EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Closing the Gender Policy-Practice Gap
European Community Development Co-operation

Overview of Recent Research on Bridging the Gap
Conclusions and Recommendations

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Executive Summary

1. This review presents the findings and recommendations of an overview of recent work and research on closing the gender policy-practice gap in development co-operation.

2. The objectives of this review are to:

   identify lessons from recent research as a basis for assisting the European Commission in implementing its Programme of Action on mainstreaming gender equality in European Community Development Co-operation, and establish methods to close the policy/practice gap.

3. The findings have been drawn from a range of sources, including: the European Commission, selected EU Member States, OECD/DAC, World Bank, UN, Commonwealth Secretariat, academic websites and One World Action’s Closing the Gap Project.

4. Key findings

4.1 Clarity on concepts, goals, and mainstreaming strategy

   Conceptual clarity is vital for implementing gender policy. Lack of common understanding of gender concepts can lead to a gap between policy and practice. There appears to be a lack of clarity regarding gender as a concept, gender equality as the goal, and gender mainstreaming as a strategy. Clear, visible and explicit gender equality goals at every level prevent policy evaporation and enhance the chance that an intervention’s outcomes will influence unequal gender relations. All studies examined emphasis the need to mainstream gender and support women-specific interventions.

4.2 Linking gender equality goals to other development goals

   Convergence and coherence between gender equality and other development goals, e.g. poverty reduction, can assist in reaching gender equality goals. Merging gender equality with other policy priorities and strategies may lead to lack of clarity at intervention level. Thus convergence at national and institutional policy and strategy levels needs to be accompanied by operational clarity within specific interventions. Sector-wide approaches and the Poverty Reduction Strategy process provide opportunities, yet to be fully exploited, for closing the gap between policy and practice on gender equality.

4.3 Changing organisations to meet gender equality goals

   The involvement of staff and other stakeholders in developing gender equality policy increased the chances of policy implementation. Implementing gender equality policies also requires political and institutional support, resources, and changes in organisational structure, management, ways of working, attitudes and procedures to anchor gender mainstreaming within an institution and move beyond individual staff commitment and initiatives. The role of senior management is crucial in this process; the importance of top-level commitment, leadership and support cannot be over-estimated. A more formalised system of appraising staff performance on gender and developing incentives for improving performance has a role to play in closing the policy/practice gap.
4.4 Specialist gender expertise
All studies examined illustrate the importance of gender specialists for effective implementation of gender policy. The gender specialist priorities are advocacy, policy development, networking, monitoring and providing support to other staff. It is argued that specialists are most effective when they have a clear and routine niche in the policy process coupled with financial and human resources. Gender expertise, of course, needs to be accompanied with a training and evaluation process to create earning carry-over.

4.5 Gender training
Ongoing and relevant gender training is another key to closing the gap between policy and practice. Training needs to go beyond ‘awareness raising’ to enable staff to apply gender analysis to their area of work. Training is most effective when it is part of a broader strategy for influencing people and promoting gender equality, and adopts the principles of adult learning. Gender training tools, resources and materials have to be relevant, sector specific and user-friendly.

4.6 Gender analysis, statistics and indicators
Collecting qualitative and quantitative information is necessary for closing the policy/practice gap. Participatory methods of data collection and a close relationship between data producers and users improve data quality and usefulness. Good working relations with training institutions, gender advocates and practitioners ensures a flow of new ideas and information. Ongoing analytical research assists in challenging established concepts and models and stimulating new ideas and debates. The South Africa Women’s Budget Initiative is a good example.

4.7 Monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring and evaluation, when on-going, regular and constructive, are essential elements in effective policy implementation. It is necessary to assess the impact of gender mainstreaming on gender relations as well as the process. Relevant gender-sensitive indicators are needed to measure performance, as are measurable, concrete, short-term objectives, alongside longer-term goals. Participatory methods, local expertise, and joint evaluations (partner/donor, donor/donor) are most valuable, and have the added advantage of building capacity.

4.8 Aligning financial resources with gender policy commitments
Gender mainstreaming needs financial resources. Globally, gender structures, programmes and interventions are under-resourced and thus less effective. Specific budgetary allocations for gender mainstreaming are essential to fund innovative catalytic work. At the same time it is vital to analyse the impact of mainstream budget allocations, including national budget allocations, on women’s and men’s lives. Gender budget analysis can serve as a powerful tool in advocating for changes or shifts in public expenditure to match policy goals.

4.9 Partnerships and networks
Partnerships and networks can assist in closing the policy/practice gap and strengthen gender mainstreaming work. Discussion on gender equality goals and strategies needs to be incorporated into dialogue with government, especially ministries not dealing directly with gender issues, with external actors, such as women’s advocacy organisations and research institutions, and with other donors. Meaningful dialogue can strengthen ownership, be a forum for review and
monitoring, co-ordination and learning and sharing new ideas, new analysis and good practice. It also enhances transparency and accountability.

4.10 Involving men
Involving men in promoting gender equality goals is recognised as essential for effective gender mainstreaming and makes political, strategic and pragmatic sense. This is not easy as it challenges pre-conceived notions and stereotypes. Greater involvement of men as gender specialists, gender focal persons and trainers and mixed teams in gender units are to be encouraged.

4.11 Disseminating good practice
While there are many good examples of gender mainstreaming, these are not widely known. Documenting and disseminating good practice in accessible forms highlight the challenges of gender mainstreaming work and improve institutional lesson learning.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Clear concepts
Explicitness and visibility of gender equality goals at policy, strategy and operational levels are necessary. Achieving gender equality goals can be strengthened by linkage to other development goals, such as poverty reduction. The European Commission should emphasise policy convergence at institutional and country levels while at the same time promoting operational clarity regarding gender within specific interventions. The European Commission should explore more fully the potential of sector-wide approaches and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers for promoting gender equality.

5.2 Gender analysis
Both qualitative and quantitative gender analysis is needed to raise awareness, inform policy makers, planning and training, and analyse the impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives. European Commission and Delegation close working relations with gender research and training institutions, gender advocates and practitioners would facilitate theoretical research and analysis. Gender budget analysis is a powerful tool.

5.3 Accountability
Accountability systems, processes and procedures on gender equality need to be strengthened. Consideration should be given by the European Commission to developing an accountability matrix, similar to that prepared by the World Bank, defining roles, responsibilities and corresponding accountabilities for all levels. Within the context of EU de-concentration special attention should be given to strengthening mechanisms of accountability at Delegation level. Country gender action plans would be valuable to clarify priorities and objectives, and for accountability and monitoring purposes.

5.4 Organisational structure and resources
Organisational structure needs to match policy priorities and this requires political, organisational, management, attitudinal and technical change. Senior management support is essential. Gender specialists have vital catalytic, co-ordinating, advocacy and monitoring roles to play. Men are important actors in the struggle for gender
equality. In addition, men’s involvement and participation in gender equality work improves its status and profile.

Ongoing and relevant training supports gender-sensitive organisational change. Training is most effective when used as part of a broader strategy, when it is relevant to post, and when follow-up activity is expected. The European Commission and Delegations should consider making gender training compulsory, and also fully integrated in all pre-posting training.

5.5 Financial resources
Specific budgetary allocations for gender mainstreaming are essential to fund innovative catalytic work and gender mainstreaming initiatives. It is equally important to analyse aid allocations, trade and other external relations activities, and national budgets from a gender perspective.

5.6 Monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process that requires attention at all levels. Good gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data is crucial to effective M&E. Participatory methodology and use of local expertise assist in mainstreaming gender in M&E. The European Commission and Delegations should identify some measurable short-term concrete results, alongside long-term goals. Documenting and disseminating good practice provide incentives for those tasked with gender mainstreaming and assist institutional learning.

5.7 Dialogue, partnerships and networking
Dialogue, partnerships and networking with government partners, other donors, civil society organisations and research institutions are key activities in gender mainstreaming work. There is an urgent need for EU Delegations to make time and resources for networking with diverse groups, and develop formal and informal structures for dialogue.

1. Background to the assignment

In March 2003, the Gender Desk - DG Development European Commission, commissioned One World Action to compile available information on recent research done in the area of bridging the gap between gender policy and practice and to prepare a summary paper for presentation and discussion at an informal EU Member States meeting. The impetus for the assignment arose from the recommendations in the Council Conclusion of 2001 that drew attention to policy evaporation:

The Council calls on the Commission to finalise specific work-plans and to put in place the necessary operational arrangements and partnerships, with a view to clarifying the modalities and details of interventions, financial resources, timelines and expected outcomes. In this regard, the Council urges the Commission to use an accountability matrix, clarifying the roles of those responsible for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Co-operation.¹

The objectives of this review are to:

¹ European Union (2001) Council Conclusions - Programme of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Co-operation
identify lessons from recent research as a basis for assisting the European Commission in implementing its Programme of Action on mainstreaming gender equality in European Community Development Co-operation, and

- establish methods to close the policy/practice gap.

2. Methodology

The review involved a survey of recent research on bridging the gap between gender policy and practice to identify lessons. Information was collected from the European Commission, selected EU Member States, the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Commonwealth Secretariat and academic websites. The review also draws on One World Action’s Closing the Gap Project that has carried out research and consultations in South Africa, Nicaragua and Bangladesh.

3. European Commission’s gender policies and strategies

*Integrating gender issues in European development co-operation (1995 Resolution European Development Council)* commits the EU to mainstreaming gender analysis in the conception, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and interventions. It recognises that special attention needs to be given to ‘specific measures’ to counter major gender disparities, and states that ‘women and men should both participate in and benefit from the development process on an equal basis’. The necessity of mainstreaming gender and at the same time supporting women specific initiatives to ensure women benefit from development processes is very clearly articulated in the draft new Regulation to be adopted in 2004.

*The 2001 Programme of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Co-operation* provides a gender analysis of the six thematic areas identified as priorities for development co-operation in the 2001 Development Policy statement and outlines steps for improving mainstreaming in each area. Significant progress is being made, for example: a sub-group on gender equality in external relations meets regularly, a manual on mainstreaming and guidelines for use of monitoring indicators are being developed, and an extensive training programme to improve gender competence in planned for 2004.

These documents provide the most comprehensive statement of the EU’s gender mainstreaming strategy. They describe an approach in which the EU agrees that gender inequality is a determinant factor in poverty and expresses commitment to reducing gender inequality as part of an overall strategy to eliminate poverty. The European Union has not demonstrated a commensurate practical commitment to implementing its gender policy throughout its development co-operation and other external relations activities, in the areas of trade or foreign and security affairs. More recently, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become overriding international commitments on policy and strategic planning. The MDGs build on commitments made in 1990s’ UN conference agreements, of which one of the most

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2 These six areas are trade and development; regional integration and cooperation; macroeconomic policies and promotion of equitable access to social services; transport; food security and sustainable development; and institutional capacity building.
important is the Beijing Platform for Action. This document states that ‘the empowerment of women and gender equality are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security’ and that ‘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’.3

In general, most EU policies mention gender largely as a symbolic commitment that seems to evaporate as the policy moves from analysis to implementation. The EU is committed to mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting issues but this is inconsistently carried through in the identification of specific programme and other intervention activities, tools and the allocation of resources. Some reasons for policy evaporation include: the lack of financial and human resources; a tendency for gender work to be driven by committed individuals rather than institutionally guaranteed; lack of gender knowledge; tools and guidance materials produced but rarely used.

4. Bridging the Gap: Findings from recent research and evaluations

Recent reviews and evaluations of gender mainstreaming work highlighted the following key issues:

4.1 Clarity on gender concepts, goals, and gender mainstreaming strategy

A lack of common understanding of gender concepts can lead to a gap between policy and practice. Knowledge of gender concepts and analysis is often uneven across organisations: in some cases, there is sophisticated analysis and understanding while in others, the understanding is vague making implementation difficult.

One World Action’s research in South Africa showed that the need for conceptual clarity is important in achieving gender equality goals. The study found gaps in information, knowledge and capacity among European Commission staff responsible for implementation. These gaps arose from a lack of clarity regarding gender as a concept, lack of clarity regarding gender equality as a goal, lack of awareness of existing gender policies, and lack of clarity regarding mainstreaming as a strategy. Gender was seen in some cases as simply including women, rather than an analysis of unequal power relations between women and men.4

The research found that there was often confusion between gender equality as a goal and gender mainstreaming as a strategy. It argues that the focus of development interventions needs to be on gender equality as a goal of development, and that clarity concerning gender equality as a goal needs to exist from policy and strategy through to operational and intervention levels. Clarity of the goal on paper often gets lost in concepts and strategies used in practice – concepts such as social development or strategies such as women’s participation, or mainstreaming. Instrumental objectives such as mainstreaming or integration become the focus because it is easier to address processes, procedures and operations rather than tackling deeper structural change. However, the research also found that both

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4 One World Action (2003 forthcoming) Closing the Gap: South Africa
targeting and mainstreaming strategies were required to achieve gender equality goals.

Similarly, a report of an Informal Consultation on 'Strategies for Gender Equality: Is Mainstreaming a Dead End?' argues that the concepts gender and women are not mutually exclusive. Women are essential actors and target groups in relation to gender equality. As a result the goal is gender equality and women’s empowerment, and different strategies and actions are needed according to circumstances to achieve this goal. Polarisation of strategies does not work, as both mainstreaming and targeting strategies are needed to achieve gender equality objectives. So while it is necessary to mainstream gender in all policies, programmes and interventions, it is equally important to support women-specific policies, programmes and interventions to ensure that women benefit from development processes.

Clarity of policy, goals and gender mainstreaming strategy is vital for effective gender mainstreaming.

The 2003 Thematic Evaluation of the Integration of Gender in EC Development Co-operation with Third Countries argues that while a strong policy framework on gender equality and gender mainstreaming exists, ‘specific policy goals on gender equality and the integration of gender in EC development co-operation are lacking, and EC policy is widely unknown at all levels’. Thus its first recommendation is: ‘Formulation of a coherent and clearly-understandable position by the European Commission on the objectives to be achieved by, and its strategic approach to, integrating gender in its development co-operation with third countries, and communication of strong and clear statements from the very top levels of the Relex family ... to all key stakeholders.’

The 2001 ‘Mainstreaming Gender Equality’ Sida Evaluation Report similarly highlights the importance of being explicit about gender equality as a goal. The evaluation found that the presence of an explicit gender equality goal enhances the chance that intervention’s outcomes will influence unequal gender relations. On the other hand, the absence of explicit gender equality goals leads to missing opportunities where gender impact might be increased. Interventions that have a less explicit focus on gender issues may have positive effects for women but they do not work to alter unequal gender relations or positively affect the position of women in their communities or societies. Clarity and visibility of gender equality goals at policy and strategy level, but also at operational level of programmes and interventions, is necessary to prevent policy evaporation.

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5 Report of Informal Consultation on ‘Strategies for Gender Equality – is mainstreaming a dead end?’ (2003) Oslo (Gender focal points of 15 UN organisations, development banks and 5 donor agencies and resource people met for four days of discussion in Oslo in early 2003)

6 Ibid. p1


8 Ibid. p52


10 Ibid.
One World Action’s evaluation of a European Community funded initiative, Adarsha Gram, in Bangladesh (see Box 1) showed that building in explicit gender equality objectives may increase the impact of altering gender relations within households.\textsuperscript{11}

**Box 1**

Adarsha Gram is a housing initiative lead by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). The main objective of the programme is to help the poorest to become self-sufficient. In allocating khas (government owned) land to poor asset-less families, the GoB has issued a directive to execute deeds in equal shares to husband/wife. Moreover, widows and vulnerable women are given priority in the selection of settlers. This move extends equal property rights to women who would ordinarily have no hope of owning property and therefore provides them with greater security. A woman interviewed at the village explained that since obtaining the house, her husband seeks her permission “even when he wants to smoke a "beedi"”.\textsuperscript{12} This is illustrative of the shift in gender relations in that particular household.

A central lesson from the 2001 Sida Evaluation Report is that gender equality goals have not filtered down from policy to implementation. Another Evaluation Report by Sida of Sweden’s and Holland’s Strategies for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Bolivia calls for clarity, explicitness and visibility in the statement of gender equality as a goal and priority at all levels and stresses the need for establishing convergence with other development assistance goals such as poverty reduction and democratic governance.\textsuperscript{13}

### 4.2 Linking gender equality goals to other development goals

In addition to mainstreaming and targeting strategies, there may be other strategies that need to be considered or developed to meet the goal of gender equality. One of these is linking gender equality goals to other development goals, such as poverty reduction, or cross-cutting priorities. Convergence and coherence between gender goals and other development goals is important to promote gender issues. The 2001 Sida Evaluation found that very few explicit linkages were made between poverty reduction and gender equality goals.\textsuperscript{14} This lack of clarity about linkages and synergies seemed to relate to the fact that there are contradictory interests of different groups involved which cannot be solved by technical and administrative initiatives. Yet convergence, linkage and synergy between policies can connect different priorities in ways that advance gender policy goals. Birte Rodenberg (2003) reminds us of the need to see poverty and gender in the wider context of democratisation, governance, and market and societal structures to avoid a narrow WID approach.\textsuperscript{15} The 2002 Sida Evaluation of Sweden and Holland’s support to Bolivia, found that the Dutch Embassy was able to promote a more effective dialogue to integrate and link its three chosen cross cutting issues – Gender, Environment, and Indigenous People - and explore their bearing on the overall objective to reduce poverty. It achieved this through a number of interlinked measures: commitment at political and official top level and organisational structure and availability of gender expertise, resources and instruments (see below 4.3 and 4.4).\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{11} One World Action (2003 forthcoming) Closing the Gap: Bangladesh

\textsuperscript{12} ‘beedi’ = tobacco.

\textsuperscript{13} Sida (2002) Sweden’s and Holland’s Strategies for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Bolivia. Evaluation 02/09

\textsuperscript{14} Sida (2001) p103ff

\textsuperscript{15} Rodenberg, B. (2003) p10

\textsuperscript{16} Sida (2002) p13-15
Sector-wide approaches can provide other opportunities for closing the gap between policy and practice on gender equality. In 1999 the DAC Working Party on Gender Equality set up a task force to examine how the sector-wide approach contributes to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and how the goal of gender equality contributes to sector-wide goals. The study included eight case studies in seven countries of three sectors: agriculture, health and education. A consultation workshop (February 2001) on sector-wide approaches concluded that the sector-wide approach has potential to promote coherence in gender equality policy given the collective effort required from governments and donors in sector development, and is a powerful mechanism to address gender disparities on a wide scale.\(^\text{17}\)

National priority and ownership, stakeholder participation, comprehensive analysis and capacity building of sector institutions are necessary for the sector-wide approach to fulfil its potential on gender equality.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy process is yet another opportunity for closing the policy/practice gap, which has yet to be fully exploited. A study for the German Technical Co-operation agency, GTZ, took the example of Ghana to examine how gender interests were taken into consideration in the PRSP process and to what extent women and women’s organisations were involved in the process.\(^\text{18}\) One overall conclusion was that there seemed to be ‘significant transmission losses’ when international documents and policy papers are translated into national poverty reduction strategies.\(^\text{19}\) The Ghana PRSP focused mainly on women’s practical needs; no analysis was done from a gender perspective and no strategies were elaborated to address the problem. The study includes some useful recommendations, such as, greater dissemination of existing policy papers, the collection and evaluation of disaggregated data, and greater coherence and coordination amongst donors on processes such as PRSPs and SWAPs.\(^\text{20}\)

An overall conclusion of the Sida (2001) Evaluation Report was that support for gender mainstreaming at the national level is maintained on the basis of the strong links with poverty reduction and that coherence between gender policies and overarching policy frameworks is important in order that gender equality goals are achieved. The authors recognise the risk that merging gender equality with other policy priorities at the level of policies and strategies may not lead to increased clarity at the intervention level and thus results in reduced commitment to gender equality. To counter this, the authors recommend that Sida should conduct policy development and strategic work at the institutional and country levels to emphasise convergence, while at the same time ‘promoting operational clarity within specific interventions’.\(^\text{21}\)

4.3 Changing organisations to meet gender equality goals

In the European Commission, until the reform in 2000, the Directorates General for Development and External Relations each had a small gender desk. The restructuring and creation of EuropeAid resulted in a more extensive ensemble of institutional mechanisms which seem to offer good opportunities to ensure gender


\(^{19}\) Rodenberg, B. (2003) p10

\(^{20}\) Ibid. p36-38

\(^{21}\) Sida (2001) p104-106
mainstreaming, including a directorate for horizontal themes including gender, and a Gender Help Desk providing technical assistance. The new structures have clarified responsibilities for gender specialists in DG Development and EuropeAid, but have not addressed the wider issue, common to all donors, of the overall gender mainstreaming roles and responsibilities of all officials working in external relations institutions.

A conclusion of the 2003 European Commission Thematic Evaluation is that policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation `have been acted upon, but have not yet been made operational'.22 Alongside the lack of specific policy goals (mentioned above) it identifies two other severe limitations: the lack of a person or structure responsible for co-ordinating gender mainstreaming strategy between the three Commission services that manage European Community development co-operation and the lack of leadership and institutional commitment to gender equality which, it argues, `gives strong negative messages about the importance placed on women's and men's experiences both within the institution and in its co-operation with third countries'.23 Its recommendations aim to anchor gender mainstreaming within the institution and provide the necessary institutional support and resources. It recommends: the establishment of one strong, visible structure for gender mainstreaming in a stable and central location in the Relex family; and the creation of awareness and understanding at the topmost levels of the European Commission of the objectives, rationale and strategy of gender equality in order to secure commitment to the challenges of gender mainstreaming.24

Implementing gender equality policies requires both structural and attitudinal change. Members of staff can serve as resistors or implementers of the policies and it is therefore important to have buy-in from staff members. The 2000 DFID report, `Gender Mainstreaming- Emerging lessons from Ghana', points to the importance of process in developing a gender policy. Involving staff and external stakeholders is important for ownership of the policy, for enhancing understanding and commitment to gender equality and ensuring that the policy corresponds to the organisational culture, structures and procedures. The report argues that involving staff and other stakeholders in developing the policy increases the chances of policy implementation.25

However, the report also acknowledges that certain structural changes may also be required. If the aim of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that gender sensitive practice becomes embedded in the organisation’s work rather than being driven by particular staff or confined to specific interventions, it requires more than a focus on aspects of what the organisation does - it requires attention to the institution itself and how it operates. Orientating organisations to implement gender policies is a long-term task, involving technical and political changes. The report lists a range of issues needing attention including, gender focal persons, financial resources, gender training and management support. The report stresses the need for a long-term

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22 European Commission (2003) Executive Summary
23 Ibid. p45
24 Ibid. p51-52
A gender mainstreaming factsheet published by the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs outlines conditions for gender mainstreaming. The starting point is that gender mainstreaming can only be applied if the entire policy process meets these conditions.

- Policy on equal opportunities and on women and development must be clearly defined. What is this policy, and how is implementation assessed?
- Directors and heads of departments must devote sufficient attention to the question of equality and equal opportunities. After all, the ultimate aim is a more just society.
- Everyone within the organisation must know how they can contribute to gender equality in their own policy field.
- Gender experts should take part in decision-making on policy, and be there to answer specific questions.
- There must be enough money and enough manpower for policy making and implementation.
- Finally, it is important for policy to be assessed and accounted for at specific stages.

From 2002 all Netherlands Ministries report on how they have fulfilled these conditions.

Alison Woodward (2003) outlines several critical success factors for gender mainstreaming in her article, 'European Gender Policy: Promises and Pitfalls of Transformative Policy'. These include: commitment to a gender mission; level of sophistication in terms of gender and policy issues in the administrative setting; level of resistance to gender; extent to which gender experts play a role. She continues that gender mainstreaming requires a radical re-definition of policy values and is transformative. It requires a deliberate and systematic approach to integration. As a result, much depends on the institutional and organisational context – the organisation's history, area of work, current personnel and procedure.

Organisational change is key to gender mainstreaming work. Macdonald, Sprenger and Dubel (1997) present a useful technique in their book Gender and Organisational change – Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice. They present a roadmap or framework which they argue may assist in guiding organisations seeking to achieve greater gender equality and gender sensitivity in their organisations. They identify seven stages for implementing gender sensitive organisational change:

1. Assessing/establishing readiness to change – the country environment, internal organisational context etc.
2. Diagnosis and conceptualisation of the change process
3. Building knowledge and consensus within the organisation – including identifying and working with internal and external allies, building consensus around the issue
4. Strategic Planning – specific objectives, clarity

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26 Ibid. p15-18
27 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2002) Gender Mainstreaming Factsheet
29 Ibid.
30 Macdonald, Sprenger and Dubel (1997) Gender and Organisational change – Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice. p95
5. Implementation of the gender and organisational learning process – action plans, trainers facilitated by gender experts

6. Evaluation of inputs, outcomes, process and impact – look at outcomes and impacts of changes – strengths and weaknesses, causal factors that have led to change or lack of it

7. Institutionalisation of organisation’s learning.

Changes in organisational structure, management and ways of working may be required to achieve gender equality aims. The DFID Ghana report stresses the need for action plans, targets and designated responsibility for promoting and supporting policy implementation. However organisational changes required for gender policy implementation can only be achieved in organisations that are open to this. Beveridge et al (2000) in ‘Mainstreaming and the engendering of policy making: a means to an end?’ stress the importance of accountability, which is only possible with a culture of openness and participation.31 The 2002 Sida evaluation found that the personal commitment of the Head of Operation in the Dutch Embassy played an important role in promoting gender mainstreaming. His positive attitude provided the leadership that enabled and ensured that members of staff fulfill their gender mandate.

Support of senior management support will go a long way in successful implementation. The DFID Ghana report highlights the importance of commitment and leadership of senior management in effective mainstreaming. The review argues that only senior management can properly oversee a cross cutting theme that intersects the various management structures of the organisation. Senior management provides signals about priorities assigned to various issues and can therefore ensure that sufficient financial and human resources and time are attached to policy commitments. Support of senior management may also assist gender responsible staff in the face of resistance. The trial-and-error nature of gender mainstreaming work also requires management support in providing the space for staff to experiment with new techniques and methods.32 Senior management can also take the lead by making gender a part of the organisation’s thinking and planning processes. Consistently integrating gender into speeches and statements on a range of subjects and not reserving comments on gender for women specific occasions might assist in challenging gender resistors. Senior management could also encourage implementation of gender policies by providing recognition to staff who do gender work. They can also show support to gender networks and form strategic alliances with women’s advocacy groups external to the organisations that can assist in raising awareness, commitment and stimulating debate within the organisation.

Senior management support can be encouraged through gender training, although it is important that senior management staff lead by example by attending training sessions with other staff members. This will assist in developing a common understanding, language and commitment on gender and could encourage resistors to see the importance of participating. The report also suggests that senior management should be involved in gender policy implementation, including discussion of own roles and responsibilities in implementing the policy.33

32 DFID (2000) p18
33 Ibid.p19
In addition to providing recognition and supporting those doing gender work, it is necessary to have a more formalised system of monitoring staff performance on gender in appraisals and developing incentives (such as promotions) for improving performance. More broadly though including gender competence/knowledge in all job descriptions may improve policy implementation. Senior management should take proactive steps to promote gender equality within staffing recruitment and procedures of the organisation.

A report of an Informal Consultation on ‘Strategies for Gender Equality: Is Mainstreaming a Dead End?’ emphasises the need for vertical and horizontal accountability to facilitate good monitoring and evaluation. ‘To monitor progress, it is important to define different roles and responsibilities for staff members at different levels of accountability. There should be vertical accountability i.e. accountability mapped by leadership level: executive head, management (directors), gender advisors in units, corporate gender units, country representatives; as well as horizontal accountability i.e. accountability across non-technical, non-programme units’. The World Bank has developed a comprehensive accountability framework that maps the roles and responsibilities of staff and management in implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy. As in other donor institutions, the effectiveness of these measures depends on organisational and attitudinal change.

A principal finding of the 2002 Sida Evaluation is that `policy priority needs to be mirrored in organisational structure’. Good tools will remain unused or underused unless there is political and top level official commitment to gender equality accompanied with the organisational change to ensure the necessary human, financial and time resources and competence.

4.4 Specialist gender expertise

The 2002 Sida Evaluation of Sweden’s and Holland’s support to Bolivia highlights the importance of gender specialists for effective implementation of gender equality policy. The report contrasts the situation of the Dutch and Swedish Embassies. The Dutch regard adequate human and financial resources, combined with the establishment of appropriate monitoring mechanisms as pre-conditions for effective gender mainstreaming, and has put in place impressive mechanisms. Within the Dutch Embassy the offices of the specialists on cross-cutting issues are located in the centre of the Embassy surrounded by the offices of the sector staff. The cross-cutting specialists have to be involved in all major stages of programme cycle: identification, formulation, appraisal, implementation and evaluation. All sector staff are obliged to mainstream gender (as well as environment and indigenous people), and it is an administrative requirement that the Gender Specialist approves all documents authorising financial support to sector activities. By contrast, while Sida has strong gender policies and guidelines it is weak in implementation; gender expertise was integrated as part of the social sector, and guidelines and other tools are not used `consistently nor systematically’.

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36 Sida (2002) p35
37 Ibid. p25-27
38 Ibid. p27
The 2002 Sida Evaluation suggested that the Swedish Embassy should strengthen its capacity for gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in order to improve the implementation of Sida’s gender policies. The evaluation suggests a better balance between policy ambitions and operational capacities. In this regard, it presents two options: 1) to assign the responsibility of gender mainstreaming to a full time expert or appointed official who has gender expertise, or 2) to adapt its gender policy to sector wide approaches and provide the necessary gender training and tools to sector officials for effective implementation. Building gender capacity in the organisation is key to preventing policy evaporation. These could take the form of specialist training or even brown bag lunch events.\textsuperscript{39}

The DFID Ghana report argues that in order for gender work to be sustainable there is a need for staff with the responsibility for spear-heading, supporting and sustaining gender work.\textsuperscript{40} Arguably, the use of gender consultants can substitute for in-house gender specialists, but this may mean that continuity and sustainability of work is compromised. The use of gender specialists in monitoring weak areas where there is a risk of policy evaporation (e.g. planning, monitoring and evaluation, as well as policy formulation) is necessary.\textsuperscript{41}

An intervention funded by European Community aid in South Africa (see Box 2) illustrates the significant role which can be played by a project officer aware of the gender equality policy and committed to the gender equality goal. The intervention also highlights the importance of dialogue at project level and at the design stage and the value of importance of identifying barriers to participation and measures to address them.

\textbf{Box 2}

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Project funded by European Community aid in South Africa addresses the denial of formal training in the building trades for African people under apartheid. Part of the remedy involves the assessment of prior (non-formal) learning and the certification of those proficient in various skills. The intervention involved funding the Building Industries Training Board to set up centres to assess skills in bricklaying and carpentry. Twenty-six contracts had been awarded for RPL assessment centres by the time of the interviews. Many of these were in remote parts of the country and were targeted at the informal sector. Initially no consideration was given to the involvement of women in this project. It was as a result of dialogue initiated by the European Delegation project officer, a woman, with the all-male project steering committee, that women were included as part of the target group. As a result of her intervention at the design stage, each assessment centre is required to meet a specified quota of women and to provide a day care facility.

In instances where specific gender expertise is not available, it is important to provide the necessary support for staff with gender portfolios. This could include external practical training or professional academic training.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid. p35
\textsuperscript{40} DFID (2000)
\textsuperscript{41} DFID/ GADN briefing (forthcoming)
Alison Woodward argues that the role of gender experts is crucial for gender mainstreaming success. However, this must be coupled with a training and evaluation process to create learning carry-over. Woodward analyses the role of gender experts in different institutional settings and argues that while there are different degrees of sophistication in different countries, it is crucial that gender mainstreamers find a niche in the policy process that is routine and coupled with resources.

4.5 Gender training
Ongoing gender training is key for gender policy implementation. However, gender training needs to go beyond simple ‘awareness raising’ and should enable staff to apply a gender analysis to their area of work. The 2003 European Commission Evaluation identified the lack of an obligatory requirement on staff to have even a basic knowledge of gender issues as a key constraint to effective gender mainstreaming. The 2001 report of an Asian Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat draws attention to the need for sector specific gender training and encourages the development of sector specific [gender] capacity building plans and training.

In addition, a multi-pronged training strategy may yield more effective results. The World Bank, for example, has a three-step strategy for training. First, integrating gender and development material into both newly planned human resource integrative courses and existing Bank Institute core courses. Second, a series of technical modules on specific aspects of gender analysis offered on demand and focused on the skills needed to perform tasks related to implementation of the strategy. Finally, informal learning events both within the Bank and regionally to encourage cross country exchanges facilitated by the Gender and Development thematic group.

The 2000 DFID Ghana report found that gender training is most effective when used as part of a broader strategy for influencing people and promoting gender equality. The report found that participants expected some sort of follow-up activity and supervisor support for applying their training. In addition, gender training worked best using principles of adult learning. These include: learner centred training based on participant needs; participatory methodology using case studies, brainstorming and problems solving to allow participants to learn from doing; skills and awareness focusing on participants own job experiences and responsibilities; trainer credibility, s/he should have knowledge, understanding and status appropriate to group; followed up with on-the-job support, more discussion, more workshops.

Relevant and effective gender tools, resources and materials are necessary for training programmes. While there are many gender mainstreaming tools, resources and materials available, there is little evidence that these are applied in programme

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43 Ibid, p73.
44 Ibid. p82.
45 European Commission (2003), p47
48 DFID (2000) p17-18
or intervention implementation. One World Action’s research in South Africa, Nicaragua and Bangladesh showed that despite the proliferation of gender mainstreaming resources, delegations lacked time, skill and commitment to use them effectively. The 2002 SIDA Evaluation suggests publishing guidelines and handbooks on how to mainstream gender in the relevant sectors of development co-operation such as education, health, water and sanitation. Gender guidelines and prompt sheets on how to mainstream gender in different sectors provide practical application of gender tools and might encourage use of these resources. On the other hand, seemingly gender-neutral operational instruments need gender analysis. The World Bank as part of its strategy to mainstream gender makes reference to the use of engendering checklists, toolkits and sample TORs for consultants and advisors.49 The Commonwealth Secretariat produced a Gender Management System Series of Handbooks and Quick Guides in 1999 on gender mainstreaming in a wide range of sectors, including finance, trade and industry, education, health, etc.50 These have been widely distributed throughout the Commonwealth, but their use has not yet been systematically evaluated. In addition tools tend to contain technical jargon making it difficult to understand and therefore use. The focus should therefore be on simplicity and user-friendliness.

In addition to this, monitoring the extent to which training improves work performance implies the introduction of systems and procedures. Considering the enormous amount of resources that go into training, it would be worth considering how to ‘test’ whether training is effectively applied in work, for example, through inclusion in performance appraisal evaluations.

4.6 Gender analysis, statistics and indicators
Globally women make up the majority of the world’s poor and dispossessed. They are disproportionately affected by poverty, violence, lack of access to resources and services. Gender inequality underscores this subordination which is experienced differently by women in each different context. The struggle for gender equality therefore is central to the struggle for a more just and equitable world. Donors can no longer ignore the needs and interests of more than half of the world’s population. Women and men should both participate in and benefit from the development process.51 The implementation of the EU’s gender policy commitment will make a huge difference to the lives of millions of women. Gender equality is key to sustainable social, economic and political development and the sustainable achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Gender analysis is an important component of gender mainstreaming. The DFID Ghana report pays attention to gender analytical research and the collection of sex-disaggregated data. It argues that all data collected by organisations for management, planning and monitoring progress should be routinely sex-disaggregated. Both qualitative and quantitative information is needed to raise awareness of the issues, inform policy makers, provide material for gender training, identify best practices for planning purposes and to analyse the impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives. Additionally, a close relationship between gender research and training institutions, gender advocates and practitioners on the ground is important to facilitate theoretical research and analysis. Ongoing analytical research

49 World Bank (2002)
51 EU (1995). Integrating Gender Issues in European Development Co-operation
assists in challenging established concepts and models and stimulates new ideas and debates.\textsuperscript{52}

The Women’s Budget Initiative in South Africa is one such example of co-operation between policy makers, donors, NGOs, academics and activists (see Box 3).

**Box 3**
South Africa was one of the first countries to have a gender budget initiative that was driven by Parliament itself. This initiative is a collaborative venture of women parliamentarians and non-governmental organisations. As explained by Debbie Budlender, the term ‘women’s budget’ is used instead of ‘gender budget’ to emphasise that while gender inequality affects both women and men, women are overwhelmingly left in a subordinate position. The WBI does not call for a separate budget for women, but rather for an analysis of the gender responsiveness and sensitivity of the national budget. The Women’s Budget Initiative (WBI) continues to influence debate on gender and public expenditure in South Africa. In 2000, the Parliamentary Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women (CIQLFW) commissioned three reports focusing on areas that impact most profoundly on women’s lives in South Africa: HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence against women. The Committee commissioned two well-known NGOs to undertake research into the budget aspects of these three issues. Members of the Parliamentary Committee will use the research findings to undertake a range of activities aimed at ensuring that future budgets allocate sufficient funds to address the needs of South African women.

The EU could use gender budget analysis in areas of co-operation that are considered gender-neutral such as trade, macro-economic policy, transport and institutional capacity building. This would show that seemingly gender-neutral areas of development co-operation affect women and men in different ways. Further, gender budget analysis would assist in monitoring the extent to which EU policies on gender mainstreaming fail to be implemented due to the lack of sufficient budgetary allocation.

An important issue raised during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) was the lack of adequate statistical information and research on women’s contribution to economic development. Why do we need statistics on gender? Sex-disaggregated data is essential for understanding the nature and form of gender equality. For example neither labour statistics nor national income accounts reflect unpaid labour in household. As a result, women’s ‘reproductive’ work is excluded from measures in the Gross National Product of a country.\textsuperscript{53} In 1995 UNDP estimated that the value of women’s unpaid labour globally amounts to $11 trillion per year.\textsuperscript{54} Excluding women’s contribution to the national accounts will result in flawed socio-economic planning especially in developing countries.

Reliable statistics play a crucial role in the work of policy makers and implementers. The dearth of adequate statistics and indicators on gender issues prevent monitoring of change and progress. The 2001 Commonwealth workshop report highlights the

\textsuperscript{52} DFID (2000), p10
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. p9
need for the collection of sex-disaggregated data and the DFID Ghana report calls for gender analytical research and sex-disaggregated data. Without sex-disaggregated data, it is difficult to measure the impact of gender policies or refine strategies and plans accordingly. A recent Review on Gender and Evaluation prepared for the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation stressed the importance of participatory methods of data collection and the use of local expertise. A close relationship between the producers and users of gender statistics is also vital to ensure that user-needs are met. Since the 1970s Sida has been in the forefront in giving support to many countries to assist them to develop adequate, responsive statistical information and competence at national level. Development planning can only be successful if information is complete, reliable and timely.

In 2000, UNIFEM launched a user-friendly guide 'Progress of the World’s Women: Targets and Indicators'. This report highlights the importance of targets and indicators for holding governments accountable for the fulfilment of commitments made to women in the Beijing Platform for Action. It provides important baseline information on the position of women in the world and is used to measure progress in areas such as economic empowerment and women’s participation in politics. UNIFEM now conducts biennial reports measuring progress in achieving gender equality objectives.

4.7 Monitoring and evaluating gender policy implementation

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential element of gender mainstreaming and closing the gap between policy and practice. Effective monitoring and evaluation is an on-going and continual process, linked to having good statistics and indicators to measure performance.

The recent Review on Gender and Evaluation prepared for the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation included an examination of evaluation methodologies, approaches and tools for evaluating changes in gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment. It concluded that most evaluations which have satisfactory gender analysis used participatory methods of data collection. The use of local expertise was stressed as indispensable to good evaluation, while at the same time providing an opportunity for capacity building. Evaluations also need to include an assessment of the capacity of partners to work for gender equality. One of its overall conclusions it that evaluations need to evaluate the extent to which gender mainstreaming has led to changes in gender relations as well as the institutional and managerial aspects of mainstreaming.

The Sida 2002 Evaluation calls for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of gender policies and practice. One aspect of the World Bank’s strategy for mainstreaming gender is to develop and implement an effective system to monitor and evaluate the process of gender mainstreaming and its impact on the ground.

56 http://www.unifem.org
57 UNIFEM has a web page on gender budgets and statistics: www.unifem.undp.org/gender_budgets
59 Ibid. p19ff
60 Ibid. p20
Having effective and easy-to-use systems and procedures in place for M&E might encourage systematic use of tools. The identification of concrete short-term objectives alongside longer term goals is also important.

Ann Coles paper on ‘Progress with Gender Equality: Men, Women and Organisational culture. Perspectives from DFID and other Aid Agencies’ (undated) argues that one of the factors that leads to gender policy evaporation is sub-conscious forgetfulness or resistance. This could be linked to insufficiently explicit targets. Therefore regular and constructive monitoring from a gender perspective, with good sex-disaggregated data provides a learning opportunity, as well as keeping intentions on track.61

4.8 Aligning financial resources with gender policy commitments

A key challenge to implementing gender policies is the lack of adequate financial resources. Globally, gender structures, programmes and interventions are under-resourced leading to ineffective implementation of policies and legislation. The DFID Ghana review states that commitments to gender equality expressed in policy or planning documents must be backed up with adequate budgetary provision to fund specific service delivery and equal opportunities initiatives, as well as to support organisation capacity building through gender training, networking and research.62

Specific budgetary allocations for gender mainstreaming are essential in order that innovative catalytic work can be funded. Financial resources for innovative work and the whole gambit of gender mainstreaming including gender analysis, structural change, training, capacity building, tools, guidelines, monitoring and evaluation have to be ring-fenced. Those resistant to gender mainstreaming, may argue that more pressing issues (such as poverty, HIV/AIDS) should take spending priority. Yet, strategic choices need to be made on the specific allocation of financial resources to gender mainstreaming initiatives for capacity building to maximise impact and promote sustainability. The ‘added-value’ of funding gender programmes by linking poverty reduction and gender equality goals should be made clear.

The need for specific gender budgets does not diminish the crucial importance of analysing the impact of mainstream budget allocations including national budget allocations on women’s and men’s lives. Gender budget analysis can serve as a powerful tool in advocating for changes or shifts in public expenditure to match policy goals. The gender budget work mentioned above is an important tool for policy analysis. It measures the impact of government spending on men and women. According to Budlender, the budget is the most important policy tool of government. It is therefore necessary for gender mainstreamers to engage in debates on budgetary allocations. She identifies five steps for consideration:

1. Describe the situation of women and men, boys and girls, who are served by a particular sector or ministry;
2. Examine the government policies and programmes in the sector to see if there are gender gaps;
3. Examine the budget to see whether sufficient money has been allocated to implement effectively the gender sensitive policies and programmes identified in step 2 above;
4. Monitor whether the allocated money has been spent and who benefited from this;

62 DFID (2000) p14
5. Go back to step one to monitor the situation to see whether the budget and its associated programme has improved on what it initially described.

This five-step approach provides a framework to analyse budget allocations for national governments but could apply to bilateral donors as well. European Community aid in the form of direct budgetary support makes it difficult to assess the extent to which the aid is benefiting women or contributing to achieving the gender equality goal. As argued earlier, gender budget analysis could be used to show how gender mainstreaming commitments cannot be implemented due to the lack of budgetary allocation. This is an important lobbying tool for those within the EU advocating for more political support and financial resources for gender mainstreaming.

In her analysis of UN budgeting processes, Hannan (2000) stresses need for, ‘clear policy statements on gender equity, clarity on gender mainstreaming in planning and budget instructions, explicit management support for gender mainstreaming, strong oversight and accountability functions and increased dialogue between programme staff, budgetary staff and gender specialists’.63 This multi-pronged strategy of budgeting ensures that gender is prioritised at all levels of the project cycle.

The 2002 Sida Evaluation of Swedish and Dutch support to gender equality in Bolivia indicates that the Dutch place great emphasis on adequate human and financial resources for monitoring and effective implementation.64 A separate budget of Euro 2 million per year is set aside for specific gender activities over and above the resources needed for mainstreaming gender in all programmes supported. The rationale for this is the continued need for funding certain WID-type activities because of reaching grass root people and achieving poverty reduction.65 The One World Action South Africa Closing the Gap research also argues for continued support to women-specific interventions and programmes, alongside support to gender mainstreaming activities. This could have a greater impact on achieving gender equality goals. The research also recommends support to women’s organisations and networks working on advocacy.

4.9 Partnerships and networks

Policy dialogue with government is an important component of gender work. Donors can play a role in facilitating dialogue at different levels within government structures and between government and civil society. Opening up opportunities for networking and dialoguing can go a long way to enhancing principles of democratic governance such as transparency and accountability.

The 2002 Sida Evaluation showed that dialogue between the government and Swedish and Dutch donors takes place in many different ways. These include: consultative group meetings (an annual forum where all donors meet government representatives to discuss national development plans and pledges made by donor communities); annual bilateral negotiations between the Bolivian Government and Holland and Sweden which are largely a review session of current co-operation; and semi-annual meetings focusing on technical and financial reviews with the Vice-Ministry for Gender which are an important monitoring opportunity. In addition,

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65 Ibid.
meetings are held with other ministries to ensure there is strong gender component outside of the Gender Ministry. According to the evaluation this method has proved to be effective as it involves a high degree of Bolivian ownership while providing a forum for dialogue and co-ordination. The 2002 Sida Evaluation reported that gender dialogue with civil society in Bolivia is undertaken at three levels: firstly, through women’s networks; secondly through delegated NGOs from Sweden and Holland that administer resources to Bolivian NGOs using gender as a criteria for resource allocation; and finally through direct support to gender initiatives.66 The authors conclude that this dialogue has been effective at national policy level.

In addition to policy dialogue at government level, networking with organisations engaged in gender work should be strengthened. Non-governmental organisations are a source of information and most are well placed to do research and advocacy work. As part of the Closing the Gap project, One World Action conducted consultations in South Africa, Nicaragua and Bangladesh with organisations involved in gender equality and equity work. The objective of the consultations was to discuss the implementation of gender policies and to raise awareness about the challenges and barriers to gender mainstreaming. Participants from a wide range of sectors including government, donors and NGOs attended and drew on their experiences in developing strategies for improving implementation of gender policies. A key issue arising from the consultation discussions was the need to strengthen existing linkages and building coalitions among civil society organisations, government and donor agencies engaged in gender mainstreaming at national and regional levels. The consultation itself provided a forum for networking and exchange.

The World Bank strategy also draws attention to the importance of partnerships with specialist gender groups.67 They have external consultative groups that meet regularly with World Bank staff to advise about gender issues. They also support governments and civil society organisations working on gender issues including consultations with civil society on gender focused development aims. How inclusive the composition of these consultative groups is and their impact on World Bank policy and practice have yet to be fully evaluated.

While strengthening debate on gender issues is important, there are also pitfalls of dialoguing. The 2002 Sida Evaluation talks about the importance and limitations of dialoguing with women’s organisations. While it recognises the importance of engaging with women’s inter-institutional networks such as the Coordinadora de la Mujer (a major recipient of support thus far), it also notes that currently the network is not representative of Bolivian women. As such, not much is known about particular challenges that women in poor communities face.68

Opening up dialogue with diverse women’s groups and organisations is important. A study by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in South Africa examining government support to organisations providing services to women experiencing violence found that government was more likely to support the work of

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67 World Bank (2002). p64.
established, urban based NGOs. The study argued that that while it made good sense for donors to fund organisations that have a good track-record of delivery, this pragmatism needs to be balanced by providing newer or less well-known organisations the opportunity both to learn and to demonstrate competence. The study also found that although considerable efforts were made to fund grass roots women’s organisations, dialogue efforts still seemed to be concentrated on urban NGOs, thereby limiting opportunities for less well known organisations to engage in policy and other debates. This prevents capacity building of grass roots movements to engage with donor and government policies, and results in the further marginalisation of this sector. Many civil society organisations, especially women’s organisations representing or working with marginalised women have little capacity to engage with EU delegations. A strong effort must be made to open up dialogue to women’s organisations from a diversity of backgrounds.

While there is a wealth of useful civil society dialogue at the Brussels level, One World Action’s Closing the Gap research shows that formal and informal structures for dialogue between EU delegations and civil society are underdeveloped. This poses particular barriers to women’s CSOs wishing to enter into dialogue with the EU. The Cotonou Agreement has opened up new possibilities for dialogue that are only now being explored. In particular, one major feature of the Cotonou Agreement is the participation of Non-State Actors (NSAs) (civil society, NGOs, private sector, trade unions, and local authorities). The agreement recognises their important complementary role and states that NSAs will have access to financial resources and be involved in the planning and implementation of programmes.

Networking and dialogue with civil society takes time and resources, as well as commitment. Donor institutions have staff and time limitations which can prevent active engagement with NSAs. In addition, the move now towards reducing the number of staff for cost saving purposes (as demonstrated by the trends towards sector wide programming and direct budgetary support) will make it even harder for donor staff to spend time networking with NSAs. As ever it comes down to a question of strategic priorities.

4.10 Involving men
In recent years, there has been a growing body of knowledge examining the role of men in achieving gender equality. In the context of development agencies, this argument has particular significance because of the critical and dynamic culture of development. Both men and women in donor institutions like the European Commission and EU delegations need to work together to ensure that gender analysis underlies their work and that gender sensitive aid results in the improvement in women’s lives.

The Oslo Informal Consultation report provides some concrete recommendations on men’s involvement in furthering gender equality commitments. These include more male staff in gender specialist posts; more male gender focal persons in other units and more male trainers/facilitators for capacity building courses. Involving men in

70 Ibid. p35
gender work is difficult as it challenges pre-conceived notions of masculinity and femininity and requires unlearning of stereotypes and conditioned behaviour. It is therefore necessary to create a gentle and non-threatening environment to encourage involvement. The Oslo report suggests it is important to break stereotypes. So for example, discussion on HIV/AIDS might be a good entry point for talking with men about masculinity and gender based violence.\textsuperscript{72}

In her paper, Coles discusses the merits (and demerits) of involving men in gender work. In the main, she argues that it is necessary to gain men’s support and suggest ways in which this can be done:

1. Engage sensitive men influencing other men with the aim of changing mind sets.
2. Men may have greater access to senior policy and programme officials.
3. Decision makers are more likely to be men.
4. At intervention level: case for women may be better received (by traditional leaders or local bureaucrats) by a man.
5. Men cannot dismiss gender issues as feminist rhetoric when other men raise it.
6. A man may be perceived as more ‘objective’ than a woman. Involvement of men can make gender concerns integral to the development process; more normal and pragmatic.
7. Their involvement breaks down type-casting that gender is a woman’s issue and can only be addressed by looking at women’s needs and interest, without addressing the barriers created by gender relations and men’s roles.
8. Easier for men to challenge masculine attitudes and controls.
9. The men who have taken senior gender position have for the most part already established themselves successfully in their organisations.\textsuperscript{73}

She suggests the following practical ways of how men’s involvement can be encouraged, facilitated and supported:

1. Gender units need mixed teams. Men should be encouraged to apply for gender positions.
2. Status of gender equality activities needs raising by demonstrating and celebrating success proving incentives and requiring accountability.
3. Senior men needs to show greater commitment and give better leadership to their staff, particularly male staff.\textsuperscript{74}

Supporting men’s involvement in implementing gender policies will go a long way to ensuring that gender sensitive aid has positive outcomes for women.

4.11 Widely disseminating good practice examples

There are many examples of good experience and lessons from the work of the EU Member States and other bilateral and multilateral donors, and from the work of European and Southern NGOs. Documenting, highlighting and disseminating good practice examples in accessible forms would encourage ongoing efforts to integrate integrating gender issues into operations and institutional lesson learning. Both the World Bank and a 2002 BRIDGE report emphasise the need to publicise good practice.\textsuperscript{75} Examples of good practice in training, working with NGOs, mechanisms

\textsuperscript{72} Report of Informal Consultation on ‘Strategies for Gender Equality – is mainstreaming a dead end?’ (2003)
\textsuperscript{73} Coles, A. (undated) ‘Progress with Gender Equality: Men, Women and Organisational Culture. Perspectives form DFID and other Aid Agencies’. Seminar on Men, Masculinity and Gender Relations in Development.
\textsuperscript{74}Ibid. p8.
for ensuring government accountability, information sharing and gender budgeting, all serve to show that implementation of gender policy is possible. In addition to highlighting the challenges we face in mainstreaming gender, this method also allows critical learning.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Clear concepts
Conceptual clarity is important. Explicitness and visibility of gender equality goals at policy, strategy and operational levels is necessary to prevent policy evaporation. In particular, each programme and intervention should have an explicit gender equality goal. There is need to strengthen capacity to put gender policy into practice – this should include clarity on key gender concepts, clarity on gender equality as a goal and clarity on developing strategies to meet this goal. Need to emphasise that gender equality is a goal and that mainstreaming is one strategy to meet this goal. So, while it is necessary to mainstream gender in development co-operation, support to women specific initiatives that ensure women benefit from development processes should continue.

Gender equality goals can link with other cross cutting priorities. However, linkages to other goals – e.g. poverty reduction – must be made with the proviso that gender equality is not lost in the convergence strategy.

**The EC should emphasise convergence at institutional and country levels while at the same time promoting operational clarity regarding gender within specific interventions. The EC should explore fully the potential of sector-wide approaches for promoting gender equality.**

Involving staff and external stakeholders is important for ownership of gender policy. It enhances understanding and commitment to gender equality and ensures that the policy corresponds to the organisational culture, structures and procedures. **The European Commission and EU delegations should aim for a better balance between policy ambitions and operational capacity.** This is key to sustainable progress towards gender equality. Wide internal and external collaboration should be a feature of gender mainstreaming policies.

5.2 Gender analysis
Both qualitative and quantitative gender analysis is needed to raise awareness, inform policy makers, planning and training, and analyse the impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives. A close relationship between gender research and training institutions, gender advocates, academics and practitioners on the ground is important to facilitate theoretical research and analysis.

On-going analytical research assists in challenging established concepts and models and stimulates new ideas and debates. For example, making use of up-to-date research and thinking, such as gender budget analysis, to highlight the gender bias of traditional economic theory and to therefore argue for increased spending on women, or to lobby for more resources internally.  

76 Gender budget analysis can serve as a powerful tool in advocating for changes or shifts in public expenditure to

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match policy goals. Gender budget analysis is vital also to examine the impact of other external relations, such as trade, and needs to be incorporated into monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of budget allocation on the implementation of EU policies on gender mainstreaming.

5.3 Accountability
Accountability systems, processes and procedures across the organisation, Brussels and Delegations must be strengthened. Vertical and horizontal accountability for gender mainstreaming with clear location of responsibility is needed. This requires a defined organisational chart that communicates roles, responsibilities and corresponding accountability. There should be expectation of delivery emphasised in performance appraisals, work plans and reports. Clear guidelines on accountability to governance structures, annual reports, expectations of reporting on progress would enhance transparency and good governance. Consideration should be given by the European Commission to developing an accountability matrix similar to that prepared by the World Bank.77

Senior staff need to take responsibility for cross-cutting and mainstreaming issues. In addition to this, senior level commitment, leadership and support – achieved through training, exposure sessions and information analysis – should be visible and unequivocal.

Within the context of increased de-concentration special attention should be given to strengthening mechanisms of accountability at Delegation level. Country gender action plans would be valuable to clarify priorities and objectives, and for accountability and monitoring purposes.

5.4 Organisational structure and resources
Policy priorities should be reflected in organisational structure. Orientating organisations to implement gender policies is a long-term task, involving technical and political changes. It needs a long-term perspective, a multifaceted approach, involving men as well as women, working in partnership and networking, and practising what you preach.

The support of senior management is essential. They should show commitment to the goal of gender equality in their internal and public statements, and provide support to gender specialists and training initiatives.

Gender specialist expertise is vital. Gender specialists play catalytic, co-ordinating, advocacy and monitoring roles, and should avoid becoming involved in implementation. Gender skills are required across the Commission and Delegations. Gender focal persons and other key gender interlocutors can be made more effective with clear TORs, training relevant to role, and on-going support. The Sub-Group on Gender in External Relations needs to identify strategic opportunities for promoting gender equality work, for example, the Quality Support Group structures, and the forthcoming Medium Term Review of the Country Strategy Papers.

Working with men is a relatively new area of work and should be explored and built on. Men are important actors in the struggle for gender equality and men’s involvement and participation in donor communities enhances the importance and

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77 World Bank (2002)
relevance of gender analysis in development co-operation. **Attention should be paid to increasing the number of male staff in gender specialist posts and as gender focal persons and trainers/facilitators for capacity building courses.** Raising the profile and visibility of gender equality work is also key. The planned brochure and website will assist in this regard.

Ongoing and relevant training is important to support gender sensitive organisational change. Training is most effective when used as part of broader strategy, when it is relevant to post, when follow-up activity is expected, and when supported by supervisors. **The European Commission and Delegations should consider making gender training compulsory,** and also fully integrated in all pre-posting training. Other less formal training methods such as inviting external speakers from NGOs or universities to address staff, brown-bag lunches and networking opportunities, could also be used by the Commission and most particularly by Delegations. In order for training to be effective, **the Commission needs to develop ways to evaluate and test if/how training is used in work.** Tools and guidelines must be relevant, effective, simple and user-friendly.

Financial and human resources are essential to close the gap between policy and practice. Policy commitments must be backed up with adequate budgetary provision to fund general and specific initiatives. **Specific budgetary allocations for gender mainstreaming are essential to fund innovative catalytic work and gender mainstreaming initiatives.**

### 5.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an on-going process that requires attention at all levels. It is important to keep in mind that process is often more important than outputs. In the case of gender mainstreaming work networking, dialogue and lobbying are important processes that lead to achieving outputs such as the Gender Budget Initiative. Measuring the impact of these activities should be part of the monitoring and evaluation process in Brussels and at Delegation level. Key to effective monitoring and evaluation is good gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data. Methodology is important for mainstreaming gender in M&E, for example, use of participatory methods, local expertise, joint evaluations, which have the added advantage of building local capacity.

Further within the broader goal of gender equality, the European Commission and Delegations should select some specifics in order to have some short-term measurable concrete results. Documenting, highlighting and disseminating good practice will provide incentives for those tasked with gender mainstreaming.

**The European Commission could consider commissioning a series of gender mainstreaming evaluations in countries** (perhaps in countries that have not had been the subject of donor evaluation or academic research and jointly with other donors) to assess what works and what does not.

### 5.7 Dialogue, partnerships and networking

Dialogue, partnerships and networking are key activities in gender mainstreaming work. This should happen at several different levels to enhance diverse participation. There should be dialogue with government for ownership, dialogue with other donors, dialogue/networking with a diverse range of NSAs and women’s organisations and stakeholder analysis.
EC officials should identify key partners in civil society and government and set up formal and informal information exchange opportunities. These could include workshops, seminars and conference to encourage buy-in from various stakeholders and interest groups and increase the likelihood of European Community promoting gender equality and equity.
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