

Integrating Gender Equality into Development Co-operation – Drawing Lessons from the Recent Evaluations by Sida and the European Commission

Joint Seminar, Brussels, November 2003

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Art. no. Sida3801en

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DPU	Development Planning Unit, University College London
GAD	Gender and Development
HRB	Human-Rights Based (Approach)
iQSG	interService Quality Support Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RELEX	External Relations (European Commission)
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
SWAP	Sector-Wide Approach
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WID	Women in Development

Foreword

On 27 and 28 November 2003, the evaluation units of the European Commission (EuropeAid) and Sida organised a joint seminar entitled *“Integrating Gender Equality into Development Co-operation: Drawing Lessons from the Recent Evaluations by Sida and the European Commission”*.

The point of departure for the seminar, on which this report is based, was two comprehensive evaluations of the implementation and results of gender mainstreaming strategies conducted by the Commission and Sida respectively. Both evaluations aimed to assess progress with the implementation of policy commitments on gender equality in development co-operation, and to provide guidance on how to move forward with the strategy of gender mainstreaming in development co-operation with partner countries. Given these similarities in scope and also the similarities in findings of the evaluations, the Commission and Sida took the initiative to organise a joint seminar as an effort to draw lessons learned from the evaluations and adding new experiences and ideas to the debate on how to decrease the gap between the policies and practice on gender equality mainstreaming.

This joint endeavour was significant as an instance of collaboration between the European Commission and Sweden, honouring the principle of collaboration with regards to development co-operation expressed in the Maastricht Treaty. The joint endeavour was also significant as an effort to pool lessons learned from our respective evaluations in a critical policy area for international development co-operation. In that sense, we believe the seminar was a good initiative ensuring a continuing learning process and the accessibility of the results to a wider audience. A questionnaire also showed that a large majority of the respondents (93%) found the seminar useful or very useful.

The invitations to the seminar were targeted at senior staff involved in the development and implementation of development policies and strategies, as well as staff responsible for gender mainstreaming strategies. A total of 74 people participated at the seminar, from nine Member States (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and UK), the UN (UNICEF and DAW), officials from the European Commission (operational, regional and sectoral units), NGOs and consultants. This broad representation contributed to constructive discussions on how to move on with the work concerning gender equality.

The seminar included three sessions: 1) joint presentation of the evaluation findings, as well as presentations of the actions taken by the Commission and Sida respectively following the evaluations; 2) three separate working groups, covering nine themes based on the evaluation results; and 3) presentation of the results of the working group sessions, followed by a key note presentation by Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), United Nations. The presentations and discussions that took place during these three sessions are presented in this report.

The seminar provided the participants with an opportunity to discuss key strategic issues related to the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy and clearly showed that there is a will and a commitment to continue the work on gender equality mainstreaming in development co-operation. The seminar participants also recognised the challenges of gender equality mainstreaming and that there is now need for critical views and some rethinking of how to do gender mainstreaming in practice. The evaluations specifically called attention to the challenge of how we manage to combine the global vision of gender equity and equality with the efforts and aspirations of the poor women and men in our partner countries who are the ultimate beneficiaries and owners of local development processes. The findings of the two evaluations point to the limitations in our achievements, which

forces us to recognise the importance of the social and cultural nature, and realise the need to ground the actions we support in local understandings.

This seminar was made possible through the efforts of many people on the part of the Commission (EuropeAid) and Sida, and the two evaluation teams. We would also like to express our gratitude towards Ms. Carolyn Hannan who made a most valuable contribution by placing our work with gender equality within a more global and historic context.

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1. Gender Mainstreaming in Sida's and the European Commission's Development Co-operation

This chapter includes the main findings and lessons of the Sida and the European Commission (henceforth Commission) evaluations, as well as the steps taken by Sida and the Commission to improve their strategies for integrating gender equality into development co-operation, as presented at the first session of the seminar.

1.1 Main Findings of the Sida and European Commission Evaluations

The findings of the two evaluations concerning progress in addressing gender equality in development co-operation are remarkably similar (see Annex 4), and reflect similar findings from other institutions. While contrasts in the findings can be identified, these are considered by the evaluation team leaders to be mainly a function of time and resources (Sida made an earlier start on gender mainstreaming than the Commission and allocated relatively more resources) and of differences in the nature of the Commission and Sida development co-operation. Together, the evaluations provide important reflections on the effectiveness of efforts to integrate gender equality into development co-operation, and on how gender mainstreaming strategies might be pursued in the future.

Discussions at the seminar provided further reflection on the difficulties of integrating gender in development co-operation, and also identified some strategic and practical ways of moving forward.

1.1.1 Clear Policy Commitments, still to be fully translated into practice

The evaluations show that while policies and strategies on gender in development co-operation are clear, actual implementation is a “work in progress”. Although some effects and benefits of gender mainstreaming can be identified, these are limited and often anecdotal. More significant and visible results are urgently required.

Gender mainstreaming is ambitious, and is a long-term strategy. Some participants wondered if a rights-based approach, and particularly women's human rights, might offer a new opportunity for pursuing gender equality. Although international commitments on human and women's rights were recognised to be important, there was a clear sense from the discussions that these alone are not enough, and can be a difficult entry point for gender equality in some contexts.

While some voices at international level may be questioning the appropriateness of gender mainstreaming as a strategy, the consensus in the seminar was for modifying and strengthening what has already been started (especially making the strategy more practical and concrete), rather than for changing direction.

1.1.2 Assessing Progress is difficult

“Assessing progress in the mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective is a bit like picking up mercury. It all too quickly slips through your fingers. There is often no agreement on what to look for, how to measure progress, how 'high the bar should be'. Until organisations have clear objectives and targets of what they hope to achieve and how they will monitor and measure those achievements, it will be up to evaluators to sort out what they are looking for.”¹

A particular difficulty, emphasised during the seminar discussions, is in dealing with the concept of “gender equality”, which is difficult to define and may be controversial in some development contexts.

¹ Reflection on Experiences of Evaluating Gender Equality, Sida Studies in Evaluation 03/01. ISBN 91 586 8593 0. www.sida.se

It is essential to use concepts – such as inequalities between women and men (in rights, access to services etc) – that are easier to translate and define, and around which agreement and consensus amongst stakeholders can be built. Equally, “gender mainstreaming” should be defined in concrete and measurable ways, enabling people involved in development to understand what is required in practice and facilitating the measurement of progress.

Examples of good practice could be just as useful as measuring “progress” in mainstreaming gender equality, according to many participants. Some participants suggested that benchmarks should be set and used to measure progress on gender equality, while others felt that assessment of good practices would be more interesting. This would require, however, a different methodology than that used for the Sida and the Commission evaluations, involving the assessment of a much larger number of interventions.

1.1.3 Visibility of Gender Equality, while Ensuring Synergies with other Goals and Issues

The two evaluations emphasises that in order to be effective, gender mainstreaming strategies must overcome a tension, between the need for clarity and visibility of gender equality as a goal on the one hand and integration and linkages of gender equality with other development goals and priorities on the other. There is a continuing need in Country Strategies, Country Programmes and interventions for clarity, explicitness and visibility in the statement of gender equality as a goal and a priority. Without the clarity called for, there is an evident lack of follow-through. On the other hand, there is a requirement for linkages and synergy so that the achievement of one policy priority can be realistically linked to the pursuit of another. That is, gender equality must increasingly be integrated into efforts to address other horizontal priorities such as poverty reduction and democratic development.

1.1.4 Resources and Institutional Support are Essential

One of the most significant constraints on progress of gender equality mainstreaming, identified by the two evaluations, is that resources and institutional support are not yet commensurate with the policy commitments on gender equality, or the requirements of a gender mainstreaming strategy.

Changes in the working environment, and in how dialogue is conducted, are essential. A male-dominated and masculine culture has inevitable consequences for the values and priorities that are expressed, formally in policy and budget priorities and informally in the discourse and atmosphere of the workplace. Moreover, dialogue with partner countries – even those with gender equality policies and machinery and active women’s organisations – is not enabling women’s voices, and voices on gender equality, to come through. As workshop participants noted, dialogue is not only about “discussing issues” with partners, but is also about listening to their views, including about their interpretations of gender equality, which may be different from those of the “donor”.

In-house capacity to manage gender mainstreaming strategies at centralised and decentralised levels is a must. The over-use of external experts to manage and implement gender mainstreaming strategies creates significant difficulties in terms of the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the strategy followed and measures taken. Creating capacity at central levels must be balanced by sufficient capacity at decentralised levels. Again this points to the need to allocate sufficient resources, in terms of skilled and knowledgeable staff.

The importance not only of the capacity, but also the position in the institution, of gender units was mentioned in the discussions. Some participants were concerned about the form and efficiency of institutional support. Gender units tend to become isolated, and sharing of experience with gender networks was requested.

1.1.5 Re-assessing Strategy

There is reasonable consensus about the principle of gender equality and its priority as a policy objective in development agencies and their country partners. However, there are differences in acceptance and understanding of gender equality policy amongst key stakeholders, and there are significant differences of views and approaches on how best to pursue gender equality in interventions.

So far, strategies for gender mainstreaming placed considerable emphasis on the development of tools and instruments (for analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation) and on capacity-building, often amongst those responsible for managing development co-operation. It seems now as if there is a multitude of tools and instruments, but few examples of good practice on the ground.

Two clear lessons of the evaluations are “*use what is already there*” and “*collaborate with others*”! There are a great deal of resources, tools and instruments available on integrating gender into development – and there is a great deal of relevant expertise and knowledge within partner countries.

1.1.6 Core Requirements for Gender Mainstreaming

The evaluations show that there is an apparent need for a set of core requirements that represent the reasonable minimum for gender mainstreaming. These are needed to ensure that progress is made beyond a pro-forma or simplistic application of the mainstreaming gender strategy, and to ensure that the energy and commitment of staff and partners working on gender issues are used to the full.

Core requirements for more effective gender mainstreaming

- Clear objectives and targets on gender equality, and strong messages of commitment to achieving these
- Gender analysis going beyond head counts of women and men
- Monitoring and reporting on changes in gender (in)equality
- Dialogue on gender equality and its implementation in policies, strategies and interventions – Government to Government, and with civil society, embassy/delegation staff (more internal team-work), and the donor community
- Resources and capacity – human resources to be reinforced and tools applied.

1.2 Sida's Revised Strategy: More Concrete and Focused

Since the publication of Sida's evaluation in 2002, a revision of the Swedish Gender Equality Policy for development co-operation has been initiated and is still ongoing². Attention has focused on the gap between policy and implementation, and the reasons for the low visibility of effects, which appear less to do with active resistance than to a lack of clarity about how to gender mainstream and how to measure its progress. The main lessons are to be more focused and concrete, establish clear priorities and improve leadership.

Many of the measures already in place are essential components of an effective gender mainstreaming strategy, including the network of staff on gender mainstreaming at headquarters and field levels, the annual programme of training courses including mandatory basic gender training for all staff, and several Help-Desk functions in place to support capacity-building within Sida. However, some experimental processes are underway to test out more concrete and practical ways of implementing gender mainstreaming.

² Presentation by Christina Båge, Division for Multi-Lateral Coordination, Sida. The revision of the gender equality policy is to be finalised by the end of 2004.

Country and dialogue strategies are a particular focus of attention. The choice of one central gender equality issue – based on national priorities – enables dialogue with country partners to be more concrete and linked to results. It also provides a concrete goal, at country strategy level overall, and for all sector support and programmes, which are required to specify their contribution to this goal and how they intend practically to take the issue into account. Gender equality becomes more visible, and provides more concrete questions for development actors to answer.

Good practice: gender focus in country strategies

In Sida's new Country Strategy for Kenya, which was prepared in 2002–3 and which is not yet adopted by the Government, women's land rights have been chosen as the specific focus of attention. Based on Government priorities and supported by the PRSP and National Platform of Action, women's land rights should be taken into account in all sector and programme support.

The focal issue chosen for Sida's new Dialogue Strategy for Ethiopia is female genital mutilation (FGM), again based on national priorities and dialogue with country partners.

A move towards more sector-specific training is part of this revised strategy. While mandatory one-two day basic training should be continued, sector- and region-specific training courses are being developed, focusing on departments where there is clear evidence of leadership on gender, thus guaranteeing the practical application and follow-up of the knowledge gained.

The initiatives being taken by Sida raised considerable interest among the participants at the seminar, and were felt by many participants to offer practical and strategic ways of integrating gender across sectors and programmes, especially with the move to budget support and Sector-Wide Approaches.

1.3 Working towards closing the Gender Policy-practice Gap: Initiatives being taken by the European Commission

A process of “digesting” the findings of the Commission evaluation, which was published in 2003, is taking place within the Commission services responsible for development co-operation³. Some findings and recommendations are supported, but gender mainstreaming is a long and complex process. The challenges of implementing gender mainstreaming in such a large, multi-cultural institution – covering so many countries – are considerable. This task during the period 1995–2001 was made even more difficult by substantial institutional and organisational reforms.

A major step was made in 2001 with the adoption of a Programme of Action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in Community Development Co-operation, providing an operational framework for implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. In 2003, a new Council Regulation renewed the policy and legislative framework on gender equality in development co-operation, and allocated 9 million Euro over three years to support gender initiatives. These activities are intended to act as a catalyst by complementing and reinforcing existing policies and programmes in developing countries. The Commission evaluation stresses the lack of clarity on the goals of gender policies and on how to turn these into concrete results. The new Regulation proposes a stronger approach with clearly defined goals linked to the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Since the publication of the evaluation, new initiatives have been implemented to strengthen the Commission gender expertise, to make the concepts and policy better known, to exchange experiences,

³ Presentation by Daniela Rofi, Gender Desk Officer, European Commission, EuropeAid Co-operation Office.

to collect good practice and to improve gender profile of Commission interventions both at programming and implementation level. Basic and sector specific gender training and capacity-building will restart in 2004, a manual on gender mainstreaming in Commission development cooperation is in preparation, a website is being created and a brochure has been published. In 2004, an internal information bulletin will be disseminated to headquarter staff and Delegations. A network of gender focal points aims to exchange good practice and develop tools and instruments. To improve the treatment of gender in projects and programmes, gender equality is part of the mandate of the Quality Support Groups (QSGs), which undertake quality screening of country strategies and project and programme proposals. The mid-term evaluation of Country Strategies will be a focus of attention in 2004, and country desk officers will be an important target.

Currently, the aim is to consolidate the strategy and the initiatives already started, not to introduce new elements.

2. Main Findings of the Thematic Discussions

This chapter includes a summary of session two of the seminar, i.e. the main findings of the thematic working groups. Discussion notes had been prepared in advance of the seminar on the nine themes addressed in the working group sessions on the first afternoon (see Annex 4). Each thematic discussion was opened by a brief presentation by a member of the evaluation teams, and in one case by a Commission official⁴, and followed by animated and insightful discussions by participants. Summaries of the main points raised by the discussions were presented to the plenary session on the following morning.

2.1 Gender Equality in Country and Sector Strategies

Under a general heading of “gender equality in country strategies”, three themes were addressed in the discussions

- Poverty reduction and gender equality
- Addressing gender equality in economic and infrastructure development
- Gender equality in country dialogue.

2.1.1 Poverty reduction and Gender Equality

As stressed by many participants, there are evident synergies between the goals of gender equality and poverty reduction. However, poverty reduction does not always lead to gender equality and gender equality does not always lead to poverty reduction (not all women are poor and not all poor are women). As poverty is not only a lack of means to satisfy basic needs, but also lack of participation to the decision making process, the two objectives are complementary and can be mutually reinforcing.

Yet conflicts are sometimes felt to exist in the implementation of the two goals. There are conflicting interests between different groups of people (e.g. between social groups/classes, rich and poor, women and men, between age-groups, donor agencies and partners). There are also conflicts experienced by many staff of aid organisations, because of multiple goals and priorities that compete for their time. Gender equality tends to be pushed aside, since agencies do not have accountability measures for gender and the voices of other interest groups are given more value. It was emphasised in the discussion that it is important to go beyond the stereotype that gender equality is targeting women only, and that poverty reduction is targeting ‘the poor’ as undifferentiated groups.

The challenge is to integrate the goals in such a way that there is an optimum impact on the reduction of social and gender *inequalities*. Analysis should focus on the possible synergies and conflicts between the two goals for specific sectors and interventions. This requires data broken down by sex and other characteristics (e.g. social class/group, wealth, age) so as to provide good data for planning and monitoring. The data may exist, but not always be easily accessible. Donor agencies can help facilitate the production and availability of appropriately disaggregated data for planning, implementation and monitoring.

Relevant and already existing data suggested by participants include the Human Development/Poverty Indicators, Gender Development Indicators and Gender Empowerment Measures. These will

⁴ The presenters from the Commission evaluation team were Mary Braithwaite, Dirk Van Esbroeck, Adama Moussa and Julian Walker. The presenters from the Sida evaluation team were Britha Mikkelsen, Bonnie Keller, Sarah Forti and Ted Freeman. Bruce Thompson, DG Development (Commission), presented on gender and transport sector development.

often need to be complemented by other data, such as qualitative sex-disaggregated data for specific sectors, themes or contexts specific data, and possibly additional quantitative data. Some agencies produce country/regional gender profiles. These are available to national partners and other agencies. Other agencies could support updating of profiles and help ensure that profiles address both poverty and gender and are based on the maximum national/local expertise. All agencies should not engage in developing their own poverty/gender profiles. Duplication should of course be avoided.

The move of many agencies from project support to sector wide support and budget support poses challenges, e.g. on governance issues and data needs for monitoring of the poverty reduction and gender equality goals. Significant experience of poverty and gender analyses, e.g. gender budgeting, is increasingly made available by ministries and different agencies including NGOs to help set benchmarks. More 'standard' procedures for developing relevant indicators for planning and monitoring are being developed in connection with the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and pursuance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Nevertheless, poverty and gender analysis are not sufficiently reflected in Country Strategies. The frameworks around PRSP/MDGs should be taken advantage of, to develop sector/context specific poverty and gender mainstreaming approaches for planning, implementation and monitoring.

2.1.2 Addressing Gender Equality in Infrastructure Development

Although this session was broadly addressed at economic and infrastructure development, the presentations and discussions focused mainly on infrastructure development, and especially on transport, corresponding to the importance of this sector in Commission development co-operation. In spite of its importance and its potential contribution to gender equality, addressing gender equality in sectors such as transport or infrastructure development appears particularly difficult. This is perhaps shown by the fact that the workshop discussions on "gender equality and transport" focused largely on "women and transport". In a sector that is very male-dominated, and that is more familiar dealing with technical rather than human aspects, it may be easier for the moment to focus on women's needs and on opportunities for improving women's access and opportunities, than to deal with the more complex approach of "gender equality".

Some of the difficulties of addressing gender equality in infrastructure sectors were highlighted by the discussions. It is unclear who is responsible for gender equality or what the issues might be beyond a very local level. The lack of gender equality objectives at sector level and in country strategies makes it difficult – if not impossible – for those responsible for sector programmes to know what should be achieved. Although there have been pilot initiatives, for example concerning women's participation in rural roads maintenance projects or developing non-mechanised transport for rural women, these are isolated and marginal, and most mainstream transport sector actors have not been involved. There are good examples of gender issues in household use of energy and water, but it is not clear what the lessons are for interventions at the level of national supply and networks.

A different way of thinking about infrastructure development is required, as well as clear and concrete objectives on gender equality for the sector concerned. As one participant noted, roads are not only used for travel, but are places of commercialisation and security. Infrastructure projects provide many opportunities for improving the quality and accessibility services and for providing skills training and jobs for women.

Good practices: opportunities for women in infrastructure

- Road improvement can be planned to provide improved market opportunities for women, and improved safety and security.
- Roads operations can provide employment opportunities for women at various levels.
- The environment in which women work can be made safer and better adapted. In India, women were trained as water engineers. Modifications to the design of water tanks and manhole covers made it much easier for women to undertake tasks.
- Contract “packaging” to involve small-scale local contractors can benefit women, who are more often involved at this level.
- In Guatemala, a supportive roads infrastructure officer opened up the issue of gender in the transport agency. A kindergarten was set up for children of employees, female employees (formerly secretaries) were supported and promoted and women’s issues were better addressed in transport planning.

Country strategies provide the framework for sector support and programmes, hence establishing clear gender equality objectives at country strategy level is essential. Sida’s “focal gender issue” approach appears to be a viable way to proceed, if the issue is sufficiently strategic and relevant to a broad range of sectors. Women’s land rights, or employment or income-generating opportunities for poor women, might provide an appropriate strategic focus for infrastructure or transport sector planning.

However, it was agreed that a priori solutions – such as set quotas for women’s participation in labour-based work – should be avoided, as there are risks as well as potential benefits. A good situation analysis, taking a multi-disciplinary approach and consulting thoroughly with female and male stakeholders, is essential as a basis for the setting of appropriate objectives and for good planning. This applies to sector support as well as projects and programmes.

Dialogue and collaboration across agencies and sectors will be essential to ensure that gender equality objectives are achieved. Responsibility for gender equality and for finding practical solutions cannot be off-loaded onto Ministries of Transport or Public Works, although it must be made clear that it is their concern. They should be expected, for example, to have clear commitments on “equality of access and opportunities for all women and men” in their policies and priorities, but they cannot be expected to address gender equality issues on their own. Some issues – such as employment or skills development – are not their primary responsibility.

Collaboration with other institutions, such as Ministries of Gender, Employment or Education, will be needed, as well as with the private sector and appropriate civil society organisations. While it is difficult to imagine dialogue amongst such actors on a broad issue such as “gender equality”, bringing key stakeholders together for a focused dialogue on “how to improve women’s employment opportunities in the transport sector” or “how to improve women’s access to transport” should be feasible. Changes to funding priorities might well be entailed, for example focusing on lower volume roads or prioritising different means of transport.

2.1.3 Gender Equality in Country Dialogue

One of the often overlooked challenges when pursuing development goals at policy and intervention level is participation by partner representatives at all levels, from intended beneficiaries to mid-level management and policy makers. As a number of participants observed, there is insufficient participation in the setting of goals and priorities at country and sector levels by those most directly involved in and concerned by the strategies; this is a widespread weakness, particularly where women’s and gender equality interests are concerned.

Policy dialogue is effective when it focuses on specific issues that can be monitored. Dialogue should be about 1) synergies between objectives, and 2) specific issues in each sector/ across sectors. Benchmarks for better practice, processes and results – and possible accountability measures – must also be issues for dialogue.

Donor coordination, some participants noted, is necessary to agree on the specific issues to consider for a country and agree with both the national mechanisms and the government on the issues and the monitoring systems. It is important to optimise dialogue on policy priorities between partner and donor agencies and to make transparent actual and possible acknowledgement of or divergence with international priorities. Dialogue must be anchored in national contexts.

Dialogue has to make sure that the commitment is translated into objectives and that resources are allocated for that purpose. So the role that national organisations and expertise can play, to bring out the issues and to monitor them, is important. Resources should be allocated for this. It will also require resources for 'educating' the stakeholders to engage in dialogue and priority setting. Good governance is a good entry point to bring the civil society in the monitoring system.

Good practice: conducting dialogue on gender

Some interesting work is being undertaken by Sida on how to conduct dialogue on gender. This was illustrated by a Memo on "Gender: Dialogue Framework for the Country Strategy Period 2003–2007", produced by the Embassy of Sweden, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which was circulated during the seminar by a Sida representative.

2.2 Gender Equality in Projects and Programmes

Three issues were discussed, in the working group, under a general heading of gender equality in projects and programmes:

- Gender Equality Goals of Projects and Programmes
- Women's Rights and Gender Inequalities
- Methods and Tools for Integrating Gender Issues in Projects

2.2.1 Gender Equality Goals

There was a general consensus on the importance of having an explicit Gender Equality Goal in the design of a project or programme. However, a more realistic – and more easily understandable – approach may be to target gender "inequality" and/or women's rights rather than gender "equality", which is still an ambitious or controversial concept in many countries.

Gender equality goals are not so much a technical issue as a political issue, as they are established within political contexts and are prioritised (or not) according to agencies' and/or individual's political priorities. The lack of political will to support a gender equality goal can therefore be fatal to its implementation.

The formulation of a gender equality goal should be preceded by an in-depth situational analysis, which should provide the basis for the selection of an appropriate and realistic objective and for the integration of measures in the project design to ensure achievement of the goal. Often, however, this analysis will be difficult to implement as important (sex-disaggregated) data are lacking. It is nevertheless very important to ensure that gender equality is integrated from the very start of the project/ programme cycle; 'adding it on' later on in the process will substantially decrease the chances of success.

Even when a gender equality goal has been included in project design, steps must be taken to avoid the risk of ‘evaporation’ in subsequent phases (implementation, monitoring and evaluation), including the allocation of clear institutional responsibility and resources and expertise.

Over the years, the number of cross-cutting issues has increased in bilateral and multilateral development co-operation. This has often led to ‘competition’ between cross-cutting issues, as a result of which the gender equality goal may acquire less importance or even become invisible. There is concern about the lack of mechanisms and guidance to ensure equal weighting among the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and a feeling that gender equality must be kept in a visible position.

Good practice: focusing action on gender around a strategic focal issue

Sida is developing a new approach in response to the evaluation’s recommendation to ensure synergies between gender equality and other cross-cutting themes and development goals, and make gender mainstreaming easier to operationalise. This entails establishing a strategic central issue for gender equality at national level and making links between all sector, or other, strategies and this focal gender goal (in Kenya, one of the two examples given, the strategic focal issue is women’s land rights). Participants expressed a great interest in this example and were keen to learn more about it.

2.2.2 Women’s Rights and Rights-Based Approach

Women’s rights and a Rights Based Approach⁵ (RBA) was the subject of lively debates in a number of sessions. It was generally agreed that the Rights-Based Approach and gender mainstreaming are complementary and not competing approaches, as are human rights and gender equality. Indeed, they are essential to each other’s implementation. Gender inequalities cannot be reduced without ensuring women’s rights, and human rights will not be fully achieved without achieving gender equality.

The discussions raised some important issues of concern about the adoption of a Rights-Based Approach (RBA):

- Although a few agencies are already in the process of implementing RBA, there is a need to better understand: i) what RBA actually consists of, ii) what methodologies are used and iii) how the synergies between RBA and gender mainstreaming can be ensured to avoid one approach replacing the other. While a rights-based approach and empowerment of women are complementary to gender mainstreaming, a rights-based approach does not necessarily mean gender equality.
- Precautions are needed to ensure that women’s human rights are clearly visible within the RBA.
- RBA must be firmly rooted within the local context, and take account of different socio-cultural and religious contexts and pluralistic legal systems. In order to have well-rooted and sustainable Rights-Based Approaches implemented, more time and research are needed, as well as an explicit reference to and visibility of women’s human rights.

Good practice: local approaches to women’s human rights

An interesting example is the work of Nigerian women’s networks, which are researching an interpretation of the Koran that favours the application of international law regarding women’s rights to inheritance. Key women’s rights are being addressed in a challenging religious and legal context, using a bottom-up approach, avoiding patronising approaches to rights issues and ultimately ensuring ownership and sustainability of “rights” concepts.

⁵ A Human Rights-Based Approach means ensuring that all development co-operation programmes, policies and technical assistance further the realisation of human rights, as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. A mainstreaming approach is involved, similar to that applied to gender equality.

Regional and international human rights instruments and their related mechanisms for implementation have been under-utilised, notably with regard to the CEDAW and its reporting mechanisms through the Committee on the Status of Women. Since other human rights instruments are being made conditional to trade and other multilateral and bilateral agreements with partner countries, the domestication of CEDAW in national legislation could also be a condition to such agreements. There are ‘minimum obligations and commitments’ that constitute a core that is not negotiable, and should become the starting point of a dialogue on gender goals.

2.2.3 Core Gender Methods and Basic (Re-)Organisational Requirements

The two evaluations show that over the years, there has been a proliferation of gender tools and methods, which are little used in mainstream development practice. There is an urgent need to select a core of necessary gender methods to ensure their application. Situational/gender analysis is an essential instrument at early stages of project/programme cycles.

Sex-disaggregated data are also essential, and can be a powerful tool for dialogue. This frequently requires obtaining new sex-disaggregated data and/or allocating time and resources to search for existing sex-disaggregated data. Good use should be made of locally-available data, research and expertise.

Good practice: using sex-disaggregated data as a basis for dialogue

In one project, when sex-disaggregated data were utilised as a basis for dialogue with partners, substantive changes to the intervention's objectives and activities occurred and transformed the entire intervention in a more participatory way.

A second core set of gender related tools is required at monitoring and evaluation stages. Despite a recent focus on gender sensitive monitoring systems and indicators, there is still a felt need for innovative monitoring systems and for good examples of qualitative monitoring related to the impacts of gender mainstreaming. Assessing gender-related impacts on the daily lives of women and men requires specific tools that go beyond numbers and can capture qualitative changes.

Good practice: gender monitoring

Innovative gender-relevant monitoring systems are being developed, such as the UNICEF computerised “gender quick search and find” to scan country reports in order to assess the frequency of gender content.

Through the key findings of several thematic gender evaluations, including those of the Commission and Sida, it is common knowledge that implementing gender mainstreaming – or indeed mainstreaming any cross-cutting issue – involves moving from a sectoral/compartmental approach to development work towards a more integrated multidisciplinary approach at institutional level. Many gender mainstreaming strategies have been ineffective because they did not take into account the organisational implications, in terms of methods of work, and the allocation of time, resources and gender expertise.

Another institutional challenge is the generally low level of institutional memory in multilateral and bilateral organisations. This is considered to be an important risk to the sustainability of the implementation of a gender strategy.

Finally, the need to strengthen gender expertise at operational/field level is strongly highlighted. The importance of identifying and drawing on local resources – data, gender expertise and local knowledge – was emphasised as fundamental to the effective mainstreaming of gender issues throughout the life of a project or programme, and to ensuring ownership and the embedding of strategies in local socio-cultural contexts.

2.3 Institutional Support and Tools

The working sessions on institutional support and tools identified a series of recommendations for more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies:

- An important strategy is to forge alliances inside and outside the organization (NGOs, specialists, other agencies). External allies can often be used to advocate and raise the profile of gender equality within the organization (although there can be risks too).
- The visibility of the gender specialists and gender support unit is essential. The main strategy for gaining visibility is networking and gathering political support from senior management (only one or two interested senior managers may be needed). The institutional ‘position’ of gender units – and not just their visibility – is a vital factor in their ability to influence decisions in the organisation.
- Find linkages to concrete examples at a sectoral level (i.e. what worked in a specific water project from a gender perspective). Stress the relevance of gender in a sector setting. Convince sector specialists that good gender analysis and good GE content is a part of good professional practice in the sector.

Good practice: making links with sector objectives

One example includes dealing with violence against women as an aspect of good professional practice by the police and judiciary (Nicaragua, India).

- Motivate technical experts by recognizing their capacity to contribute to gender equality learning. Involve sector experts and recognise their capacity to contribute (and to learn).
- Clarify that mainstreaming means actively engaging with gender equality; it is not an automatic process that can be assumed to be effective when it is no longer visible. The view that “there is no need to have gender equality expertise, training and guidelines” because “gender has been mainstreamed” is wrong!
- Concerning training, all staff needs to be gender sensitive but not necessarily gender specialists; they need to be able to recognize when they need to call on highly trained specialists. A two-track approach to training seems the most appropriate.
- Even basic training in gender analysis needs to be relevant to the functional role of the person being trained and should fit with other organizational requirements (expertise, procedures, criteria, etc.). The challenge is how to do this. It appears to be unknown if the right training, or enough training, is being delivered, indicating a lack of knowledge of how development co-operation is really managed and how programmes and country strategies are actually negotiated.
- While gender training should recognize that, for many agency personnel, gender as a professional sphere is bound up with personal identity (at least more than other cross-cutting issues), it is important that gender issues are presented as mainly professional rather than personal.
- Checklists and simplified gender procedures are not a substitute for a deeper understanding of mainstreaming as a strategy (it’s both simple and complicated at the same time). The supply of gender tools to staff should be accompanied by clear information and guidance on how they should be used.

- Essential requirements for effective gender mainstreaming are:
 - Sustained political will and clear messages from senior management;
 - Means of overcoming high levels of staff rotation (impact on organisational memory);
 - Genuine organisational internalisation of gender equality through funding and staffing professional positions on a permanent basis from within the organization.

2.4 Men's Perspectives on Gender Equality

In discussing this issue, the working group focused on what can be practically done to ensure that men's concerns are reflected in development co-operation, and on what can be done to promote gender equality as an area of professional expertise for men as well as for women.

An important strategy is to identify male allies, both inside and outside development organisations. There is a clear need to overturn the stereotype that working with gender issues is something that only women do. The focus in many institutions on appointing women, and even certain types of women, in positions related to gender mainstreaming (e.g. as Gender Focal Point) means that even men who have a commitment and professional interest in promoting gender equality may feel put off trying to work in this field, feeling that they do not 'fit'.

In order to involve men in working to promote gender equality, it is important to identify the benefits to men of changes in stereotypical roles and masculinities. In many cases stereotypes of male behaviour can be constraining for men as well as for women. It is also important to seize opportunities to take advantage of local efforts to re-define stereotypes of masculinity.

Good practice: tackling gender inequalities from men's perspective

A group in Nicaragua has been set up to discuss and address masculinities, such as local traditions of machismo, which mean that peer pressure and the social expectations of both men and women conspire to perpetuate problems such as gender violence in relationships. Such groups provide an opportunity to foster local partnerships.

Men's support for gender equality (which implies that men share power with women) can be built on appeals to men's sense of justice. Relating gender inequalities to other inequalities that cut across gender (such as social class or ethnicity) can help in this regard.

Avoiding the naïve use of confrontational approaches to dialogue on male roles is essential. While confrontation may be a useful strategy in some cases, this may make men feel 'accused', and may alienate some men who would otherwise be willing to engage constructively with gender issues.

While there is a need to focus on building men's support, it is important to recognise that there is resistance from women as well as men to promoting gender equality. For example, some women working in development organisations may wish to dissociate themselves from gender concerns and feel that being called a feminist is a stigma. At the community level, efforts to combat even the most extreme forms of gender inequality or abuse (e.g. female infanticide, genital mutilation) are not only resisted by men, but also by some categories of women who have an interest in maintaining the status quo. Even pioneering women in development organisations may resist greater involvement by men because their past experience suggests that this will result in gender equality agendas being hijacked, and may even result in the issues becoming invisible or watered down. Building on women's and men's interests in gender equality, and counteracting resistances by both women and men, is therefore essential.

3. Overview: Ways Forward

This chapter is based on the final session of the seminar, particularly the overview by Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of the UN's Division for the Advancement of Women (see Annex 5), of the issues raised by the evaluations and seminar discussions. It offers advice to development agencies, and those involved in gender and development policies and strategies, on ways of moving forward more concretely and more effectively with gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

3.1 Rethinking Gender Mainstreaming

Ms. Hannan emphasised that some rethinking about gender mainstreaming is needed. The issues raised in the seminar are not new, but reflect questions and concerns that have been raised over the past few years by many involved in gender and development. It is now time to take stock and to decide what can be done about the gaps and weaknesses.

Ensuring that gender equality is fully addressed in development co-operation is not easy. 2003 is, in many ways, a different – and less supportive – environment than 1995. Development agencies and their partners have crowded agendas, are overburdened with demands and there are too few specialist resources on gender equality.

Gender experts must ask hard questions about whether they are doing the right things in the right way, and whether they are working hard on the wrong things, especially when human resources are limited and dispersed. A new way forward is needed that links gender equality with other development goals and objectives, brings gender knowledge and expertise into the mainstream and makes much better use of local knowledge and resources.

3.2 Using Global Mandates

Ms. Hannan pointed out that the global mandates, which must be utilised more effectively, even in difficult areas such as budget support, is a useful reference point. The use of global mandates in dialogue is a way to overcome resistance and keep the issues on the development agenda at different levels. Staff of development agencies should know the global commitments, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Millennium Development Goals are forcing more attention on targets and indicators, and on measuring progress. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a legally binding human rights treaty and has been ratified by 175 countries. Commitments on rights such as CEDAW can and should be used strategically in development co-operation, although it is important to know the reservations to the convention of countries, as well as their reporting history and the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

3.3 Simplify Concepts and use Clear Language

It is essential to avoid making the concepts and approach too complicated. According to Ms. Hannan gender equality is not necessarily more difficult than poverty reduction, or human rights, but can be problematic because it is also related to personal identity, in a way that other issues are not. Neither gender equality nor gender mainstreaming are conceptually difficult. Resistance can be linked to personal attitudes or political will, or arise because the issues are not presented in the right way.

Ms. Hannan's advice was that if "gender" is difficult, talk about "women and men". If "equality" is problematic, talk about "reducing inequalities". Find a way to work that is acceptable to the local context, and avoid the too-easy use of "gender", "gender mainstreaming", etc. in documents, assuming that readers will know what is meant.

3.4 Gender Mainstreaming is the Right Strategy

Defend "gender mainstreaming" as a strategy. Ms. Hannan clearly stated that gender mainstreaming is a globally endorsed strategy, even if the way it is explained and implemented needs to be rethought. Gender mainstreaming was introduced because previous approaches did not deal with structural and systemic constraints to promoting gender equality. The reactions to the apparent difficulty of "gender mainstreaming" have not prevented the mainstreaming approach being adopted in other areas. It is, however, essential to insist on the continued need for specific activities – targeted at women, gender equality or men's roles and responsibilities – as well as gender mainstreaming, in order to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

3.5 Link Gender Equality to other Goals and Priorities

Policies on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in development co-operation exist. The problem is that, even when the policy is strong, there is insufficient impact on the institution. Gender equality policies are not adequately linked to the overall goals and priorities of the institution, or to other goals that compete for resources. The ten-year review of the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action could provide an opportunity to make these links.

3.6 Focus on Mainstream Processes and Impact

A stronger focus on mainstream processes and on impact on the ground will help to move things forward. Gender mainstreaming should make a difference to how decisions are made about objectives and strategies, as well as to the objectives and strategies themselves.

Analyses and data collection – for country or sector strategies, or projects and programmes – provide vital opportunities for drawing attention to and building knowledge of the differences and inequalities between women and men. Establishing a basic reflex of asking that data and information be sex-disaggregated will do much to make gender equality issues more visible during preparation and planning, and to provide the means for monitoring and evaluation later on. The lack of sex-disaggregated data is often cited as a handicap, but there are more data available than we use, often because it is "lost" as data is passed up the system (eg health data). More systematic demands for sex-disaggregated data, and support to statistical services, would help.

Processes of consultation and dialogue also provide important opportunities for raising awareness and knowledge about gender equality issues, and for taking them into account when establishing objectives and strategies. Involving and supporting representatives of women's or equality organisations and gender experts, as well as promoting participatory approaches that involve women and men, will help substantially.

3.7 Country Strategies and Dialogue: Priorities for Integrating Gender Equality

Country strategies are important. They provide opportunities for establishing context-specific goals, building on local knowledge and integrating gender issues into dialogue and consultation. There is a great deal of experience in partner countries, but this needs to be documented and made accessible, so

that it is fed into country and sector strategies. While gender analyses are being undertaken, they are not used in country dialogue or integrated into country strategies. This is a critical precondition for getting gender equality right at sector and project/programme levels. It is important to move beyond the obligatory paragraphs in documents.

Sida's focal issue approach for country strategies has considerable potential, if it is an integral part of the strategy and is carried through into all sector strategies and programmes. The initiative by Sida of providing a guiding framework for carrying out gender-sensitive dialogue in Ethiopia is another example of good practice.

Gender budgeting could be used as part of designing and monitoring country strategies. There is a need to work more strategically on Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAPs) and budget support. Bringing together social and economic sectors would help, since people's lives are not segmented into social and economic domains.

3.8 Accountability, Top-level Support and Mainstream Tools and Procedures

Gender equality policies can only lead to achievements if translated into an action plan, including accountability and responsibility. The lack of accountability mechanisms is a serious weakness. Institutional arrangements for implementing and monitoring gender mainstreaming in development organisations and clear signals of top- and middle-level management support are crucial. The World Bank has started a process of identifying the location of accountability and responsibility, through an institutional matrix.

Gender skills are professional skills and should be treated as such. There is a need for a major rethink on how competence development is being done. The failure to integrate gender equality into existing procedures and in ordinary training and guidelines has been a major weakness. There has been relatively too much focus on technical tools and training, as if training plus a manual means progress. More and different things must be done. Modular training with follow-up support, working on what is on people's desks, appears to be the most effective.

Gender analyses should not be too complex, and should be adapted to the specific tasks of staff. Good training can be provided to staff without use of any of the standard instruments (DPU's web of institutionalisation, Harvard, etc). There are so many tools, but most are not being used. Tools should be developed collaboratively, with users.

3.9 Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming

Evaluating gender mainstreaming is essential, as is ensuring that gender equality is addressed in other evaluations (country, sector, programme). A sound understanding of how gender mainstreaming is progressing, and of how to overcome the weaknesses and constraints, is important. So too are examples of good practice, which can help to demonstrate to non-specialists how gender equality can be taken into account in everyday work. Targets and indicators for progress in gender equality and gender mainstreaming should be established, and ongoing collaboration between evaluation units and gender experts should be encouraged. Most importantly of all, the findings of evaluations must be taken into account in improved strategies and procedures for managing development co-operation.

Annex 1 – Seminar Programme

Thursday, November 27

08.30 – 09.00 Registration of Participants

09.00 – 10.45 **Opening of seminar**, welcome and introduction
The Commission and Sida evaluations: background and intended purpose
The main findings of the two evaluations: common points and contrasts
 (presentations by Britha Mikkelsen, co-ordinator of Sida's evaluation, and Mary Braithwaite, co-ordinator of the Commission's evaluation)
 Discussion

10.45 – 11.00 Tea/coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 **Actions taken by the Commission and Sida since the evaluations**
 (presentations by Commission and Sida staff)
 Discussion
 Explanation of working group sessions

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 16.00 **Working group discussions on themes**
Working group 1:
 Theme 1.1 Gender and poverty reduction
 Theme 1.2 Gender in economic and infrastructure development
Working group 2:
 Theme 2.1 Gender equality objectives of projects and programmes
 Theme 2.2 Addressing women's rights and reducing gender inequalities
Working group 3:
 Theme 3.1 Institutional support for gender equality
 Theme 3.2 Gender from men's perspectives

16.00 – 16.30 Tea/coffee break

16.30 – 17.30 **Working group discussions on themes continued**
Working group 1:
 Theme 1.3 Gender in country dialogue and strategies
Working group 2:
 Theme 2.3 Methods and tools for integrating gender into projects and programmes
Working group 3:
 Theme 3.3 Capacity and tools to take gender issues into account in the management of development co-operation

Friday, November 28

09.00 – 11.00 **Themes – feedback from the working groups**
 Brief presentations by rapporteurs on the main findings of the working group discussions
 Discussion

11.00 – 11.30 Tea/coffee break

11.30 – 13.00 **Strategic conclusions**
 Keynote presentation by Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), United Nations
 Comments and discussion
 Final closing remarks

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Annex 3 – Joint Presentation of the European Commission and Sida Evaluations: Perspectives of the Evaluation Team Co-ordinators

Mary Braithwaite (Commission evaluation) and Britha Mikkelsen (Sida evaluation), November 2003

Introduction

This paper presents findings from the European Commission and Sida evaluations on gender mainstreaming in their respective development co-operation with third countries, and some personal reflections on the two evaluations. It outlines some discussion points for exploration during the seminar, many of which are further elaborated in the thematic notes for the working group discussions during the seminar.

The scope of the two evaluations were:

Commission:

- In regional terms, the evaluation covered European Commission development co-operation with the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region, Latin America and Asia (ALA), Mediterranean (MED) countries, former countries of the Soviet Union (TACIS) and the Balkans (CARDS).
- The period covered by the evaluation is 1995 to early 2002.
- Thematically, the evaluation addressed :
 - Policy synergies between gender and other goals of Commission development co-operation
 - Operationalisation of policy commitments on gender in Commission development co-operation, including resources, capacity and institutional capacity to support gender mainstreaming
 - Integration of gender in procedures and instruments for managing Commission development co-operation, both general (Project Cycle Management) and sector-specific
 - Gender in Country Strategy Papers and processes, including political dialogue
 - Contribution of Commission-supported development interventions to improved participation and influence of women and men in development and to reduced gender inequalities
- Four country missions to Bolivia, Jordan, Mali and Philippines were undertaken. Eight interventions were evaluated (two in each country) covering: Rural infrastructure and local economic development; Women's health; Decentralisation; Private sector development; Women in parliament.

Sida:

- The purpose of the evaluation was:
 - to assess how Sida's mainstreaming strategy is reflected in the country strategy process (including quality of gender analysis and dialogue),
 - to assess the strategic and/or practical changes with regard to gender equality that interventions supported by Sida have contributed to or may contribute to,

- to provide input to a deeper understanding of the meaning of key gender concepts: gender equality, empowerment of women, stakeholder participation, strategic and practical gender equality effects, and mainstreaming
 - identify links/synergies and/or conflicts between gender equality goal and poverty reduction
 - provide lessons for revision of Sida's Action Programme for promoting gender equality.
- The period covered is ca. 1995–2001
 - Three Case Study Countries – Nicaragua, South Africa, Bangladesh
 - 12 intervention cases – 4 interventions in each of the three countries covering:
 - Democratic governance: Police Academy (Nicaragua), Regional and local authorities (Atlantic Coast, Nicaragua) Local Authorities LGDSP (Northern Cape, South Africa), Statistics South Africa, Legal Aid Centre (NGO Bangladesh), STD/Steps towards Development (NGO Bangladesh)
 - Urban development: Programme for Local Development PRODEL (Nicaragua), Comprehensive Urban Plan CUP (Kimberley, South Africa) and Trees, Paving & Lighting TPL (Kimberley, South Africa)
 - Health sector: Integrated Local Health Systems PROSILAIS (Nicaragua),
 - Non-formal education NFE: Adult literacy, Post-literacy, Urban Working Children (Bangladesh)

Findings and Lessons

Overall thematic findings:

- Achievements in terms of gender equality policies, strategies and guidelines are clear and are in accordance with international plans.
- Implementation of gender mainstreaming policies is a “work in progress” (Sida) or at an early stage (Commission).
- The effects and benefits of gender mainstreaming are embryonic (Sida) or yet to become visible (Commission).
- There are big challenges in translating policies into practice.
- Resources and institutional support are not yet commensurate with the policy commitments on gender equality or the requirements of a gender mainstreaming strategy (Commission).
- There is an apparent tension between two key characteristics that must be present if gender equality is to be successfully supported by development co-operation efforts:
 - On the one hand there is a continuing need in Country Strategies, Country Programmes and in interventions for *clarity, explicitness and visibility* in the statement of gender equality as a goal and a priority. Without the clarity called for, there is an evident lack of follow-through.
 - On the other hand the requirement for *convergence, linkage and synergy* so that the achievement of one policy priority can be realistically linked to the pursuit of another. I.e. gender equality must increasingly be integrated into efforts to address other horizontal priorities such as poverty reduction and democratic development.

The Commission and Sida evaluations contribute to better understanding of the *constraints* on the promotion of gender equality and provide many suggestions for the way ahead. This is an important time for the Commission and Sida and their partners to appreciate that *gender mainstreaming is both worthwhile and possible*, but requires understanding of the gender equality goal and its synergies with other goals, as well as increased and continuous commitment and resources.

Changes in Gender Equality:

Changes in gender equality which could be identified by the Sida and Commission evaluations were:

- Most gender equality changes associated with Sida and Commission supported initiatives have concerned practical gender needs. These primarily concern improvements in services and access to resources, such as health services (Women’s Health and Safe Motherhood Project, Philippines/Commission; PROSILAIS/Health systems, Nicaragua/Sida), credit provision (VRES, Mali/Commission; PRODEL/Urban development; Nicaragua/Sida) and water and sanitation (PRAS Beni, Bolivia/Commission).
- Commission and Sida support has had some positive effects on the participation of women amongst staff at project level (e.g. EJADA/Jordan, and amongst projects financed by the NGO budget line and MEDA Democracy programme. In Sida supported interventions e.g. Urban Planning CUP/ South Africa, Police Academy, Nicaragua, and Steps Towards Development NGO Bangladesh) and in community decision-making (VRES, Mali; CASCADE/Philippines, and Urban development PRODEL, Nicaragua).
- There is very limited – and only anecdotal – evidence from the Commission evaluation of changes in gender roles or control of resources, e.g. anecdotal evidence by female beneficiaries of the VRES project in Mali of increased revenue; observations by men and women in communities benefiting from the Women’s Health and Safe Motherhood project (Philippines) that men now undertake family tasks when their wives attend meetings and training. – Non Formal Education/ literacy and post literacy programmes of women and men, and of Hard-to-reach Urban Children in Bangladesh were seen by Sida evaluation to have substantial potential for influencing gender roles in the longer run.
- In many cases, existing gender inequalities – in income, in labour market participation, etc – are not being addressed (CASCADE, Philippines/Commission; EJADA, Jordan/Commission). Moreover, the absence of attention to gender equality means that potentially negative effects of development interventions on the situations of women cannot be ruled out (APEMIN Bolivia/Commission; decentralisation project in Mali/Commission).
- Positive gender equality changes are closely linked to the clarity of gender-specific goals and allocation of specific resources (ASK – Legal Aid, Bangladesh/Sida; PRAS Beni, Bolivia/Commission).
- Positive changes in gender roles appear to be the result of gender-actions targeted at women *and* men (gender sensitivity training for men and women by the Women’s Health and Safe Motherhood project, Philippines/Commission).
- Where the partner institution or local staff is committed to gender equality, and can draw on its own knowledge and networks, the support for gender equality has been much stronger (Steps and ASK Bangladesh/Sida; CASCADE/Philippines).
- Where the partner institution has linked gender equality to its own modernisation and to institutional mechanisms for gender equality the support has been much stronger (Police Academy, Nicaragua/Sida).

- Interventions that provide services or resources to meet practical gender needs may evolve over time to pursue a more strategic approach to gender equality, especially through the gradual building of knowledge and group capacities (PRODEL – local development, Nicaragua and NFE, Bangladesh/Sida; CASCADE, Philippines/Commission).
- Structures for consultation and accountability for gender equality change within partner organisations have been shown to be vital in supporting gender equality change in projects and programmes (e.g. LGDSP- local authorities, South Africa/Sida)
- The absence of systems and procedures to define goals in gender equality and to monitor indicators of gender equality change, greatly inhibit the ability to document those changes which are occurring (e.g. Statistics SA but all the Sida and the Commission projects evaluated).

Discussion Points

- *Evaluating gender mainstreaming – what is good progress, and who is listening?*

There are methodological challenges in evaluating gender mainstreaming, not least establishing reasonable expectations and dealing with time frame, intervention cycle and entry points for gender analysis.

“Assessing progress in the mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective is a bit like picking up mercury. It all too quickly slips through your fingers. There is often no agreement on what to look for, how to measure progress, how ‘high the bar should be’. Until organisations have clear objectives and targets of what they hope to achieve and how they will monitor and measure those achievements, it will be up to evaluators to sort out what they are looking for.” (*Reflection on Gender Equality Evaluation*, Sida Studies in Evaluation 03/0)

In the case of both evaluations, the scope of study was vast and the findings indicate clearly the difficulties of demonstrating progress as well as the major challenges still to be faced by donor agencies in addressing gender mainstreaming. Despite the considerable interest triggered by the evaluations (which provided the Commission and Sida staff and partners with a rare opportunity to reflect and comment on their efforts to integrate gender issues into their work), the evaluators experienced the difficulty of finding the right balance between the necessary rigorous assessment and evaluation of achievements on the one hand and the more contextual appreciation of the difficult environment experienced by people working on gender issues on the other.

The difficulty of establishing appropriate standards for an evaluation of gender mainstreaming has lessons both for evaluators and for those steering such evaluations.

Do evaluators have a lack of ‘realism’ in expectations of mainstreaming? E.g. concerning the time taken to achieve substantive change.

Could evaluations of gender mainstreaming be undertaken differently, so that the measurement of progress and the formulation of the findings take better account of the context? For example, would evaluation of a larger and wider sample of interventions reap different results (compared to evaluating country strategies, institutional capacity and commitment, and a few interventions)? Might the use of participatory evaluation approaches – or the involvement of a wider group of stakeholders – enrich the findings?

- *An (over)ambitious policy challenge?*

The policy challenge of “integrating gender in development co-operation” – across all sectors, at all levels and throughout the cycle – was very great in both organisations. It was a genuine response to the need for more substantial progress on reducing gender inequalities in developing countries, and reflect-

ed international developments in policy and practice. But it demanded a strategic perspective over the long-term and a significant level of institutional commitment and resources for its implementation, requirements which need to be continuously pursued and monitored.

Was the gender mainstreaming strategy too ambitious for some development institutions to take on board?
Or do the weaknesses in making progress merely indicate insufficient institutional commitment to gender equality?

– *Has the strategy pursued been appropriate?*

The strategy for gender mainstreaming placed considerable emphasis on the development of tools and instruments (for analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation) and on capacity building, often amongst those responsible for managing development co-operation. It seems now as if we have a multitude of tools and instruments, but few examples of good practice on the ground.

Have gender mainstreaming strategies been too focused on tools and capacity building and forgotten other important elements? If so, where should the focus of strategies now be?

– *Gender as a supportive, not competing, objective of development*

The case for gender equality as a contribution to meeting over-arching objectives of development co-operation (poverty reduction, growth and social development) appears not yet to be widely accepted or understood. Gender equality seems often to be regarded as “yet another” objective that has to be taken into account alongside many others. It may even be seen as a competing objective, competing for time and resources. People still need to be convinced that gender equality and other development objectives can be mutually reinforcing, and that this does not mean that gender equality “disappears” within other objectives.

How to make the case for gender equality as part and parcel of development objectives – i.e. optimising synergies?
How to ensure that it retains its visibility, while being inter-linked with other objectives, such as poverty reduction and economic growth?

– *How to pursue gender equality in interventions*

There is a reasonable consensus about the principle of gender equality and its priority as a policy objective in development agencies (Commission, Sida) and their country partners. However, there are differences in acceptance and understanding of gender equality policy amongst key stakeholders, and there are significant differences of views and approaches on HOW best to pursue gender equality in interventions.

Should gender equality as a global priority take precedence over local ‘models’ to address power relations in non-gender terms (class, race)?

– *Gender equality in development, and development for gender equality*

Gender mainstreaming tends to stress the integration of gender “in” development co-operation. However, development co-operation must also contribute to gender equality, through improved women’s rights and empowerment.

What can and should development co-operation be prioritising, to make substantial progress on gender equality and women’s rights?

– *Understanding the slow progress on gender mainstreaming*

Assessing the underlying reasons for the slow and difficult progress with gender mainstreaming, especially the failure of development institutions to allocate sufficient effort and resources to its implementation, points clearly to issues of values and priorities, of both individuals and institutions. The male-dominated and masculine culture of some development institutions has inevitable consequences for the values and priorities that are expressed, both formally in policy and budget priorities and informally in the discourse and atmosphere of the workplace. Moreover, dialogue with partner countries – even those with gender equality policies and machinery, and active women’s organisations – may not be providing opportunities for women’s voices, and voices on gender equality, to come through.

How can the right messages be given by institutions that gender equality is a priority? How can priorities and values shift, to become gender-sensitive?

What are “adequate” resources for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and how can these be secured?

What can be done to allow voices on gender equality to have their full place in dialogue and decision-making on development co-operation?

– *Making the best use of what is there*

Two of the clear lessons of the evaluations on integrating gender are “use what is already there” and “collaborate with others”! There are a great deal of resources, tools and instruments available on integrating gender into development – and there is a great deal of relevant expertise and knowledge within partner countries.

How can we avoid duplicating what is already there? How can best use be made of existing resources and tools? What can be done to ensure that better use is made of local experts and resources?

– *Strengthening in-house capacity*

In-house capacity to manage gender mainstreaming strategies at centralised and decentralised levels is a must. The over-use of external experts to manage and implement gender mainstreaming strategies creates significant difficulties in terms of the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the strategy followed and measures taken. Creating capacity at central levels must be balanced by sufficient capacity at decentralised levels. Again this points to the need to allocate sufficient resources, in terms of skilled and knowledgeable staff.

How can in-house capacity best be built and maintained? What seem to be the most cost-effective and sustainable ways of doing this?

– *Core requirements for gender mainstreaming*

There is an apparent need for a set of core requirements that represent the reasonable minimum for gender mainstreaming. These are needed to ensure that progress is made beyond a pro-forma or simplistic application of the mainstreaming gender strategy, and to ensure that the energy and commitment of staff and partners working on gender issues are used to the full.

Is there agreement that core requirements include:

- Clear objectives and targets on gender equality, and strong messages of commitment to achieving these
- Gender analysis going beyond head counts of women and men

- Monitoring and reporting on changes in gender (in)equality
- Dialogue on gender equality and its implementation in policies, strategies and interventions – Government to Government, and with civil society, embassy/delegation staff (more internal team-work), and the donor community
- Resources and capacity – human resources to be reinforced and tools applied.

Annex 4

– Thematic Discussion Notes for Working Group Sessions

Discussion Themes

Nine main themes emerge from the findings of the Commission and Sida evaluations. These were discussed in three concurrent working group sessions on Thursday.

A brief discussion paper has been prepared on each theme by members of the two evaluation teams. These papers introduced the main issues that emerge from the evaluations and suggested some questions for discussion during the working group sessions. They also indicated the people who made brief presentations to open the sessions. The main points emerging from the discussions were presented at a plenary session on the Friday morning.

The nine themes, and their allocation between the three working groups, were:

Working Group 1:

Gender in Country and Sector Strategies

Theme 1.1: Gender and poverty reduction

Theme 1.2: Gender in economic and infrastructure development

Theme 1.3: Mechanisms for integrating gender in country dialogue and strategies

Working Group 2:

Gender in Projects and Programmes

Theme 2.1: Gender equality objectives of projects and programmes

Theme 2.2: Addressing women's rights and reducing gender inequalities

Theme 2.3: Methods and tools for integrating gender issues in projects and programmes

Working Group 3:

Institutional Support and Capacity to Integrate Gender Issues into Development Co-operation

Theme 3.1: Institutional support for gender equality

Theme 3.2: Gender from men's perspective

Theme 3.3: Capacity and tools to take gender into account in the management of development co-operation

Theme 1.1: Gender and Poverty Reduction

Presenter/rapporteur: Britha Mikkelsen (Sida Team)

1. Key Points: Poverty is multidimensional, diverse, complex and dynamic. *Income/consumption poverty* and *deprivation* such as isolation and exclusion, violence, vulnerability and powerlessness, are known to have a gender bias against women. Yet ‘not all women are poor – not all the poor are women’. – ‘Feminisation of poverty’ is extensive, but efforts to combat poverty do not automatically reduce gender inequalities, since the causes and effective measures differ from place to place. Poverty Reduction (PR) is the over-arching goal in development cooperation. Gender Equality (GE) is defined as a *sub-goal in its own right*, in parallel with goals for other cross-cutting issues, e.g. good governance, human rights and environment, by most aid organisations. But gender equality is also a *means* to combat poverty. Poverty reduction and gender equality address many similar issues such as *equity* and *empowerment*, and rights of (poor) women and men. Opportunities for identifying common poverty/gender-dis-aggregated indicators are obvious. It is important to optimise *synergy* between gender equality and poverty reduction and other relevant goals of development cooperation. *Mainstreaming* of the two sets of goals in policies, strategies and interventions is equally relevant. In theory Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and MDG processes should help to improve analysis of synergies between gender equality and poverty reduction at the different levels of cooperation. Do we have evidence of this? Sida’s poverty concept at the time of the evaluation emphasised security, capacity and opportunities, which were used in the evaluation framework and proved to have immediate gender relevance.

2. Examples: The multiple goals of development cooperation are seen by many staff as *competing goals* and the potential synergies are overlooked (Sida eval). Where perceived conflicts may arise between the two goals, these seem to be connected to limited capacity and experience of the implementing organisation and staff, of undertaking poverty and gender analysis separately or in conjunction, and in pursuing these in follow-up. Perceived conflicts between PR and GE are exacerbated by historical experience and cultural norms in some societies. Several inter-linkages were observed, e.g. access to education, credit and jobs, and women’s rights and struggle against violence. Research highlights other poverty reduction-gender equality synergies, eg agricultural productivity. Commission’s and Sida’s strategic priorities include economic and social empowerment of both women and men. But actual and possible linkages and synergies between the gender equality goal and the goal of poverty reduction were rarely *explicit* in the country strategies and interventions and hence difficult to trace. They were addressed as *opportunities* in the Sida evaluation. There are many *un-exploited opportunities* of poverty reduction and gender equality linkages to be pursued. The modalities for inter-linkage differed between interventions: 1) Some were situated in *the poorer geographical regions* (Nicaragua) 2) Infrastructure and urban focused interventions tend to address *national poverty dimensions* (South Africa, Bolivia) and 3) some focused on *specific target groups* (CASCADE Philippines, Hard-to-reach children, Bangladesh). The different ‘entry points’ provide opportunities for analysing possible synergies with the gender equality goal.

3. Questions for Discussion:

- There are obvious synergies between gender equality and poverty reduction. How can these synergies be capitalised on at different levels of development cooperation? Could common poverty-gender-dis-aggregated indicators help? Which other practical steps can be taken?
- Global and donor agency specific policies and strategies do not always correspond with national partner policies and practices. If some national partners are supportive of poverty reduction but have policies and practices not supportive of gender equality, how can GE be addressed within PR strategies?
- Are PRSP and MDG processes helping to promote GE at policy, programme and project levels? How can donors, partner agencies and civil society contribute?

- How can relevant stakeholders ensure that GE remains an explicit goal when linked to poverty reduction so that gender issues are not taken for granted and therefore not addressed? What can you do?

Theme: 1.2 **Gender in economic and infrastructure development**

Presenters: Mary Braithwaite (Commission evaluation team) and Bruce Thompson, Commission DG DEV/B/5

Rapporteur: Mary Braithwaite

1. Key Points: Economic and infrastructure development interventions can make a major contribution to gender equality through improved access to services and opportunities for improving women's skills, employment and income. This is a particular challenge to the Commission, given their importance in its development funding. Local-level initiatives – rural road maintenance, social infrastructures, micro-enterprise, etc. – seem better able to address gender issues than large-scale infrastructure programmes and macro-economic initiatives. However scaling-up these experiences appears difficult, so their potential to contribute to gender equality remains to be achieved. With the increasing shift to budget support, the challenge to integrate gender into large-scale/macro-level programmes in these sectors is even greater. Even local initiatives face some difficulties. While the association between gender and poverty reduction in local infrastructure or economic development projects can bring benefits to women, it can also bring negative impacts. Assumptions about gender roles, and an absence of gender-sensitive impact assessments and monitoring, can mean that “paying special attention to women” places additional – albeit unintended – burdens on women. Perceptions and processes of dialogue in these sectors seem to be key barriers. Decisions and solutions are largely technical, the voices of women are rarely heard, and, as the interventions should benefit people generally, it is assumed that women will automatically benefit. There are also difficulties of dialogue between sector specialists and gender experts. Intervention-specific dialogue, according to the Sida evaluation, often lacks specificity, providing no pointers to practical alterations in programmes to advance gender equality. And sector-specific tools are often unknown and unused.

2. Examples:

- All four country missions in the Commission evaluation show the potential contribution of infrastructure and economic sectors to gender equality, particularly skills, employment, economic empowerment and decision-making. Yet country strategies are not supportive; though ‘gender as a cross-cutting issue’ is mentioned, there are no gender equality objectives or strategies. Strategies for infrastructure, productive and economic sectors are largely ‘gender blind’.
- The engineers responsible for a Commission-financed national roads project in Madagascar did not know how to deal with the findings of a social and gender impact study because the study did not give concrete indications as to what could be done.
- In Jordan, there are well-known and significant disparities in women's and men's participation in the labour market, and women often face severe discrimination. Yet, an industrial development programme had taken no steps to ensure that women and men benefited equitably from the opportunities created.
- A mining diversification project in Bolivia is marginalising women in its activities, because it has no conceptual framework for addressing gender issues or disparities, and operates with traditional assumptions about “women's work” (and pay).

3. Questions for Discussion:

- Are there good examples of how to take gender into account in economic and infrastructure programmes, or to “scale-up” local-level initiatives?

- Why is it difficult to address gender equality in economic and infrastructure sectors, and how can the difficulties be overcome?
- What should infrastructure and economic development programmes be aspiring to achieve in terms of gender equality?
- How can relevant stakeholders ensure that gender equality is linked to sector objectives (e.g. reduced transport costs, improved access to services, enterprise development)?

Theme: 1.3 **Mechanisms for integrating gender in country dialogue and strategies**

Presenter/rapporteur: Adama Moussa (Commission team)

Fiche prepared by Claudy Vouhé (Commission team)

1. Key Points: Multi-level dialogue with government, civil society and other key stakeholders (including the female and male beneficiaries of a project) is more effective and enables solutions to be found in case of resistance by one of the levels. A flexible interpretation and application of the gender concept is required, as well as coherence and clarity amongst donors in terms of their objectives/ messages (internal and external) and actions. Dialogue at project/programme level can produce more immediate changes, but dialogue with the government allows gender to be anchored in the national context, including the judicial context (Cedaw, Constitution etc.). Dialogue should help to find synergies between gender equality and other development objectives, to define specific goals for gender in each sector and to find strategies that can be implemented and whose impacts can be evaluated. Nevertheless, processes such as PRSP or decentralisation (Mali, Bolivia) tend to hide gender, by “mainstreaming” it within the more global objectives of poverty reduction or empowerment. Because other country strategies such as CSPs (Commission) are based on PRSPs, gender is also then “hidden” within other development processes, repeating the problem. The allocation of *specific* financial resources and the use of adequate tools and methods, including the training of local and international teams, contribute to the *visibility* and *realisation* of gender equality objectives and strategies. Focal points and other specific mechanisms are effective if they are specifically recognised and supported by the institution and if the rest of the staff also feels “responsible” for gender equality. Systematic use of local organisations as mediators on gender issues by the government and civil society is also a way of accessing essential skills/knowledge to monitor changes.

2. Examples: In Bangladesh, Sida conducted a *dialogue* on two levels (Government and civil society) and has committed resources to integrate gender in non-formal education. In Nicaragua, faced with an unreceptive government, Sida took advantage of its reputation and of an effort of *donor coordination* in order to continue its gender support through civil society. In Madagascar, *the cross-cutting project IGED* (Commission) allowed the mobilisation and training of primary project stakeholders in gender issues. In spite of the high quality of international technical support, the low level of support coming from the Commission – especially when compared to the interest of national partners – has slowed the integration of gender in the CSP and the strategies in the key sectors. In South Africa (Sida) and Bolivia (Commission), the presence of a *social development adviser* with qualifications in gender has positively influenced the dialogue and reflections on gender. The gender focus of interventions was strongest when synergies between gender and democratic governance had been identified and when gender was considered to be a specific objective in the country strategy. Use of the national gender-supportive legal framework has enabled resistance to be overcome (e.g. local government of Northern Cape)

3. Questions for Discussion

- What *mechanisms* can ensure that gender is taken into account in the political dialogue and strategies (at country and donor level)?
- What are the *key opportunities* for the donors and other relevant institutions to promote the integration of gender into policies and strategies at the national level?
- What are the *advantages and difficulties* of addressing gender within the political dialogue between institutions and donors with regard to its integration into national strategies?
- What *means and resources* are needed to address gender as part of the political dialogue with institutions and donors to promote its integration into country strategies?
- What is the best way to use and build upon the juridical framework and other gender-related capacities to promote gender mainstreaming?

Theme 2.1: Gender equality objectives of projects and programmes

Presenter/rapporteur: Bonnie Keller (Sida Team)

1. Key Points: Global, i.e. internationally accepted, gender equality objectives (e.g. of a development institution, of a country) must be applied or translated at the level of projects and programmes. Meaningful attention to gender equality objectives cannot be left to good intentions, chance or to a statement, buried somewhere in the project design, to “integrate attention to gender.” The absence of clear and explicit gender equality objectives in intervention design is one reason why there is a continuing observed disparity between global gender equality objectives and the lack of progress in reducing inequalities through projects and programmes. Establishing a specific gender equality objective at the outset, during project identification and formulation, is necessary to ensure that identified gender inequalities are addressed during implementation. An explicit objective will indicate how gender equality is related to achieving the other objectives relevant to the sector or theme in question. It will also show how gender equality is linked to other cross-cutting goals such as poverty reduction. An explicit gender equality objective will enhance the likelihood that gender relevant actions will be mainstreamed in all phases of the project cycle and that monitoring and evaluation and other learning and accountability tools will document changes in unequal gender relations.

2. Examples: A gender equality objective should state a goal to reduce gender inequalities and/or to improve women’s situation relative to men’s, specific to the theme or sector. However, there is inconsistency in the degree/extent to which most development agencies have ensured that such an objective is actually included in project identification and formulation. There are examples of projects, especially in the social sectors, which have objectives to improve women’s situation (reduced maternal mortality, increased girl’s education) or to support their empowerment and rights (increased influence in decision making and politics). Often, these have not included the perspective of unequal gender relations. It is common to find a women-specific objective in a larger programme (water & sanitation), which is then narrowly interpreted and documented as the number of women participating in certain project activities. Women-focused objectives are most common in social development projects (education, health, water). In the Sida and Commission evaluations, no good examples of gender equality objectives were identified. In some projects, the negative impact of absence of a relevant objective was identified well into the project cycle, followed by *ad hoc* initiatives to try to introduce a gender perspective. Objectives to reduce gender inequalities and/or to improve women’s situation relative to men’s are still relatively uncommon in economic sector projects (employment creation, skills development), private sector development (trade promotion) and infrastructure (energy).

3. Questions for Discussion:

- Why are gender equality objectives absent or rare? What is required to ensure that appropriate and adequate gender equality objectives are included in project identification and formulation?
- What could/should these objectives look like, at the level of projects and programmes?
- What is needed to ensure consistency of objectives with “global” objectives – of the donor, the country, the Millennium Development Goals?
- How can relevant stakeholders ensure that gender equality objectives are followed through in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes? What can you do?

Theme: 2.2 **Addressing women's rights and reducing gender inequalities**

Presenter/rapporteur: Sarah Forti (Sida Team)

1. Key Points: There are positive signs from both the Commission and Sida evaluations that Development Co-operation is increasingly paying attention to “women’s participation” in project activities and decision-making bodies as well as to “women’s access” to resources and services. This is an important first step in reducing gender inequalities. The focus is primarily on affirmative action, with efforts visible in *quantitative* terms, i.e. numbers of women. Evidence of progress towards *qualitative* improvements in the situation of women, and especially towards the reduction of gender inequalities, is, on the contrary, hard to find. Efforts to address the content of national legislation or to tackle discriminatory customs and practices appear to be few and far between, even though the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), agreed at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, contain important commitments to “promote gender equality and empower women” and specify a series of targets and indicators for measuring the achievement of this goal. One difficulty seems the absence of good examples and practical guidance at policy level on how to move from the promotion of women’s participation (*quantitative*) to tackling gender inequalities from a *substantive* perspective. One approach to making progress on Gender Equality is through the implementation of Women’s Human Rights and a better use of international Conventions. Women’s Human Rights is the underlying concept behind the term “Gender Equality”. In its policy, Sida clearly defines Gender Equality as “Equal rights, opportunities and obligations of women and men and an increased potential for both women and men to influence, participate and benefit from development processes.” It is generally agreed that Women’s Human Rights are most comprehensively enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention is an International Human Rights instrument that specifically addresses the issue of discrimination against women and their equal rights with men in all main sectors of society e.g. family, employment, education, health, law, politics, economics, agriculture, water and sanitation.

2. Examples: In the Sida Evaluation it was found that support to “reducing gender inequalities” was addressed in Democratisation Programmes in terms of equal participation of women and men in democratic processes at local government level e.g. in LGDP South Africa. In the Commission Evaluation, it was also found that support to “improve women’s rights” focused on women’s participation in election and balanced representation in parliament e.g. in Jordan. In both cases it was found that these examples were often marginalised from mainstream development co-operation. In the case of the Commission they were funded through special budget lines for Democracy and Human Rights as oppose to mainstream budgets. In the case of Sida, this intervention was part of one department specifically dealing with Democratisation and Good Governance. Nevertheless, some good examples can be found at project level (in the WID era), in the support to women’s lawyers groups and women’s legal aid projects that empowered women at the grass root level to invoke their rights. Presently, further opportunities for Donors to address Women’s Human Rights from a *substantive* perspective, should be

found in the Sector support to National Human Rights Commissions (activities) and the support to Human Rights Training/Education, by ensuring that women's human rights are not diluted in the overall Human Rights concept but specifically addressed. Likewise, the new Rights-Based Approach (RBA) to Development offer a new opportunity to clearly mainstream Women's Human Rights and address gender-based inequalities in all sectors of Development Co-operation from a *substantive* perspective.

3. Questions for Discussion

- 1) Why are Women's Human Rights so seldom specifically discussed in broad development and political contexts?
- 2) Are there further good examples of programmes and interventions that have *substantively* addressed Women's Human Rights to reduce gender inequalities and what can be learnt from these experiences?
- 3) On a practical level, how can development interventions move from promoting women's participation to *substantively* address gender equality? What can different stakeholders do? What can you do?
- 4) What is the value of promoting Women's Human Rights within Development Co-operation and how can this be done?

Theme 2.3: **Methods and tools for integrating gender issues in projects and programmes**

Presenter/rapporteur: Dirk Van Esbroeck (Commission team)

1. Key Points: Many methods and tools have been developed for integrating gender issues in projects and programmes, of which stakeholder participation, an important 'mainstream' principle of good development practice, and gender analysis are probably the most prominent. Stakeholder participation covers a broad range of approaches that vary from purely instrumental participation to involving primary stakeholders in key decisions. It can provide less influential groups, women in particular, with the opportunity to influence the process. It can also increase the project management's knowledge of the socio-cultural context and its understanding of which approaches and tools can actually work. However, stakeholder participation increases the complexity of the process, does not automatically recognise gender inequalities and does not always lead to empowerment. All this calls for specific competence to manage the participatory process to ensure the integration of gender equality. Gender analysis is a proven approach for identifying gender issues at the projects and programmes level. So far, many analytical tools and approaches have been developed, but these need to be adapted to the specific cultural, sectoral and geographical context of the project. Moreover, these tools should fit in the overall (participatory) approach adopted by the project or programme. This, again, requires specific capacity and competence, both within the project/programme and external, which should be ensured on a continued basis throughout the different phases of project/programme planning and implementation.

2. Examples: Both evaluations identified the existence of strong policy commitments to gender equality, but consider that a major challenge is making these policies permeate the project and programme level. Both evaluations point to: the need to ensure a *constant* level of attention to and competence on gender integration throughout the different phases; and the need to develop an institutional memory on gender integration to avoid the potentially negative effects of discontinuity of key actors responsible for gender. The lack of gender analysis during planning, as well as of gender sensitive monitoring, is a major factor in projects unintentionally producing negative effects for women (Commission Evaluation). The Sida evaluation states that intervention-specific dialogue has the greatest potential to improve gender equality results of development cooperation. Both evaluations found that besides the existence of clear policies, tools and instruments, the level of commitment and interest at the level of

staff and consultants seems to be a key factor for integrating gender issues. The Commission evaluation identified resistances (procedural, but also attitudinal) against gender-specific methods and tools as a major problem. Both evaluations also pointed to local expertise and approaches as a vital resource to help build and ensure capacity over time at the project/programme level.

3. Questions for Discussion

- Can ‘dialogue’, as the Sida evaluation suggests, be considered as a key to include gender analysis in project design and implementation? Does this imply that, both in gender analysis and stakeholder participation, HOW things are done is as important as whether they are done? Or should we, on the contrary, develop more (sector or intervention) specific tools?
- How can *resistances* to gender analysis and genuine stakeholder participation be overcome, not only in the design phase, but also during implementation?
- What *mechanisms* should be developed to ensure that the results of gender analysis and stakeholder participation are constantly fed into the project/programme cycle?
- What can be done to integrate a gender perspective in projects where gender equality has so far not been an important component? What competence, methods and approaches are needed in such cases to alter views, attitudes and practices in favour of gender equality?

Theme 3.1: Institutional Support for Gender Equality

Presenter/rapporteur: Ted Freeman (Sida Team)

1. Key Points: The Commission evaluation highlights the importance of a gender sensitive organizational culture and active commitment by senior management. The Sida evaluation also notes the importance of support for gender equality at the embassy level for Sida and within partner organizations – public, private, or civil society. Bilateral and multilateral agencies invest considerable resources in gender equality policies, strategies, action plans, training programmes and programming tools (including gender analysis guidelines) but both evaluations indicate a mixed record in successfully developing a positive gender equity culture at headquarters level (Commission) and in embassies and delegations. Tools for mainstreaming gender equality may be limited at country level (Commission) or may not match with the orientation and skill sets of staff (Sida). The commitment and knowledge (or lack thereof) of ambassadors (Sida) or heads of delegation (Commission) is often a major factor in success or failure of gender mainstreaming. Agencies have also struggled with the institutional support structure for gender equality, including the designation of focal points (Sida) and the institutional profile of headquarters staff supporting gender (the Commission). While the Commission evaluation criticizes the low institutional profile of gender equality and the lack of visible commitment of senior management, the Sida study indicates that such a commitment, though necessary, may not be sufficient. One important element is the clarity and strength of senior management messages on the importance of GE provided to the staff at HQs and at embassies/delegations. Where these messages are lacking (Commission evaluation) the effect may be more severe in a hierarchical management structure. Both the Commission and the Sida evaluation raise the issue of pro forma consideration of gender equality issues in programme design and development. Both evaluations also highlight the importance of non-staff consultants and supporting technical assistance staff whose attitudes and skills may either support or undermine gender equality in programming. While most agency staff have received gender training, often this is not true of outside consultants and technical experts. The Sida evaluation points out that there are clear opportunities to support capacities and commitments in gender equality among some partners. Finally, there is a serious question whether performance in supporting gender equality is of sufficient importance in institutional reward structures, especially for senior staff.

2. Examples: For Sida in Nicaragua and Bangladesh, changes in ambassadors and shifts in emphasis

from one country strategy period to the next brought with them changes in the profile of gender equality as a priority in programming – with both positive and negative examples. Sida programmes in strengthening democracy (Nicaragua) and non-formal education (Bangladesh) encountered resistance or pro-forma support on the part of some national partner agencies but also found government and civil society partners with real competency and commitment to GE. The Commission report points out the extremely male dominated structure of staffing at senior levels as a factor limiting the institutional culture from a gender equality perspective but also notes that the development of an action plan for 2002–2006, the appointment of a Grade A civil servant full time on gender in AidCo and the creation of an inter-service committee on gender in development represent positive steps.

3. Questions for Discussion:

- How can we avoid the relative isolation of “gender focal point” staff at headquarters and field levels?
- How to make proper tools available and provide incentives for staff to make use of them?
- Should support of gender equality be made a key criteria for assessing the performance of senior staff?
- How can organizations ensure that consultants and technical assistance personnel are committed to gender equality and have the right skills to develop and implement programmes which support GE?
- How to recognize GE capacity and commitment among partner agencies when it does exist?
- What structural factors (incentives, rewards, imbedded programme processes, competing priorities) promote the development of a supportive institutional culture for gender equality?
- What can different stakeholders, including yourself, do to strengthen institutional support for GE?

Theme 3.2: Gender from men's perspective

Presenter/rapporteur: Julian Walker (Commission team)

1. Key Points: Taking men's perspectives into account as part of gender approaches is important for a number of reasons: Interventions that aim at changes in the activities and status of women imply corresponding changes in the status and behaviour of men, which must also be addressed. In many cases interventions promoting gender equality are blocked by men in positions of power, both at the community level and within development institutions such as Sida or the Commission. It is therefore vital to ensure such men's support, by convincing them that women's subordination is also a problem for themselves or their communities. Men and women are not homogeneous groups, but have diverse needs and interests, differing on the basis of class, age, ethnicity, etc, and gender inequality is not a simple opposition between oppressed women and oppressing men. Gender inequalities intersect with other inequalities, resulting in some men being marginalised, while cultural conventions concerning gender roles sideline men from some activities. As illustrated by Sida's work on men and masculinities, responding to stereotypes of male behaviour is as much of a challenge as addressing stereotypes around women. Therefore, Gender and Development approaches advocate that men's perspectives should be taken into account and that development interventions aiming to promote equality should focus on women, or men, or women and men as a matter of strategic choice.

2. Examples: During the Commission evaluation, one of the case study projects visited (a Women's Health programme in the Philippines) introduced training and sensitisation components for men when it became clear that a key barrier to the project was resistance from men who were otherwise unwilling to allow their wives to spend large amounts of time on project activities. Another relevant evaluation finding, from the Sida evaluation, was that attempts to gain the support of men for gender initiatives may lead to a focus on less controversial Practical Gender Needs (PGNs), with benefits such as child

health which also appeal to men, rather than on Strategic Gender Needs (eg a redistribution of power between women and men). However the Sida evaluation also found that programmes which explicitly address Strategic Gender Needs, (rather than Practical Gender Needs) such as those supporting the National Police Academy in Nicaragua, and Legal Aid in Bangladesh, had the strongest impact on women's empowerment.

3. Questions for Discussion

- What does taking on men's perspectives mean in practical terms for development institutions?
- What is the best way to address the diversity of women's and men's needs, without losing a focus on the structural inequalities between women and men
- Does the recognition of men's perspectives lead to the danger of resources earmarked for gender equality and the promotion of women's rights, being co-opted in men's interests?
- How can men's support be won for tackling the strategic needs of women, in addition to the less challenging practical gender needs of women? What practical examples and suggestions can be given for bringing men on board?
- What can be done to make "gender" an issue of as much professional concern to men as to women?

Theme 3.3:

Capacity and tools to take gender into account in the management of development co-operation

Presenter/rapporteur: Julian Walker (Commission team)

1. Key Points: Considerable efforts have been made in gender training and in the development of gender-specific tools by both the Commission and Sida. Yet this has yielded little in terms of sustained institutional capacity to integrate gender. There may be a number of explanations for this:

- The accessibility, usefulness – and use – of gender-specific tools was questioned by the evaluations. Many tools are available amongst donors and national partners, but they are not always coherent with current 'standard' methods of development institutions, and most often they are not being used.
- Even where gender issues are raised in mainstream development tools (eg PCM) or sectoral guidelines, practical guidance about how to address these issues is often missing, and in many cases even these mainstream tools under-utilised.
- Training on gender is often criticised for being overly abstract and theoretical, and poorly linked to the day to day work of participants.
- Training is only effective if there is follow up – i.e. if what is learnt is carried through in day to day work and support is provided that enables this to happen (resources, active support from management etc).

2. Examples: The Commission evaluation found that a key problem is that the integration of gender into guidelines is inconsistent. For example in the Commission while some guidelines stand out as good (eg the forestry sector guidelines) others fail to address gender issues, or mention gender as a cross cutting issue without giving practical guidance as to how to deal with it (eg the Framework for Country Strategy Papers). This was exacerbated by the fact that the impact of gender training is undermined by high staff mobility and the fact that predominantly young experts or junior or temporary staff participate in the training courses, rather than more senior permanent staff. On the other hand the Sida evaluation found that while there are many good gender tools and guidelines as a result of the Action programme, the problem is ensuring that these are used by the full range of staff, rather than being the sole responsibility of Gender Focal Points. The Sida evaluation also found that training needed to be made more relevant by being linked to the needs of specific sectors and interventions, and that short refresher training for headquarters staff and partners is necessary to keep gender issues alive.

3. Questions for Discussion

- Why do gender training initiatives and the provision of tools appear to be insufficient for developing institutional memory and sustainable skills in gender mainstreaming? What lessons can be drawn?
- Are there examples of more successful approaches to creating sustained improvements in the knowledge and skills on the integration of gender amongst people responsible for managing development co-operation?
- Should the focus be on integrating gender perspectives into mainstream tools, or is there also a need for specific ‘gender tools’?
- Should gender tools and training be simplified to ensure that they are accessible to all staff, or would this compromise the quality of activities such as gender analysis or the integration of gender into monitoring and evaluation?

Annex 5 – Gender mainstreaming: Reflections on Implementation of the Strategy

Presentation by Carolyn Hannan, Director, UN Division for the Advancement of Women

I thank the European Commission and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for providing me with the opportunity to participate in this seminar. I would like to begin by congratulating the Commission and Sida for the very constructive evaluations of promoting gender equality through gender mainstreaming within their organizations, and particularly for the positive follow-up processes which they have initiated. Although there is a shift in emphasis in evaluations today to learning processes rather than measurement of accountability, many evaluations still come to an abrupt end when they are presented, and tend to grace bookshelves more than promote processes of change. There has been an important learning process in both the Commission and Sida evaluations, which has continued long after the evaluations were finalized. There is a concerted effort by both organizations to draw out and apply the important learnings on gender mainstreaming. As a result, there are already positive indications of change underway. Through this seminar, the evaluations have potential to contribute to better understanding of gender mainstreaming and to improved implementation and the positive impact of the evaluations can spread beyond the two organizations directly involved.

What I will offer in this presentation are reflections on the discussions held during the seminar, as well as insights from my own experience in both bilateral and multilateral contexts. I will not provide many conclusive answers to questions raised but hope to highlight major gaps and challenges and some potential ways forward. Many of the issues raised in this seminar are not new; they have been raised time and again over the past two decades. This should clearly imply that it is time, particularly in the context of the forthcoming review and appraisal of ten years of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, to seriously rethink some of the approaches in place. I will begin with some general reflections and then speak briefly on specific aspects of efforts made in development cooperation contexts to implement gender mainstreaming.

Global mandates and commitments

It is important to start with the global mandates for gender mainstreaming. The necessity for gender equality policies to be “in line with” the international goals on gender equality was raised in discussions over the past two days. It is not, however, enough to be in line with the global goals and recommendations. It is critical to effectively use these global goals and recommendations for action in development cooperation, as an integral part of the policy frameworks developed in agencies and in policy dialogue with partners.

The Member States of the United Nations – the partner countries of development cooperation agencies – committed in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) to gender mainstreaming in all areas of development. Since then, the mandates for gender mainstreaming have been significantly reinforced. Specific mandates have been developed for different sector areas and issues, including even in difficult areas, such as budgets and peace and security. There is considerable support for gender mainstreaming among Member States, even though there is still uncertainty on how to implement the strategy. In New York there is a strong constituency of supporters of gender mainstreaming, with an informal group of around 25 Member States (the Friends of Gender Mainstreaming) working to promote more effective implementation in the intergovernmental processes, and in the work of the permanent missions to the United Nations and the entities of the United Nations.

Several times during the seminar it was stated that lack of support for gender mainstreaming by partner institutions is a problem. There was reference to resistance of different types. It is true that individual bureaucrats, particularly at middle-levels of management, may not know about these specific global commitments or may not be interested in implementing them. It would be dangerous, however, to slip into a pattern of presuming that there will automatically be resistance. The global goals and recommendations can be used very constructively by development cooperation agencies. The starting point has to be that the Governments should be accountable and willing to work with partners to secure implementation of commitments made globally. The global goals and recommendations must be consistently referred to in policy dialogue and women's groups and networks should be brought into this dialogue. There are often strong local movements of women's groups and networks making concerted efforts to hold their Governments accountable to these same commitments. Partnerships with, and/or support to these groups, in this context can be very effective.

Use should also be made of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs). The Millennium Declaration recognized that gender equality is a key indicator of, and precondition for, sustainable development. The MDGs clearly set out critical development goals, targets and indicators, including one goal on gender equality. It is not enough, however, to work with one specific goal on gender equality; there are critical gender perspectives in relation to all other MDGs. The targets and indicators already developed for gender equality need further refinement and expansion. Work is underway to strengthen the focus on gender equality in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, both to support gender mainstreaming and the achievement of all the MDGs. Much can be gained from the strong emphasis in the work on the MDGs on implementation, targets and indicators to strengthen the focus on implementation, targets and indicators in promoting gender equality.

It should be a requirement that professional staff in development cooperation agencies are aware of the global goals and recommendations on gender equality and that they have capacity to use them in dialogue with partner countries. To ensure that this is possible, information on the global goals and recommendations should be integrated into training programmes in development agencies.

The importance of the rights-based approach was emphasized many times during the seminar. The important conclusion was made that the rights-based approach is not a substitute for gender mainstreaming. The rights perspective and the empowerment approach must be integral to gender mainstreaming. It is also critical to keep in mind that the use of the rights-based approach does not automatically ensure attention to women's human rights. There has to be an explicit focus on women's human rights.

It is thus also important to improve the focus on legally-binding commitments that governments have made through international conventions, in particular the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It is worth noting that 175 of 191 Member States of the United Nations have ratified CEDAW. Bilateral development cooperation agencies can take as a starting point that probably all or most of their partner countries have ratified the convention and thereby committed to actively eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, in both public and private contexts. It is important in preparing for policy dialogue to know what reservations, if any, the partner countries have to the convention; what their reporting record is; and what the CEDAW Committee has commented on and what changes they have recommended in the Concluding Comments prepared after the dialogue with the countries. The CEDAW convention, alongside the Platform for Action, should be an important basis for gender equality policy frameworks in development cooperation agencies. CEDAW could be used more strategically in dialogue with partner countries, and NGOs could be effectively involved in these discussions. Ways and means of using CEDAW in development coopera-

tion policies and programmes should be integrated into training programmes in development cooperation agencies.

Gender mainstreaming: concepts and approaches to implementation

The discussions in this seminar, as well as in other contexts, have focused attention on the complexity of gender mainstreaming. Without falling into the trap of over-simplifying, it is important not to over-problematize gender mainstreaming. While it is necessary to explicitly highlight gaps and challenges, this should not create myths about gender mainstreaming being too difficult to implement or foster the perception that only experts can use the strategy effectively. The comment of one of the transport specialists at this seminar: “Don’t give up on us (non gender specialists). We can take gender perspectives on board in our own work.” is particularly pertinent in this respect. Many discussions of gender mainstreaming have, to far too great an extent, focused on the complexity of the strategy rather than on concrete steps needed to implement it. Gender specialists need to be aware of the risk of inadvertently hindering the implementation of gender mainstreaming by portraying it as too complex.

It is also important to distinguish between general problems relating to development cooperation which affect all areas of work, and problems and challenges which are specific to the promotion of gender equality. General challenges and constraints in development cooperation, for example in attaining local ownership of processes, can be attributed to the gender equality and used as an excuse for doing nothing. There are certainly some specific sensitivities around the promotion of gender equality because it is directly linked with power relations and stereotypes. Discussions here also highlighted the close links between the personal and the professional in working with gender equality which can also create constraints. However, in organizations where promotion of gender mainstreaming is popularly perceived to be extremely difficult and minimal efforts made to implement it, the question should legitimately be raised: Is the promotion of gender equality so intrinsically more difficult than poverty eradication, promotion of human rights, and achievement of effective participatory governance? It is important to expose the underlying values and attitudes underlying perceptions of gender mainstreaming, particularly if they lead to inaction on gender equality within an organization.

Related to this is the issue of conceptual clarity. There has been considerable discussion during the seminar of conceptual confusion and difficulties with concepts. While there certainly can be difficulties with, for example, the distinction between the concepts of equality and equity, there has also been an unfortunate over-problematizing of concepts which has not been constructive for implementation of gender mainstreaming. The concepts of gender and mainstreaming should not present enormous problems. A great disservice is done to the promotion of gender equality when the perception is created that gender mainstreaming is so enormously difficult conceptually as to render it impossible to implement.

If the concept of “gender “ appears to be difficult, it is possible to use “women and men” to clarify that the concept refers to women and men and the relations between them. If “mainstreaming” appears difficult to grasp, it is possible to talk about integrating or incorporating gender perspectives, if this is more understandable. What is critical is to take time to find out what causes the difficulty in understanding and develop other ways to explain the concept. Flexibility and pragmatism are important. Experience has shown that development specialists do have the capacity to take on new and complex concepts. In fact, they often like to be challenged in this way. Unfortunately the promotion of gender equality has not excited and inspired development professionals as much as could be desired.

There is, in addition, a need for clarity relating to goals and strategies. The strategy of gender mainstreaming is not adequately understood by many professional staff in development cooperation agen-

cies. There may be many reasons for this. It can be because staff have never received an adequate explanation, apart from being given a copy of the gender equality policy, and are truly at a loss to know how gender mainstreaming would be relevant to their work or how it could be implemented. It could also be that the presentation of mainstreaming to professional staff through training programmes has been inappropriate – for example teaching theoretical analysis methodologies without adequate attention to ways of using them in daily work, or by failing to focus clearly on the areas of work professional staff are involved in. It, however, also needs to be kept in mind that some professional staff may simply *not want* to understand what it means. In this context, clear establishment of professional responsibility and accountability for gender mainstreaming is critical.

It is interesting to recall that when gender mainstreaming was first introduced as a concept in the early 1990s, there were many complaints about how difficult it was to understand and implement. Over the years the concept of mainstreaming has, however, been adopted in other contexts, for example in relation to disability, children, human rights, and poverty, with very little difficulty. Despite this, one can still hear that the concept of mainstreaming gender perspectives is too difficult. It is thus important to raise the question: Why can development professionals work with the concept of mainstreaming in relation to other areas but not in relation to gender equality? What is the underlying factor that needs to be addressed – the concept itself or the political will within the organization, as manifested by management signals and the attitudes of individual professional staff?

It has become increasingly “fashionable” in some circles, even among gender specialists, to criticize gender mainstreaming. It is interesting to note that this criticism comes most often from organizations where little success has been achieved in its implementation. That there are huge failings in relation to *implementation* of the gender mainstreaming strategy is very clear, but it is short-sighted and unconstructive to blame the strategy itself or these failings. There should be a greater focus identifying the factors which have made implementation difficult. It is also important for gender specialists to take a more self-critical look at their own roles and to develop new ways and means of supporting gender mainstreaming.

A historical perspective

When gender mainstreaming is criticized and it is suggested that gender mainstreaming should be abandoned, the question should be raised: What is the alternative? In this context it is useful to have a clear historical perspective. In the 1960s and 1970s the strategy utilized was women-specific activities. Lessons learned showed that this approach as the sole strategy led to the marginalization of women and their concerns. It did not deal with the structural causes of inequality. In the 1980s and early 1990s most organizations introduced the integration approach in an attempt to overcome the problems identified and to influence the mainstream of development. While attention was given to women’s priorities and needs, it was usually after all important decisions on goals, strategies, activities and resources had been made. As a result, most attention to women was in the form of components or add-ons which had little impact on mainstream development.

In the mid 1990s the mainstreaming strategy gained ground. It was established precisely to deal with some of the constraints identified in earlier strategies. Gender mainstreaming aims to incorporate attention to women as well as men, their contributions, priorities and needs, from *initial* stages of policy and programme development to influence goals, strategies, activities and resource allocations. Gender mainstreaming should involve changes to the way development cooperation is done – contributing both to the achievement of gender equality, as well as facilitating the achievement of all other development goals. This is what is referred to as the transformative process in gender mainstreaming –

it can require re-focusing, re-prioritizing and reorganizing development cooperation efforts to ensure that all stakeholders, women as well as men, can influence, participate in and benefit from development interventions.

All that being said, it is clear that implementation of gender mainstreaming is not simple. It does require explicit attention to gender perspectives and it requires development of knowledge, awareness, commitment and capacity among professional staff. It involves a process of change which will not be achieved in a short time – changes in processes and procedures, as well as changes in what is done on the ground and the impacts of these changes. Effective means of measuring both the process and the impacts need to be developed, including targets and indicators.

It should also be made clear that Member States of the United Nations committed to a dual approach in promoting gender equality: gender mainstreaming complemented by targeted activities for women and gender equality. There is no contradiction between the strategies; both continue to be needed. What is important is to understand the differences between the strategies so that there is clarity on what is gender mainstreaming and what is not.

The review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, scheduled for 2005, provides an excellent opportunity for a critical rethinking of approaches for implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. The question needs to be asked: Are we doing the right things or expending a lot of energy doing the wrong things well? It is clear that sector specialists are not always getting the kind of support they need to fully integrate gender perspectives into their work. Since there are very few gender specialists within organizations who can support gender mainstreaming, what they do is critical. Many specialists are working in isolation with little concrete support, and few strategic alliances and resources. Much of the work on gender equality within development cooperation organizations is separate and marginalized. There has also been an over-emphasis on technical aspects (the perception that provision of training and guidelines would make the critical difference) and a neglect of political aspects (political will, clear management signals of support, and adequate resources). Many existing processes, mechanisms and instruments, which could support gender mainstreaming, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the MDGs, are not being effectively utilized.

Areas where change is most needed

In the remainder of the presentation I would like to focus on some of the areas where change would be most needed.

– Gender equality policies

Most development organizations today do have a gender equality policy. To be effective, such policies require regular updating, to respond adequately to development challenges and to changes in development cooperation. Even when strong gender equality policies are in place, they do not necessarily have the desired impact, often because they are kept on the margins of the policy environment within organizations. A major failing is the lack of linkage between promotion of gender equality and other prioritized development goals – the issues that are at the centre of attention – within organizations. Neglect of these linkages leads to failure to utilize the constructive synergies that could emerge.

A second reason for lack of impact is that gender equality policies are often developed or revised by gender specialists with little consultation throughout the organization. A policy which is developed or revised collaboratively, in a process requiring inputs from all parts of the organizations – field-level as well as headquarters, has much greater potential for developing awareness, commitment and capacity and a real sense of ownership throughout the organization, and thus there is also greater potential for effective implementation.

For a gender equality policy to have the desired impact there needs to be a strategy and/or action plan which elaborates the needs to be done at different levels to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively. This should outline what actions need to be taken; who is responsible; and how they will be held accountable. It should also include explicit attention to the competence development required for implementation of the policy within the organization – that is, attention to the areas of competence required and the ways by which this should be developed within the organization. This should have implications for the overall training programme within the organization, as gender perspectives need to be incorporated into all training on substantive issues as well as procedures and processes.

Responsibility for developing the competence on gender equality, and other changes in processes and procedures required, in order to meet the organizational commitments made in the adoption of a gender equality policy should not be left to a few under-resourced gender specialists. The sections of the organization responsible for planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation and competence development of staff should have clearly outlined roles and responsibilities.

There have been very constructive discussions at this seminar on the importance of identifying and building on the synergies between promotion of gender equality and achievement of other development goals, such as poverty eradication, promotion of human rights, promotion of environmental sustainability, and establishment of effective participatory governance. Discussions revealed that there is some “competition” among development goals in many organizations. There can be a clear hierarchy of goals, with some receiving more attention/priority, resources, and stronger management support than others. Poverty eradication remains the most important development goal for most organizations. Staff know that they will be held accountable in their work programmes for poverty eradication. It is therefore important to ensure that gender perspectives are fully integrated into poverty eradication efforts. It is well established, including through the Millennium Declaration, that poverty eradication is facilitated by gender equality; and experience has also shown that in many contexts promotion of gender equality is facilitated by gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies. Gender specialists must develop more effective ways and means to establish and use the linkages between gender equality and poverty eradication, and other development goals, to move the gender equality agenda forward.

It is also well established that, as well as being a development goal in its own right, gender equality is critical for achieving all other development goals. Inequality between women and men and continued discrimination and subordination of women creates enormous hindrances to development which need to be addressed in every sector. It is important to challenge the perception of gender equality as just one more cross-cutting issue added unto the responsibilities of professional staff with no guidance or prioritization. Gender equality should not simply be seen as a cross-cutting issue but as a development goal with implications for all other goals. As an analysis variable, gender is overarching and impacts on all other variables, such as class, race, ethnic group and age. Women are not a special interest group or a vulnerable group; they comprise at least 50% of the population, and through their roles and responsibilities in many different areas, make critical contributions to development which need to be recognized and built on.

– The country strategy process

A critical entry-point for advancing the promotion of gender equality is the country strategy process. It is important that gender analysis is integrated into country-level analyses, in order to influence sector policies and the establishment of clear gender equality goals at sector level, as well as action plans for gender-sensitive implementation. Country strategies determine which sectors will be prioritized; which aspects within specific sectors will be focused on; what links will be established between sectors; and what the concrete approach will be. Analysis at all levels of strategy development has to be context-specific. It must build on local knowledge – locally established goals, strategies and targets – through consultation processes which include women’s groups and networks. There is a strong body of field-

level experience, including good practice examples – not always well documented – which should feed into policy development and country strategies. Work at the field level, while critical, will, however, by itself not bring about the systemic change required. Gender-sensitive country strategies and sectoral strategies within development organizations are critical for ensuring full organizational commitment. Without this commitment explicitly outlined in the country and sectoral strategies, promoting gender equality at field level will be left to the initiatives of committed individuals and thus will lack potential for more long-term impacts and sustainability.

Experience to date shows that gender analysis is not implemented adequately into most country strategies, and in turn into sectoral strategies. There are few examples where gender equality has been given priority focus in development of country strategies. Strong institutionalization of gender perspectives into country strategy processes requires systematic incorporation of gender perspectives into dialogue and analyses and establishment of monitoring processes, including targets and indicators. The challenge is to go beyond the obligatory and politically correct one or two paragraphs on women/gender to a sound gender analysis which influences choices made through country strategy processes.

Considerable analysis has already been carried out, particularly by local women's groups and networks. The challenge is to make this knowledge available and integral to country strategy processes.

Many organizations have commissioned separate gender analyses with the purpose of influencing the mainstream process. However, much of this work has remained separate and has not influenced critical mainstream decisions and resource allocations. The results have appeared as an annex to country strategies or as separate documents with little impact.

Sida presented a positive example of an innovative approach which awakened interest and support during the seminar, that is, the prioritizing of one gender equality issue – land rights – within a country strategy. This critical issue for women would be addressed in all sectors within the framework of the country strategy process. A word of caution was, however, raised by participants – that the issue of land rights for women should be an integral part of the whole of the country strategy, to be addressed by all sectors and not kept as a separate component for women, if this innovation is to be effective.

Two issues raised marginally in the meeting are very important in the context of the country strategy process – data and budgets. It is important to ensure that policy commitments made by governments are matched by data collection to facilitate monitoring of implementation of these commitments. There are, however, huge data gaps to be addressed. Firstly, the issue of lack of sex-disaggregation of statistics, and secondly, the fact that there is no data collected systematically on many key issues for gender equality. The MDG context could be used constructively to focus more attention on these data needs. On the other hand, it is also clear that there is sometimes more data available than is presumed. The reason such data is not brought forward and utilized is that there is little demand. A good example of this is the health sector where most data is disaggregated on collection at grassroots level, but becomes aggregated as it passes up through the system because of lack of demand for disaggregation. Development cooperation agencies, as users of statistics, could play a more constructive role by making clear demands for disaggregation by sex and age as well as for collection of critical information on gender equality. Agencies can also support the role of producers – such as National Statistical Offices, statistical departments in line ministries – in different ways.

Similarly, it is important to match government policy commitments on gender equality with resource allocations. To date initiatives to mainstream gender perspectives into budget processes, while undertaken in many countries, have been ad hoc and relatively marginal processes, often initiated by NGOs and civil society groups as stand-alone initiatives. If assessment of budget allocations relative to policy goals on gender equality could be made an integral part of country strategies, this could be a powerful tool for change, particularly if the Ministry of Finance were actively involved.

– Policy dialogue and sector approaches

The seminar had a strong focus on dialogue as a critical instrument for bringing women's voices into decision-making processes. It is important that dialogue builds on the knowledge and capacity already existing at local levels. Incorporation of local analyses, goals and targets will promote real ownership and partnerships. There has not been sufficient focus on gender equality issues in dialogue. The ability of development cooperation agencies to follow through on issues raised in dialogue with partner institutions was emphasized in the seminar. It is not constructive if development agencies raise gender equality strongly in policy dialogue and are then not willing or able to live up to the expectations generated. Sida offered a potential good practice example on policy dialogue. A framework has been developed to guide Sida professionals in incorporating gender perspectives into dialogue in the context of country strategies. The framework provides guidance, sector by sector, on the gender equality problems/issues, the goal in terms of raising these issues in policy dialogue, the key questions to be raised – by which actors and with which partners, and the manner by which the issues should be raised constructively. Such a framework is an important innovation.

In discussions on sector approaches during the seminar, very thoughtful inputs were raised by the transport specialists, highlighting the need for a holistic, cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach. Appropriate responses to challenges in the infrastructure sector today do not lie in any one sector. Greater cross-sectoral collaboration is required within organizations. For example, transport is not simply about building roads but involves provision of transport services, with implications for, for example, labour market issues and health and security issues. The interlinkages between sectors, and the gender perspectives in relation to these, need to be addressed at all levels – the country strategy level, the sector strategy level and the level of intervention. Achievement of gender mainstreaming in sectors requires stronger alliances between sector specialists who know the sector well but do not have in-depth knowledge of gender perspectives, and gender specialists who may not know the sector issues in depth but should be able to raise the appropriate questions to be addressed. The constraints involved in sector-wide approaches and budget support were noted as specific challenges to be addressed.

Institutional arrangements

Finally I would like to make some very brief comments on institutional arrangements for gender mainstreaming within organizations, focusing on the role of gender specialists, the role of management, strategies for competence development, the critical role of gender analysis, and the need for relevant tools.

– Gender specialists

Most organizations have gender specialists in both headquarters and the field. Experience has shown that it is critical that these specialists have clear mandates, particularly emphasizing their catalytic role; strategic location providing adequate access to information and decision-making processes; adequate levels of resources; and most importantly, clear lines of reporting and full explicit support from senior and middle-level management within organizations. Unless clear signals of commitment and support come from senior management in particular, the efforts of gender specialists will not have optimum impact. It is particularly important that the responsibilities and accountability of all other categories of staff in organizations are clarified so that responsibility for gender mainstreaming does not fall entirely on gender specialists.

Gender specialists themselves need to rethink their strategies and approaches and focus on more effective means of developing competence for gender mainstreaming within organizations. Greater attention needs to be given to communication skills for gender specialists to ensure that gender mainstreaming can be advocated, supported and monitored in understandable, non-threatening and constructive ways.

– Management roles

Leadership by management in organizations is critical to the effective promotion of gender mainstreaming. Managers at all levels must have adequate levels of awareness, commitment and capacity for the promotion of gender equality and must be aware of their important role in promoting, supporting and monitoring progress and demanding accountability from all staff. Senior managers can give invaluable support through messages of commitment and support in different ways. Experience has shown that staff in organizations do respond positively to the vision and priorities elaborated by senior management. Commitment and support of middle-level management is also critical. In some organizations, the positive signals of senior management have limited impact because of middle-level managers who block progress because of disinterest or resistance to the principles of gender equality.

Ways and means of developing greater substantive understanding of gender equality and the gender mainstreaming strategy among managers, and of holding them accountable for progress, must be developed. These can include, for example, more effective briefings for senior management on gender mainstreaming and their roles in promoting, supporting and monitoring progress, as well as inclusion of responsibility for gender mainstreaming in the work programmes of middle-level managers, and accountability for the promotion of gender equality in work contracts and performance assessments.

– Competence development

Professional competence for promotion of gender equality and utilization of the gender mainstreaming strategy should be required of all professional staff in organizations. This includes awareness, knowledge and commitment as well as capacity, that is, to know *why* promotion of gender equality is an important development goal and *what* to do to address the goal in their own work. Staff in many organizations have received training which addresses the question of why they should be working on gender equality but have not received sufficient support in knowing how to go about it. This has created considerable frustration, which is counterproductive for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. Although there has been a significant focus on competence development over the past decade, particularly through training programmes, in many organizations, it is clear that the “hearts and minds” of staff have not been sufficiently captured. One reason for the limited success in this area is probably a tendency to treat competence development as primarily a technical process. Attitudinal change is required which requires a focus on the rationale for the promotion of gender equality.

New approaches are needed which provide incentives and motivation for professional staff to further develop their knowledge, commitment and skills. Experience has shown that training on gender equality not only has to be tailored to specific sector areas and issues, but must also be tailored to the different types of work done by various groups of professionals. Once professionals are made aware of what the gender perspectives are in relation to the sector they work with, such as health, economics, agriculture, etc, they need to also understand how to work with these issues when doing research and analysis, collecting and utilizing statistics, conducting policy dialogue, developing and implementing projects, monitoring and evaluating, providing training programmes, etc. Each professional needs to be assisted to understand the ways in which gender equality is relevant for the work in their “in-trays”, and how they might go about addressing these issues. Innovative programmes today focus on the specific tasks that participants are currently working on, in order to make the training as useful as possible.

Many programmes also work towards the development of a set of concrete, measureable individual actions that the participants can agree to undertake on the completion of the programme, as a means to ensure that the programme will have some immediate effect on the work of participants.

The competence development efforts made in many organizations have less than optimal success because little attention has been given to follow-up. Participants should leave programmes with a clear understanding of what they are required to do. Managers must also be made aware of the commitments made by participants and encouraged to follow-up on a regular basis. Some organizations have

established “help-desks” (which can be electronic) to support participants who have follow-up questions after completing their training programmes. Training divisions should develop new means to follow-up training programmes to both assess effectiveness of the programmes as well as ensure that professional staff get the additional support they need.

Training divisions in organizations should work together with gender specialists to put in place a more diverse, action-oriented and client-friendly competence development programme on gender mainstreaming. A range of on-going learning processes need to be initiated, including on-the-job training and dynamic interactive debate fora where topical issues can be discussed, to meet the needs of all professional groups within organizations. Executive briefings for senior- and middle-level management, rather than traditional training programmes, have been used effectively in some organizations. “Brown-bag lunches” have also been useful in some contexts. It is, however, important to know what the value and contributions of different types of activities can be. A series of brown bag lunches on diverse topics, for example, can certainly be effective in raising awareness and interest, but will not provide the “hands-on” guidance needed to help professionals know what they need to do differently on a day-to-day basis.

– Gender analysis

In connection with the discussion of competence development efforts, I would like to raise the issue of gender analysis. Over the past 10–15 years different models for gender analysis have been developed. In development cooperation contexts these models have sometimes been unquestioningly adopted and presented in training programmes. The outcome of these efforts has been mixed, depending to a certain extent on how theoretical and complicated these analysis methods are and the manner in which they are linked to the work of organizations. There have been cases where many different models for gender analysis have been presented to participants, without any clear linkages to the work of the participants. Presentation of analysis models in a theoretical manner, with no direct links to the work of participants can create frustration and resistance.

Developing gender analysis capacity does not so much require teaching a particular analysis model but fostering capacity of participants to ask the right questions in relation to their work and know where to go to find the relevant information (particularly developing understanding that there is a lot of analyses and information available at local levels). If a particular gender analysis model is to be presented, the emphasis must be on how it is relevant to the work of the participants and how they themselves might use it in their daily work. It needs to be kept in mind that training programmes do not aim to turn all professionals into gender specialists. Professionals should be supported to know how to analyse their work from a gender perspective, that is, to know what critical questions should be raised, and how to work with these in their daily work.

Teaching gender analysis as a separate analysis methodology often presumes that all gender analysis should be done in the context of separate analyses. Gender mainstreaming rather requires that gender perspectives are incorporated into existing analyses, such as sector analyses, country strategy analyses, poverty analyses or analyses on HIV/AIDS, disability, etc. Training programmes should support participants to fully integrate gender perspectives into the existing analyses they use in their day-to-day work.

– Methodologies and tools

The separateness of many efforts to promote gender equality – which work against the gender mainstreaming strategy – can be seen in other areas. Organizations have, for example, developed specific methodologies and tools for promoting gender equality. Many of these are (or could be) very useful. However, research has shown that many very relevant tools – such as guidelines, manuals, handbooks –

on a multitude of sectors are not being used effectively. There are many reasons for the underutilization of the existing methodologies and tools. In some organizations there is little knowledge that they exist because inadequate attention has been given to dissemination within organizations. Ironically, in some cases methodologies and tools are used more in PR activities outside the organization than internally as a means to develop capacity. To be effective instruments for change, the tools developed must have a broad distribution within the organization and must be used effectively in training programmes. Help-desks, as discussed earlier, could also be established in the initial stages of introduction in an organization, to support potential users and get feedback to ensure development of more effective methodologies and tools in the future.

A second reason for non-utilization of existing methodologies and tools is that many are overly complex and not user-friendly. Busy bureaucrats need instruments which are clearly developed on the basis of an understanding of what they do and can provide guidance in a short, concise manner. Experience has also shown that methodologies and tools which are developed in a collaborative manner, together with those who will use them, have the best chance of being used and making an impact operationally.

A major failing in relation to development of methodologies and tools, is the lack of attention to incorporating gender perspectives into existing processes and tools, such as existing sector guidelines, manuals and handbooks. It is not always strategic to develop a separate handbook on, for example, gender and agriculture, when the organization has an existing handbook on agriculture with no attention to gender perspectives. A priority for gender specialists in an organization should be to identify the most critical planning instruments and ensure that gender perspectives are fully incorporated into these, for example, guidelines on country strategy development, handbooks on poverty eradication or evaluation manuals. In addition, gender perspectives need to be an integral part of efforts to work with partner countries to develop strategies, guidelines, handbooks, etc, for example in the context of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or Country MDG Reports.

Conclusions

Gender equality perspectives are still not at the centre of the development debate to an adequate extent. It is important to identify and build on synergies between gender equality and other development goals. The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs offer a unique opportunity in this respect. The work that has been done to promote gender equality in many organizations has been characterized by separateness, isolation and marginalization. Lack of support for this work by management levels has probably been a major causal factor. Gender perspectives are not an integral part of the work of organizations at policy or programme levels. Training efforts have not had significant impacts in some organizations. Resistance to incorporating gender perspectives in different areas of work still exists, although sometimes in subtle, less visible, forms. A more dynamic process of competence development is required to create the awareness, commitment and capacity required for gender mainstreaming.

Although there is a lot of discussion of the importance of alliances, collaboration and local ownership, much more could be done to make local knowledge and expertise on gender equality more central in many development cooperation organizations. Local goals, analyses, priorities and targets must be at the centre of the work on promoting gender equality, with the country strategy process playing a key role in this respect. The voices of women must be brought more clearly into this process. Lack of interest among partner institutions should not be acceptable as an excuse for doing nothing, particularly in the context of the existing strong global mandates. Organizations need to focus first on the lack of interest and support within their own organizations.

Ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, implementation of gender mainstreaming takes place in a very different context. Development cooperation involves a very full political agenda, with competing priorities; overworked bureaucrats, and limited gender specialist resources. It is important to critically rethink approaches for gender mainstreaming in the current context. Some major opportunities exist for supporting this. Firstly, implementation of the agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC, 1997/2) – which have provided the major global framework on gender mainstreaming – will be reviewed in the Coordination Segment of the ECOSOC in 2004. Secondly, the Commission on the Status of Women is mandated in 2005, as part of its multi-year programme of work – to review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome document of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (2000) – Beijing +5. This review will include a focus on implementation of gender mainstreaming and the lessons learned, good practices and gaps and challenges after ten years of implementation.

The Commission on the Status of Women will focus in 2004 on the “role of men and boys in achieving gender equality”. Participation of men in implementation of gender mainstreaming – managers, professional staff and consultants within development cooperation agencies as well as policy-makers, administrators and stakeholders in partner countries – is critical, and this may be an area for further emphasis in development cooperation agencies.

In closing, I again commend the Commission and Sida for the positive contributions the two evaluation processes have made to discussions of gender mainstreaming. It is clear that efforts are being made to develop a learning process where lessons learned will feed back into policies and implementation and monitoring of activities. The learnings from this process will contribute to more effective evaluations of gender mainstreaming in the future, but should – just as importantly – also contribute to effective mainstreaming of gender perspectives into all other evaluations in different sector areas. An important spin-off of the follow-up activities to both these evaluations is also the close collaboration and alliances fostered between policy makers, programme staff and evaluators within (and between) the two organizations, which is a precondition for gender mainstreaming.

In particular the recommendation to continue to make efforts to more effectively implement the gender mainstreaming strategy, despite the constraints experienced to date, is very positive. The concrete recommendations in the two evaluations on what more could be done to enhance gender mainstreaming through, for example, country strategies and dialogue, are very constructive. The evaluations rightly point out that, while it is too early to assess adequately what has been achieved, it is important to establish clearly now what should be achieved and how this might be measured. The seminar identified some critical questions which remain to be answered: What constitutes good progress in gender mainstreaming in different areas? Who decides what is an adequate level of progress? How can it be effectively measured, both in terms of process and impact on the ground? What targets and indicators are needed for different areas? Issues of attribution/contribution remain – to what extent are the efforts – direct and indirect – made by development cooperation agencies instrumental in promoting change on the ground in partner countries.

The two evaluations will continue to make a significant contribution to advancing gender mainstreaming in development cooperation within the two organizations and more broadly. If we in the Division for the Advancement of Women in the United Nations can contribute to and support the process in any way we would be happy to do so.

Thank you.

Annex 6 – Executive Summaries of the European Commission and Sida Evaluation Reports

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EuropeAid Co-operation Office

General affairs
Evaluation

Evaluation of the Integration of Gender in European Commission Co-operation with Third Countries. Synthesis of Main Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.

Gender equality mainstreaming is the (re)organisation of policy processes to incorporate gender equality perspective at all levels and stages of policy-making so that policies and programmes are designed and implemented in ways that meet the different needs and interests of men and women.

The Commission⁶ has conducted an evaluation of gender equality mainstreaming in European Commission development co-operation entitled “*Thematic Evaluation of the Integration of Gender in European Commission Development Co-operation with Third Countries*”.⁷ The evaluation addresses how gender is integrated within: the policy framework; the institutional set-up, culture, capacity and resources; the procedures and instruments for managing development co-operation (country strategies, sector programmes and projects, budget lines); the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and dialogue in partner country and the programmes and projects.

The evaluation is based on comprehensive desk work and country case studies including field missions in Bolivia, Jordan, Malawi and the Philippines.⁸

Main Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation shows that the Commission has a strong policy framework on gender equality and gender mainstreaming to guide European Commission development co-operation. This framework mainly consists of 2 Council resolutions of 1995 (Beijing) and 1998 (legal base to budget gender line). A third pillar is the Communication from the Commission of 2001 presenting a concrete strategy for the implementation of the Council commitments.

However, the report presents a rather mixed picture of how this policy framework is reflected in the different steering documents. According to the evaluation the *strong regulatory framework on gender equality* is not yet easily understandable and accessible to Commission staff and co-operation partners who, as a result, have a very low *knowledge of the objectives and strategy of the Commission and perceive gender as being very low on the list of Commission priorities*. This has been reinforced by the *lack of clear declarations or guidance from the highest political authorities* on the importance of gender mainstreaming.

⁶ EuropeAid, Evaluation Unit (H6).

⁷ The final report and the country reports are available at:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/evaluation/program/sectorrep.htm>

⁸ The findings of the country cases studies are summarised in a separate report: “*Thematic Evaluation of the Integration of Gender in EC Development Co-operation with Third Countries. Volume 2.*”

In general *gender equality has been treated in a rather formalistic and limited way in Country Strategy Papers (CSPs)* as well as in the political dialogue. Although standard references to ‘gender as a cross-cutting issue’ can be found in most CSPs, they are very rarely translated into any strategy.

On the whole gender equality is fragmentary rather than properly mainstreamed in European Commission development co-operation.

The evaluation also conclude that compared to budget allocations available to other horizontal issues, *the financial resources* specifically allocated to support the integration of gender in development co-operation are very limited. Combined with an insufficient level of staffing and a strong imbalance between the extraordinarily broad task of gender mainstreaming and the institutional capacity set aside for this task, has led to a non-operationalisation of policy commitments. There seems to be a clear anomaly between the objectives set for gender equality and the available resources.

The evaluation shows that five projects out of the eight studied seem to have had a positive effect on women’s participation in decision-making (community decision-making) and on their improved access to certain resources (access to credits, improved women’s rights). However, according to the evaluation gender equality is rarely properly mainstreamed into the design of the projects and programmes. Most project documents contain only “symbolic phrases” about gender as a cross-cutting issue. Gender analyses are sometimes undertaken within socio-economic studies, but the data and information on gender appear not to be subsequently used in project planning. Hence the positive effects are rarely the result of prior planning, but have happened as projects have developed and needs have emerged.

The evaluation concludes that as a consequence of this, again, fragmentary mainstreaming of gender, *the impact of Commission projects and programmes on gender equality is allowed to be “hit or miss”*.

The lack of information and disaggregated data, and lack of systematic monitoring or evaluation, made it very difficult to identify any positive or negative general and global impacts of Commission actions on women’s and men’s relative situation.

Main Recommendations

In order to achieve a sustained improvement in the integration of gender in European Commission development co-operation, the evaluation recommends:

1. *A firmer “anchoring” of gender mainstreaming within the institution as a pre-condition for further progress.*
A coherent and clearly understandable statement on Community objectives concerning gender equality should be formulated by the Commission political authorities and disseminated through the different Director Generals (DGs) of development co-operation and external relations.
2. *A strong, visible and adequately resourced structure for gender mainstreaming* should be created and located in a stable and high-level position within the Commission services. *Financial resources specifically allocated for gender mainstreaming should be increased* and made available within all mainstream resources (training budgets, budget lines, regional programmes, country/sector support, etc.).
3. *Gender equality should be integrated into key management procedures and instruments at critical points in the cycle of strategies* so as to prompt appropriate responses when assessments and decisions are being made. Gender equality should also be integrated into *key indicators* (systematic disaggregation by sex) *and in monitoring and reporting systems* to ensure that it is effectively taken into account and to enhance visibility of Commission’s efforts on gender equality mainstreaming.
4. *A central and visible source of “information and resources”* (with reliable data, concrete examples of practice, etc.) should be created and be made easily accessible to development partners at country level and to those involved in managing programmes and projects.

Promoting Gender Equality in Partner Countries – an Evaluation of Sida's Mainstreaming Strategy⁹

Background

Sida's action programme for the promotion of gender equality is scheduled for revision. The revision will take stock of mainstreaming experiences in Sida-financed co-operation, and analyse how the action programme may be developed. This was the background to an evaluation initiated in 2000 by Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV). The purpose of the evaluation was to draw lessons from gender equality mainstreaming, and to support the planned revision of the action programme.

The main questions addressed by the evaluation concerned how Sida's mainstreaming strategy has been reflected in country strategies, and translated into action in projects and in the dialogue between Sida and its partners. Specific attention was paid to potential gender equality results of individual projects.

The evaluation focused on twelve Sida-financed projects in Bangladesh, South Africa and Nicaragua, in the areas of urban development, democratic governance, health and education. The projects were chosen because they were assumed to have mainstreamed gender equality concerns, or because they were presumed to have resulted in identifiable gender equality developments.

Findings

Mainstreaming in country strategies

The 1997 country strategies for the co-operation with Bangladesh and Nicaragua represent a high water mark in their attention to gender equality. They reflect much of the momentum created by the Beijing conference and the subsequent preparation of Sida's action programme for gender equality. At that time, there was much enthusiasm for the gender equality objective, both at Sida headquarters and the embassies, and this spirit influenced the country strategy processes and contents in a number of ways.

More recent country strategies, including that for the 1999–2003 co-operation with South Africa, appear to have lost some of the steam built up in the mid-1990s. In particular, the gender equality goal is less pronounced in these strategies, and the relationship between gender equality and poverty reduction not fully explored. In the case of Nicaragua, this trend coincided with Sida's decision to manage the co-operation for 2001–2005 through a regional strategy for Central America and the Caribbean. Regional strategies, the evaluators note, do not provide the same strategic detail and specificity as individual country strategies.

Mainstreaming in Sida-financed projects

Gender mainstreaming in Sida-financed projects differs from mainstreaming in country strategies in several respects, the most important being that while Sida is responsible for mainstreaming in its country strategies, it is Sida's partners that have the main responsibility for mainstreaming in the projects supported by Sida. In many cases, however, Sida has reason and opportunity to take a proactive role also in project mainstreaming, for example through dialogue with partners on practices that bridge partners' gender equality policies and Sida's action programme.

⁹ This text is based on *Sida Evaluation Newsletter* No 1/02.

To conclude, the mainstreaming of gender equality concerns in individual projects did not meet the high level of ambition reflected in Sida's action programme. Most projects exhibited only embryonic evidence of mainstreaming. Mainstreaming processes are often complex and multi-faceted, and it is hardly surprising that the projects did not meet the high ambition of the action programme.

Mainstreaming in the dialogue between Sida and its partners

Dialogue between Sida and its partners on strategic priorities is a key factor in the process of gender mainstreaming. Dialogue is necessary for reaching a joint understanding of gender equality with reference to specific projects, as well as to general policies related to the Swedish country programmes.

What is striking about the *project specific dialogue* is the variation in intensity of the dialogue from one intervention to another. Interested embassy staff were able to advance a fairly detailed dialogue in relation to specific interventions, for example in the areas of local government in South Africa.

In other projects, the dialogue often seemed to be pursued with limited capacity and effort.

In general, the *policy dialogue* on gender equality, which typically has a government-to-government character, is most successful when it has a specific purpose in terms of expected responses from partner governments, and where like-minded donors act in concert. This was the case in Nicaragua, where key donors, Sida included, were instrumental in bringing about the government's decision to restore the independence of the National Women's Institute, previously under the authority of the more conservative Ministry of the Family.

Conclusions and lessons

Experience of gender equality mainstreaming is still in its infancy. Five years is a short time for a strategy to take root and produce effects, and mainstreaming is not always well understood by Sida staff and the partners. The evaluators conclude that mainstreaming remains a worthwhile and workable strategy in the action programme for promoting gender equality. However, considerable work remains to be done in order to build capacity for such promotion.

Sida's present strategy for gender equality mainstreaming faces a number of constraints. These include weaknesses in partner organizations, inadequate capacity and interest among Sida staff and consultants, limited use of gender analysis, and weak systems and procedures for monitoring gender equality processes and results.

There is an obvious need for a set of core requirements that represent a reasonable minimum level for gender mainstreaming. This should be in place, not to encourage Sida staff and partners to achieve only the minimum, but to avoid what appears to be an existing all-or-nothing approach that often results in proforma or simplistic mainstreaming efforts. The minimum requirements recommended by the evaluation include a reasonable level of project specific gender analysis, clear objectives for expected gender equality changes, and systematic monitoring and reporting on gender related results.

According to the evaluators, the revision of Sida's action programme should also reexamine the opportunities and constraints of Sida's use of dialogue for the promotion of gender equality. Project specific dialogue should be recognised as a key staff function for all programme officers at the embassies, and be reinforced by management.

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- 1997:1 Swedish Support to Bai Bang – a brief history
Anders Berlin
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reformer i Polen, Ryssland och Letland
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- 1998:2 Striden om Bai Bang. En studie av de inrikespolitiska och partipolitiska
faktorernas betydelse kring Bai Bang projektet
Ulf Bjereld
- 1998:3 Fackföreningsrörelsen, näringslivet och Bai Bang
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- 1998:4 Bai Bang i svenska massmedier 1980–1996: part-study 1
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- 1998:6 Läsundersökning for Sida Evaluations Newsletter
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- 1999:2 Statistics of Aid through Sida
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- 1999:4 Report on the DAC Workshop on Evaluating Gender Equality
and Women's Empowerment
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- 1999:5 Aid, Incentives and Sustainability – a brief background
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- 2001:2 Incentives for Ownership
True Schedvin, Gun Eriksson Skoog
- 2001:4 Contracted-financed Technical Assistance (KTS)
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- 2001:4 The Quality of Counterpart Reports: an assessment of quarterly and
annual reports from four bilateral programmes in Tanzania 1997–1999
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- 2001:5 Evaluating External Assistance to the Western Balkans
– with special emphasis on Bosnia and Herzegovina: a preparatory study
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- 2002:1 Mainstreaming Gender Equality:
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gender equality in partner countries: Inception Report
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- 2004:1 Evaluation of Integrated Area Programmes in Bosnia-Herzegovina
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