



Why analyse gender at household and community level?

Gender analysis at household and community level is essential, as this is where women and men «live» and experience the effects, positive and negative, of development (see gender analysis sheet 3).

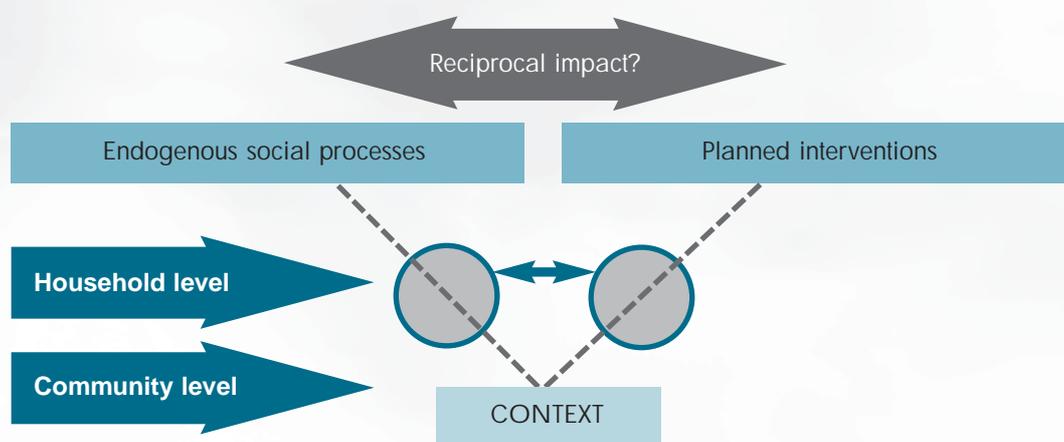
Gender equity is also considered as one of the main values that form the basis of the SDC programme. It is a guiding principle of the country programme 2003-2007 and priorities for the coming years are identified. For example gender analysis to be undertaken for all programme components and gender disaggregated performance indicators to be determined and monitored.

Yet, many development programmes make assumptions about the way women and men live at household and community level. They do not sufficiently take into account the fact that women and men have different roles, responsibilities, rights/power, resources and needs. The lack of knowledge of livelihoods and needs of women and men in target groups is a key factor in the failure of programmes and projects. Collecting gender aware data collection at micro level is essential to constitute baselines and assess change overtime.

What to analyse?

The general aim is of course to identify key issues at micro level in different sectors (e.g. education or vocational training) or processes (e.g. decentralisation). It is to map out local dynamics and actors working at that level to influence or address problems. All this should be done using gender lenses. The two-scene analytical framework (see sheet 3) can be used.

The starting point is to answer the question: «what information is useful to help design and run programmes and projects?». If the analysis is carried out at the very beginning of an intervention, the focus cannot be narrowed down too much as researchers cannot define a priori that some information will not be useful. Alas, gender issues are often excluded through this process.



In the northern part of Madagascar, an NGO identified a good market for eggplants, squash and pumpkins and proposed a gardening project to local women. Women were to receive land from their husbands to start the production. A year later, despite the promising market, women had done little and had received no support from men. A further round of investigation on the part of the NGO revealed that in that part of the island, these crops are believed to create male infertility, thus explaining the reluctant attitude of both women and men.

How private is the household?

Traditionally, micro level analysis has had an *anthropological* approach, implying that researchers/planners have no right to question/challenge the organisation of roles and powers in the private sphere. They can only describe it. What happens at household level, and to a lesser extent at community level in terms of gender, is often protected by the «cultural argument». However, there is no doubt that the household is political.

Gender relations in the private sphere have an impact on the public sphere (the community, the workplace, society at large). Over the years, many issues have confirmed this and the need to consider household-based gender issues as development issues in their own right. A few examples from different countries:

- Gender bias in the distribution of food leads to higher mortality of girls and/or to nutritional deficiency in pregnant women.
- Unequal decision-making power over sexual rights between women and men contributes to the HIV/AIDS pandemics.
- Domestic violence against women contravenes human rights as well as affecting victims' physical and mental ability to work and perform in society.
- Women's lack of control of financial resources affects the success of their micro enterprises and credits get used up by men.
- Household domestic habits/needs (e.g. cooking, sanitation) affect the environment and public health (water contamination).

Of course, macro policies and interventions in the public sphere also impact gender relations at household and community level. In some countries ...

- The privatisation of health services has increased prices and reduced the number of women attending ante natal clinics.
- One-child policy (China) leads to high infanticide of girls.
- The construction of roads has led to better access to work and markets for women and men, but also to migration and family dislocation (more female headed households).
- In some cases, new roads led to the commercialisation of agricultural produce being taken over from local women by male intermediaries with better access to transport, information and capital.





How to gather the information?

1. From the start, it is important to include gender in the definition of the focus of the analysis. This means both:

- Involving women and men (policy makers, professionals, community workers, community leaders etc.)
- Involving staff (women and/or men) from organisations working on gender/women issues

2. It is essential to review existing research methods and frameworks (e.g. PRA, household surveys, community profiles etc.) to engender them (sheet 3) using gender tools and indicators.

3. Potential obstacles to women's and men's participation in the analysis must be pre-identified e.g:

- Can women speak openly in public?
- Are women likely to talk freely in a mixed group?
- Is it desirable to run separate discussion groups for women/men, and/or different groups of women/men (e.g subgroups by age)?
- Are women and men likely to be available at the same time for the consultation?
- If doing a household survey, when are both women/men likely to be at home?
- If planning a public meeting, when are women/men most likely to attend?
- If travel is needed to attend the meeting, will women as well as men come?
- If only «leaders» are invited to the meeting, how gender representative will it be?
- If the place selected for the meeting is associated with men, or women, may it affect a gender-balanced participation?
- Are communication channels chosen to invite women and men to participate in the consultation gender aware?
- Etc.

These questions can be applied to ensure the participation of women and men both from target groups **and** development organisations in the analysis.

4. Based on this gender-aware preparatory work, the teams must plan strategies to ensure that women and men will be able to express themselves freely on what they experience and perceive as their gender needs and what they think are key gender issues and inequalities to address in their context.
5. Household and community analysis can take time and resources (financial and human too). There is often a temptation to short circuit the process to go to the «essential», i.e. planning, and/or to put more emphasis on programme/project analysis (sheets 8, 9). Yet, micro analysis, particularly if it follows a participatory approach, is a key process in empowerment as it encourages women and men to work through their problems (individually and/or collectively), provokes self-reflection and creates ownerships of objectives and strategies.

As this process also raises issues of (gender) power at household and community level, it may also create conflicts of interests that may require mediation/negotiation between different community groups, including between women and men. But it can also offer a space for dialogue.



In the Gaya region of Niger, women had a tradition of cultivating and commercialising the shoots of palm trees (called mirichi) as a delicacy. A DDC agricultural project for women succeeded in increasing the mirichi production. Local markets soon became saturated and the transport of mirichi to distant markets had to be organised. Rapidly, richer men took over the mirichi market from the women as only they had access to transport and capital to buy in large quantities.

Thanks to a project designed for the management of a forest producing wood for the city of Bamako, mechanical equipment was brought in to facilitate large-scale forest exploitation. Right from the start, the project discussion partners were exclusively men. When the project was set up and a forest management committee was put in place, it too was uniquely composed of men. Only during the on-site visit of a gender expert did people realise that women had been exploiting the forest for a good ten years with only their arms and legs as equipment. Despite the markedly lower productivity which was registered, not only did they already have a management committee, but a solidarity fund as well. With the implementation of the project, the structure put in place by the women became obsolete, and the women were reduced to simple labourers.



«Must have» gender information at household level (see analytical tools sheet 4)

- What reproductive tasks do women and men have in different household structures (e.g. female headed, nuclear, polygamous, extended)?
- What productive roles do women and men have? What benefits do they get?
- How do women and men use their time and resources (in different roles/tasks)?
- What do women and men contribute (value attached to contributions)?
- What resources are accessed and controlled (decision-making) by women/men?
- What factors (culture/traditions, laws) influence gender at household level?
- How do gender relations improve/constrain individuals' and household welfare?
- What would women/men like to change in gender relations at household level?
- What are women's/men's priorities for change?

«Must have» gender information at community level (see sheet 4)

- What initiatives target gender needs (what needs? practical and/or strategic)?
- How do women and men participate in local activities/projects?
- What roles are they fulfilling?
- Who is involved in making decisions?
- What community/development resources can women/men have access to?
- Which are controlled by women/men?
- What benefits do women/men gain from these development initiatives?
- What factors (culture/traditions, laws) influence women's and men's participation and gender relations at community level?
- How do gender relations improve/constrain community welfare?
- What would women/men like to change in gender relations at community level?
- What are women's/men's priorities for change?
- How do local development actors (women and men) perceive and work with «gender»?