

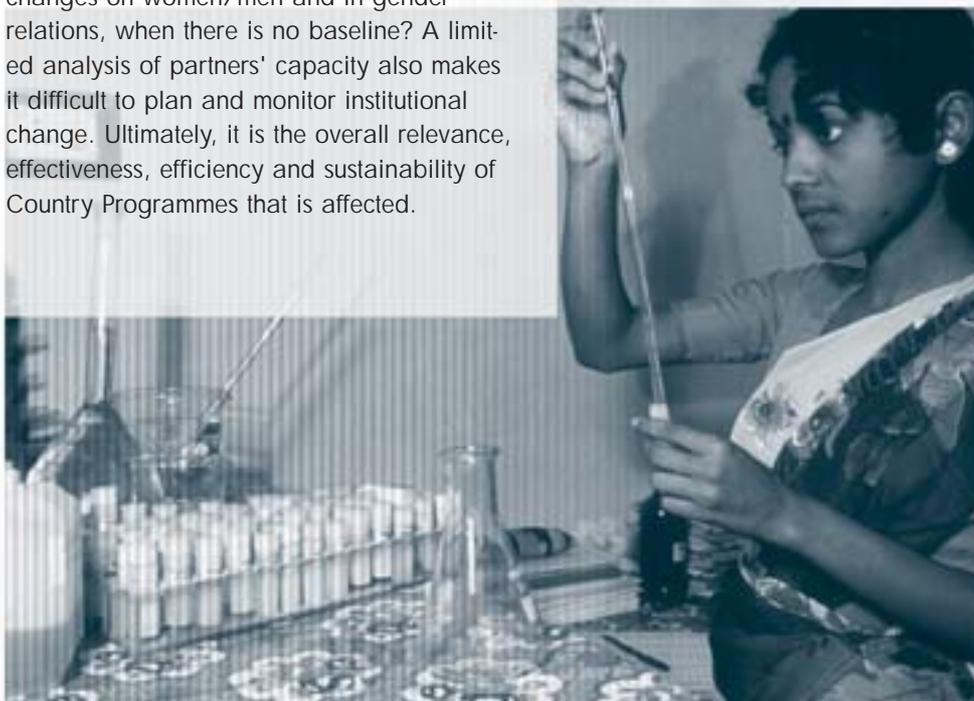
Ultimately, it is a matter for SDC and its partners to decide how, how far and how fast they can proceed with gender, keeping their policies, objectives and resources in mind.

### Why integrate gender in Country Programmes?

Very often, the context analysis in Country Programmes doesn't consider gender issues: In general, «women situations» rather than «gender relations» are observed and assessed. Not all key data are gender disaggregated and gender data are more available in some sectors (social) than others (economic). There is limited analysis of development actors' and partners' commitment and competence towards gender equality.

Of course, this has a direct impact on Country Programmes, and subsequently on individual programmes and projects. When initial analysis are not gender aware, working hypotheses, risks and objectives cannot reflect the gender needs of women and men. Monitoring is affected too. How to monitor changes on women/men and in gender relations, when there is no baseline? A limited analysis of partners' capacity also makes it difficult to plan and monitor institutional change. Ultimately, it is the overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Country Programmes that is affected.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, a workshop was held to assess the integration of gender in the projects implemented by SDC NGO partners. This led to the identification of key problems and potentials and of short to medium term solutions to be considered in the next Country Programme.





## Shaping the Country Programme with gender

### *Avoiding gender evaporation ...*

It is critical to analyse the national context through gender lenses, ensuring that both the national (endogenous processes) and the co-operation scenes (development aid, including SDC) are assessed (see sheets 3, 6). But this is not enough as, in SDC and in many other development organisations, experience shows that a gender-aware country analysis does not necessarily lead to gender-aware Country Programmes. «Gender evaporation» can happen when the gender needs and inequalities identified in the analysis do not shape the strategic orientation of programmes/projects. Gender equality gets «lost» in the multiplicity of challenges and problems targeted for action. Defining clear responsibilities for gender is critical to prevent evaporation.

### *Defining stakes ...*

On the basis of the country or sector analysis, SDC and its partners identify the relevant «gender stakes» for the intended action or programme in the local/national scene and the cooperation scene

- What gender disparities are inherent to each sector/priority area?
- What gender inequalities are accentuated/accelerated by programmes (SDC, others...)?
- Who is already addressing gender in these areas/sectors and how?
- What are the potential alliances for SDC?
- Do SDC and its partners have a «comparative advantage» to address gender in these areas/sectors?

In SDC's programme in Tanzania, gender is a cross-cutting issue, but there is also a specific gender programme addressing strategic gender needs through support to NGO's or Government offices' specific actions.

Gender stakes are identified at three levels. What gender issues and inequalities affect:

- Women and men in communities, households?
- Interventions (performance and sustainability of the programme)?
- Partner organisations (approach to gender in the current programme, constraints and opportunities to improve practices)?

It is important to distinguish, but also to link these three levels of analysis to come up with a realistic view of stakes that the Country Programme can possibly address.

#### *Selecting priority areas of intervention ...*

Because resources are limited and needs are great, partners make choices about what they will, will not support. If the impact of a programme on gender equality cannot be the sole criterion for the selection of priority areas/sectors for SDC, it should at least influence it. In a gender mainstreaming process, there is a need to identify if priority areas in the Country Programme offer scope to address gender relations or if other areas could provide a stronger leverage for gender equality. In other words, is it sufficient to integrate gender in existing priority areas to really make a difference on gender equality ... or is it also necessary to invest in different areas?

To assess the gender potential of a priority area, or sector, four key questions are asked:

- What benefit (financial, human) is work in this sector likely to bring to women, to men?
- What cost might it inflict on women, on men?

- What potential for improving gender equality does it carry?
- What potential risk of negative impact on gender equality does it carry?

Links between gender and interventions exist in any sector. The challenge is to find the strongest link, i.e. the area/sector that carries the greatest potential to influence mechanisms that perpetuate gender inequality. In some countries, education carries the strongest potential, whilst in others, access to land or credit is a key discriminatory process that needs to be tackled.

The question ... «is our choice of priority area/sector likely to impact on practical and/or gender strategic needs?» is therefore crucial. (see definitions of practical and strategic gender needs sheet 4).

Working on strategic gender needs is usually more difficult than working on practical needs. It requires more commitment, skills and, at times, gender specific programmes. Using a twin-track approach, partners can gradually integrate gender as a transversal theme in «traditional areas» whilst at the same time developing innovative/pilot actions in areas with stronger gender equality potential.

#### *Continuing the dialogue ...*

To ensure the link between analysis and planning, the dialogue initiated during the analysis between SDC and its partners must continue. The focus should be on drawing lessons on gender from previous Country Programmes, programmes/projects and partnerships and taking measures to ensure that the future implementation strategies consistently and

In Bangladesh, gender mainstreaming is being carried out at both programme and organisational levels within SDC as well as in work with partners. The Coordination Office makes continuous efforts to increase gender competence and has put in place instruments aiming at integrating gender in all programme components (HID team + HID strategy). Concretely, support to develop gender strategies is provided to SDC staff and to SDC partners, common gender seminars with selected partners are organised on a regular basis and gender is a key dimension of the SDC controlling system.

### Must have information in a gender-aware Country Programme

#### *Context analysis*

- Disaggregated data/information gender
- Gender aware analysis of key sectors and policies
- Information about key gender disparities in the country/sectors
- Information about local, national and international agencies working on gender
- SDC past experience and lessons learnt on gender

#### *Proposed Country Programme*

- Gender-aware working hypotheses, factors of influence and risk analyses
- Gender-aware (sectoral/thematic) and/or specific objectives (gender issues/gaps)
- Context relevant impact hypotheses of the Country Programme on women **and** men (relatively)
- Gender disaggregated and/or specific indicators (expected outputs and outcomes)
- Financial, human and technical resources planned for gender

explicitly integrate gender. If SDC or its partners do not have gender capacities, national or sector gender experts can be brought in.

#### *Working with gender sensitive partners*

Partnerships and alliances are key issues in the elaboration of gender-aware programmes. Are we working with the best possible partners/alliances to mainstream gender? What can be done to improve the capacity of existing partners? See sheet 10 on gender and partnerships



The process of formulating a Country Programme is as important as its implementation. The integration of gender concerns from the start - i.e. in the analysis of the context, the definition of stakes and the choice of sectors of interventions and partners – plays a major part in the mainstreaming of gender. However, Country Programmes are evolutive tools too, and efforts to integrate a gender perspective can have positive impact at different stages of the implementation.