equality issues.

Processes are under way in most partner countries to follow-up on the Beijing Platform for Action by identifying priorities and strategies. Although not all contacts in partner organisations may be knowledgeable about these commitments, most organisations include current or potential gender equality advocates who can be allies in raising issues and identifying opportunities. Women's organisations, women's studies/gender studies institutes, and others are also potential allies in identifying critical issues and possibilities for change.

Flexibility and openness to innovation.

The willingness to be flexible and try new approaches is important wherever problems are complex and strategies must suit local circumstances. This may require the injection of resources for research, technical expertise, or new activities. Equally important is a commitment to monitoring activities and results, to joint reflection with partners on the reasons for success or failure, and to disseminating lessons.

Humility about knowledge and achievements in industrialised countries.

While many industrialised countries can point out areas of considerable progress toward more equal gender relations, none have achieved

equality between women and men. The experience of such countries can often provide a useful input to consideration of possible strategies – but it needs to be adapted by partners in accordance with their concerns and circumstances. The experience of other countries in the region or other countries with similar historical, economic, or social circumstances may be more easily adaptable. For example, the experience of the Government of the Philippines in implementing a mainstreaming strategy has been seen as an inspiration and a major resource by several other governments in the region and could also provide some lessons to governments of industrialised countries (see the earlier discussion on the Philippines mainstreaming strategy).

Aligning internal human resource practices with programme goals for gender equality.

An agency's credibility with its partners on issues of equality between women and men can be undermined if the policy is contradicted by internal staff practices. If men predominate among the agency's senior decision-makers, experts, and consultants at headquarters and country offices, it would not be surprising for partners to doubt the seriousness of the agency commitment to an equal role for women as actors and decisionmakers in development.

Challenging culture: two views

“Why is it that challenging gender inequalities is seen as tampering with the traditions of culture, and thus taboo, while challenging inequalities in terms of wealth and class is not?”

Mona Mehta, “Gender, Development and Culture” in Tina Wallace and Candida March (eds), *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development*. Oxford: Oxfam, 1991.

“Some women choose to ignore gender injustice. For example, many Zimbabwean women will state that it is ‘cultural’ for women to be subordinate to men. What is ‘cultural’ about a woman earning all the food through her sweat in the fields, and preparing that food for her husband and children to sustain them when the man is drinking the day away? Is it ‘cultural’ to be beaten to a pulp and to protect the man who has done it? The questions can go on and on – there is a vast world literature on what women suffer in the name of culture.”

“Attitudes to women as being inferior and lesser human beings at all levels are reinforced directly or indirectly in many complex ways. People who oppress others tend to share a belief in their own ‘natural’ superiority; it is actually ‘culture’ which justifies this belief. Many men think because they are male they have the right to own women and oppress them in all kinds of ways – from owning them as part of their estate, to battering and raping women to show their dominance and humiliate them.”

Colleta Chitsike, “NGOs, gender, culture and multiculturalism – a Zimbabwean view.” *Gender and Development* 3(1): 19-24.

Building capacity – lessons of organisational strategies

Development cooperation agencies must continually build their own capacities to understand and address gender equality issues if they are to have effective partnerships.

Many agencies have developed policies, established units to play a catalytic or advisory role, provided training to staff, developed information resources, formulated checklists and guidelines to be used in planning, and developed rosters of gender equality experts. But more can be done – indeed must be done – to achieve systematic and consistent action on gender equality objectives and to build capacity to respond to new challenges as they emerge.

A number of lessons can be drawn from experience about what is entailed in building organisational capacity for addressing gender equality issues and ensuring that such capacities are put to use. These general lessons have contributed to the development of Sida's *Action Programme on Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries* (1997).

Staff training can contribute to capacity. In order to be fully effective, training must be accompanied by staff commitment to implementation and an organisational environment that demands and values efforts to apply gender equality perspectives. Progress will not be made unless staff consider the application of gender equality perspectives as a *professional* responsibility -- making use of the information and resources available and applying their analytic skills and creativity to these issues. Management also has a responsibility to promote and reward staff efforts.

Documentation on efforts to support gender equality could be improved. Agency studies report that work in this area is often under-reported. Interesting developments are often ignored in formal project reports or lost in the 'roll-up' of the reporting process.

Reflection about what has been attempted and achieved can help develop confidence and competence. Lessons about effective strategies for working with partners – in policy dialogue, collaboration with partners in problem analysis and planning, in identifying allies and the room for manoeuvre – can only be drawn by the programme staff who have been involved in these processes. Staff responsible for particular sectors or themes could build up their files on *good practice* as a means of building both competence on gender equality issues and confidence in being able to discuss issues with partners.

Tools and methodologies can only improve staff and agency performance if they are used. Programme staff often call for guidelines and instruments to facilitate the application of gender equality perspectives. This demand is fueled by the volume of work, the pressure on staff to respond to several crosscutting themes, and some uncertainty about how to proceed with this complex issue. To meet this stated need, many agencies have invested resources in preparing guidelines and instruments. However, too often these tools languish on the shelf because they are considered too complex, or too simplistic, or not quite on point for the particular situation at hand. This is inevitable as a tool can only assist analysis, not replace it. Similarly, limited use is made of gender equality manuals and checklists issued as additions to standard procedural manuals, despite useful guidance provided about where and how gender equality perspectives are relevant. As a result, more attention is now being focused on ensuring that the main methodologies and manuals that guide staff work incorporate gender equality perspectives – another form of “mainstreaming.”

Institutional capacity and individual responsibility for mainstreaming gender equality perspectives:

Elements of institutional capacity – capacities required by development cooperation agencies to work effectively with partners toward gender equality

- clear policy stating objectives and results sought
- management commitment and leadership
- staff commitment to developing knowledge and skills
- availability of technical expertise on gender equality issues (both in-house and through consultant rosters)
- planning methodologies and manuals that integrate gender equality objectives into mainstream processes
- mechanisms to monitor activities and results
- feedback loops for learning from experience
- contacts and network on gender equality in partner countries
- resources allocated to support the above

Responsibilities of individual staff – while there is an overall institutional responsibility to set the context for action by agency staff, individual staff members also have responsibilities. All staff members do not necessarily need to be “gender experts” but each has a responsibility to develop competence to:

- have meaningful discussions with partners about the relevance of equality between women and men in relation to country strategies or specific initiatives under discussion
- recognise when specialist resources are required
- identify resources that can be drawn on (such as experts, particularly experts in partner countries; activist organisations with experience and expertise; agency checklists and guidelines on the subject; etc.)

Two exercises that looked at lessons and capacity

Sida's *Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries* (1997) contains an Experience Analysis. This document was based on a series of reports that looked at Sida's work to promote gender equality across Sida's programming areas:

- Synthesis Report: Gender Equality Experience and Results Analysis Exercise
- Lessons Learned
- Department for Natural Resources and Environment: Agriculture and Rural Development Activities
- Department for Natural Resources and Environment: Forestry, Soil Conservation, Fishery, Water Supply and Sanitation.
- Health Division
- Department of Cooperation with NGOs and Humanitarian Assistance
- Division for Public Administration and Management
- Education Division
- Division for Democracy and Human Rights
- Culture and Media Division
- Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation (INEC)
- Regional Department for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Asia (REMA), Southern Africa (RESA) and East and West Africa (REWA)
- Department for Research Cooperation/SAREC
- Department for Central and Eastern Europe

In 1997, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs published the results of a study on **Gender Equality Competence in Swedish Development Cooperation**. This report looked at the current situation in various organisations and institutions and outlined a series of recommendations to strengthen overall capacity to implement Sweden's objective of promoting equality between women and men in international development.

Keeping up with the evolving agenda

The rapidly changing international environment offers many challenges for development cooperation generally and for supporting gender equality specifically. Economic globalisation is changing the role of the state and civil society organisations and challenging traditional assumptions about the role states can play in supporting gender equality efforts. The feminisation of poverty and changing opportunities for women in the international economy requires consideration of the linkages between overall economic health and the role of women in that society. The shift from centrally-planned to market economies in Central and Eastern Europe and the financial crisis in Asia demonstrate that gains for women can be reversed in situations of social and economic uncertainty. In the face of environmental degradation, the women's movement has taken on the task of formulating gendered approaches to environmental policies and strategies.

Development cooperation priorities also change. The concern with achieving broader and more sustainable impacts has led to a greater emphasis on partnerships in which leadership and responsibility rest with the developing country. Policy frameworks and institutional capacity in partner countries and questions of good governance and democratic development are also high on current agendas. At the same time new mechanisms of development cooperation have developed, including policy dialogue, programme assistance, greater use of sector programme support, and greater involvement of the private sector.

Thus the environment for development cooperation and its priorities and methods continue to evolve – and so must thinking and strategies for gender equality.

It is crucial that gender equality issues are integral to agency discussions of development problems and strategies. When gender equality perspectives are given adequate attention in the early stages, they can deepen and change the understanding of what is at issue and how it can be approached. (And if gender equality considerations are only considered at a late

stage, gender equality strategies run the risk of being, at best, “add-on” or “extra” elements and, at worst, being considered irrelevant.) Take, for example, two themes high on the current development cooperation agenda:

Strengthening civil society and democratic development.

Much that is written about civil society and democracy includes only perfunctory acknowledgments of the multiple social and practical barriers to participation faced by women. Yet can a “healthy civil society” be said to exist if women (as well as men) are not active and visible in it? And can “democracy” be achieved if women do not take an equal part in representing the views of the public and in decision-making? Full participation by women must be explicitly defined at the outset as a critical element of a healthy civil society.

Capacity of public-sector organisations.

The capacity to address issues of equality between women and men is generally neglected when defining the capacities required for effective organisations. However, in light of the commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action, “planning capacity” in all sectors must include the capacity to mainstream gender perspectives into policy and programme analysis and decision-making. Thus, for example, an institution’s planning capacity must include an adequate data and information system, with the sex-disaggregated data necessary to assess implications of policy choices for women and men respectively.

Emerging issues have important implications for gender equality. Examples include:

Increasing inequality in Central and Eastern Europe.

The transition to market economies and democracy has led to increased inequality between women and men in most countries in the region. For women, economic uncertainty has been exacerbated by

discriminatory dismissals and discriminatory practices in retraining and recruitment to new jobs. With a sharp fall in the representation of women on elected bodies, women are also being marginalised in politics.

Studies and anecdotal reports from many countries refer to the upheaval in values that has accompanied the political and economic transition – an upheaval in which equality, as understood in the Soviet period, has assumed negative connotations. There are many examples of politicians, decision-makers and the man-on-the-street (and sometimes even the woman) voicing opinions about the transition allowing women to devote more time to their “natural roles as mothers and home-makers.” This is unrealistic. Large parts of the economy would not function if women withdrew and many families would go hungry without women’s income. However, it is an ideology that serves to justify discrimination against women when there are not enough jobs to go around. Development cooperation agencies need to consider how to discuss issues of equality and women’s position in a constructive way with partners, and to consider how best to support women in this time of uncertainty so that inequality is not further exacerbated.

Taking advantage of new information and communications technology.

Development cooperation agencies are exploring the potential of new information and communication technologies as tools for development. However, access to and use of these technologies reflect existing inequalities between women and men – equipment and operating costs, the need for technical and literacy skills, and time constraints generally pose greater barriers for women than men. Equality advocates are calling for innovative strategies to promote equitable access by women and men and to prevent the creation of new gender gaps in knowledge, tools, and skills.

The new technologies also have enormous potential as a means of networking, advocacy, and social mobilisation, for women's organisations and networks. Here too, early exploration of the opportunities to use these technologies effectively in support of gender equality objectives will be an important factor in shaping its impact.

Equality implications of globalisation.

The policies and trends associated with market liberalisation (reduced tariff barriers, reduced regulation of foreign investment, more mobile capital) have gender-differentiated impacts because of existing inequalities between women and men. In many countries, job growth has been in female-dominated sectors (such as the garment industries, electronics, data-processing) while import competition has put pressure on formerly-protected sectors in which more men have been employed. While women may benefit from new jobs, concerns about an export strategy based on low-wage female labour include the quality of jobs created, the limited prospects for improving wages and working conditions in those jobs and the possible impacts in creating downward pressures on wages and working conditions more generally.

The challenge as globalisation proceeds is to shape policies and processes so that they promote improved living conditions for all and increased equality between women and men. Development cooperation can contribute through such means as:

- support for policy research on liberalisation measures that support gender equality (the phasing of liberalisation to enable both male and female workers to adjust, the targeting of adjustment policies to ensure that both women and men have access, the requirements for social services to support economic growth, etc.);
- support for more effective involvement of equality advocates in national and international trade policy discussions;

- capacity development of economic planning ministries in the application of a gender perspective in policy decisions; and
- systematic monitoring of equality impacts by government and non-government organisations.

Swedish resources on policy issues and emerging themes

Central and Eastern Europe

- The Gender Perspective in Sweden's Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe. Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1997.

Gender and economic analyses

- Gender Analysis and Development Economics. A Programme of Research and Training, prepared by Diane Elson, funded by Sida, 1993.

Gender and poverty

- Gender equality and poverty: trends, linkages, analysis, and policy implications. Two-volume briefing prepared for Sida by BRIDGE, 1998.

Gender and the environment

- Mainstreaming gender equality perspectives in bilateral development cooperation focused on the environment. Inventory of approaches by DAC members, commissioned by Sida on behalf of the OECD/DAC Expert Group on Women and Development. Prepared by B. Woroniuk et. al, 1998
- Gender and the environment in development cooperation: an assessment of Agenda 21 and the Platform for Action. Prepared for Sida by I. Guijt. 1997.

War, conflict and the girl-child

- Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions. Prepared by C. Nordstrom, Uppsala: Life and Peace Institute, 1997.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Sida strategy for promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in international development cooperation. Sida, Health Division, 1997.
- Gender equality in sexual and reproductive rights and health. Inventory of approaches by DAC members, commissioned by Sida on behalf of the OECD/DAC Expert Group on Women and Development. Prepared by R. Jahan et. al, 1998.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health: The Challenge for Research. A Discussion Paper by a Group of Consultants. Sponsored by Sida, SAREC and WHO. 1996.

3.2 Cooperation and coordination with other actors

In its work with partner countries, Sida works in collaboration with a range of Swedish actors – including some 1,500 companies, academic institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and consultants – as well as with bilateral and multilateral agencies.

The effectiveness of Sida's efforts to promote gender equality in partner countries depends on the ability of these actors to take up gender equality issues. Sida can encourage and assist them to strengthen their capacities and efforts to pursue mainstreaming strategies in many ways.

Collaboration with Swedish NGOs

A wide range of Swedish NGOs work with parallel organisations in the south, such as trade unions, farmers associations, church groups, humanitarian organisations, human rights advocates, women's organisations, and men's networks. Their joint work benefits from similarities in values, constituencies, and objectives; and the exchange of experience between north and south can enrich both sides.

NGO collaboration can also contribute to the development of vigorous civil societies that are so important for democratic and sustainable development in partner countries – a contribution that is strengthened when the collaboration promotes equitable relationships between women and men in the management and activities of partner organisations.

Sida supports NGO north-south partnerships, although its role in specific projects is indirect. Sida provides funds for NGO initiatives and evaluates achievements, but does not assess and approve each proposed activity. Both NGOs and Sida see it as important that NGO activities are “owned” by the NGOs and their southern partners.

At the same time, in using the public funds provided through Sida, NGOs undertake to comply with the general policy framework for Swedish development cooperation. Through dialogue about project experience, training, planning methodologies, and Swedish development policy, Sida supports NGO efforts to improve project quality and results. Gender equality issues are becoming an increasingly important part of this dialogue.

Some NGOs have invested considerable thought and effort in formulating gender equality strategies – in debating policies and objectives internally and/or with partners, considering the implications for project planning processes, and reflecting on experience. Some have also requested more exchanges with Sida on the interpretation of the gender equality policy, on the adaptation of Sida's planning methodology (the logical framework analysis) to the resources and working style of NGOs, and on dialogue skills and cultural competence for addressing gender equality issues effectively with partners. Such exchanges will be facilitated by opportunities to participate in the internal and external Gender Equality Networks established by Sida under its *Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries*.

Some Swedish NGOs can use their own experience in Sweden to enrich a dialogue with partners about issues of equality between women and men. For example, trade unions can draw on the history of efforts by women for recognition of their rights in the labour force and for the support of the labour movement. As a result of such struggles, trade unions have been pushed to consider their responsibilities to women members and to develop strategies to overcome constraints faced by women both as workers and as members of organisations representing worker interests.

Organisations with other types of interests and constituencies may have less experience with gender equality. The ability to raise these issues with partners (and their credibility in doing so) will be influenced by their openness to reflecting on gender equality in relation to the values of the Swedish organisation generally (and not only in relation to particular projects with partners).

Taking Stock: NGO capacity and strategy on gender equality

Each NGO must develop its own approach to gender equality issues, in accordance with its specific characteristics (its structure, development philosophy, size, partners, etc.). However, a number of basic elements of capacity and strategy on gender equality can be identified:

- a clear statement of what the organisation is aiming to achieve;
- a clear strategy for policy implementation outlining who is responsible for what, measurable targets and objectives, and a time frame;
- demonstrated support for the organisation's leadership and management;
- specific allocation of resources (both staff time and money);
- ongoing dialogue with southern partners and women's organisations on strategies and priorities;
- the identification of resistance and the development of strategies to deal with such resistance (from staff or from partner organisations);
- an institutional culture in which policies or policy statements are used by staff and influence programming.

Adapted from: *Gender Equality and Swedish Non-Governmental Organizations: Overview and Talking Points*. Sida, Department for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations and Humanitarian Assistance, November 1996.

Collaboration with the Swedish public sector

Given the major role of Swedish public-sector organisations in development cooperation, they must have the commitment and capacity to pursue issues of equality between women and men.

Sweden's longstanding domestic policy on gender equality means that public-sector organisations have useful experience that can be reviewed with partners for possible adaptation to their own uses. The manual prepared by Statistics Sweden, *Engendering Statistics: A Tool for Change*, provides

a good illustration. The manual was developed from training materials initially prepared for a collaborative activity, funded by Sida, on gender statistics with partners in East, Central and Southern Africa. Statistics Sweden drew on domestic experience when developing the training and the manual.

Swedish institutions have experience and resources in many gender equality areas relevant to development cooperation. Teacher training colleges have a decade of experience in designing and delivering courses on the promotion of equality between women and men. The National Police Board has experience in providing training to police officers to improve the quality of response to cases of violence against women. Several political parties have implemented strategies to increase the profile of their women candidates and the probability that they will gain office.

An ongoing challenge in collaboration with government agencies, public institutions, and academic organisations is to ensure that their experience and knowledge on gender equality is applied in *all* development cooperation activities, not only those focused on equality concerns, and thus enhances the impact of Swedish cooperation in achieving the gender equality objectives of southern partners. A mainstreaming strategy implies that *all* initiatives contributing to the development of statistical instruments and management information systems need to incorporate gender equality issues from the problem-identification and design stage. *All* initiatives to strengthen the rule of law and the capacity of the judiciary need to consider issues of bias and discrimination against women. *All* initiatives to develop research capacity and the knowledge base need to consider skills and approaches to ensure that relevant gender equality issues are addressed.

Work with contractors, consultants and the private sector

Relations between Sida and the Swedish private sector differ from other forms of collaboration as they are pursued on a competitive, commercial basis – Sida selects firms or consultants and contracts them for a specified activity. Given the possibility of choice among a number of contractors, selection criteria can be based on demonstrated commitment and past performance on gender equality. Contractual requirements can be specified and contractors held accountable.

Various divisions of Sida have considered or experimented with different approaches to collaboration with contractors on gender equality. This experience has been channelled into informed Sida's Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries, which states Sida's intention to make more demands of contractors for capacity and performance in mainstreaming gender equality.

Ensuring adequate competence among contractors to work with promotion of equality between women and men

- Demanding evidence of competence and experience in working with gender equality
- Stressing the importance of gender equality in invitations to tender
- Assessing tender documents from a gender equality perspective
- Taking up gender equality in Terms of Reference and Job Descriptions
- Requiring mainstreaming of gender equality into all reporting
- Including reference to competence on gender equality in Sida's consultant register
- Developing a resource base of gender equality specialists within each department/division
- Developing policy and utilising instructions on demands to be made on consultants in relation to gender equality

From: Sida's *Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries* (1997).

Collaboration with bilateral and multilateral agencies

Formal and informal collaboration with bilateral and multilateral agencies is an increasingly important aspect of Swedish development cooperation.

As one of the countries financing UNDP, WHO, UNICEF and other UN organisations, Sweden is able to encourage and monitor performance in mainstreaming gender equality. The potential for influence is increased when Sweden takes its turn on the governing body of such organisations. Advocacy can also be undertaken in cooperation with other like-minded countries.

On occasion, Sweden has financed or contributed to special initiatives by such organisations to increase their capacity to mainstream gender equality. A recent example is the support provided by Sweden and several other countries for a joint UNDP/UNIFEM/UNV project to place gender specialists in UNDP country offices to support UNDP and the UN system in gender mainstreaming and implementation of the *Platform for Action*. This two-year pilot will allow gender specialists to be placed in 18 countries.

Among bilateral organisations, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has provided an important forum for exchanges about gender equality strategies. In 1998, the DAC adopted new *Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation*, based on a joint vision of the broader approach to gender equality required to implement the Beijing *Platform for Action*. The *Guidelines* are intended to inform DAC deliberations on development policy as well as the actions of individual member agencies. They also provide a basis for peer reviews of agency performance and monitoring of the overall performance of development cooperation in supporting gender equality. Sweden, as the Chair of the DAC Expert Group on Women in Development, took a leading role in shaping the *Guidelines* and ensuring their adoption.

Issues of common concern have also been explored in meetings between

the OECD-DAC Working Party on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality. These sessions have facilitated the exchange of resources, ideas, and strategies.

Through the Swedish embassies in many of its partner countries, Sida also exerts influence through its participation in gender equality networks with other bilateral organisations and through collaborative funding of equality-focused initiatives. Lessons from this experience still need to be brought into bilateral dialogue and cooperation. Despite intentions and efforts, innovations and efforts on gender equality issues are too often invisible when related issues are addressed outside the network of gender specialists. This tendency of gender equality issues to disappear is reinforced by similar tendencies in other bilateral agencies. However, recent adoption of the DAC *Guidelines* by Sweden and its bilateral colleagues, and the development of Sida's *Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries*, provide a firm basis on which to seek more consistent attention to gender equality perspectives in dialogue and cooperation with bilateral agencies at the field level.

4.0 Conclusion

The United Nations General Assembly has decided to convene a Special Session in June 2000 to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi *Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action*. The Assembly also decided that it would consider further actions and initiatives during that Special Session.

To date, national action on the PFA has been uneven. By 1997, approximately 70 percent of the governments that had attended the Beijing Conference had full or draft follow-up plans. The Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) has been surveying NGOs and documenting both the advances and setbacks in implementation. Their 1997 report noted:

While the overall results of this survey suggest encouraging advances in implementing the Beijing Platform, they cannot obscure the fact that in many parts of the world concurrent global and national political and economic forces are undermining the gains made so far. The increasing momentum of economic globalisation and cutbacks in state-supported social programs have combined to erode the human rights of large sections of populations, especially the health and living conditions of women and children. (p. 1)

As countries prepare to evaluate their progress on the strategic objectives in the Beijing Platform for Action, development cooperation agencies will also be called to account. Have they taken their commitments to equality between women and men to heart and moved beyond lip service? Have they established the necessary structures and processes? Have they supported the efforts of partner governments and organisations to promote gender equality? Have they conducted the necessary analysis? And have their projects and programmes actually had a positive impact on the lives of women and men and on gender equality?

Although the Platform For Action clearly specifies that governments are responsible for taking steps to improve gender equality, specific actions are also set out for bilateral development cooperation agencies. A sample of the agreed actions include:

Critical Area of Concern - A: Women and Poverty

[Actions to be taken] By multilateral financial and development institutions... and through bilateral development cooperation:

- a) In accordance with the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development, seek to mobilise new and additional financial resources ... with a view to contributing towards the goal of poverty eradication and targeting women living in poverty;
- b) Strengthen analytical capacity in order to more systematically strengthen gender perspectives and integrate them in the design and implementation of lending programmes, including structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes;... (para. 59)

Critical Area of Concern - B: Education and Training of Women

[Actions to be taken] By Governments... bilateral and multilateral donors...:

- a) Reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on rural women, migrant, refugee and internally displaced women and women with disabilities;
- b) Provide universal access to, and seek to ensure gender equality in the completion of, primary education for girls by the year 2000;... (para. 81)

Critical Area of Concern - C: Women and Health

[Actions to be taken] By Governments, ... bilateral and multilateral donors...:

- a) Ensure the involvement of women, especially those infected with HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases or affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in all decision-making relating to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases;
- b) Review and amend laws and combat practices, as appropriate, that may contribute to women's susceptibility to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases...(para. 108)

Critical Area of Concern – F: Women and the Economy

[Actions to be taken] By multilateral funders ...bilateral and private funding agencies...:

- a) Review, where necessary reformulate, and implement policies, programmes and projects, to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women in rural and remote areas;
- b) Develop flexible funding arrangements to finance intermediary institutions that target women's economic activities, and promote self-sufficiency and increased capacity in and profitability of women's economic enterprises... (para. 169)

[Actions to be taken] By international, multilateral and bilateral development cooperation organisations:

Support through the provision of capital and/or resources, financial institutions that serve low-income, small- and micro-scale women entrepreneurs and producers in both the formal and informal sectors. (para. 170).

Critical Area of Concern – H: Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

[Action to be taken] By multilateral development institutions and bilateral donors:

Encourage and support the development of national capacity in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition by providing resources and technical assistance so that countries can fully measure the work done by women and men, including both remunerated and unremunerated work, and where appropriate, use satellite or other official accounts for unremunerated work. (para. 209)

Institutional Arrangements

Regional and international organisations, in particular development institutions, especially INSTRAW, UNIFEM and bilateral donors, should provide financial and advisory assistance to national machinery in order to increase its ability to gather information, develop networks and carry out its mandate, in addition to strengthening international mechanisms to promote the advancement of women through their respective mandates, in cooperation with Governments. (para. 300).

The challenge is clear and the basic building blocks to meet that challenge are slowly taking shape. Women and men from around the world are working for more equal gender relations – in families, schools, workplaces, communities, organisations and governments. This is a long-term struggle being played out in different ways around the globe. Progress is not always guaranteed and setbacks are also evident. Yet, women and men continue to work to implement the vast array of international agreements and declarations that promise equal rights and respect for the inherent human dignity of women and men. Development cooperation organisations have the mandate, responsibility and resources to support these efforts.

It is vitally important that all structures of government, including the President himself, should understand this fully: that freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. All of us must take this on board, that the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme will not have been realised unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of the women of our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society.

- South African President Nelson Mandela,
State of the Union Address, May 1994.

Further reading:

Development Assistance Committee – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1998). *DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*. [Available electronically at <<http://www.oecd.org/dac>>]

Guijt, Irene and Meera Kaul Shah (1998). *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Kabeer, Naila (ed.) (1997). *Tactics and Trade-Offs: Revisiting the Links between Gender and Poverty*. IDS Bulletin. 28(3).

Miller, Carol and Shahra Razavi (eds.) (1998). *Missionaries and Mandarins: Feminist Engagement with Development Institutions*. Intermediate Technology Publications in association with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development: London.

Visvanathan, Nalini *et al.* (eds.) (1997). *The Women, Gender & Development Reader*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Websites

WomenWatch: WomenWatch is a gateway to UN information and data on women worldwide. This interagency web site is an excellent resource for information about UN system initiatives on gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women, documents and follow-up to the UN Global Conferences and Women and data on the situation of women in different regions.

<<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>>

United Nations Development Programme - Gender in Development: This site contains the UNDP Gender in Development Monograph Series as well as other useful links and resources.

<<http://www.undp.org/undp/gender>>

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD): This site contains UNRISD's Occasional Papers on Gender, which are useful research discussions of specific topics including gender mainstreaming, trade, and micro-enterprise.
<<http://www.unicc.org/unrisd/html/gender/index.htm>>

Electronic Development and Environment Information System (ELDIS): Hosted at the Institute of Development Studies, Eldis is one of the best on-line directories to information on development and environment, including WWW and gopher sites. The Gender Guide allows searching this database for organisations, online documents, and print publications.
<<http://ntl.ids.ac.uk/eldis/gender/gender.htm>>

Qweb Sweden: A world-wide network for promoting women's health and gender equality. It offers comprehensive links to sites on women's health, empowerment of women, sexuality and reproduction, and violence and abuse. <<http://www.qweb.kvinnoforum.se/>>

This booklet is a companion volume to *Striking a Balance*, published by Sida in December 1998. The text was produced by Johanna Schalkwyk and Beth Woroniuk in collaboration with Carolyn Hannan-Andersson and Agneta Halldén at Sida's Policy Secretariat and Eva Stenvång, an independent consultant.

Design: Castenfors & Co

Photo: IBL Bildbyrå

Production: Sida's Policy Secretariat

Copies of this publication may be ordered from Sida Information, S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden, email: info@sida.se

ISBN 91 586 7738-0



Why is equality between women and men on the development cooperation agenda? What impacts are we seeking to achieve? How can bilateral agencies such as Sida work to promote gender equality in partner countries? And how can they develop their own capacity for effective action on gender equality?

This booklet seeks to provide answers to these questions. Prepared as a companion to the Sida publication *Striking a balance* it is concerned with how development cooperation can promote gender equality within a partnership framework. Concrete examples, resources and Sida publications designed to assist people working in development cooperation are highlighted throughout the document.



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: 105 25 Stockholm. Sweden.
Visiting address: Sveavägen 20, Stockholm.
Telephone: +46 8 698 50 00. Facsimile: +46 8 698 56 15.
E-mail: info@sida.se Website: www.sida.se