Working Party on Gender Equality

GENDER EQUALITY IN SECTOR-WIDE APPROACHES (SWAPs)

(Note by the Netherlands)

This document is based on country case studies carried out in Ghana and Bangladesh (health); India, Ghana and Uganda (education); Kenya and Zambia (agriculture). These were carried out for the Task Force on SWAPs respectively by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the World Bank.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reference guide: Gender Equality in Sector-wide Approaches (SWAPs) ......................................................... 3

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 3

2. Gender Equality on the agenda .................................................................................................................. 3

3. Sector-wide approaches ............................................................................................................................... 4

4. Challenges for the gender dimension in SWAPs ..................................................................................... 5
   4.1 From projects to policy agreement ........................................................................................................ 6
   4.2 Instruments for mainstreaming the gender dimension in sector analysis, policy and strategy ........ 7
   4.3 Building institutional and organisational gender capacity ................................................................. 8
   4.4 Towards monitoring and evaluation in support of gender equality .................................................... 9
   4.5 Gender agenda setting for donor coordination .................................................................................. 10

5. Promising practices and opportunities to make SWAPs gender sensitive ............................................. 11
   5.1 Gender analysis .................................................................................................................................... 11
   5.2 Policy and strategy development ........................................................................................................ 13
   5.3 Policy environment ............................................................................................................................... 16
   5.4 Budgeting ............................................................................................................................................. 16
   5.5 Institutional development and capacity building .............................................................................. 17
   5.6 Monitoring and evaluation .................................................................................................................. 18

6. Code of Conduct for gender equality in sector-wide development programmes ..................................... 19

Annex 1 Experiences in health sector programmes ..................................................................................... 20

Annex 2 Experiences in education sector programmes .................................................................................. 28

Annex 3 Experiences in agricultural sector programmes .......................................................................... 35
REFERENCE GUIDE

GENDER EQUALITY IN SECTOR-WIDE APPROACHES (SWAPs)

1. Introduction

1. The sector-wide approach has become a major *modus operandi* in development co-operation aiming at supporting a sector as a whole, replacing the approach of discrete project activities supported by a single donor. A sector is defined as a coherent set of activities at the micro, meso and macro level, within clearly defined institutional and budget frameworks, for which the government has defined policies. Compared to projects, sector-wide approaches entail changes in strategies, working methods and institutional arrangements, making it necessary to rethink the strategy for gender equality objectives in international co-operation. In recognition of this need, the DAC Working Party on Gender Equality initiated a process of reflection about the promotion of gender equality in sector development.

2. The process started with a series of case studies reviewing experiences with gender mainstreaming in sector approaches. Case studies in the agricultural sector were conducted by the World Bank (overall), the Netherlands (Kenya), Germany (Zambia), and Canada and the World Bank (Mozambique). Case studies in the health sector were taken up by the Netherlands (Bangladesh, Ghana). DFID has taken the responsibility for the education sector with case studies in three countries (Ghana, India and Uganda). The case studies, sector papers and a preliminary draft of the synthesis paper were presented to the Working Party at its annual meeting in Paris in April 2000. It was decided to proceed with the work by developing the synthesis paper into a reference guide, and by organising an expert consultation meeting to collect and discuss further experiences to inform the reference guide.

3. The purpose of this reference guide is to highlight challenges and provide guidance on the basis of promising practices in making gender equality objectives an intrinsic part of planning and implementation of SWAPs. The guide is meant to help donors, governments and other stakeholders such as NGOs, in finding ways to integrate gender equality concerns into the analysis and formulation of sector policies and programmes, to ensure a positive impact on women and reduce gender inequalities.

4. The identified challenges for mainstreaming gender equality in SWAPs will be addressed in Chapter 4. The subsequent chapter will summarise promising practices derived from the case studies at different levels of a SWAP, supplied with opportunities taken from other sources, which may be helpful for future planning. The guide ends with a framework for a Code of Conduct for making sector wide approaches equally responsive to men’s and women’s needs in development.

2. Gender Equality on the agenda

5. Equality between men and women was officially recognised by the world community in the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, and was later confirmed in many treaties, conventions and agreements. The Beijing Platform for Action, the result of the fourth UN World Conference on women: Equality, Development and Peace, recognises gender equality as both a human rights and a core development issue. Gender equality has gained increasing recognition as being a strategic objective for
poverty reduction, being the commonly shared objective for development co-operation. Research studies of the World Bank show that reducing gender inequalities can contribute significantly to poverty reduction.

6. In line with the Beijing Platform for Action, an increasing number of donors, supported by the DAC, pursue a two-pronged approach of both mainstreaming gender equality in all policies and programmes and special initiatives for empowerment of women at all levels. The OECD/DAC defines gender equality as follows:

“Gender Equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender Equality does not mean that men and women become the same but their life opportunities and life chances are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women’s empowerment does not presume a particular model of gender equality for all societies and cultures, but reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it. Achieving gender equality will require changes in institutional practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained. It also requires a strong voice for women in shaping their societies”.

7. In 1996, the OECD/DAC Members (21 donor governments plus the EC, IMF, UNDP and the World Bank) adopted a framework for development co-operation in the 21st century, based on seven international development targets, forthcoming from the UN conferences in the nineties (Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing). These targets cover extreme poverty reduction, universal primary education, gender equality, access to reproductive health, infant and child mortality, maternal mortality and environment. Besides being an international development objective in itself gender equality as cross cutting strategic theme, is expected to contribute to the other international development objectives.

8. The Comprehensive Development Framework introduced by the World Bank in 1999 to guide development efforts in the 21st century underscores the realisation that the many elements making up the development process must be planned together and co-ordinated in order to obtain the best results. Issues of gender and equity are stated to be integral to every part of the framework. Another framework presently being made gender sensitive is the framework for poverty reduction, the so called Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, which are to form the key instrument for some countries’ relations with the donor community. With a set of operational frameworks for development co-operation now being (or soon to be) gender-inclusive, chances for gender inclusive planning are better than ever before.

3. Sector-wide approaches

What is a sector-wide approach?

9. A sector-wide approach is not an aim in itself, but rather a working method to enhance effectiveness of aid in which contextual analyses play a central role. Development assistance provided under the umbrella of the sector-wide approach is country specific, ownership based, institutionally informed and based on a thorough consultation process involving relevant actors. The reasoning in a sector-wide context starts from the micro level upwards, so as to ensure a focus on poverty reduction and

on related strategic issues such as gender equality. Aid activities will preferably be initiated at the macro or sector level, so as to maximise their effect and sustainability. Analyses may however justify lower level activities as long as these fit in a longer-term perspective of co-ordinated sector-wide support. Ultimately all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressively relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds.4

10. The emphasis on government leadership in sector development and on coherent national structures in partner countries coincides with the partnership principles of OECD/DAC’s framework for development co-operation, *Shaping the 21st Century, the Contribution of Development Co-operation*:

- Developing countries’ interests and priorities should be at the centre.
- Donor-funded programmes and activities should be within the framework of a locally owned strategy and approach.
- Planning and implementation processes should involve a range of stakeholders, including non-state actors.
- Development initiatives should seek to build on and strengthen local capacity.

11. The above indicates that the replacement of project support in development assistance by sector-wide programmes is not merely a technical move, but it is part of a wider shift in development thinking. The rationale for the increased preference for sector programmes can be found in the dissatisfaction about the isolated results of traditional projects and the lack of government ownership of projects driven by donors. A variety of strategies and management arrangements from several donors had undermined the government’s ownership of the development of the country in question and proved to be counterproductive to any sustainable form of development. A sector-wide approach should lead to more coherent and effective policy and programmes, as a prerequisite for sustainable poverty reduction.

12. The shift from traditional projects to sector wide approaches in practice is usually a gradual shift. A SWAP does not imply that projects are not possible any more. A SWAP pursues a shift from focus on individual, and at times disconnected projects to a policy agreement. It also pursues institution and capacity building for effective management and implementation that usually can only be realised over the medium and long term.

4. **Challenges for the gender dimension in SWAPs**

13. Main challenges in mainstreaming gender equality in SWAPs identified on the basis of the case studies are:

- Moving from projects to policy agreement.
- Instruments for mainstreaming gender in sector analysis, sector policy and strategy.
- Institution building and capacity building.
- Monitoring and evaluation in support of gender equality.
- Agenda setting for (donor) co-ordination.

On the basis of the case studies for each of these challenges, specific issues are highlighted.

4.1 From projects to policy agreement

14. Moving away from projects towards a SWAP implies a focus on policy development, while promoting national ownership and leadership. With respect to gender equality this requires well understood and shared gender concepts and gender-sensitive stakeholder participation.

Towards comprehensive and shared gender equality concepts

15. Although the term “gender” is widely used in SWAPs, often the concept still has a restricted connotation. In the education sector the case studies found the orientation to be on getting more girls into school, especially on expanding female enrolments in basic education. Wider problems limiting girls’ school attendance and performance receive less attention. They include issues of poverty and the family’s need for girls’ help in domestic and agricultural work, restricted mobility of girls, social restrictions on co-education, early marriages, sexual harassment and abuse, teenage pregnancies. They also include issues related to problems within the sector, such as the lack of sufficient qualified (female) teachers, inappropriate teaching methods reducing the relevance of education, lack of a safe and secure school environment, of proper facilities, and of opportunities for advanced education. A combination of these factors may keep girls at home or make them drop out early.

16. The current focus on gender in the health sector primarily implies more attention to reproductive health care for women. While this may lead to better services for mother and child health care, the focus may endanger attention to other health problems for women. Moreover, it overlooks the way in which gender inequality leads to ill health of women. Being a woman can be one of the major predisposing factors for one's health situation. Women may face particular barriers to report and seek care for their illness, such as their low status in society and the household, which limits the availability of resources to pay for the services. Financial barriers were found to be on the increase in many contexts, including Ghana, because user fees are putting a heavy burden on the most vulnerable groups. Cultural factors may severely limit women's use of health services, such as taboos on consulting male practitioners and lack of mobility of women. Women's special needs, determined by social norms, such as privacy, are often not met in the services offered.

17. In the agriculture sector, similar incompleteness was noticed. The central role of female farmers in agricultural production and household food security has been widely noted and women's major contribution the agricultural sector has become recognised. Less so have problems which limit women's productivity, such as unequal access to resources (land, capital, agricultural inputs, income), distorted decision making and workloads within households with women having the worst end of the stick in both cases. Lack of resources in the hands of women to buy fertilisers, quality seeds, etc., keeps general production levels low; limited financial benefits for women take away the incentive to invest their labour in activities controlled by men, again hampering productivity.

18. The fact of the matter is that generally sector programmes have come as far as recognising the need for efforts to make sector development more relevant for women, but the programmes restrict their objectives to increasing the number of women involved. The reasons behind women’s limited access to goods and services, and their inability to take advantage of them in the same way that men do, are often overlooked. It tends to still lead to the development of parallel programmes instead of gender integration, to a lack of consistency between programmes and to a discrepancy between stated objectives and the programme of activities.
Promoting national ownership for gender equality

19. National ownership is a complex concept as there are various stakeholders with different perceptions, priorities etc. A key element of the SWAP and ownership concept is stakeholder participation. Ownership of “gender equality” policy will depend \textit{i.a.} on the extent to which the process of stakeholder participation as steered by the central Ministry for the sector, is gender sensitive. How to involve women’s organisations, national gender institutions and mechanisms (“machinery”) etc. needs to be worked out in practical terms. Looking at current practice will help.

4.2 Instruments for mainstreaming the gender dimension in sector analysis, policy and strategy

20. Mainstreaming of gender equality in SWAPs requires further development of gender (sensitive) instruments, including instruments to link to national policy and financial frameworks.

Further developing gender (sensitive) instruments

21. Comprehensive gender (and poverty) analysis requires analysis at micro (local, household), sector and macro levels. These will illustrate the gender-specific needs and factors that contribute to gender inequality and policy inefficiencies. Instruments for gender analysis and programming at the three levels are available, such as:

- Guidelines for gender assessment studies (micro/meso level).
- Gender checklists for institutional sector and organisational analyses (meso level).
- Gender chapter of World Bank PRSP source book.
- Guidelines for gender aware budget analyses.
- Reference material for gender and macro economic sector analyses.

22. What seem to be missing are instruments that link the three levels. Case studies further show that often analysis and policy instruments actually used in SWAPs are generally not gender sensitive.

Policy implementation: fully rounded gender strategy or phasing of gender integration?

23. Two case studies in the education sector made the point that the focus on increasing girls’ enrolment may be “the only feasible practical response, given the very low baseline from which the programme begins”. They suggest a more phased strategy towards gender equality through sector-wide approaches. Although a fully rounded gender analysis in SWAPs is an important starting point, a specific focus on increasing the numbers of women/girls to be served can be justified as a practical tool to guide implementation, and mobilise support within and outside the sector institutions.

Linking to national frameworks

24. The gender equality policy for the sector appears often to be developed in relative isolation, it has not been made part of the national policy for gender equality and the special structure established for this purpose has not been consulted in the sector-level policy development. The Bangladesh Ministry of Women’s and Children’s Affairs had not been consulted in the sector reform process. In Uganda, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development did not play a significant role in the development of
the education SWAP. Similarly, in Ghana, the National Council for Women and Development had not been directly involved in policy setting for gender in the education sector, nor in the health sector.

25. Another important framework from a gender point of view is the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Little evidence has been collected by the case studies about a link between PRSPs and SWAPs and the focus of SWAPs on the promotion of poverty reduction. However, the education sector paper briefly commented on this point. It found similarities in the way poverty affects children’s education in the three countries studied, but noted that government measures to address the problem differ. The Ugandan government’s Universal Primary Education Policy, which provides free education for the first four children, at least two of whom are girls, appears to make a significant impact on enrolment, particularly of girls.

Making available financial resources for mainstreaming gender equality

26. Ideally, financial resource allocations and actual expenditures should match the stated objectives. In the agriculture sector programme of Kenya, the separate objective on gender equality was found helpful in offering the opportunity for a separate budget line. At the same time, it was noted that for making gender equality part of the whole sector programme, all budget lines should be open for this purpose. As this is not the case, strong commitments regarding gender equality in the strategy document tend to evaporate when actual budgets and service delivery plans are made.

27. In some cases, the recognition of the need for better resource planning is growing, and examples were found of finance following the stated commitment to gender equality in the education programmes in Uganda and India. The development of objective oriented Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks provide an opportunity for gender aware budgeting. The link to financial frameworks -- such as national budgets and medium-term expenditure frameworks -- needs to be further worked out.

4.3 Building institutional and organisational gender capacity

28. Key for the gender equality focus of SWAPs is to build mechanisms, structures and capacity to translate gender equality issues at micro and sector level into macro and sector policies. Such policies require a strategy to manage and implement the gender focus. The case studies show that notwithstanding some promising practices, there are no examples as yet of fully mainstreamed gender equality mechanisms in SWAP decision making and processes.

29. The institutional framework for SWAPs has two sets of structures: the policy-making/management structures and the implementation structures of the sector: the schools, the health services, the agriculture services. A few case studies reported on initiatives taken to strengthen institutions in view of realising gender equality concerns, but in general institutions are badly equipped for this purpose. On the whole, commitments to gender equality objectives still have to be made operational through new or changed structures, be it at management or at implementation level.

30. Notable is the often skewed male-female ratio at all institutional levels, with stereotype functions, low numbers of qualified women, and absence of women in decision-making positions. This goes along with gender-biased attitudes of policy-makers in ministries, employees in facilities where policies need to be implemented, and in communities and households where men control most decisions about the use of resources. At all these levels measures and capacity to address this problem are needed.

31. Re-organisation of the institutions in the health sector is one of the major components of the sector strategy in Bangladesh. It involves uniting the Ministry of Family Planning and the Ministry of
Health to form the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. An obvious gender dimension of the bifurcated system is that most female employees are concentrated in family planning, especially at community level, while services are also largely oriented towards women. The Health Directorate has far less women, both as users of services and as workers. It proved to be most difficult to get gender concerns addressed in the re-organisation of the institutions and onto the reform agenda, partly because the available information about issues calling for attention from a gender point of view was insufficient to confront traditional structures and operations.

32. For managing the gender policy, special structures may have been created, at national ministerial and/or district level, often supported by bilateral donors. The quality of experiences is mixed. The Gender Issues Office in the Ministry of Health and Family Planning in Bangladesh has few resources and limited decision making power within the bureaucratic system. The gender co-ordinators at state level in the Indian District Primary Education Programme were said to be the weak link in the SWAP chain, because of their low position and their lack of ability to communicate the gender messages. A positive example of a separate gender structure was found in Ghana, where all 100 districts have a District Girls' Education Officer, who is part of the District Education Planning team and has received adequate training to interact with schools and communities.

33. In agriculture and in education sector programmes, problems have been reported about lack of sufficient and qualified female extension agents and teachers. In some cases, measures have been taken to address the problems by orienting agricultural research and extension structures more towards female farmers, and by efforts to attract and educate more female teachers. By and large, however, these aspects of programming appear to fall outside of the scope of sector planning, for the moment.

34. The capacity requirements of gender specialists, both in national agencies as well as in donor agencies, change as a result of the shift from projects to a sector-wide approach. The needs shift towards the ability to do micro, meso and macro gender analyses, coupled with institutional and organisational gender analyses. Conducting policy dialogue, developing adequate gender (sensitive) SWAP instruments and accompanying gender training are also critical. The changes require adaptation of competencies, job profiles and accompanying training programmes.

4.4 Towards monitoring and evaluation in support of gender equality

35. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of SWAPs are on the whole still weakly developed. Various instruments are developed and used, including by donors. But these are often not well linked. Examples of instruments are:

- Community monitoring instruments.
- Poverty assessments (World Bank, DFID).
- Household surveys.
- MIS systems.
- Public Expenditure Reviews.

36. Cases show that efforts are made to make instruments gender (and poverty) sensitive, for example Bangladesh community monitoring and Public Expenditure Review for the health sector. A major challenge is to link the various exercises. There are also examples where gender monitoring is explicitly taken up in annual donor SWAP reviews.

37. Another challenge, particularly for donors, is the question of how to link SWAPs monitoring and evaluation to the wider International Development Targets, including gender equality. Donor agencies are
increasingly required by their parliaments to work on the basis of objective oriented management and accountability. For example, the Netherlands is in the process of developing an objective-oriented M&E system for development co-operation that takes the international development targets as a point of reference. The question remains as to whether and how such a system could be meaningfully linked to SWAPs monitoring and evaluation.

4.5 Gender agenda setting for donor co-ordination

38. The case studies identify the following major issues for (donor) co-ordination in support of gender equality and with a focus on building national ownership and leadership:

- Dialogue on gender concepts and approaches.
- Inclusion of donor agencies that cannot provide budget support.
- Co-ordination of policy dialogue on gender.
- Development of gender (sensitive) instruments that link the micro, meso and macro level instruments.
- Co-ordination of instruments.
- Internal gender capacity building for SWAPs.
- Change in function profiles and accompanying training programmes for gender and sector specialists.
- Co-ordination of support to gender institutional and capacity building and gender programme implementation.
- Co-ordination of M&E on gender aspects.

39. The case studies found the role of donors to be diverse. On the one hand, donors have fostered and supported initiatives such as gender analyses, gender structures in sector ministries and pilot activities. They have also helped to ensure that gender is seen as a policy issue for top management, in Uganda for example. Some donors took the initiative to ensure that the NGOs they funded also supported the sector programme goals.

40. On the other hand, donors do not always have a strong and unified voice on gender equality goals. For example, without a shared vision of the SWAP goals their influence on the integration in the agriculture sector in Kenya was limited. Donors in the Ugandan education sector share a broad vision on gender equality, but they are not articulating it as a clear common commitment as is the case with the universal primary education. This appears to be linked to the misconception that 'gender' is a western agenda, and a perception that too assertive an approach will compromise Ministry ownership. Yet, the Ugandans consulted were adamant that gender equality is a shared goal and that much of the momentum has come from the grassroots.

41. The lack of one donor voice on gender equality goals was also found in the other two countries. In Ghana the same misconception prevailed among donors that gender is a western feminist agenda. In India the increasing state-focus of donors exacerbates the lack of uniformity. Thus, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) culture may be quite different in a World Bank supported region than in one supported by one of the bilateral donors.

42. As well as differences between donors, there are differences of perceptions within donor agencies. Sector-specific specialists do not necessarily have a clear understanding of gender mainstreaming.
and its meaning for implementation in their area of specialisation. Weaknesses of communication were recorded between departments responsible for promoting gender and sector specialists and managers.

5. Promising practices and opportunities to make SWAPs gender sensitive

43. The case studies in the three sectors contain important lessons for future sector development. Thus, this chapter presents promising practices that may help planners and decision-makers in their efforts to make gender equality goals an inherent part of the sector development. In addition, opportunities for changing SWAPs in a gender equality direction are included, taken from experiences in other contexts. Examples of promising practices and opportunities may be expanded by inputs and discussions at the WP-GEN workshop in The Hague, 22-23 February 2001.

44. Promising practices and opportunities concern the areas of:

- gender analysis
- policy development
- policy environment
- budgeting
- management and implementation structures
- monitoring and evaluation

5.1 Gender analysis

45. The confusion about the meaning of gender and the limited scope of gender objectives in current SWAPs has much to do with a lack of analysis and understanding of the problems at stake. Gender analysis is not yet common practice, although the essential function of an analysis for sound planning has been widely recognised.

The PRSP Sourcebook underlines the importance of gender analysis to ensure that the different ways by which men and women experience poverty can be taken into account. It suggests participatory studies in different communities throughout the country to collect the views of women and men on their social and economic conditions, their future and their requests for assistance. It also reminds policy makers to ensure that their teams responsible for the development and implementation of poverty reduction strategies are balanced in their composition of men and women, and include gender skills.

PROMISING PRACTICES

Gender analysis in ASIP Kenya

46. In the Agriculture Sector Investment Programme in Kenya an interesting process of gender analysis took place between 1996-1998. A team of the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture with the support of an ex-patriate consultant, undertook a study of gender relations in agriculture in three different regions. It brought to light constraints and challenges with regard to equitable agricultural development and found gender imbalances to be rooted in values, norms, myths, taboos and traditions, widely accepted by both men and women. The imbalances result in distorted decision making, unequal access to and control over resources (land, capital, agricultural inputs, income), and a major work burden on women compared with
men. In the smallholder farming in Kenya where many men are out-migrated, this leads to the paradoxical situation that ownership and decision making is in men’s hands, while the actual cultivation and management is done by women. Practical problems stemming from this situation were reported. For example, delayed and inappropriate decisions negatively affect the productivity or health situation of animals or crops. Lack of resources in the hands of women to buy fertilisers, quality seeds, etc., keeps general productivity levels low. Limited direct financial benefits for women takes away the incentive to invest their labour in cash farming activities traditionally controlled by men, hampering optimal productivity. A heavy workload on women, which affects their own health and nutrition as well as those of their children, is exacerbated by an increasing number of men without employment.

47. In addition, the team conducted an institutional analysis, addressing the main functions of the institutions involved (mission, structure and human resources), its culture and decision making process. Noting that organisations are gender-biased in the same way as society, with men and male interests being dominant, the study comments that a change of structures and cultures of institutions is essential to address gender issues in a credible and consistent manner. It submitted a proposal for a Gender Equity Mobilisation Support (GEMS) programme at national, district and community level. This was accepted by the Ministry of Agriculture.

48. The spin-off effects of the use of the tool of gender analysis in the Kenya ASIP case are several:

- The analysis successfully made the point of the need for a separate objective in the context of the ASIP on gender equality. Thus, the four major objectives of ASIP are: i) enhancing agricultural growth, ii) improving environmental sustainability of agriculture, iii) improving household nutritional status, and iv) improving the economic status of women. Changes in gender relations are imperative to attain any one of these objectives. Improving women’s rights to land, control over farm resources, access to credit, extension and general marketing information, involvement in technology development and a more equal division of labour, will all help to attain the first three objectives, thereby improving women’s economic security in itself.
- A separate objective on gender equality offers the direct opportunity for a separate budget line, ensuring the availability of funds for activities to attain the objective.
- Structures responsible for the implementation of activities to promote gender equality are established at three levels: national, district and community.
- Capacity on gender equality matters was promoted among a group of people directly involved in the implementation of SWAPs.
- Decentralisation of capacity was promoted by involving districts and communities.
- A process of stakeholder consultation was started, including awareness raising on issues of gender relations in agriculture.

OPPORTUNITIES

Health Sector Programme in Bangladesh

49. The gender analysis of the Health Sector Programme in Bangladesh was found to be more advanced than those in most other health sector programmes; it has led to an incorporation of gender issues into the planning stages of the programme. Yet, its focus on women, rather than on socially constructed relations between men and women, may lead to an improvement in services to women, but fails to address
special problems women face in seeking health care. Elson and Evers\(^5\) argue that this kind of gender analysis tends to result in the identification of women-specific components, and is likely to marginalise gender inequality concerns within the health sector framework, because women-specific programmes are always a minority in the budgeting and implementation process. They provide the suggestions in paragraph 50:

**Improving Gender analysis in Health Sector Programmes**

50. Integrating gender analysis into health sector programmes involves moving from a "women-in-the-sector" approach to looking at the sector from a woman’s viewpoint, that is recognising the sector as a structure in which gender is always present, even if women are absent. This involves:

- Redefining the scope of the sector by looking at the ways that men and women within households provide as well as consume health services.
- Bringing the interaction of the paid (productive) and unpaid (reproductive) economy into the analysis.
- Extending the policy framework to recognise institutional biases and gendered institutional norms which mean that women and men are not on a level playing field in terms of their access to health services as consumers or producers.
- Disaggregating health information systems by gender in order to analyse gender differences in health need, utilisation of health services, participation in decision-making about health provision.
- Recognising that the same health programme will very often deliver different benefits to men and women.
- Recognising that gender bias in health sector institutions damage the effectiveness and sustainability of sector programmes.

5.2 **Policy and strategy development**

51. Policy and strategy development is a major process in any SWAP, involving the government, donors and other stakeholders. The single sector policy should reflect national priorities and is to be agreed upon by all stakeholders involved. During the policy development process, a differentiation in strategies and actions for women and men should be made, based on the variation of ways poverty affects men and women. In Bangladesh and Ghana several initiatives were taken to ensure incorporation of gender equality objectives in health sector policy.

The PRSP Sourcebook offers suggestions for using the findings of a gender specific poverty diagnosis to identify gender-sensitive policy, programme and project options for the poverty reduction strategy (Gender Chapter, Table 5).

**PROMISING PRACTICES**

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a) **Bangladesh Health Sector: prioritising task force involvement**

52. The working group structure established for the development of policy and programmes initially did not include a specific group for gender issues, nor was the integration of gender made the responsibility of anyone particular. As a result, gender issues were raised in an *ad hoc* way, without gaining ground in any of the activities of the working groups.

53. In order to be more effective the gender advocates participating in the process decided to be strategic and to select key task forces for their actions. Three were chosen:

- The Task Force for Essential Package of Services, to ensure that services would be tailored to meet the needs of both male and female beneficiaries.
- The Task Force on Human Resources Development, to address employment, decision making and requirements from a gender perspective.
- The Task Force on Finance and Expenditure, to look at financial sustainability and accountability of expenditures in the sector from a gender perspective.

b) **Bangladesh Health Sector: “engendering” key documents**

54. Policy and implementation documents of the Health SWAP in Bangladesh were made gender-specific:

- The Programme/Project Appraisal Document (PAD) contains the World Bank’s criteria for development assistance. No standard reference to gender objectives is made in this format. Inclusion of such objectives in the PAD is warranted as it can not be assumed that gender aspects will automatically be covered by poverty criteria.
- The Programme Implementation Plan for the Bangladesh Health Sector was more difficult to make gender specific, due to lack of data and analysis. The solution to this was to include in the PIP the intention for actions to remedy the gap, such as the development of a gender strategy for the sector, and an institutional review of gender relations.
- The Development Policy Letter to the President of the Bank is the formal agreement of the recipient government with the World Bank. Any agreements made about gender incorporation and action in the sector programme should be included to reflect the sincere intentions regarding the gender equality objectives and to strengthen their legitimacy. In Bangladesh this did not happen. Consequently, a bilateral donor and the sector ministry took the initiative for a supplement to the policy letter, giving details of the agreements made to integrate gender equality concerns in the health sector programme.

c) **Bangladesh Health Sector: Gender Action Plan**

55. As part of the programme development a gender action plan was developed in Bangladesh. Due to the lack of data and the complexity of the programme, it was impossible to draft a coherent strategy at the early stage of the sector programme development. Still, the gender action plan was an important document, as it highlighted the main points that came from the Gender Issue Office and the informal gender group. In addition, most of the recommendations in the gender action plan found their way into the PIP and the Development Policy Letter for the Health and Population Sector Programme.
56. The complexity of the sector programme made it necessary to keep open the gender actions to be taken at the start of the programme. Thus to allow for more detailed analyses and planning in the implementation process. The action plan mentioned that an institutional review should be undertaken at the start of the sector programme. Furthermore, a gender strategy covering the main areas of concern was to be developed together with those responsible for implementation. In other words the activities/interventions described in the action plan created the opportunity to develop appropriate action during implementation and to keep gender on the agenda during the reforms.

d) Ghana: Health Gender Strategy

57. In Ghana, a Health Gender Strategy was developed upon the initiative of the Health Research Unit, supported by bilateral donors. It was done through a literature review and stakeholder consultations at different levels. The main strategies for promoting gender equality in the health sector in Ghana are:

- Strengthening information for gender programming:
  - define policy information needs
  - review routine data collection
  - review performance indicators
- Strengthening gender sensitivity in policy formulation and programme development:
  - improve gender balance in the MoH organisational structure
  - train gender focal persons for strategic positions at all levels
  - improve gender balance in all categories of health personnel
- Strengthen gender sensitivity of health providers at all levels:
  - review pre-service curricula (include gender planning strategies)
  - review in-service training (same)
  - develop guidelines on gender activities
- Strengthen gender sensitivity at service delivery point (gender sensitive client orientation):
  - ensure privacy and confidentiality
  - provide all services
  - reduce waiting times
  - introduce patient friendly initiatives
  - introduce new conditions of service
- Strengthen partnership in implementation of gender policies:
  - organise community durbans, including discussions on gender issues
  - organise community discussion groups on gender and health
  - identify gender focal persons at district assemblies
  - educate traditional leaders on gender issues
  - develop a gender and development curriculum with the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service

e) Sub-sector choices

58. Apart from separate plans and strategies, the choice for sub-sectors and sub-programmes can be decisive for equal opportunities for women in the sector. The agricultural sector programme in Mozambique became more relevant for women by putting its focus on the small-holder producers, which in Mozambique are primarily women.
5.3 Policy environment

59. As SWAPs should reflect national priorities and be part of national policy frameworks, references about gender equality in the SWAP should, ideally, have its roots in a national framework on this issue. As pointed out above, positive examples of this are still few.

PROMISING PRACTICES

a) Uganda: Universal Primary Education

60. An example of an integrated approach to gender equality as part of an explicit national policy can be found in the education sector of Uganda. In 1996, the Ugandan government announced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) initiative: free education for up to four children per family, two of which are to be girls, plus all orphans. As a result of this policy, enrolment figures went up dramatically. To enable the implementation of the policy the Uganda Education Strategic Investment Programme (ESIP) 1998-2003 was developed rapidly, supported by a group of donors. Thanks to the UPE policy and its provision to ensure equal access by girls and boys, the education sector programme had a gender equality component from the very beginning. The positive policy environment for gender issues is further strengthened by the support for gender equality matters by the country’s leadership and by the influential Ministry of Finance.

b) Costa Rica: legal measures for women’s opportunities in agriculture

61. The agricultural sector programme of Costa Rica offers an example of addressing gender equality beyond the strict sector boundaries. Legal measures taken, such as modification of rules for land tenure and resettlement led to increased participation of women. Legal changes requiring that land be granted in the name of both men and women increased women’s access to land. Male applicants were still far more likely to receive land than female applicants, but there was a marked increase in women beneficiaries compared to before these changes.

5.4 Budgeting

62. Allocations and expenditures are the ultimate proof of the extent to which good intentions on gender equality are transformed into concrete measures and practice. The case studies found that strong commitments on gender equality in the strategy document tend to evaporate when actual budgets are made.

The PRSP Sourcebook calls for engendering the national budget to ensure that i) women and men are involved in the budget development process, ii) resources are earmarked for investments that benefit women, and iii) supporting services are provided to maximise the effectiveness of the investments. The tools to engender the national budgets include a gender-disaggregated public spending incidence analysis, which looks into how much men and women, girls and boys, benefit from spending on publicly provided services (see Gender Chapter). An example of a good practice of this tool was found in the health sector in Bangladesh and concerns the Public Expenditure Review.

PROMISING PRACTICE

63. In Bangladesh attempts were made to include gender as a permanent issue in the Public Expenditure Review of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The main reason behind this is that it
provides the opportunity to check whether the expenditures are in line with policy priorities. In practise this means tracing the line from policy priorities, to expenditures, to delivery of services, and to their impact on utilisation and health status. In Bangladesh a start has been made in including data disaggregated by sex and age group. The PER for the year 1999/2000 provides, for example, information on use of services by gender, and on public expenditure allocation by gender and type of service.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Gender sensitive budget analysis**

64. Another tool to increase consistency between budgets and policy intentions is gender-sensitive budget analysis. It refers to a gender analysis of governments’ mainstream budgets according to its impact on women and men, with recognition given to a society’s underpinning of gender relations. Its application in the context of SWAPs may well be considered. An example is the tracking of gender equality expenditure in the Public Expenditure Review for the health sector in Bangladesh.

#### 5.5 Institutional development and capacity building

65. Case studies show the importance of a capable gender unit for co-ordinating, supporting, catalysing, piloting and monitoring gender related work in support of gender mainstreaming. It should be noted though, that the case studies also found that separate structures for gender issues can create a dilemma. While needed as a forum to further develop the subject and get it onto the sector agenda, a gender structure often has a marginal position, with a limited mandate and no power.

66. Case studies show the importance of a supportive platform in the organisation involving the various “gender” stakeholders. An example is the Informal Gender Working Group composed of Government, NGOs, donors for the Bangladesh health sector. The gender structure should be well integrated in the structures that steer and monitor the SWAP process.

### PROMISING PRACTICES

**a) Ghana: Gender perspectives in health institutions**

67. Discussions about gender perspectives in the health sector in Ghana brought to light power structures within the institutions, which constrain women's participation in the sector and their decision making authority. In the health sector men dominate the medical officer and assistant positions, while the majority of nursing staff are women. The first group takes up most senior positions, as well as international training opportunities. To redress this situation the decision was taken to do away with the requirement of a medical degree for all positions, except for the medical director of hospitals. This will enable more women, who are less likely to have medical degrees, to be promoted to more senior level positions. Another change was made with regard to training opportunities. Until recently, admission requirements for training in public health and community nursing included the successful completion of a midwifery training, which was restricted to women. This requirement has now been dropped, enabling men to enter into these traditionally female fields.

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b) Ghana: Girls’ Education Officers

68. Following the 1994 UN focus on girls’ education within the Education for All strategies, a task force on girls’ education was established in Ghana. This task force was upgraded to be the Girls’ Education Unit, within the basic education section of the Ghana Education Service, with direct government funding as well as donor support. One of the key initiatives of the Girls’ Education Unit has been the establishment of District Girls’ Education Officers in all 100 districts of the country. The rationale for appointing DGEOs was that problems related to girls’ education were found to be highly localised, and therefore to be addressed at that level. The DGEOs have been provided with basic orientation training. A training programme on participatory learning and action is in process. This has prepared them to interact with schools and communities. In the administrative setting, the DGEO is part of the District Education Planning team.

c) Kenya: Gender Equity Mobilisation Support (GEMS) Unit

69. The gender analysis exercise for the Agricultural Sector Investment Programme in Kenya proposed to establish gender structures, GEMS Units, at three levels: national, district and community. The strong point of the exercise was that potential staff at all these levels had been involved in the analysis, and thus had been prepared for the job of managing and implementing the gender component in the ASIP. The envisaged structure is to serve as a centre within the government for further policy development on gender equality, for ensuring proper implementation of objectives and for capacity building at all levels.

d) Bangladesh: Gender Issues Office in Ministry of Health

70. Few resources and virtually no decision making power within the bureaucratic structure, initially gave the Gender Issues Office in the Ministry of Health and Family Planning a marginal position. GIO staff were generalists with little knowledge of gender issues. By adding a national consultant to the team, whose input improved the understanding, co-ordination and follow-up on gender in the sector programme, the GIO’s position also improved considerably. The position of the GIO was also improved by the creation of an Advisory Gender Working Group composed of the GIO, NGOs and interested donors and the creation by the Ministry of a Gender, Stakeholders and NGO unit as part of a newly established Policy Research Unit.

5.6 Monitoring and evaluation

71. Governments and donors are generally in agreement that SWAPs need targets, indicators and systems for monitoring progress against them. Yet, the case studies were brief about monitoring and evaluation in practice. Good practice was only recorded in the health sector program in Bangladesh.

PROMISING PRACTICES

Bangladesh: Health Sector Monitoring

72. In the health sector program in Bangladesh the two main instruments for monitoring were made gender sensitive:
i. A Management Information System providing information on patient visits to health facilities disaggregated by sex and age, also taking into account some specific information such as treatment of violence related injuries.

ii. A regular household and community survey of users, known as CIET survey, and non-users of public services to find out if the health care system actually meets the needs of men and women, boys and girls, especially the poor.

The information gathered will serve as input for the PER and is a resource for the policy appraisal process.

6. **Code of Conduct for gender equality in sector-wide development programmes**

73. This Code of Conduct should be seen as a set of minimum requirements needed to make progress towards more equality between the sexes for participation in and benefits from sector-wide development. Clearly, rules and procedures can never guarantee that men and women enjoy equal rights and opportunities that they can use, but in the process of the sector-wide programming the following ten steps are vital to help realise this goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten steps to promote gender equality in SWAPs:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gender analysis of the sector: at different locations, and at micro, meso and macro level, with stakeholder participation and using participatory methods, early in the SWAP process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capacity building strategies for reducing gender inequalities (awareness raising, knowledge building, instruments, training, piloting) of major stakeholders at all levels, including national level offices of concerned donors agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consensus among donors about gender equality concepts, objectives and strategies for support to the sector and clear communication and dialogue with partner governments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coherence between national policy frameworks (PRSP, national gender policy) and sector policy on gender equality, and clearly voiced support for both by national leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clear objectives and strategies for reducing gender inequalities in the sector programme, including targets and performance indicators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Budgets follow strategy for reducing gender equalities, ensuring adequate resources for gender equality measures in major budget lines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Management and implementation structures adapted to requirements of reducing gender inequalities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender structures equipped with clear mandate and resources, and supported in analytical, institutional and skills development, to act from an informed position within the administration and integrated into the SWAPs steering structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management information and monitoring systems in support of bottom up programming and micro, meso and macro linkages and to ensure timely and adequate information of performance towards gender equality in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review and evaluation missions pay full attention to progress towards gender equality aspects in the sector, involving gender expertise in all teams.</td>
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ANNEX 1

EXPERIENCES IN HEALTH SECTOR PROGRAMMES

1. Case studies

Country case studies in the health sector were conducted in Ghana and Bangladesh. In these countries health reforms started in 1993 and 1996 respectively, with the involvement of governments, bilateral donors and the World Bank as the lead agency. The case studies report primarily about the process of mainstreaming gender issues in the sector wide approach, about the actions taken, the difficulties encountered, the solutions found and the role of different actors involved. In the two countries, a gender orientation is gradually growing in the context of the health sector programmes, but dynamics and specifics vary.

At the time of the development of the health sector programme in Ghana there was no explicit orientation towards women or gender issues. The health sector reform focused on access to care, quality of care, and efficiency. However, a 1998 review of the sector programme pointed out that aspects of poverty and gender discrimination might lead to inequality in health coverage and outcome, in addition to the already existing large regional inequalities. As yet, these findings still have to find their way into the official policy documents.

The health sector process in Bangladesh took a different start. It was not so difficult to address gender issues, because the very objective of the Health and Population Sector Strategy is to improve the health of women and children. There was wide recognition that in the past the health system had failed to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, who in Bangladesh are women. This made a focus on their health situation a legitimate concern and a willing ear was lent to the theme in early discussions when the basic objectives of the programme were being formulated. Soon it became clear though, that the approach adopted was narrowly focused on re-orienting services to meet women’s needs in a limited way and primarily in the reproductive health sphere. There was no understanding that the low status of women, the wide range of gender inequalities and the lack of decision-making power were key constraints to improving the health status of women.

2. Issues and concepts

This leads into the question of the characteristics of gender issues in the health sector and of the concepts used. If re-orienting the supply of services is only part of the answer, as was learned in Bangladesh, what more is there to do? The case study distinguishes a beneficiary approach from a gender inequality approach. The first highlights the specific health needs of women and girls forthcoming particularly from the biology of reproduction (‘women’s health needs approach’, Standing, 1997). The approach undoubtedly has its merits, because it makes an effort to provide better services to women (and children). The limitations of the approach are that it does not take into consideration how gender inequalities come to bear on i) men’s and women’s access to sector services and how they ii) affect women’s health status as compared to men’s health.
2.1 Access

Under a beneficiary approach the focus on reproductive health for women may actually limit women’s access to health services, because of a tendency to overlook the need for health services for girls and older women. The focus can also distort proper insight in women’s utilisation rates of the health system, as they may appear to be high solely because of the use of family planning services, while general medical services are used far more by men (Elson/Evers, 1998). For example, in both Ghana and Bangladesh, differences in the male to female ratio in reported incidence of tuberculosis, suggest that women face particular barriers to report and seek care for their illness. Women’s low status in society and in the household limits the availability of resources to pay for the services. Financial barriers were found to be on the increase in many contexts including Ghana, because user fees were putting a heavy burden on the most vulnerable groups. Cultural factors may also severely limit women’s use of health services, such as taboos on consulting male practitioners and lack of mobility of women. Women have special needs determined by social norms, such as privacy, which are often not met in the services offered. Instead, they are frequently treated with less respect by health staff, while their position does not allow them to demand better services and attitudes.

2.2 Health status

A mere women-as-beneficiaries-approach may also overlook the way in which gender inequalities lead to ill health of women. Being a woman can be one of the most important predisposing factors for one’s health situation (Standing, 1997). Women’s low social status, leading to vulnerability, malnutrition, or violence, and the division of labour that puts the care burden of sick family members primarily on women are among those factors. By not noting such problems the beneficiary approach will fail to establish a health care system which can fundamentally address women’s needs. This calls for a gender (inequality) analysis as part of the health sector process.

2.3 Lessons on gender analysis

The Bangladesh case study illustrates the need for a more systematic gender analysis, which takes into account:

- The health situation of women and girls as distinct from men and boys, which leads to different demands for services.
- Gender-based power relations in facilities and in households, which are likely to hinder women from making use of the improved system.
- The economic aspects of gender differences, such as the different consequences of user fees and cost recovery for men and women.
- The role of women as providers of health care at community, the interaction of paid and unpaid (household) care systems.
- The institutional inequalities influencing sector priorities, the inferior employment status of women health providers, the availability of male and female health staff, their attitudes towards male and female patients.
- Gender imbalances in decision-making at policy formulation and implementation levels as a source of inequality and a constraint to more equitable policy development.
3. Policy and instruments

The development of a policy, a strategy and a programme of work for the sector is a time-consuming and complex process. Both case studies discuss this, but as the Bangladesh case study is most elaborate in this regard, examples in this paragraph are primarily based on those experiences.

3.1 National policy context regarding gender equality

It is generally recognised that the national policy context with regard to gender is important for a successful gender equality approach in the sector. In Ghana, the National Commission on Women and Development has prepared a national gender policy framework. Due to lack of finalisation though, the framework has not been able to officially inform the sector policy. The Bangladesh study reports that the Ministry of Women’s and Children’s Affairs had not been consulted in the sector reform process.

3.2 Mainstreaming gender issues in policy development

During the two-year process of translating the Bangladesh health sector strategy into a programme of work, many initiatives were taken to mainstream gender concerns, some were successful, others failed. The Logframe exercise with a large group of stakeholders for the development of the Health and Population Sector Programme became an opportunity missed from a gender point of view. The working group structure set up for this purpose did not contain a specific group for gender issues, nor was the integration of gender made the responsibility of anyone particular. Several task forces attempted a gender orientation, but only focused on women as targets of service delivery, by-passing topics such as mentioned above under ‘issues and concepts’. Efforts resulted in gender issues being raised in an ad hoc way, without gaining ground in any of the activities of the working groups.

In order to be more effective the gender advocates participating in the process decided to be strategic and to select key task forces for their actions. Three were chosen:

- The Task Force for an Essential Package of Services, to ensure that services would be tailored to meet the needs of both male and female stakeholders.
- The Task Force on Human Resources Development, to address the implications of sector reform for male and female employees.
- The Task Force on Finance and Expenditure, to look at financial sustainability and accountability of expenditures in the sector from a gender perspective.

During the sector-wide process many policy and implementation documents were used:

- The Programme/Project Appraisal Document (PAD) of the World Bank contains the Bank’s criteria for development assistance. These do not include gender objectives, although bilateral donors involved in the sector programme may have gender objectives specified in their own frameworks. In the Bangladesh case the Netherlands argued that gender criteria need to be included in the PAD, as it can not be assumed that gender aspects will automatically be covered by poverty criteria.
- The Programme Implementation Plan should also include explicit gender actions and outputs. The Bangladesh case suggested that in case this is not possible due to lack of data and analysis, the PIP may express the intention for general actions, such as the development of a gender strategy for the sector, and an institutional review of gender relations.
• The formal agreement of the recipient government with the World Bank is made by Development Policy Letter to the president of the Bank. Any agreements about gender incorporation and action in the sector programme should be included to reflect the sincere intentions regarding the gender equality objectives and to strengthen their legitimacy. In Bangladesh this did not happen. Consequently, the gender expert at the Netherlands Embassy took the initiative for a supplement to the Policy Letter, to give the details of the agreements to mainstream gender in the health sector programme.

3.3 Gender Action Plan

In Bangladesh, a Gender Action Plan was developed by an Informal Working Group on Gender issues (IWG). The IWG was able to start discussions with the Programme Preparation Cell (PPC) of the ministry, and work directly with its key decision makers and managers. At the PPC’s insistence the Gender Issues Office took a central role in the preparation of the Gender Action Plan. In spite of the impossibility of drafting a comprehensive and coherent strategy at that stage, the Action Plan was an important instrument. It brought to the table specific points for “infiltration” in all task group agendas. Most of the recommendations were incorporated into the Health and Population Strategy Programme.

In Ghana, the initiative for a framework on gender issues in the health sector was taken by the Ministry of Health, and resulted in the document "Promoting gender equity in health, a framework for action" (1998). The gender equity strategy has not become part of the health sector policy, but will be pursued parallel to the sector programme. Advocates of gender equality intend to promote the issues through information sharing and dialogue.

3.4 Budgets

Budgets need to be in line with objectives. This was the rationale behind the choice of gender advocates in Bangladesh to join the Task force on Finance and Expenditure. They wanted to ensure that both resource allocations and actual expenditures would match the gender objectives. This requires measures to track the resources allocated for gender components and to link these to output (training, service delivery) and ultimately to outcome (health status). Such mechanisms may help to identify the extent of ‘evaporation’, i.e. the problem that strong commitments with regard to gender equality are present in the strategy document but evaporate when actual budgets and service delivery plans are made. For this complex issue a consultant was allocated to the Health Economics Unit, paid by the Netherlands. As a result a gender perspective has been integrated into the financial indicators and into the health sector public expenditure review. It allows for a gender-aware analysis of the budget, so that an estimate can be made of resource allocation to services that most likely will benefit women and contribute to greater gender equality in the sector.

3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

Apart from indicators of expenditure and service delivery, also indicators on utilisation of services and impact on men's and women's health status are needed. In Bangladesh, two instruments for gender-sensitive monitoring systems and practices were developed:

i. A Management Information System providing information on patient visits to health facilities disaggregated by sex and age, also taking into account some specific information such as treatment of violence related injuries.

7. The Informal Working Group was established to co-ordinate gender mainstreaming. It was chaired by the Gender Issues Office (GIO) of the Ministry and consisted of a few donor partners, representatives of UN agencies, NGOs and staff of the ministry.
ii. A Public Expenditure Review which analyses the efficiency and equity of financial allocations and expenditure includes a gender PER and some analysis of financial flows from a gender perspective.

iii. A regular household and community survey of users and non-users of public services to find out if the health care system actually meets the needs of men and women, boys and girls, especially the poor.

A major monitoring and evaluation event is the Annual Programme Review (APR). The Programme Appraisal Document (PAD) mentioned earlier and the Development Credit Agreement (DCA) provide the benchmark for the evaluation of successes and failures of the sector programme. This is another reason why gender should be explicitly incorporated into both instruments.

3.6 Lessons on policy and instruments

- Gender equality objectives need to be made explicit and expressed clearly in policy documents.
- Budgets need to reflect objectives, and mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure actual spending according to objectives.
- All documents used for the policy and planning process should be made gender-sensitive, notably the Programme Appraisal Document, the Development Credit Agreement, the Policy Implementation Plan, the Development Policy Letter; and gender-sensitive indicators should be incorporated in the Annual Programme Review.
- Integration of a gender perspective into the financial indicators and into the health sector public expenditure review is needed to help track allocation of resources and spending on gender equality objectives.

4. Structures and capacity

Structures and capacity are crucial for putting policy into practice. Gender objectives at the programme level should be made operational in institutional arrangements, staff training and staff management. This section deals with institutional re-organisation and structures, human resources and capacity, for which both case studies provide experiences.

4.1 Reorganisation of the institutions

The re-organisation of the institutions in the health sector is one of the major components of the sector strategy in Bangladesh. It involves uniting the Ministry of Family Planning and the Ministry of Health to form the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. An obvious gender dimension of the bifurcated system is that most female employees are concentrated in family planning, especially at community level, where services are largely oriented towards women despite the family planning related needs of men. The Health Directorate has far less women, both as users of services and as workers. Getting gender concerns addressed in the re-organisation of the institution and onto the reform agenda was the most difficult part, according to the Bangladesh study. Little was known about the issues involved from a gender point of view, while the sector approach incorporated many reforms taking place at the same time.

4.2 Human resources development

The process of identifying gender concerns in relation to specific reforms was aided by CIDA supported inputs on human resources. Attention to human resource management from a gender perspective is important for two reasons. First, health staff often contribute to unequal use of health services by men and
women, because of their attitudes towards male and female clients. Secondly, the inequality in the position of male and female health providers is likely to be continued in inequality in the provision of services. The inputs provided towards the human resource development were not much appreciated by the relevant staff of the health sector and a gender perspective did not become well integrated into the human resource development.

In Ghana, discussions about gender perspectives in human resource development has led to some changes. In the health sector men dominate the medical officer and assistant positions, while the majority of nursing staff are women. The first group takes up most senior positions, as well as international training opportunities. To redress this situation the decision was taken to abolish the requirement of a medical degree for all positions, except for the medical director of hospitals. This will enable more women, who are less likely to have medical degrees, to be promoted to more senior level positions. Another change was made with regard to training opportunities. Until recently, admission requirements for training in public health and community nursing included the successful completion of a midwifery training, which was restricted to women. This requirement has now been dropped, enabling men to enter into these traditionally female fields.

Among the most formidable barriers to the development of a more gender-sensitive health sector are gender-biased attitudes of policy-makers in ministries, employees in facilities where policies need to be implemented and in communities and households where men control most decisions about use of resources. At all these levels measures and capacity to address this problem are needed.

4.3 Gender structures

The Ministry of Health and Family Planning in Bangladesh has a separate structure for gender matters, the Gender Issues Office (GIO). It has few resources and virtually no decision making power within the bureaucratic structure, a marginal position which was reinforced by the low expectations of the Donor Consortium. GIO staff are generalist administrators with little knowledge of gender analysis. The position of GIO improved after it received assistance from a national consultant, whose input improved the understanding, co-ordination and follow-up on gender in the sector programme. With her help and in cooperation with the Informal Working Group on Gender the GIO produced a Gender Action Plan (see para. 4.3.4).

The Gender Action Plan contained recommendations on institutional aspects. The suggestion that a gender consultant be added to the Management Change Unit was not accepted. A second recommendation concerned the establishment for a Gender Advisory Group to co-ordinate NGOs and other ministries. This led to the creation of a new unit, the Gender, Stakeholder Participation and NGO Unit (GNSP), within the Policy Research Unit, which strengthens the gender machinery of the ministry and provides an institutional home for gender issues. An on-going problem for the gender structure though, is the weak mandate and the lack of resources. There is no direct linkage between the GIO and the two key decision-making structures: the Management Change Unit and the Planning / Programme Co-ordination Unit.

The role of technical assistance can be looked at from two sides, one being the general consultancies for the preparation of the sector programme, the other being the gender consultancies. During the development of the Health and Population Sector Policy there were major consultancy inputs by the World Bank and the various donors. Few of these consultants considered the gender implications of the issues they were addressing. Apart from those that looked into health and reproduction matters, none of the consultants linked the ultimate goal of the sector strategy (to improve the health status of women and children) with their own work. Special gender consultancy was called in to support the integration of gender into the financial aspects of the programme. This assistance has continued throughout the process.
4.4 Lessons on structures and capacity

- Institutional rules and procedures often limit the promotion of women to more senior positions; changing the rules (such as requirements of having a particular degree or admission requirements for training) help women to enter new career paths and will improve the gender balance in institutions.

- Separate structures for gender issues often create a dilemma. While needed as a forum to further develop the subject and to get it on the sector agenda, a gender structure usually has a marginal position, with a limited mandate and no power. In Bangladesh the position of the Gender Issues Office improved when a national expert was added to the office.

- In a sector-wide approach gender specialists need to switch from a micro-level project-based focus on gender to a meso-level or institutional focus. This requires a sharp view on how institutionally, as well as society-wide, gender inequalities influence the sector priorities, systems of accountability and management.

- The comprehensive nature of a sector-wide process makes it difficult for those responsible for cross cutting issues to keep track of developments and to be omnipresent. In such a dynamic process it is necessary to carefully select strategic positions and moments to incorporate gender issues.

- The (temporary) addition of national and international expertise on gender issues in strategic places helps to improve the understanding of the matters involved and of the way to make them operational.

5. Actors and dialogue

A basic principle in sector-wide approaches is that each developing country and its people are responsible for their own development. Policy and programmes may be developed in partnership with donors, and will be supported by financial means and technical assistance, but the ultimate ownership is with the country concerned. Ownership, participation and partnership are recurrent concepts in all recent frameworks and debates around the new development policy. They strongly relate to and depend on actors and dialogue. How was the interaction from a gender point of view in the health sector?

5.1 Governments

On the part of the Bangladesh government there was a gap in understanding the gender issues for the sector. This improved when outside experts started to work with the government staff on long term or short term assignments. The government took responsibility for the development of a Gender Action Plan, which also increased its ownership of the matter. A remaining constraint, however, is that government is unable to realise the allocation of adequate resources and power to the GIO. Within the Ministry there is no organisational structure that can be made accountable for the gender equality objectives set out in the health strategy.

The decentralisation process that accompanies the health sector development in Ghana provides opportunities for more tailor-made development and more participation of communities, traditional authorities, NGOs and Community Based Organisations. However, the district’s orientation on technical aspects of health care will need to be shifted to include more socio-economic aspects of health, before gender equality will have a chance of becoming included in the district health planning and implementation. For this to happen the case study suggests a intensive dialogue and gender training for all stakeholders at all levels.
5.2 Stakeholder participation

The two case studies are most limited in their account of the involvement of stakeholders from civil society and private sector in the sector-wide process. The Bangladesh study reports that the participation of stakeholders with gender expertise - NGOs, local research groups and the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs - was not well integrated into the decision-making process in the early stages of the sector-wide programme. The Ghana study records experience with participatory approaches in project planning.

5.3 Donor Consortium

Individual donors often have their own gender policy, which they want to realise in the sector-wide approaches as well. This may lead to initiatives on the side of one particular donor that can inform the sector process. Examples in Bangladesh include the integration of a gender focus in the financial and expenditure reporting systems, and the supplement to Development Policy Letter to the President of the World Bank, mentioned above.

The World Bank, as lead donor, did not help to smooth the integration of gender. It did not accord high priority to gender issues, while the case study also signalled its lack of understanding of the issues involved. "The World Bank [seemed to] lack the capacity to competently address gender issues in sector-wide programmes. Within the Health and Population Sector Programme, the Bank’s concerns are focused clearly on the macro and meso levels, yet its gender analysis remains narrowly focused on the micro level." (BD, 3rd version, Dec. 1999.)

5.4 Policy dialogue

Gender issues have not been seriously addressed during the dialogues that guided the initiation and development of the sector programme in Bangladesh. There was little follow-up of the issues raised during the meetings of the preparation missions, partly because the Aide Memoires were hardly discussed within the ministry or with other stakeholders concerned.

In the course of the sector programme, dialogue on gender issues increased thanks to initiatives of donor gender specialists. In Bangladesh, they ensured gender expertise at strategic points in the governments and also made arrangements for continuous presence of gender experts in the Annual Reviews. Links between gender activists within the Ghanian health sector and partners have been useful in putting the issue of gender mainstreaming on the agenda of senior management.

5.5 Lessons on actors and dialogue

- The present level of stakeholder consultation and participation in the health sector programmes studied has been very limited, and no specific efforts were reported to ensure equal involvement of both sexes.
- The level of understanding of and priority to gender equality issues is limited among national government and lead donor.
- Gender equality advocates of NGOs, donors and UN agencies, co-ordinating their efforts in more or less informal structures, have shown to be a powerful instrument for getting gender concerns attended to in the sector programme.
- In situations where national gender advocates, both inside and outside the government, have insufficient political influence, donor representatives may play an important role in promoting and supporting the gender agenda and mainstreaming process.
ANNEX 2

EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAMMES

1. Case studies

The experiences with gender mainstreaming in the education sector were researched in three countries, Ghana, Uganda and India. The UK Department for International Development commissioned the country case studies in support of the present study on gender mainstreaming in sector-wide approaches. The case studies included field visits to interview key informants in government, the donor community and civil society. The case studies have been summarised in a synthesis report “Mainstreaming Gender through Sector Wide Approaches in Education” [DCD/DAC/GEN(2000)7].

In Uganda, the sector programme for education is called Uganda Education Strategic Investment Programme (ESIP) 1998-2003. It developed as a direct response to the Universal Primary Education (UPE) initiative launched by the government in 1996, which provides free education for up to four children per family, including two girls, plus all orphans. Being based on the UPE, the education sector programme had a gender equality component from the start. There is strong support for it from the country’s leadership, and from the influential Ministry of Finance, which takes an active role in social policy.

Ghana does not have one clear sector wide programme for education. The nearest the government comes to a donor supported SWAP is the sub-sectoral programme of “fCUBE” – free compulsory basic education, to be implemented between 1996 and 2005. The widespread support for the “fCUBE” objectives of enhanced access, quality and equity, are not accompanied by a coherent strategy to achieve these. Donor co-ordination is weak and there continue to be many different donor projects not all linked directly into the sector programme. A positive environment for gender equity considerations, with significant legislative changes being effected, permitted discussion of problems associated with girls’ education.

In India the District Primary Education Programme is a federal government scheme, supported by international donors. The DPEP is not a self-consciously defined SWAP, nor do the government and the donors recognise it as such. It was launched in 1994 and is presently being implemented in 193 districts in 15 states. Decentralisation is a key feature of the programme and districts are encouraged to develop their own strategies within centrally defined parameters. Gender equity is high on the government’s agenda, also with regard to education, for which goals are included in the Constitution (e.g. eliminating gender bias in education by 2005). The attitudes of the different states vary, while gender equity concerns are not always obvious at school level. In the Indian context gender constraints interact with problems of poverty, caste and ethnicity, the start point for improving gender being extremely low.

2. Issues and concepts

Some gender issues in education are obvious, such as the fact that girls and women enjoy less education than boys and men. In general, they go to school in fewer numbers and for a shorter period of time. Disaggregated enrolment figures are usually well-kept and well-known. Wider problems limiting girls’ school attendance and performance get less attention. They include issues of poverty and the family’s need for girls’ help in domestic and agricultural work, restricted mobility of girls, social restrictions on co-education, early marriages, sexual harassment and abuse, teenage pregnancies. They also include issues related to problems within the sector, such as the lack of sufficient qualified (female) teachers, inappropriate teaching methods reducing the relevance of education, lack of a safe and secure school environment, of proper facilities, and of opportunities for advanced education. A combination of these
factors may keep girls at home or make them drop out early. The lack of attention for the underlying and wider problems of gender inequality may lead to limited concepts of gender issues in education policy.

2.1 Access vs. quality

In the three cases, the level of analysis of gender issues prior to the development of a SWAP varied, but the sense that gender is about access issues only, prevails in all. The three governments subscribe to macro-level goals of gender equality in education, and the primary focus is on increasing enrolment. Issues concerning the quality of education and its outcome for students concerned receive much less profile.

For example, in Uganda, the girls’ strategy (the stipulation that at least two girls be included among the four free children per family) is a central part of the UPE, but the existing programme for teacher development continued without questioning its quality to deal with the girls’ strategy. Neither has it been analysed how male and female teachers are being affected by teacher rationalisation and the introduction of double-shifting, although it is likely that women are more vulnerable to being relocated to lower status positions. It was also not taken on board that moving towards new objectives in the context of a SWAP had implications for the curriculum.

The India case study pointed out that the Universal Primary Education objective, being enshrined in the Indian Constitution, puts pressure on the District Primary Education Programme to perform in terms of 100% enrolment. Some people have argued that this pressure to increase enrolment has had negative side effects on achievement levels. On the other hand, the case study suggests that the focus on increasing girls’ enrolment may be “the only feasible practical response, given the very low baseline, in gender terms, from which the programme begins”. A similar point has been made in the Ghana study, suggesting stages of development towards gender mainstreaming in SWAPs.

2.2 Lessons on concepts and issues:

- In the absence of an analysis of the gender dimension in education, the gender issue tends to be perceived as a simple issue of increasing girls’ enrolments, without attention to wider issues of quality and outcomes, and structures of power and authority which impede the realisation of gender equality.
- Carrying out a thorough overall diagnosis of the constraints to achieving gender equity within the sector early in the process of formulating the policy framework for the SWAP is important for highlighting strategies and policy measures.
- A fully rounded gender perspective is an important starting point, but a specific focus on girls’ education can be justified as a practical tool to guide implementation.

3. Policy and planning

3.1 National framework

The three case studies emphasise the importance of an enabling environment for gender equality, in terms of a national policy framework and support of the country’s leadership. Strong and weak points have been found.

The history of commitment to and implementation of programmes for women’s equality is quite different in the three countries researched. In Ghana, gender targeted programmes pre-date the sector planning process, and the positive climate created over a couple of decades enabling interventions to address gender equality, may have had greater influence than the introduction of a sector programme. The latter lacks an
agreed policy framework for a SWAP, which is said to weaken the potential for system-wide changes in Ghana in terms of gender mainstreaming. In India, a tendency towards ‘policy evaporation’ in gender goals is observed: strong at the centre but weakening in local implementation. The federal structure of the Indian nation state implies a difference in the pace and form of change in these varied contexts. Uganda has a short history of active engagement towards gender equality compared to the other two cases, but the issue enjoys strong support from the current political leadership. The favourable environment for gender equality concerns in Uganda is also assigned to the institutional structures for the participation of civil society, the strong women’s organisations, and the stipulation that there should be at least 30% women on committees at every level.

The gender orientation not only differs between the three countries in question, but also within the countries. Particular difference is noted between the level of understanding and commitment of gender issues at the national level versus the local levels. It is important to recognise that ‘one size’ does not fit all; country and locally specific gender planning is required, with wide participation of all stakeholders.

In spite of the different experiences and responses, a common factor in the three countries studied is that the people with particular responsibility for gender in the government were not involved in the sector-level policy development. In Uganda, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development did not play a significant role in the development of the education SWAP. Similarly, in Ghana, the National Council for Women and Development had not been directly involved in policy setting for gender in the education sector.

3.2 Poverty

The way poverty affects children’s education is similar in the three countries studied, but the government’s responses to poverty are different. In Ghana, the considerable cost in attending school is a major problem (e.g. obligation to wear uniforms), despite the provision of a ‘free’ government service. The Ugandan government has addressed this with its UPE policy of ensuring that education is free for the first four children, at least two of whom are girls. This has made a significant impact on enrolment, particularly for girls. India is difficult to generalise as each state pursues its own strategies.

3.3 Objectives and scope

All programmes studied make reference to girls’ primary education in objectives and targets, and in several instances a significant increase in the number of girls attending school has been noted. The sector study found this focus to be limiting in two ways. First, the approach to gender as a matter of access leads to the development of parallel programmes instead of gender mainstreaming. This causes a lack of consistency between programmes and to discrepancy between stated objectives and the programme of activities. Secondly, the concentration on primary and basic education, although understandable, seems to weaken the potential for promoting gender equality. A progressive strategy into post-basic education would encourage households to take primary education for all children serious, because of the better opportunities for girls in secondary education. There are signs of policy evolving in this direction in Ghana and Uganda.

3.4 Budgets

Translating gender equality objectives into budgets and expenditure frameworks is significant and difficult at the same time. In Ghana the most problematic area for gender mainstreaming was said to be that of budgeting and finance. While expertise would have been available in Ghana to include gender budgeting in the first full Medium Term Expenditure Framework, no use has been made of it.

Concern for gender is beginning to be reflected in the budget in Uganda. A positive example in this regard concerns the School Facilities Grant, which prioritises the poorest schools and makes separate-sex latrine
provision compulsory. Within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for Education, the 2000-1 budget initiated incentive awards for districts making progress on achieving gender equality, and for girls reaching P7 to continue into secondary school. This demonstrates that finance is following the stated commitment to gender equality, and the recognition of the need for direct targeting of girls at post primary level. The District Primary Education Programme Guidelines in India do not specify financial parameters to support the stated objectives on girls’ education. Yet, attempts have been recorded to appraise district plans and monitor implementation progress with attention to gender specific financial planning and the extent to which allocations are being dispersed. Large variations between states remain on the money allocated to gender and gender disaggregated activities within budgets.

3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

In line with the primary framing of objectives in terms of increasing enrolment figures for girls, monitoring and evaluation is also mainly addressing issues of access and retention, for which a substantial amount of gender disaggregated data is available. The need for better monitoring of learning outcomes by gender as a direct indicator of quality, has been agreed upon in Uganda, and work on developing a means of doing this has commenced. Attention is also being given to ensuring that EMIS allows for participatory monitoring, with schools and communities involved in collecting qualitative and quantitative data useful for their own planning and accountability purposes. In this context a closer look at reasons for gender disparities in access and achievements is feasible.

In India, the District Primary Education Programme has made a great impact upon the strengthening of educational management information systems, both regarding the way information is gathered and how it is used. Yet, the accuracy of the data collected is still weak, and vested interests tend to distort the data. An innovative monitoring initiative concerns the self-monitoring schools in Uttar Pradesh.

3.6 Lessons on policy and planning

- A SWAP cannot create the conditions necessary to drive change in the sector on its own. A strong general policy of gender equality is required at the national level, as well as strong political commitment within and beyond the sector. Recognition of the international human rights framework for gender and education in a country’s constitutional and policy frameworks helps to create the conditions for this.

- Equally, the lack of an agreed policy framework for a SWAP weakens the potential for system-wide progress towards gender equality.

- The parallel process of decentralisation of decision-making may lead to policy evaporation in gender goals at decentralised levels; an ongoing challenge is to ensure that in the decentralising process, commitments to gender that are strong at national policy level are made operational at state, district and ground level.

- It is important to recognise mainstreaming as a process, which is to permeate the whole programme, instead of just focusing on increasing the number of girls going to school. Mainstreaming implies changes for all aspects of the education programme, not just developing parallel programmes for girls’ education.

- Goals and targets are of key importance, clearly defined and locally specific, with proper resources in both financial and technical terms. These should cover the gender dimensions of access, retention, attendance, achievement and transition to post primary opportunities.

4. Structures and capacity
The case studies give no systematic account of the institutional structures for education and the process of reform to meet the demands of the sector programme, but some strong and weak points have been recorded. A supportive institutional structure for the education sector in Uganda, is the Ministry of Finance, which effectively promotes social development goals in line ministries. Its poverty monitoring system highlights local constraints to achieve gender equality and poverty reduction, thus strengthening the hands of those working to gender equality goals in the education system. On the other hand, the India case study shows doubt about the implementation of gender work in DPEP, which comes under the responsibilities of an organisation perhaps best described as a quango. Staff is a mixture of government employees and consultants. The organisation's mandate covers research, monitoring and gender training, with the gender unit being rather small and under-resourced.

4.1 Gender structures

At the state level in India, designated gender co-ordinators have responsibility for all gender aspects of the programmes. At the district level, gender resource groups and teachers take this responsibility, being trained by the state gender co-ordinators. In theory, gender responsibility runs through the programme from the centre to the village level; in practice there is a de-prioritisation of gender away from the centre. District level staff usually do not grasp the abstract concept of gender as set out in DPEP documents and transmitted by DPEP staff and donor organisations. The state gender co-ordinators were said to be a weak link in the SWAP chain, due to i) their middle class, academic background, ii) lack of seniority, iii) poor training quality.

Better experiences with a separate gender structure have been recorded in Ghana. The Girls' Education Unit (GEU) was established in the Ghana Education Service in 1997. Its main roles are: i) to improve girls' participation and decrease drop-out levels, ii) to raise awareness about girls' education matters, iii) to maintain girls' regular attendance in schools.

One of the key initiatives instituted through the GEU is the establishment of District Girls' Education Officers (DGEO) in each of the 110 districts. It appears to be a valuable management tool to address constraints to girls' full participation in school. Basic orientation training has been given to all the officers and a programme to provide training in participatory learning and action (PLA) will gradually include all of them. The view was taken that problems related to girls' education are highly localised, and therefore addressing the problems should be location-specific to enable the development of appropriate interventions. PLA activities involve both men and women, who together explore male and female roles and responsibilities. These are then linked to gender specific constraints in education and the locally specific means of overcoming them are being identified. This bottom-up approach appears to have a greater potential for success than a centrally determined policy intervention.

The DGEO has a place on the district education planning team, so that locally specific information can be disseminated within the district, and be included in planning processes. Other activities of the GEU include improvements to the content of text books through a gender and equity analysis of current texts. This was followed by the training of Curriculum Research and Development Division staff, master trainers and publishers.

The GEU has provided a central focus for the issue, but is sometimes seen as distracting from the mainstream approach by providing an excuse for other parts of the system to ignore the issue. The case study concluded that this does not imply that such a unit is necessarily ill-advised, rather more consideration should be given to its constitution and mandate.

4.2 Lessons on structures
The weaknesses of a top-down planning approach to gender mainstreaming may be effectively addressed by a decentralised system such as the District Gender Education Officers system in Ghana. The Participatory Learning and Action approach employed in Ghana is permitting a sophisticated gender analysis to take place at a local level, which may be more effective than national level directives.

Separate gender structures for policy implementation may become marginalised or may provide an excuse for other parts of the system to ignore the issue. More consideration should be given to its constitution and mandate.

5. Actors and dialogue

5.1 Stakeholder participation

The main signal of the case studies about stakeholder involvement is that there is ample room for improvement. In Ghana, community participation in basic education links to the populist government’s emphasis on bottom-up planning. Despite the government’s commitment progress toward this goal of people’s involvement has been very slow. A similar situation was reported from India. In spite of the Indian tradition of community mobilisation, the Village Education Committees were found to be dormant: “By and large… VECs seem to be token institutions with neither teachers nor parents expecting much from them… One reason for this lack of dynamism seems to be that these committees were formed in a top-down manner, based on government directives rather than any felt need of the community.” In such a situation, it does not really help that 1/3 of VEC members are to be women. As a matter of fact, research found that female participation in VECs is not necessarily an indicator of gender equality: women tend to be less vocal in the VEC, the balance of decision-making power remains unaltered.

In the Indian District Primary Education Project states and districts have involved NGOs on a voluntary, non-budgetary basis to assist in community mobilisation activities. There are fewer instances of NGOs being provided with DPEP funding to take on aspects of programme implementation. Various explanations for this situation were given, ranging from lack of capacity of NGOs on the one hand, to mind-set problems of DPEP functionaries, who look towards the government/public sector for implementation solutions, on the other hand.

The Education Strategic Investment Programme Guidelines in Uganda stated that “NGOs will be an essential part of the complex process of reform/change… useful as catalysts for initiating local experiments, which add diversity, insights and practices that are often impossible through government”. Yet, the structures for consultation with NGOs have remained unclear, and opportunities are still being missed for learning lessons from relevant NGOs working to increase gender equity in education.

5.2 Donor community

The role of donors was said to be diverse. Donors have helped to ensure that in Uganda gender is seen as a policy issue for top management. A number of projects have promoted girls’ access to education, and some donors have taken the initiative to ensure that the education NGOs they fund also support ESIP goals. Donors to the Ugandan education sector were found to share a broad vision on gender equality, but they are not articulating it as a clear common commitment as is the case with the universal primary education. This appears to be linked to the misconception that ‘gender’ is a Western agenda, and a perception that too assertive an approach will compromise Ministry ownership. Yet, the Ugandans consulted were adamant that gender equality is a shared goal and that much of the momentum has come from the grassroots.
The lack of one donor voice on gender equality goals was also found in the other two countries. In Ghana the same misconception prevailed among donors that gender is a western feminist agenda. In India the increasing state-focus of donors exacerbates the lack of uniformity. Thus, the DPEP culture may be quite different in a World Bank supported state than in a state supported by one of the bilateral donors. Apart from inter-donor differences, there are intra-donor communication problems. Sector-specific specialists do not necessarily have a clear understanding of gender mainstreaming and its meaning for implementation in their area of specialisation. Weaknesses of communication were recorded between departments responsible for promoting gender and sector specialists and mainstream managers.

5.3 Lessons on actors and dialogue

- The SWAP process has primarily operated through formal national institutions; NGO involvement and stakeholder consultations have been limited. Donor/government strategies need to shift to civil society, including paying more attention to strengthening poverty and gender advocacy voices in structures of sector governance.

- The emerging picture of the donor community is that the donor voice on advocating gender equality goals in education sector programmes is inconsistent. There are examples of sensitive and effective practice, but in other cases representatives of key donor agencies were not committed to promote a gender mainstreaming approach. The view that gender is a western agenda has been strongly rejected by persons consulted from the countries concerned.

- Gender issues have not featured prominently in recent Joint Review Mission reports. More vigilance from donors and governments is required to focus and monitor progress towards gender mainstreaming within their own institutions.
ANNEX 3

EXPERIENCES IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR PROGRAMMES

1. Case studies

Country case studies on gender mainstreaming in the agriculture sector were conducted in Kenya and Zambia. In addition, the World Bank produced a sector overview paper of current practices on gender in all agriculture sector programmes (ASP) [DCD/DAC/GEN(2000)3/REV1]. The latter focuses primarily on policy components to strengthen women’s involvement in ASP. The country case studies provide examples of the process of mainstreaming gender concerns in the design of the sector programme and of the steps taken to get women’s interests more firmly integrated at that stage.

The World Bank review is based on 26 agricultural sector programmes assisted between 1989 and 1998. It was found that in 17 of those ASPs efforts were made to address gender or women in development issues, twice as many in the second five year period than in the first. The depth and quality of the gender focus differ widely. While in Costa Rica and Mozambique critical steps were taken to incorporate women in land titling and settlement consolidation, in most cases the stated focus on women was much greater than the explicit steps taken to address their needs. Equity between men and women receives less attention than equity for the poor. Overall, there were opportunities missed to address gender in many ASPs.

The Kenya case study records the experience of a gender study in the context of the Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (ASIP), undertaken between 1996-1998. It involved a team of the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture with the support of a Dutch consultant, financed by the Royal Netherlands Embassy. The team conducted a gender analysis in three different regions, and resulted in a proposal for a Gender Equity Mobilisation Support (GEMS) Programme at national, district and community level, which was accepted by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Agriculture Sector Investment Programme (ASIP) Zambia has been in operation since January 1996. During the first phase, cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and poverty alleviation, were not made part of the programme. At the time of the extension phase of ASIP I, the German GTZ commissioned a consultancy on cross-cutting issues, with emphasis on gender. The case study recounts the initiatives, and the lessons learned from it.

2. Issues and concepts

Agriculture is a sector widely researched, also on the gender issues involved. In spite of regional differences, female farmers play a central role in agricultural production and household food security, a fact that has become generally recognised. In many countries, women constitute more than half of the agricultural labour force and are responsible for most of the household food production. Agriculture remains the main source of employment for women in the developing world, providing work and income to more than two thirds of the female work force, and over 90% in many African countries. Yet, agricultural sector strategies are seldom based on a proper analysis of gender roles and relations.
2.1 Gender analysis

In the context of the Kenya ASIP, such an analysis has been carried out, bringing to light the constraints and challenges with regard to equitable agricultural development. The study emphasised that gender imbalances are rooted in values, norms, myths, taboos and traditions, widely accepted by both men and women. In the agricultural sector they are manifest in distorted decision making, unequal access to and control over resources (land, capital, agricultural inputs, income), and a major work burden on women. In the situation of smallholder farming in Kenya where many men are out-migrated, this leads to the paradoxical situation that ownership and decision making is in men’s hands, while the factual cultivation and management is done by women. Practical problems forthcoming from this situation were reported. For example, delayed and inappropriate decisions negatively affect the productivity or health situation of animals or crops. Lack of resources in the hands of women to buy fertilisers, quality seeds, etc., keeps general productivity levels low. Limited direct financial benefits for women takes away the incentive to invest their labour in cash farming activities traditionally controlled by men, hampering optimal productivity. A heavy workload on women, which affects the health and nutrition situation of themselves and children, goes along with an increasing number of men without employment.

The extent to which asset inequality constrains growth and poverty reduction has recently been researched by the World Bank. The report *Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction* (1999) makes the case that gender-based asset inequality diminishes productivity, output and growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Burkina Faso, for instance, where different members of the household simultaneously cultivate the same crop on different plots, it was found that the allocation of factors of production is unevenly distributed. Plots controlled by men are much more intensively farmed than those of women. “Though it is well documented that the marginal product of fertiliser diminishes, virtually all fertiliser is concentrated on the plots controlled by men.” Simply shifting the existing resources from men’s to women’s plots within the same household could increase output by 10-20 percent, according to the report. Similar cases were found in Zambia and Kenya, where output could be 15 to 20 percent higher if women would enjoy the same level of agricultural inputs and education as men.

2.2 Lessons on gender analysis

The case studies indicate the following lessons concerning gender analysis in ASIPs:

- A gender analysis is not yet common practice, gender issues are frequently put in terms of women and development leading to marginal actions.
- Applying gender analysis will strengthen a client responsive action programme, which can enhance ownership and sustainability.
- Sector approaches are by definition sectoral, but the promotion of gender equality requires cross-sectoral measures, which can only be identified by an encompassing analysis.

3. Policy and planning

3.1 National policy context

Reference to the role of a national policy framework and structure is limited in the case studies. The Kenya study states that a ‘higher level’ strategy which promotes gender equity, and a women’s emancipation structure, are important for the success of addressing gender equality concerns in the agricultural sector. However, it does not explain the specific relation found.
3.2 Policy choices and objectives

During the formulation of ASIPs, sub-sectors or sub-programmes are identified. The ultimate selection may be quite important from a woman’s point of view, as can be illustrated by the case of Mozambique. The agricultural sector programme became more relevant for women by putting its focus on the small-holder producers, which in Mozambique are primarily women. Sub-programme selection in Zambia merely followed the organisational structure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Only two sub-programmes were successful to address the needs of small-holders and female farmers, the Seeds Standard and Multiplication programme and the Rural Investment Fund. Those programmes were also the only ones known by name by farmers in the field.

In spite of all the evidence about the central role of women in agricultural production, action for women is frequently presented in special, often small scale, programmes to assist women as a vulnerable group. Some sector programmes have gone beyond this approach by taking steps that address gender inequality in a more fundamental way. In Costa Rica, for example, modification of rules for land tenure and resettlement led to increased participation of women, and in El Salvador the involvement of female farmers in setting the agricultural research agenda resulted in research being better oriented towards their needs.

Mainstreaming gender issues implies its integration in all policies and programmes. A specific objective, in addition to integration, can be very useful to guide the design of gender equality throughout sector programmes and budgets. The Kenya ASIP may serve as an example. It envisages four major objectives: i) agricultural growth, ii) improving environmental sustainability of agriculture, iii) improving household nutritional status, and iv) improving the economic status of women. Changes in gender relations are imperative to attain any one of these objectives. Improving women’s rights to land, control over farm resources, access to credit, extension and general marketing information, involvement in technology development and a more equal division of labour, will all help to attain the first three objectives, thereby improving women’s economic security in itself.

3.3 Budgets

An additional advantage of a separate objective on gender equality is that if offers the direct opportunity for a separate budget line. Irrespective of a separate objective though, mainstreaming of gender throughout the sector programme requires an earmarking of funds. Actions to overcome gender constraints need to be spelled out in each activity, which of course will rely on an adequate gender analysis. Without clearly identified activities supported by specific budget lines, gender will evaporate in the course of the implementation of the sector programme.

3.4 Mainstreaming in policy development

Gender issues had been addressed in initial ASIP documents in Kenya, but the absence of an analytical and operational basis necessitated a gender study. The study made more mature policy development on gender issues possible. Apart from the value of the information produced by the study and of the input made in the ASIP formulation, most important has been the capacity building of staff it involved. The insights they gained from this experience through interaction with communities may greatly benefit ownership and sustainability of the future programme.

In ASIP I Zambia several initiatives were taken to promote the incorporation of gender issues during the formulation phase, such as the attachment of a committee of gender specialists to each ASIP Planning Committee, the production of a checklist for sub-committees, and the formation of an indicators committee. None of them was successful, due to staff turnover and internal re-organisation processes of the ministry. In the formulation of ASIP II gender is supposed to be an issue again. Given the fact that nobody
has been made responsible for ensuring that gender perspectives are taken into account and that managers showed a lack of interest in the subject, the Zambia case study predicted that not much success should be expected this time again.

3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

The case studies were brief about monitoring and evaluation. The Zambia study stressed the necessity of monitoring throughout the course of implementation to keep gender issues relevant and to be able to make corrections in case policies have been less effective than anticipated. Concerning external monitoring the Zambia study noted that during the Mid-Term Review no gender segregated data-collection and analysis was carried out. In the Kenya gender study, indicators for monitoring had been developed by farmers and collaborating institutions together. They focus on changes in attitudes and practices.

3.6 Lessons for policy and planning

- Sub-sector identification within the sector programme can be decisive for the opportunities for women’s participation.
- A specific gender objective, in addition to gender integration in the overall programme, makes gender part of the policy process that guides the design of sector programmes and budgets.
- Policy development on the basis of field research by those responsible for implementation, enhances the level of ownership and sustainability of the programme.

4. Structures and capacity

Gender capacity is still weak in Ministries of Agriculture, according to the World Bank review. Efforts to improve the situation have generally been supported by bilateral donors. Cases in point are Benin and Mozambique where, respectively, gender units in the Ministry of Agriculture and a Gender Unit Network were established with funds from DANIDA. The prevalence and capacity of structures needed for a gender oriented ASIP appear to be miles away from the ideals expressed in the Kenya study.

4.1 Institutional changes

As part of the Kenya study the team conducted an institutional analysis, addressing the main functions of the institutions involved (mission, structure and human resources) its culture and decision making process. Noting that organisations are gender-biased in the same way as society, with men and male interests being dominant, the study comments that a change of structures and cultures of institutions is essential to address gender issues in a credible and consistent manner. The case studies show that only a few ASIPs have structures for gender issues, while transformational processes were not reported at all.

The gender study in the Kenya ASIP proposed to establish gender structures at three levels, national, district and community. At national level, a Gender Equity Mobilisation Support (GEMS) Unit is foreseen in the MoA’s Development Planning and Information Services Department. Its function is to provide support to ASIP management and to the district GEMS, through training, technical advice, etc. Also at the national level, a GEM partnership Network was designed consisting of the Gender Desks of the other ministries involved in ASIP, of NGOs and of institutions responsible for gender equity issues in the country. At the district level, a District GEM team will be created to support the district staff in implementing the GEM programme. At community level, the extension service is to be strengthened by community promoters to work at sub-location and lower levels.
The GEMS is a two-edged sword. The exercise has built capacity on gender equality matters among a group of people directly responsible for the implementation of the objectives set in this regard. Capacity building took place through experience and interaction with the field. At the same time, it has created a structure that is to serve as a centre within the government for further policy development on gender equality, for ensuring proper implementation of objectives and for capacity building at all levels. Beyond that, awareness raising amongst community leaders as well as male and female farmers, is expected to result in more balanced farm decision making and resource allocation.

Some re-orientation of research and extension structures was reported in the World Bank study. In an effort to make research more relevant for female farmer, the Agriculture Sector Reform and Investment Project in El Salvador encouraged the participation of women in the National Agricultural Technology Center to help guide the research programme. To better serve women’s interests through extension, agents were trained to be alert on women’s needs, while also more female extension agents were attracted to the service.

4.2 Lesson on structures and capacity

- Gender capacity within institutions is of major importance, but is as yet seldom adequately in place.
- Capacity building and consultation can be successfully linked to create and sustain ownership of gender action in ASIP, as was shown in the Kenya GEMS initiative.
- More gender sensitivity in institutional practices, procedures and attitudes are a pre-requisite for sound implementation of gender equality processes in sector programmes.

4.3 Actors and dialogue

The most prominent features of the sector-wide approach relate to actors and interaction. Ownership of the programme is to be with the country concerned, while processes of consultation and participation are central in developing and implementing sector programmes. Partnership among all actors, ranging from donors to governments to beneficiaries, is strongly advocated in recent frameworks for the new development policy. This paragraph deals with the experiences from a gender point of view in the agricultural sector.

4.4 Governments

Although most countries have ratified UN resolutions and recommendations on women's rights, actual implementation by governments is often weak. This was also recognised by the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya, which committed itself to participate in the gender study team of GEMS. The research resulted in a GEMS programme, with strategies and structures to promote gender equality in ASIP. While the Ministry of Agriculture accepted the proposal, so far the World Bank and the EU, as lead donors, have not been clear on it.

4.5 Stakeholder consultation

Stakeholder consultation is regularly mentioned in the three studies and a distinction is made between beneficiaries and officers among stakeholders. Consultation with the latter, who have management and implementation responsibilities, is to result in commitment, understanding and sustainability. Consultation of male and female beneficiaries is essential to ensure that the sector approach is responsive to their needs and options for change. To be representative and useful, the consultation needs to be carefully planned. Issues to consider include: who is to be consulted, who can claim to represent views and interests of a
larger group? How is the consultation to take place, which methodologies are to be used, where? The ASIP gender study has provided an example, but as it states itself, only in a very limited way. The consultation process was part of the preparation stage, and room should be made in the implementation phase to continue the process by regular review and planning meetings.

Active consultation and participation of beneficiaries is considered a cornerstone of ASIP Zambia, crucial to achieve the objectives of the programme. In practice, effective involvement of resource poor and female farmers was faced with a number of difficulties. One is that the consultation base narrowed as the programme progressed. Based on the desire to recognise existing farmer organisations, the programme shifted from consulting with grassroots groups to co-operatives. This proved to be negative for women’s participation, because co-operative registration is usually by heads of households and men. The same happened with the regard to the District Agricultural Committees (DACs), whose role is to facilitate the implementation of community projects and to review work programmes of ASIP to ensure that farmers’ needs are reflected and addressed. From the beginning the representation of women was limited, not more than one or two per DAC. The condition -- added later -- that DAC members have to be elected representatives of farmers’ associations has caused a further shift towards men.

4.6 Donors

The experience to date brings out the catalytic role bilateral donors can play in mainstreaming gender issues in ASPs. They have fostered and supported initiatives such as gender studies, gender structures in sector ministries and pilot activities. In other cases, though, they have been inhibiting the process of gender mainstreaming by not being clear among themselves about the priority to be given to gender issues in the agriculture sector programmes (see above).

4.7 Policy dialogue

Issues of policy dialogue were hardly discussed in the case studies. Implicit results can be recognised, such as the commonly executed gender analysis in Kenya.

4.8 Lessons on actors and dialogue

- Ownership by the national government should not exclude discussion about issues that may not yet be priority for governments, such as gender equality. Policy dialogue between governments and donors can be informed by international agreed priorities, such as UN resolutions on gender equality.

- Selection of stakeholders should not be limited to formal associations, as this endangers representation of women.

- Stakeholder consultation is work in progress, and should be continued during the implementation of the sector programme.

- Agreement among donors and government on a gender policy in the sector-wide approach at an early stage, sorting out differences in focus and strategy may promote a more swift process of gender mainstreaming.

- Donor co-ordination will be enhanced by a gender working group or task force, which can address policy direction and approach, discuss division of tasks between donors on facilitation and mainstreaming of gender issues in the sector-wide approach.

40