

The purpose of these *Key Sheets* is to provide decision-makers with an easy and up-to-date point of reference on issues relating to the provision of support for sustainable livelihoods.

The sheets are designed for those who are managing change and who are concerned to make well-informed implementation decisions. They aim to distil theoretical debate and field experience so that it becomes easily accessible and useful across a range of situations. Their purpose is to assist in the process of decision-making rather than to provide definitive answers.

The sheets address three broad sets of issues:

- Service Delivery
- Resource Management
- Policy Planning and Implementation

A list of contact details for organisations is provided for each sub-series.

Overview of the debate

Over the past 5 years, the debate about gender mainstreaming has focused on:

- promoting attention to gender equality in Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAs) and macro policy frameworks, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes (PRSPs)
- preventing the 'evaporation' of policy commitments in the process of planning and implementation
- the importance of addressing gender inequalities within governments, donors and NGOs as well as supporting staff capacity to promote equality in their work
- how a focus on gender highlights the construction of male as well as female gender identities, and the impact of changing gender roles and relations on men and masculinity
- the definition and measurement of 'empowerment'.

Key issues in decision making

Both DFID and DGIS are committed to the promotion of gender equality in all aspects of their work. This is because:

- *Gender equality is essential to poverty elimination.* The International Development Targets can only be achieved by addressing the disproportionate burden of poverty, lack of access to education and health services, and lack of productive opportunities borne by women.
- *Human rights are universal, premised on the equal worth and dignity of all human beings.*

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework provides a context for analysing the constraints which women and men experience in the realisation of their human rights. Gender discrimination excludes women from the equal access needed to sustain livelihoods, increases their dependency and locks them into long-term poverty traps. For example, land is commonly owned and controlled by, and women's access to it mediated through, men. Women's access to formal channels of credit is also limited since they lack the kind of collateral provided by land. Policies, institutions and processes influencing access to assets tend to reflect and reinforce gender difference and inequality. Women seldom participate in consultation and their interests figure little in public policy-making.

'Gender mainstreaming' – a term which came into widespread use after the 1995 4th UN World Conference on Women – is the approach adopted by most governments, donor agencies and NGOs to ensure greater equality of opportunity. Each sectoral component of the Beijing Platform for Action includes the following 'mainstreaming paragraph': 'governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.'

All DFID and DGIS macro policy frameworks for development assistance involve gender analysis; action to promote gender equality; and organisational capacity building and change. At all stages and all levels, women's as well as men's perspectives are to be involved in analysis and decision-making.

Gender analysis explores the norms of male and female behaviour and experience, and their implications for the different ways men and women contribute to, and benefit from, development processes. Sex-disaggregated data are essential to inform policy and project planning, and to monitor and assess the impact of commitments. Two distinct areas of information are necessary: (i) *gender analysis of primary stakeholder groups*. The precise information needed will depend on the level and nature of the intervention. Common areas of enquiry include the different roles of men and women; the resources they access and control; the issues they prioritise; and the ways in which new initiatives and services might affect women and men differently; (ii) *gender analysis of secondary stakeholder groups*. Organisational analysis should include an examination of (a) gender patterns in staffing and organisational culture and (b) the extent to which policies, staffing, and budget allocations recognise and address issues of gender equality.

Action. Gender equality does not necessarily mean equal numbers of men and women in all activities, or simply the same treatment. It signifies an aspiration towards a society in which neither women nor men suffer from poverty, and both are able to live equally fulfilling lives. With this goal in mind, gender analytical information should lead to the following kinds of action:

- collating and commissioning targeted research, and establishing sex-disaggregated information systems



DFID experience

Support for:

- Small-scale credit, savings, and insurance for poor women (BRAC)
- Training for women primary school head teachers (Kenya)
- Organisations working with female prostitutes in Calcutta to keep down HIV infection rates
- Stopping violence against women (Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Pakistan, South Africa, the Caribbean, Zambia)
- A 15-country research programme in Africa and Asia aimed at more gender-sensitive approaches to travel and transport programmes

The Netherlands' experience

- Muslim women and development
- OECD-DAC Reference Guide on gender equality and SWApS
- Strengthening gender expertise in Netherlands foreign policy
- Mainstreaming poverty

Expertise

- BRIDGE – gender knowledge for a fairer World, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex
- KIT (Royal Tropical Institute), The Netherlands
- Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
- Gender and Development Training Centre, The Netherlands
- IIVA (Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement in Amsterdam)
- VENA (Women and Development Document Centre, University of Leiden)

Gender Mainstreaming *continued*

- addressing practical barriers experienced in accessing resources, services and opportunities (e.g. actions to increase women's access to formal channels of credit)
- specific targeting of innovative or strategic initiatives (e.g. work with men on reproductive health issues)
- addressing ideological barriers (e.g. removing gender bias from school textbooks)
- building the capacity of staff to mainstream gender equality in their work

PRSPs and SWApS make up a complex process of negotiation involving multiple stakeholders. Gender equality must be agreed as a priority issue. Entry points include international, national and sectoral policy commitments to gender equality, new research findings on sex-disaggregated data, and individuals in key positions. Networking and coordination are essential. Donors should seek out opportunities to support – with resources, training and professional back-up – civil society organisations active in lobbying for gender equality, as well as units within partner governments.

Planning frameworks (e.g. Logical, Result-Oriented Frameworks) must include explicit references to gender. Mention in accompanying documentation is not sufficient to ensure appropriate commitment. It should always be clear who the policy/project is intended to benefit. Specific indicators, backed up with staff and financial resources, are required to measure quantitative and qualitative outcomes for women as well as men.

Capacity building and organisational change. Gender mainstreaming is not about Women's Officers and Units working with female beneficiaries, but is the responsibility of all staff. However, policy commitments all too often 'evaporate' in the process of planning and implementation. Effective mainstreaming requires long-term capacity building and organisational change, including:

- *human resources* – specific staff, with effective communication skills and commitment, to act as catalysts in participatory policy formulation; skills workshops; drawing up gender checklists, guidelines and performance appraisal systems; networking; and commissioning/collating appropriate research.
- *financial resources* – policy and planning commitments backed up by budget allocations, recognising the costs of organisational capacity building as well as initiatives on the ground.
- *political will/management support* – a need to think strategically. When senior management take gender mainstreaming seriously, the rest of the staff will do so as well.
- *attention to gender equality within the structure, culture and staffing of organisations* as well as in their policies, programmes and procedures.

Key Literature

- Goetz, A.M. (1997) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*. London: Zed Books.
- Lingen, A. et al. (1997) *Gender Assessment Studies: a Manual for Gender Consultants*. Netherlands Development Assistance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Engendering Development through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources and Voice* (2000) World Bank Policy Research Report. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Poverty Elimination and the Empowerment of Women. Strategies for achieving the International Development Targets* (2000). London: DFID September.

Key Sheets are available on the Internet at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/keysheets/> or through the websites of DFID and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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