



Development
Cooperation
Ireland

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Gender Equality Policy



GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

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? Key Concepts

Gender is the most fundamental organising feature in all societies and gender inequality is the most prevalent form of social disadvantage within societies. The whole area of gender equality can be daunting in its use of jargon and concepts.

Yet there are key concepts which can provide us with a common understanding and analytical framework. The following explanation of the key concepts serves as a basis for further dialogue within Development Cooperation Ireland and with a variety of government and non government partners.

Watch out for explanations of Key Concepts throughout the Document

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSP	Country Strategy Papers
DAC	OECD's Development Assistance Committee
DCI	Development Cooperation Ireland
DCD	Development Cooperation Directorate
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
EU	European Union
GT	Gender Team
GOI	Government of Ireland
HAPS	HIV/AIDS Partnership
HQ	Headquarters
HRD	Human Rights & Democracy
IA	Ireland Aid (Development Cooperation Ireland as of 6/2003)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MAPS	Multi-annual Programme Scheme
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAEG	Programme Appraisal and Evaluation Group
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SMG	Senior Management Group
SWAPs	Sector Wide Approaches
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
WID	Women in Development



FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Development Cooperation Ireland's Gender Equality Policy. This Policy focuses attention on an issue of critical importance to poverty reduction. The majority of poor people in the world are women and girls: it is impossible to eliminate poverty without having a clear and unambiguous commitment to gender equality.

This Policy stresses three areas for the advancement of gender equality for women and men: full achievement of human rights; equal access to resources and services; and equal participation in political and economic decision-making.

The Policy acknowledges that international recognition of rights of women has not been translated into practice on the ground. Women suffer sustained violations of their human rights, particularly in societies torn by conflict. Domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, such as trafficking, forced prostitution and rape – including marital rape – are a common experience for women. Violation of women's human rights increases their vulnerability in many ways, not least by increasing their risk of contracting HIV. In this context, achieving gender equality is both a matter of human rights and of great urgency.

Development Cooperation Ireland works in countries where women are often the main providers for their families and have the primary responsibility for their health and welfare. Yet women in these countries do not have equal access to the resources and services that are vital to them and this makes and keeps them poor.

There are many obstacles to women's equal participation with men in political and economic decision-making and lack of time is possibly the most serious. Women's involvement in unpaid work, which is invisible in economic statistics, is vital to the survival of families and communities and yet prevents women's participation in decision-making at various levels. Discriminatory laws and customs are additional hurdles to participation in economic and political developments.

The Policy does not stop at identifying what must be done to achieve gender equality. It also addresses how it should be done by - endorsing a strategy of mainstreaming. It places emphasis on the principles of partnership and dialogue to realise gender equality objectives. It argues that progress can be made through better analysis and understanding of the political and economic realities facing women and men in developing countries.

Although mainstreaming is important, it does not replace the need to promote women-specific interventions aimed at eliminating gender inequality. Women's empowerment is a pre-requisite for gender equality.

I believe that the full implementation of this Policy will enhance the quality and impact of our work for the benefit of both men and women and their societies at large. Gender equality is an important goal in its own right and its achievement is also crucial for sustainable human development. Understanding this is essential to ensure the continued relevance and success of our development cooperation programme.

Minister Tom Kitt, T.D.

Minister for State at the Department of Foreign Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Development Cooperation Ireland is committed to promoting gender equality through its programme as an integral part of its poverty reduction strategy. Gender inequality primarily affects women: they experience poverty differently from men because they are denied equal rights and opportunities, lack access to resources and services and are excluded from important decisions that affect their lives and development.

Over the last decade, gender equality has made some progress and its importance has been spelled out in international conventions and agreements. The link between gender equality and poverty reduction has been made explicit and this understanding is reflected in some of the more significant cornerstones of international law and policy such as UN Millennium Development Declaration, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Government of Ireland has signed all of these declarations and conventions and remains committed to their full realisation.

Development Cooperation Ireland recognises that 'sustainable development is only attainable when the needs and interests of both men and women are fully recognised'.¹ The implementation of a gender equality policy is vital if this recognition is to be made concrete.

? Key Concept 1 **Gender**

Gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male. In different societies, there are different sets of rules, norms, customs and practices by which differences between males and females are translated into socially constructed differences between women and men, boys and girls. These culturally determined gender identities define rights and responsibilities and what is 'appropriate' behaviour for women and men. This results in the two genders being valued differently, often reinforcing the idea that women are inferior and subordinate to men.

Policy Goal

To support the achievement of gender equality as an essential component of sustainable human development

Policy Objectives

The Objectives of Development Cooperation Ireland's Gender Equality Policy are

- To advance equal rights for women and men
- To eliminate gender inequalities in access to, control of and benefit from resources and services
- To support women's equal participation with men in political and economic decision-making

¹ Report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee, pg. 41, February 2002

Strategy

Gender equality is the goal: gender mainstreaming is the strategy.

DCI has adopted mainstreaming as a strategy since 1996. In this new policy, the mainstreaming strategy is augmented by support for specialised interventions to promote women's empowerment and specific gender equality projects. These projects will include interventions that primarily target women and girls and provide support to institutions mandated to promote gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming will continue to be a centrally important strategy as it enables us to creatively and proactively adapt our ways of working in development to promote gender equality. Through mainstreaming, gender equality becomes aligned with and in turn influences the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development cooperation policy and programmes.²

DCI prioritises a number of entry points for gender mainstreaming, reflecting the priorities of the programme and the preferred aid modalities. These entry points include policy dialogue with partners, such as, national governments, multilateral agencies, civil society organisations and other government donors; and encouraging gender mainstreaming through sector wide and area based programmes and programmes supported through other partner organisations.

DCI attaches a high degree of importance to partnership with government and civil society to promote gender equality and will make resources available to enhance their capacity for gender analysis and policy-making that explicitly addresses discrimination and exclusion based on gender. Women's civil society organisations will attract particular support to enable them to interact with and influence key institutions and policies.

The policy places a strong emphasis on establishing time-bound institutional arrangements that will support the policy and ensure broad organisational ownership and responsibility for delivering on the objectives. At the end of the three year period, gender equality will be a highly visible policy priority at institutional and operational levels and DCI staff will have adequate capacity to undertake gender analysis and programming in support of the policy.

Gender equality is the goal: gender mainstreaming is the strategy.

² Adapted from Strengthening Mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS in DCI - Mozambique, Gaynor and Jennings, 2004, pg. 8

MAINSTREAMING – WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

- 1** Understanding the policy environment – what is the legislative and institutional context?
- 2** Consulting men and women, boys and girls; special care must be taken to ensure that women's and girls' needs are articulated
- 3** Assessing gender differences and inequalities in roles, responsibilities, needs, constraints and access to opportunities and resources.
- 4** Disaggregating data by sex
- 5** Setting explicit gender equality objectives
- 6** Developing gender equality indicators to measure progress
- 7** Supporting gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems
- 8** Drawing together good practice and lessons learned and sharing these with partners
- 9** Building alliances with likeminded partners and encouraging coordination
- 10** Promoting positive images of women and men and avoiding stereotypes
- 11** Using gender sensitive language in all communications

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Development Cooperation Ireland's Gender Equality Commitment

Development Cooperation Ireland has as its absolute priority the reduction of poverty, inequality and exclusion in developing countries.³ A commitment to promote gender equality is an integral and essential contribution to poverty reduction.

Development Cooperation Ireland's commitment to Gender Equality is made clear in the Government of Ireland's 1996 White Paper on Foreign Policy and in the 2002 Ireland Aid Review Committee's report.⁴ The report states that "the overall objective of sustainable development is only attainable when the needs and interests of both men and women are fully recognised in the planning and implementation of programmes". Therefore "gender equality has a vital role to play in the reduction of poverty".

In 1986, Ireland's development co-operation programme adopted a 'Women in Development' (WID) policy through implementing the DAC/WID Guiding Principles.⁵ Since 1995, gender has been a crosscutting priority for the policies and strategies guiding DCI's programme, as set out in the policy document 'Gender on an Operational Footing', which recommended gender mainstreaming as the core strategy.

A review of that strategy undertaken in 2003 concluded that while staff have a high level of awareness of gender issues, gender mainstreaming as a strategy is not well understood or practiced and institutional arrangements for supporting gender mainstreaming are weak. Additionally, the complexities of new aid modalities (such as sector wide approaches and budget support) present challenges for mainstreaming gender equality, making an updated policy necessary and timely.

On the basis of the review, which included gender audits, a participatory workshop and broad staff consultation, this new policy has been developed with an emphasis on

- 1** robust institutional arrangements
- 2** a requirement for a clear three year action plan to underpin the policy
- 3** the responsibility of all DCI staff for delivery of policy goals

³ Report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee, p. 23

⁴ Ibid, p. 41.

⁵ Since updated in the 1998 OECD Development Assistance Committee Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

1.2 International Context for Gender Equality

Gender inequality remains pervasive worldwide. It is exacerbated by poverty and is a key factor in the persistence of poverty. Gender inequalities manifest themselves in access to services and control of resources, in economic opportunities and in legal and political rights. Women bear the direct costs associated with these inequalities; they bear the heavy burden of reproductive labour and other unpaid work making their participation in social, political and economic activities difficult. As a result women's experience of poverty is different to that of men; it is more severe and more prevalent. The quality of life for society as a whole is adversely affected by gender inequality, hindering development and poverty reduction.

There is a strong basis in international covenants for promoting gender equality, framed by international agreements and conventions that most countries have adopted and ratified.

In 1979 the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), an international bill of rights for women, was adopted by the UN General Assembly. In the 1990s, Development Cooperation Ireland supported the outcomes of a series of UN Conferences and Summits, most notably the commitments made to gender equality contained in the Beijing Platform for Action, the final document of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women held in 1995.

? Key Concept 2 Gender Equality

Gender equality means equality between men and women in all spheres, both public and private. Gender equality means equal access to and control of resources and benefits, equal participation in political decision-making and equality under the law for women and men. Different cultures and societies can follow different paths in this pursuit of equality. Gender equality is not only a democratic necessity in its own right but also an economic, political and social necessity for poverty reduction.

International Commitments to Gender Equality⁶

<p>The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has been ratified by 75% of UN members. The Convention:</p>	<p>The Platform for Action (PFA) was adopted by the governments of all countries at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Progress is periodically reviewed at the international level. The PFA:</p>
<p>Includes articles on the elimination of discrimination in public life, civil status, education, employment, healthcare and other aspects of social and economic life;</p>	<p>Outlines strategic objectives and action in relation to twelve critical concerns: poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision making, government structures to support equality, human rights, media, the environment and the girl child;</p>
<p>Goes further than other human rights standards by requiring states to take measures to eliminate discrimination;</p>	<p>Emphasises the responsibility of governments to promote equality between women and men;</p>
<p>Requires states to take action to modify social and cultural attitudes and practices that disadvantage women</p>	<p>Emphasises the relevance of gender equality commitments to government policy and programmes in all sectors</p>
<p>Applies to discriminatory action by private organisations and enterprises as well as by the state</p>	<p>Outlines responsibility of NGOs and development agencies as well as governments</p>

⁶ Text of the Convention see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/frame.htm> and for the text of PFA see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/>

More recently the UN Millennium Declaration, which explicitly reaffirms the commitment to full implementation of CEDAW, builds on and reinforces these obligations by requiring member countries 'to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable'.⁷ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) build on the declaration by identifying eight mutually reinforcing goals that provide a roadmap for the international community to meet the commitments set out in the Declaration.

The first goal calls for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Tackling gender inequality is key if this goal to be achieved. Currently, women in developing countries have less access to productive resources such as land and agricultural inputs than male farmers. According to a recent World Bank report, if women in sub Saharan Africa had equal access to agricultural inputs, the total agricultural output for the region could increase by up to 20 percent.⁸

The third goal refers specifically to the need to promote gender equality and empower women while recognising that gender equality remains crucial to achieving the all eight goals. The full set of indicators subsequently developed for this goal recognise the importance of women's access to paid work as well as to increased literacy rates and participation in primary education. Going back to the second goal, education is considered the single most important intervention for increasing economic productivity, reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and improving the educational and health prospects of future generations. It is acknowledged that each additional year in school is associated with a decline in infant mortality of 5% to 10%, yet in 22 countries in Africa more than half of school age girls have no education at all.

Women are increasingly susceptible to HIV; combating the disease is the sixth goal of the MDGs. In sub Saharan Africa, 55% of those infected are women and in many African countries females aged between 15-24 years have prevalence rates up to 6 times higher than males of the same age and on average are infected six to eight years younger than

men. Women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because of biological vulnerability, exacerbated by gender inequality. Women's inferior socio-economic position to men ensures their dependence and reduces their choices. They are frequently discriminated against in law, have limited access to information or sexual and reproductive rights and are most vulnerable to gender-based violence. These gender disparities directly increase the spread of HIV/AIDS – there is no more compelling argument for eliminating gender inequality.

The MDGs clearly will not be achieved without bringing the agenda of gender equality upfront and centre. The complex interrelationship between reducing poverty, equal access to relevant health and education services and women's empowerment must be understood as inherently linked together. Development Cooperation Ireland recognises these relationships and the central role of gender equality in eliminating poverty.

Millennium Development Goals

- 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2 Achieve universal primary education
- 3 Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4 Reduce child mortality
- 5 Improve maternal health
- 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7 Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8 Develop a global partnership for development

⁷ United Nation 2000, United Nations Millennium Declaration see <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/>

⁸ Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals, Gender and Development Group, World Bank, April 2003

Children in Afghanistan
Photo: Fiona English, DCI



2. DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IRELAND'S GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Policy Goal

To support the achievement of gender equality as an essential component of sustainable human development.

Policy Objectives

- To advance equal rights for women and men
- To eliminate gender inequalities in access to, control of and benefit from resources and services
- To promote gender equality in political and economic power

? Key Concept 3 **Women's Empowerment**

Women's empowerment is essential to achieving gender equality. It is a bottom-up process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it. The ultimate goal of women's empowerment is for women themselves to be the active agents of change. The achievement of women's empowerment will allow women to move into the political and social mainstream and shape it in a way that fits with their needs and constraints.

To achieve the goal of gender equality the following **principles** will be adhered to by Development Cooperation Ireland

DCI Principles

All development cooperation activities should have clear gender equality objectives.

All Development Cooperation Ireland interventions should support progress toward more equal relations between men and women.

Women's empowerment is critical to advancing gender equality.

As women are a majority among the world's poorest and as women's and girls' societal status and livelihoods are disadvantaged relative to men's and boys', it is therefore necessary to undertake specific measures (including women's empowerment) to redress the power imbalance between men and women.

Gender equality can only be achieved through partnership.

This includes partnership between men and women. Gender equality will benefit society as a whole and men have an important part to play in changing attitudes and behaviours and transforming received ideas on roles and responsibilities.

Senior management acknowledges an institutional mandate to promote gender equality.

Senior management hold all those who work with development cooperation accountable for the implementation and success of the gender equality policy.



3. DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IRELAND'S GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

Development Cooperation Ireland will implement its gender equality policy in partnership with national governments, multilateral and international agencies and civil society organisations. DCI may support interventions whose primary or sole objective is gender equality and/or identify strategic entry points for the support of gender equality in sector programmes or projects.

Resources will be made available to enhance the capacity of partners in government and civil society to undertake gender analysis and policy-making that explicitly addresses discrimination and exclusion based on gender. Women's civil society organisations will attract particular support to enable them to interact with and influence key institutions and policies.

Based on the review of mainstreaming gender equality in DCI, this new strategy recognises the need to ensure broad ownership within the organisation of the policy and strategy. This will be achieved by ensuring that everyone working in development cooperation has an acknowledged responsibility for delivering on the policy. Appropriate training and capacity building will be made available for all staff.



Following from the policy, a three-year action plan will be developed with broad organisational input. Activities will be prioritised and adequate indicators will be identified to monitor progress.⁹ The three-year action plan will be drawn together and overseen by a Gender Team, established for the period. The action plan will be developed within 6 months of the endorsement of this policy. The objective of the Gender Team is to drive the policy forward and ensure that it is embedded in DCI at the end of the three-year period. It will provide an opportunity for the continued participation of all sections of the Development Cooperation Division and Embassies in actively realising the objectives of the Gender Equality policy.¹⁰ The objective of achieving gender equality must be made explicit in the documentation for all programmes and projects.¹¹

Mainstreaming cannot anticipate every situation nor provide a blueprint for action; rather it guides us through a learning process and enables us to creatively and proactively adapt our ways of working.

Through mainstreaming, gender equality becomes aligned with and in turn influences the design and implementation of the development cooperation programme.¹² What follows is a summary of the steps to be taken when following a gender mainstreaming strategy:

? Key Concept 4 **Gender Mainstreaming**

- 1 Understanding the policy environment – what is the legislative and institutional context?
- 2 Consulting men and women, boys and girls; special care must be taken to ensure that women's and girls' needs are articulated
- 3 Assessing gender differences and inequalities in roles, responsibilities, needs, constraints and access to opportunities and resources.
- 4 Disaggregating data by sex
- 5 Setting explicit gender equality objectives
- 6 Developing gender equality indicators to measure progress
- 7 Supporting gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems
- 8 Drawing together good practice and lessons learned and sharing these with partners
- 9 Building alliances with likeminded partners and encouraging coordination
- 10 Promoting positive images of women and men and avoiding stereotypes
- 11 Using gender sensitive language in all communications

⁹ See DCI resource - Strengthening Mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS in Mozambique, Gaynor and Jennings, 2004 for advice on best practice, pg. 7

¹⁰ See 4.8.2. below for further details

¹¹ There are a range of institutional management tools that should be the focus of attention including country strategy planning processes, funding framework documents, memoranda of understanding, programme appraisal and evaluation (PAEG) documents, annual business plans and reports

¹² Adapted from Strengthening Mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS in DCI - Mozambique, Gaynor and Jennings, 2004, pg. 8



? Key Concept 5 **Gender Analysis**

A gender analysis refers to the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress gender inequalities. Gender analysis endeavours to identify and understand the different roles, relations, resources, constraints, needs and interests of men and women in a given context. Gender analysis involves collecting data and disaggregating it by sex, understanding gender roles and the division of labour, identifying the constraints and opportunities/capacities of both males and females at household level and in the legal, social, economic and political environment.

3.1 Policy Dialogue

Dialogue with partners has always been important in DCI's work. However, it is increasingly important as the basis for moving from project to programme aid.

The number of formal mechanisms for policy dialogue has increased. This provides Development Cooperation Ireland with a number of opportunities to raise the issue of gender equality with its partners and to influence the policy environment by identifying practical measures to work towards achieving gender equality.

Promoting gender equality through policy dialogue involves:

- Understanding the policy environment within which Development Cooperation Ireland is operating – this means assessing partners’ gender equality policies and the relevant national legislation. On the basis of this assessment, Development Cooperation Ireland can identify opportunities to support and/or challenge partners in a constructive manner, using the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and Development Cooperation Ireland gender equality policy.
- Working towards a shared vision of gender equality with partners.
- Supporting analysis of gender inequality and its links to poverty
- Drawing together best practice and lessons learned and sharing these with partners as a basis for developing policy.
- Encouraging the inclusion of civil society in policy dialogue
- Building alliances with likeminded partners in pursuit of gender equality
- Working to ensure that gender equality issues are prioritised and adequately addressed.

3.2 General Budget Support

General Budget Support is a key instrument of aid policy that is becoming increasingly important within Development Cooperation Ireland as a modality that can make a significant impact on poverty reduction and development. As its central focus is on funding poverty reduction, it is an ideal arena for the promotion of gender equality objectives as national budgets and national policy frameworks are linked together. Gender equality should be promoted as one of our budget support policy objectives. This should be reflected in the CSPs and in PAEG proposals.

Development Cooperation Ireland can promote gender equality through general budget support by:

- Promoting the collection and availability of gender analytical information and sex-disaggregated data to inform dialogue on budgetary policy and promote gender mainstreaming.
- Helping to develop space for other voices (e.g. civil society) to be heard in policy debates.
- Supporting the development of capacity within Ministries of Finance and Planning to provide gender aware budget statements (these reports will identify gender biases in the allocation of the budget within departments, ministries or levels of government).
- Building capacity in Ministries of Finance and Planning and within civil society organisations to undertake gender budget analyses and influence the allocation of resources for positive gender equality outcomes.
- Encouraging the identification of gender equality indicators in national anti-poverty frameworks (such as PRSPs)

In order to ensure that Development Cooperation Ireland’s budget or sector support to any given country contributes to gender equality, there are a series of methodological tools¹³ that are used by different groups (both government and civil society organisations) in gender budget initiatives. These tools promote greater transparency in policy processes and budgets by matching policy intent with resource allocation.

Tool 1 Gender Aware Policy appraisal	Analyses the potential contribution of policies and programmes to reducing gender inequality
Tool 2 Gender disaggregated beneficiary assessment	Evaluates the extent to which programmes or services are meeting the needs of beneficiaries
Tool 3 Gender disaggregated public expenditure benefit incidence analysis	Evaluates the distribution of budget resources among women and men, boys and girls by calculating the unit costs per person of a certain service and the pattern of use by each of the groups.
Tool 4 Gender disaggregated public expenditure analysis of the impact of the budget on time use	Establishes a link between budget allocations, service provision and the way in which different members within households use their time
Tool 5 Gender aware medium term economic policy framework	Incorporates a gender perspective into the medium term frameworks of policy development, planning and budgetary allocation by challenging the gender-blind underlying assumptions about how the economy works
Tool 6 Gender aware budget statement	Government generated reports summarizing the main findings and drawing out implications of different patterns of revenue and expenditure on gender equality

¹³ Gender Budget Initiatives, UNIFEM, 2001 and Budlender and Sharp, 2000

3.3 Sector Wide Approaches

Increasingly Development Cooperation Ireland is channelling funding through sector-wide programmes in programme countries. This involves working through comprehensive government led frameworks at sectoral level in close cooperation with other international donors. It provides Development Cooperation Ireland with the opportunity to work closely with the government concerned (and other partners) on the formulation of development plans and budgets and to fund these on a pooled basis with other donors. Development Cooperation Ireland therefore can help ensure that the policy dialogue is focused on the interrelated goals of poverty reduction and gender equality.

Promoting gender equality through sector wide approaches involves¹⁴:

- Promoting the collection and availability of data on gender differences and inequalities in resources, access, needs and opportunities.
- Supporting the collection of sex-disaggregated data and intra-household information on access to and control of resources and services
- Encouraging the use of participatory processes to allow men and women, boys and girls to identify their needs, constraints and opportunities.
- Encouraging the inclusion of gender issues in stakeholders' consultations and supporting the inclusion of women's organisations in deliberations.
- Encouraging the identification of sector specific gender equality objectives at the outset and identifying gender sensitive performance indicators.
- Creating capacity to enable gender mainstreaming in the sector-wide programme over time – this may involve institutional capacity building in gender analysis and planning for the sector within Ministries
- Highlighting the links between national gender equality policy, sector policies and budgets. This process seeks to ensure that gender gaps are not exacerbated by the misplacement of resources or lack of policy coherence through the national or sector budget.
- Supporting gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems – this involves the acquisition of adequate gender-informed baseline data, the continuous collection of sex-disaggregated data and the development of gender sensitive indicators within government led monitoring frameworks.
- Encouraging donor coordination for gender mainstreaming – this will involve improving dialogue to achieve a common understanding of gender concepts and relevant approaches; coordinating policy dialogue among donors sectorally; identifying key issues/entry points for gender mainstreaming and agreeing a division of labour among interested donors;
- Encouraging support among donors for institution building, capacity building and programme implementation. A common approach among donors will enable national governments to develop and own a consistent approach to mainstreaming gender equality through sector policies.

¹⁴ This section draws on the OECD DAC Reference Guide to Gender Equality in Sector Wide Approaches: A Reference Guide 2001



? Key Concept 6 **Gender Needs and Interests**

Women and men have gender needs and interests that arise from the different roles and tasks they are expected to undertake in society. There are two types of needs and interests: 'practical' and 'strategic'. Short-term interventions might be useful in providing immediate basic services and support to women but might not achieve lasting changes in gender relations or equality, which often require a fundamental change at a strategic level.

Practical gender needs are the short-term needs arising from women's and men's responsibilities and daily living conditions. For women, practical needs concern areas such as health care, education and water supply, as well as food and income for everyday household requirements. There is often convergence between women's practical needs and family needs, making them much easier and more visible for interventions to address.

Strategic gender needs arise out of women's subordinate position to men. They are not always immediately identifiable by the women concerned. They may relate to inequalities in the gender division of labour, in ownership or control of resources, in participation in decision-making or in experiences of gender based violence and discrimination against women under law. These needs require strategies for challenging fundamental inequalities and are more likely to meet resistance. Ultimately these needs are strategic and have potential to transform gender relations in favour of equality.

3.4 Area Based Programmes

Development Cooperation Ireland's Area Based Programmes offer important opportunities for supporting gender equality. The area based programmes essentially establish a bilateral relationship with the relevant local government entity at district or provincial level. It provides Development Cooperation Ireland with similar opportunities for policy dialogue and lesson learning as those available at national level. A key part of area based programmes should be supporting local government to adopt and prioritise national gender equality policy by implementing locally specific interventions. This can involve:

- Promoting the development of a common vision with partner institutions regarding gender equality in the local context. Based on that common vision, encouraging the development of strategies and interventions focusing on the promotion of gender equality
- Supporting cross-sector gender analysis of the district or province to identify the gender differences in access to services and resources and ensuring that these findings inform priorities in the provision of assistance to the sectors and to institutional capacity-building of local government.
- Enabling participation in project and programme design by stakeholder organisations but ensuring that representation of women's interests is organised with care and (as appropriate) separately to ensure that their voices, needs and constraints are considered and influence programme priorities and design.
- Working with partner institutions to identify specific gender equality objectives in projects and programmes at the outset and gender sensitive performance indicators at the level of output, outcome and impact.

3.5 Partnership with Civil Society Organisations and International Humanitarian Organisations

Development Cooperation Ireland supports a broad range of civil society organisations including Irish NGOs, Missionary groups and nationally based NGOs in third countries. Additionally, Development Cooperation Ireland supports the programmes of international organisations and NGOs involved in the field of humanitarian work. Many of these organisations have a long track record in gender equality work and are therefore an important resource for Development Cooperation Ireland in lesson learning and deepening institutional capacity. However others are relatively new to the area and have a limited capacity and experience in gender equality issues. Development Cooperation Ireland can promote gender equality with these partners by

- Encouraging the development of policies and procedures that promote gender equality where these do not exist.
- Requiring institutional capacity on gender equality as a criterion for selecting civil society organisations that will receive resources through framework agreements (i.e. MAPS, Block Grant and HAPS) and any organisations receiving funding for humanitarian crises.
- Building a strong understanding of the gender-specific needs of men and women in emergency situations (i.e. HIV/AIDS, security, food, healthcare, shelter and trauma support)
- Requiring the demonstrated use of gender analysis in the development of projects and programmes and reporting on progress in achieving gender equality results
- Encouraging partners to strengthen their institutional capacity to support gender equality and creating opportunities for lesson learning and dialogue on mainstreaming gender equality between Development Cooperation Ireland and partners
- Encouraging partners to actively promote positive images of women and their needs, interests and views, especially in fundraising materials and in development education and campaign work.
- Supporting the establishment of North-South partnerships between civil society organizations with a gender advocacy competence and a commitment to promoting development education on global gender inequality issues domestically.

3.6 Working with Multilateral Organisations

The UN's development assistance and the resources of the International Financial Institutions are a key part of the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As such they offer an important arena for the promotion of gender equality and are key partners for Development Cooperation Ireland

Development Cooperation Ireland can promote gender equality in multilateral programmes by:

- Working with multilateral organisations to ensure the integration of high quality gender analysis in the design of programmes and development of policies; this should be a particular focus in poverty assessments and common country assessments.
- Monitoring multilateral organisations to ensure that they operationalise their gender equality policies at programme level and hold them accountable to their stated policies.
- Coordinating with multilateral organisations on policy dialogue especially in areas such as public sector reform and macro-economic issues.

3.7 Institutional Development and Capacity Building for Partners

Gender equality can be advanced or blocked by institutional obstacles and by limited capacity to engage with gender equality goals. Interventions to address this can include:

- Supporting partners to develop capacity to carry out gender analysis at policy, planning and operational levels
- Supporting organisational change that enables the organisation to respond to gender equality issues.
- Encouraging gender awareness training for staff.
- Providing assistance for developing capacity at the national (particularly national offices of statistics) and sectoral levels to collect and analyse sex disaggregated data

3.8 Institutional Development and Capacity Building for Development Cooperation Ireland

Development Cooperation Ireland's commitment to mainstream gender equality throughout the development cooperation programme faces some internal institutional capacity challenges. The first is at the level of skills for gender analysis and programming. The second is in establishing suitable and workable institutional arrangements that will facilitate the promotion of gender equality as outlined by the policy.

3.8.1 Capacity Building

Motivated and committed staff trained to work on gender equality mainstreaming is key if the policy is to succeed. Staff need a general competence and understanding of gender issues as they pertain to their area of work. For those involved in providing specialist advice to the programme, they need the capacity to understand and support gender analysis in their sector of expertise and be able to define and monitor interventions that address gender equality objectives.

Training will be a key part of the capacity building strategy but other interventions will be identified as part of the three year action plan.

3.8.2 Institutional Arrangements

Many organisations which undertake to implement a gender equality policy face the challenge of policy evaporation as staff with other areas of concern tend to lose sight of gender equality objectives. Experience shows that high level management commitment and a supportive organisational structure and culture is necessary for a policy on gender equality to succeed.

In this regard, the following institutional arrangements are proposed for Development Cooperation Ireland:

- A Gender Team to be established at Headquarters and to be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the gender equality policy. The Gender Team at Headquarter will have cross-Directorate membership. Representatives on the Gender Team should be appointed by their Head of Section; they will have management responsibility within their Sections and will lead on the implementation of the policy within their Section. The workload associated with membership of the Gender Team will be acknowledged in staff role profiles.
- Overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the policy will be the remit of the Gender Team at Headquarters.
- At Embassy level, a team structure with responsibility for mainstreaming gender will be encouraged, the membership and functioning of the team to be determined locally.
- The Gender Teams at Headquarters and Embassies will share and exchange information and lesson learning regularly.
- The appointment of a Gender Adviser at Senior Development Specialist level with specialist gender competence who will have responsibility for assisting Development Cooperation Ireland staff and stakeholders in implementing the gender equality policy. Each Embassy will also need specific gender expertise at advisory level.

- The Gender Team at Headquarters will develop and work to a three year action plan with annual, time-bound targets and reporting procedures.
- During 2004, the budget required to support policy implementation will be accessed from the administration budget line. The Gender Team will submit a budget with the three year action plan for allocation at the end of 2004.

Development Cooperation Ireland promotes an equal opportunities culture in the workplace as part of the human resources policy of the Department of Foreign Affairs, which is conducive to achieving the aim of gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and women's empowerment at Headquarter and Country Offices.¹⁵ Gender training provides opportunities for Development Cooperation Ireland staff to become aware of the legal framework for the equal opportunities policy of the Civil Service and the service-wide targets for achieving equality. Development Cooperation Ireland will:

- ensure more positive gender equality attitudes and practices through awareness training;
- ensure that there is no gender discrimination in the provision of training opportunities
- seek to ensure that there is no gender discrimination in assigning staff within Development Cooperation Division and to Missions abroad;
- continue to promote and implement family-friendly policies;
- develop workplace policies at Development Cooperation Ireland Country Offices to ensure that there is no gender discrimination in the recruitment, placement, promotion or working conditions of staff locally employed.

3.8.3 Development Cooperation Ireland's Gender Equality Policy and Communications

Development Cooperation Ireland has a responsibility to ensure public ownership and understanding of the development cooperation programme. As part of the communications strategy, Development Cooperation Ireland will publicise its gender equality policy, ensure that it is communicated as a core value informing our work and provide information on its progress. Publications and information materials will present positive images of women, their needs and their achievements.

Development education has a crucial role in enlarging public understanding of development issues. This is a vital arena for gender issues as audiences are stimulated to understand the underlying causes of poverty and underdevelopment. Promoting an understanding of gender inequality globally is also a priority for funding of development education partners and their programmes.

¹⁵ Gender equality mainstreaming in the Development Cooperation Ireland programme and workplace is based on the Civil Service document on Gender Equality Policy of May 2001, which mandates the Equality Authority to promote an equal opportunities culture in the workplace as part of the human resource policies. The main legal framework for the policy on equality of opportunity in the civil service is the Employment Equality Act, 1998, and the Equal Status Act, 2000.



4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The objectives of Development Cooperation Ireland's Gender Equality policy are the baseline against which results in implementation will be assessed. Review and monitoring tools are essential for measuring the success of the policy. The work plan for the Gender Team will include the development of a review framework which will identify both qualitative and quantitative gender equality indicators.

4.1 Preparing for Evaluations

Terms of Reference for studies, reviews and evaluations should provide explicit and feasible direction on gender equality issues.¹⁶ It is recommended that:

- Evaluation teams have members with the capacity to support appropriate gender analysis
- Particular attention is paid to methodology, especially the collection of sex-disaggregated data and linking it to gender analysis, including an assessment of changes in gender relations and reduction of gender inequality.
- When appropriate, participatory methodology is used in order to enable women's participation in analysing performance and identifying the extent to which they have benefited from interventions.

The weight given to gender equality compared to other issues in general evaluations will vary from one activity to another, and depend on a range of factors including evaluation objectives, scope and resources.¹⁷

4.2 Review Mechanisms for the Gender Equality Policy

A review mechanism for the new gender policy and strategy will be established which will include an internal, mid-term review of key components of the strategy. Participatory gender workshops as part of the review process to discuss experiences will take place regularly at regional level.

An evaluation of the progress, achievements and shortcomings of the Gender Equality policy will be undertaken three years after its adoption and its recommendations will inform the next three-year phase of the Gender Equality policy or a reformulation of the policy if appropriate.

¹⁶ OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, Review on Gender and Evaluation, Final Report to the DAC Working Party on Evaluation, May 2003

¹⁷ *ibid*, pg. 20

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www.dci.gov.ie

Development Cooperation Ireland

Department of Foreign Affairs
Bishops Square
Redmond's Hill
Dublin 2

Tel +353 1 408 2000
Fax +353 1 408 2880
Email dci@iveagh.irlgov.ie
Web www.dci.gov.ie