Measuring Gender Equality

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This issue of *Development Bulletin* considers effective ways to measure progress towards the achievement of gender equality in ways that are straightforward and relevant and that provide useful information at international, national, and community or project levels. The papers, discussion and recommendations resulted from a two-day symposium on the harmonisation of gender indicators, organised by the International Women's Development Agency and held at the Australian National University, June 15-19 2006.

The purpose of the symposium was to identify ways to measure the impact of gender mainstreaming and the gaps between gender policy and what actually happens on the ground. As gender is an overarching principle of the new Australian White Paper on development, and there is a growing demand for accountability, simple but effective ways to measure gender mainstreaming are needed. Both the symposium and this journal are timely.

The papers focus on Millennium Development Goal 3, to promote gender equity and empower women taking 12 key indicators in seven priority areas — education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, infrastructure, property rights, employment, participation in national parliaments and local government bodies, and violence against women. Three specific groups of women are the target for discussion — poor women in the poorest countries, adolescents and women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.

**Background report**

We have started this issue with four background papers on gender indicators prepared for the symposium by Joanne Crawford. This is an excellent starting point for reading the other papers in this issue.

**Books, reports, useful contacts and materials on gender**

To provide you with a range of additional information on gender issues, we have included news of the latest books and reports on a variety of aspects of gender, gender mainstreaming and gendered research. If you know of other books and materials that people would find useful, please let us know and we will include them in the next issue of *Development Bulletin*.

**AusAID support**

Some support towards publishing this issue of *Development Bulletin* was provided by AusAID. We are grateful for their support. Without it, this very valuable information would not have been as widely available. We hope that this information supports improvements in gender equality.

**Viewpoint**

There are four papers in the Viewpoint section. All provide additional perspectives on different gender issues including details of the South Australian online gender indicators project, new models of women's education in Timor-Leste and Vanuatu, and the impact of the introduction of *syariah* law on gender equity in Indonesia.

**Development Bulletin online**

We would like to remind you that we have a number of back issues of *Development Bulletin* available free online. This includes 87 papers on Women, Gender and Development in the Pacific. You are welcome to download any of this material and to reprint it elsewhere as long as you reference it.

And from all of us here at Development Studies Network, fruitful gender disaggregated research.

*Pamela Thomas*

*Managing Editor*
Opening speech:  
Symposium on the harmonisation of gender indicators

The Hon Teresa Gambaro MP,  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

I think many of us have grown up in a generation in Australia that has seen a lot of change and a much greater focus on gender issues. As a consequence it's easy to understand how so many Australians might think that we are pretty much where we need to be in this area.

But when you look beyond our own backyard, it becomes quickly apparent that as a responsible global citizen we have a lot of work to do. I think the head of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Noeleen Heyzer, best summed up which way we need to go when she said:

The fact that tracking progress on gender equality and women's rights is on the agenda is, itself, a sign of progress. But for commitments to have an impact, we need accountability, action, and political will (UNIFEM 2002).

We should be under no illusions, gender issues are pivotal in ensuring the effectiveness of aid. As the Human Development Report 1995 on gender says, 'if human development is not engendered it will be endangered' (UNDP 1995).

Yet despite many advances in gender equality in recent decades, gender discrimination still pervades many dimensions of life on a global scale. In the developing world, gender gaps are especially pronounced. This is particularly the case in access to, and control of, resources, economic opportunities, power and political voice.

These inequalities affect the lives of women most severely, but ultimately they affect society at large. They are a constraint to development because they limit the ability of women to develop and exercise their full capabilities, for their own benefit and for the benefit of society as a whole.

Women in parliament
An area of interest for me is the role of women in parliament. Women are highly under-represented in national parliaments and decision-making bodies worldwide. Only 14 countries around the world have reached the United Nations benchmark of having 30 per cent of parliamentarians being women.

I'm sorry to say the Pacific is one of the worst performing regions in the world with an average of three per cent in 2005. Of the 11 countries that have no national representation of women worldwide, six of these are Pacific countries. Leaving 50 per cent of the population unrepresented is not an effective strategy for sustainable development.

Gender equality must be recognised as a core development objective. It should be addressed as a key part of any development strategy that seeks to enable all people to escape poverty and improve their standard of living. Global research has shown that gender inequality tends to slow economic growth and complicate the rise from poverty.
The extent to which women and girls benefit from development policies and programmes will have a major impact on a country’s overall development success.

Research shows that women and girls tend to work harder than men — a point I shall be making to my mostly male parliamentary colleagues. Women and girls are more likely to invest their earnings in their children and are major producers as well as consumers. So gender equality and sustainable development are closely inter-connected.

Given how important gender is to aid and growth, it is vital that we measure progress through indicators that tell us how far we have come and how far we still have to go. They form the basis on which to learn lessons from past practice and make more informed decisions in the future. For aid agencies and governments, gender indicators are a key tool for accountability, telling us whether our programmes are working. They help us to monitor the impact of policies and programmes on both women and men and at both the national and international level.

Worldwide in the development community there is an increased focus on measuring performance. This provides an opportunity to highlight where there are gaps in relation to measuring gender equality. Incorporating gender into the process of monitoring and evaluation will ensure discriminatory practices and policies are identified and then eliminated.

**Australian commitments**

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the aid programme makes a real contribution to achieving greater gender equality through its development activities.

The promotion of gender equality is an overarching principle of the aid programme and applies across all aspects of the strategic framework outlined in the White Paper.

The Australian Government, through AusAID, is making some good headway in the area of promoting equality in its programmes in the Asia-Pacific. Let me give you a few examples.

In Solomon Islands and Tonga we supported peak women’s organisations to provide non-partisan support for women candidates in the recent elections. Although in the Solomon’s no women candidates were elected, the support we provided nonetheless helped give women a voice. Women in Solomon Islands are not giving up, they appreciate our support and we’ll continue to give it.

In Sri Lanka Australia supported a programme to assist women affected by conflict by using small loans to increase income, and by improving the capacity of local authorities to respond to violence against women.

Simple measures can make a difference to women’s lives. The Sri Lankan programme funded the construction of wells and latrines close to women’s houses, reducing the distance they had to travel and their exposure to violence.

In Papua New Guinea the law and justice programme is helping the Government to reform sexual assault laws. AusAID has provided a sexual assault adviser for the justice system there to progress these reforms.

**Women in business**

Another area of interest for me is the role of women in business and the close connection with economic growth. Economic growth is positive for gender equality. It provides both women and men with new opportunities and it tends to increase the participation of women. This in turn increases productivity and supports further economic growth.

Conversely, a lack of participation takes away this opportunity to achieve financial independence for women and their families. Microfinance programmes can have significant impacts in this area. Let me give you a few examples of AusAID-supported microfinance programmes.

In Bangladesh an AusAID programme to expand access to financial services provided credit for nearly 23,000 households in the northwest districts, a part of the country with a high concentration of poverty. The borrowers are women, whose income-generating activities resulted in a 27 per cent increase in school attendance among borrowers’ children.

In Tianjin, China, AusAID supported a project to assist laid-off women workers in urban areas to create new economic opportunities. The project helped establish the Tianjin Women Business Incubator Centre, the first of its kind for laid-off workers in China.

In Laos, funding of over $1 million has been provided to a microfinance project for rural women and their families in 28 target villages. The project helped 1,400 women and had an impressive repayment rate of 99 per cent. Loan funds were used to raise livestock, grow vegetables, or for weaving, embroidery and dressmaking.

Other projects benefited women in Ghana, Indonesia, India and the Philippines.

**Conclusion**

We’ve had some good success with projects in a number of countries. But isolated projects are not enough. We are also aiming for gender equality results across all sectors. To achieve this we will need to make better use of gender-sensitive indicators when we monitor and evaluate projects. After all, if we measure it, it’s more likely to get done.
We also need to remind people that gender equality is a fundamental human right. And that people understand that gender issues are an important factor in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty. Quite simply, at the end of the day, it is about people, ensuring everyone — men, women and children — are given 'a fair go' regardless of their gender. A forum such as this is a great opportunity to discuss these issues.

References


Introduction: Measuring progress towards gender equality: Developments, issues, challenges and directions*

Joanne Crawford, consultant

In July 2003, in Australia, some 60 invited local and international consultants, NGOs, academics and gender specialists came together for a two day gender and development (GAD) dialogue, GAD and intersectionality in the region: Forging the future, to address challenges and opportunities associated with gender mainstreaming. The symposium explored reasons for the wide and virtually universal gap between policy commitments and implementation and identified ways forward. It concluded that despite sound policy statements, rhetorical political commitment and a plethora of tools and checklists, both the amount and quality of gender-informed development work was of significant concern and the achievement of policy objectives was partial at best. Key priorities and recommendations included the need for:

- cross-sector collaboration: to share issues, learnings and successful approaches and build a supportive environment for change across sectoral 'silos'; and
- ongoing review of gender work to assess whether approaches were progressing gender equality: what is working? How do we know?

There was a general recognition among participants that current trends in development policy (such as the emphasis on transparency, accountability, greater quality, and measurable outcomes and impact) provided strategic opportunities to advance issues relating to gender equality. The emphasis on accountability, for example, potentially offers a rationale for more systematic review of the implementation of policy commitments and a basis on which to highlight the gap between policy and implementation and identify options for addressing this. The focus on aid effectiveness provides a rationale to scrutinize what works and what doesn't.

Since that dialogue, there has been significant work on gender equality issues associated with the ten year review of progress on the Beijing Platform for Action and the five year review of progress towards the MDGs, both in 2005. Research has included work on measuring progress towards equality and associated statistical needs and challenges.

In February 2005, European NGOs Eurostep and Social Watch published 'Accountability upside down: Gender equality in a partnership for poverty eradication', which assesses the extent to which gender equality commitments have been implemented in the development assistance of nine bilateral donors. The report identifies 'policy evaporation' as a significant problem, noting that it becomes 'increasingly difficult to track resources for gender equality' as the policy process moves from framework through programming and budgeting to implementation, evaluation and measurement of impact (van Reisen 2005). It highlights the limits to accountability in the case of gender equality and explores ways in which such contemporary development concepts might assist efforts to close the gap between policy and implementation.

Identifying effective, agreed, workable indicators of progress in promoting gender equality is critical if those concerned with gender equality are to utilise the strategic potential in current development priorities to close the gap between policy and action.
Where capacity to collect gender disaggregated statistics or organisational commitment is limited, it is important to focus on a few key indicators and build the technical capacity and political will to enable consistent use. In the words of UNIFEM head Nooelen Heyzer, 'The fact that tracking progress on gender equality and women’s rights is on the agenda is, itself, a sign of progress. But for commitments to have an impact, we need accountability, action, and political will' (Elson and Kekik 2002:viii). This is a challenge with technical and political dimensions.

Symposium on the harmonisation of gender indicators

Australia’s aid programme promotes equal opportunities for women and men as participants and beneficiaries (AusAID 1997) and emphasises quality and effectiveness. Setting standards as a sector and committing to them through measuring and reporting can only benefit the pursuit of these objectives, and help close the gap between policy and practice. But what are the priorities in terms of measuring whether development work is making a real and lasting contribution to tackling gender inequality and enabling both women and men to be part of and benefit from development? How can the sector establish a common basis for measuring the gender impact of development work, so learnings can be shared and quality improved?

The symposium, convened by International Women’s Development Agency and supported by key stakeholders, brought together organisational leaders and technical specialists from government, non-government and regional development agencies in Australia, New Zealand and Pacific island countries, academics, commercial contracting firms and independent consultants. Achieving significant change in the quality and effectiveness of development work — for that is what is at stake in any focus on gender — requires leadership, technical expertise and diversity of perspectives.

The symposium sought to enable sector-wide dialogue and ‘buy-in’ on key gender indicators, to help ensure that gender equality is an integral part of development projects, programmes and policies for Australian and New Zealand actors in the aid and development community. The symposium reviewed international developments, discussed experiences and learnings, and suggested a variety of indicators for measuring progress towards gender equality. It explored processes to harmonise usage of gender indicators, to enable incorporation of contemporary learnings and improved monitoring of the impact of development activities on gender inequality, so that Australian-assisted international development projects contribute to realising gender equality. Finally, participants identified processes to take discussions forward toward implementation. These are detailed in the conclusions and recommendations paper later in this Bulletin.

The symposium was facilitated by Dr Geeta Rao Gupta, assisted by Connie Lenneberg and Joanne Crawford. Dr Rao Gupta is the lead author of the UN Millennium Project Task Force report, Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women and president of the International Center for Research on Women. Discussion was structured around panels and addressed each of the seven strategic priorities and associated indicators identified by the UN Millennium Task Force on Education and Gender Equality as critical to achieving MDG3 — promote gender equality and empower women — by 2015.

Purpose and structure of the background papers

The series of papers in this issue of Development Bulletin are an edited version of a background paper that was developed to inform thinking, prompt discussion and provide some shared knowledge to support dialogue and collaboration among the symposium’s diverse participants. It begins with a short discussion of the strategic rationale for a focus on indicators. It then briefly defines gender-related indicators and their role before reviewing recent international research and experience on assessing and monitoring progress towards gender equality, particularly in development. The papers note opportunities and challenges in determining and using appropriate indicators, and establishing or strengthening accountability frameworks.

Notes

* Development of this background paper benefited from discussion at several international workshops involving some of the key people working in the area and from field input via an IWDA Partner Workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in April 2005. Some sections draw on previous work with Jenny Riley for IWDA’s 2003 Gender and Development Dialogue.
1. Dr Linda Kelly was to co-facilitate but illness forced a late withdrawal. Connie Lenneberg is a member of the Australian Council for International Development’s Development Practices Advisory Committee. Joanne Crawford is a consultant and board member of IWDA.

References

**Rationale: Why a focus on indicators, now?**

Joanne Crawford, consultant

Sex disaggregated statistics, collected in relation to indicators that tell you something meaningful about women's situation, are essential to effective policy development and to monitoring implementation and impact. The Beijing Platform for Action requested producers of statistics to generate and disseminate sex disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation. Since then there has been a growing recognition of the importance of statistics, data, indicators of progress, monitoring and evaluation in helping to narrow the gap between commitments to gender equality and achievements.

Gender-sensitive indicators are a key tool for accountability, identifying and monitoring the impact of policies and programmes on women and men at the national and international level and at a local or activity level. In particular, tools that capture change in women's status and gender relations are critical for assessing the effectiveness of policies and programmes in promoting gender equality and monitoring for unintended consequences. Successful gender mainstreaming requires the use of gender-sensitive indicators and indicators that capture progress towards gender equality.

To date, policy commitments to gender equality and use of mainstreaming as a primary strategy have run significantly ahead of policy implementation. The absence of gender disaggregated data both reflects and contributes to this situation. A 2003 review of evaluations among OECD donors, for example, found that few general evaluations employ gender sensitive indicators ... many evaluations were faced with lack of sex-disaggregated baseline data and limited monitoring information, particularly on gender relations and benefits' (Hunt and Brouwers 2003:5).

The current focus on measuring performance towards achievement of the MDGs provides a strategic opportunity to highlight gaps in relation to gender equality — the third of eight MDGs and acknowledged as critical to achievement of all other goals — and build commitment to accelerate progress. The emphasis on accountability and governance more generally within the development sector provides a further rationale for assessing performance and a basis for highlighting gaps between policy commitments and implementation and identifying ways to address them.

Improving data is critical to taking advantage of this moment, as the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development 2005-2015 highlights: there is a clear need to accelerate implementation ... of both key international conventions and treaties and national gender equality policies, plans and programmes, to extend the range of partnerships, to pursue measurable results-oriented activities, and to develop more stringent monitoring of such implementation based on agreed targets and appropriate gender indicators ... Focused implementation needs to be underpinned by sex-disaggregated data, and in many Commonwealth countries this is lacking or uneven. Governments need to enhance disaggregated data collection (by sex, age, ethnicity and other relevant factors) in order to improve their information and analysis for planning and programme delivery (Commonwealth Secretariat 2005:21).

While there may be some areas in which our ability to utilise this strategic moment is itself affected by limited data, the absence of such data in the context of continuing gender inequality and high-level commitments to improve collection may have its own potential traction.

Engagement with statistics and indicators is essential if we are to continue to improve monitoring and evaluation of progress (or lack thereof) towards gender equality (Danner et al. 1999). In policy terms, if we cannot answer questions about the effectiveness of existing policies, it is difficult to determine whether more systematic implementation is what is needed, or whether other approaches should be tried.

**Gender Indicators: A review of usage, issues and developments**

**Definitions and roles**

An indicator is 'a pointer; a number, a fact or perception that measures change in a specific condition over time' (ECA ACGD 2004:vii). Indicators can be used at various levels (activity, project, programme, policy or organisation, national, regional, international) and to measure different types of factors. Once most common in project management, usage has broadened with the growing focus on measuring effectiveness. Indicators are now widely used to map, monitor and forecast development priorities. They provide an important tool in evaluating the longer-term impact of development work: what change has occurred, for whom? Is quality of life improving? Are inequalities being addressed, or reproduced?

*Gender-sensitive indicators* recognise that men and women experience the world differently, not least because of socially constructed gender roles, and enable measurement of changes in the status and roles of men and women over time. They
enable policy makers and development workers to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies, programmes, projects and budgets on gender roles, gender relations and gender discrimination. How far and in what ways have policies and programmes met their objectives and achieved results related to gender equity?

Gender-sensitive indicators also make women's contribution more visible. As currently constructed, mainstream indicators such as GNP obscure or undervalue women's contribution to society by defining out areas of (unpaid) work where women dominate, such as childrearing or housework, and in the informal or non-market sector. Indicators that seek to capture women's contribution in these areas thus have important political as well as practical functions, drawing attention to the differential power, workloads and access to resources and opportunities of men and women.

Gender equality indicators essentially seek to capture the situation of women in relation to men and various dimensions of equality by:

- measuring the individual attainment of women;
- disaggregating data by sex and other categories (age, ethnicity, disability);
- comparing the status of women relative to men in various socio-economic spheres; and
- providing information on gender-related changes (eg, number of reported cases of sexual abuse).

In terms of gender equality policies and the strategy of gender mainstreaming, there are three primary potential applications of gender indicators:

- As an input: using the indicators to inform analysis.
- As a results measure: for example, an indicator measuring the ratio of women to men at all levels of an organisation can be used to measure the success of policy measures to address gender segregation in the workforce.
- To raise awareness of issues and the need for gender analysis. Collecting gender disaggregated statistics helps to build an overall picture of patterns and trends in gender inequality (Mackay and Bilton 2003:46). The availability of data can also help reshape a 'private' issue as a public issue, as in the case of domestic violence or gender pay gaps.

To assess the extent of movement towards gender equality we need to assess trends in women's well-being and evaluate changes in their status in relation to men. Gaps 'both affect and reflect power dynamics, which themselves have the potential for positive change in the processes of resource and capabilities distribution. It is important to assess whether gender gaps in well-being have changed in both fast and slow growing economies, using a wide range of indicators rather than just the money metric of income per capita' (UNRISD 2005:xxiii).

But gender indicators need to be used carefully and critically. The available statistics have their limitations, in terms of quality of data and what the data captures. Nonetheless, well chosen gender indicators can be a good pointer to the status of women, women's and men's access to resources, opportunities and choices, and changes in gender relations. They can provide 'brief and powerful descriptions of women's current situation and benchmarks against which success of particular initiatives and the need for further work can be assessed' (ibid:48). While no number of indicators 'can capture the rich diversity and complexity of women's lives, they help us to monitor the fulfilment of commitments to women's progress, as well as mobilise support for stronger efforts in this regard' (Heyzer 2001).

Of the various statistical measures available, the World Bank and the UN have the longest running databanks and the broadest coverage in terms of countries, regions and thematic areas, enabling tracking of changes within and across regions and over time. The overlap in data sources also enables cross-checking.

The primary gender equality indicators currently in use at the international level are UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and Gender Development Index (GDI), the World Bank's Women in Development Indicators, the OECD's Gender Equality Marker, and the MDGs. The following papers outline their respective composition, strengths, limitations, and recent developments (for MDGs, see Shetty paper, this issue).

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Human Development Index, Gender Development Index, Gender Empowerment Measure and The World's Women series

Joanne Crawford, consultant

Human Development Index

UNDP's annual Human Development Report contains some of the most widely cited and used gender indicators. Many of the standard statistics are sex disaggregated. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure that seeks to capture well-being in terms of life expectancy, education and income. But it does not take account of gender inequality — a significant limitation, given large and persistent gender gaps in many indicators of well-being such as control over economic resources, education, earnings, mortality, access to employment, pay, time use, or power in public and private spheres (Klasen 2004).

Since 1995, UNDP has used some of the available sex-disaggregated indicators to publish two composite gender measures, the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM). The GDI adjusts the average achievement measure of the HDI to reflect inequalities between men and women, with HDI rankings adjusted downwards for the degree of gender inequality in basic capabilities (Bardhan and Klasen 1999:986). It is not a measure of gender inequality but 'a human development measure that takes into account gender gaps in well-being' (UNRISD 2005:57). The strong influence of GDP biases the HDI and GDI in favour of formal economic measures of development and thus limits their ability to capture women's economic and social activity.

By contrast, the GEM seeks to measure the extent of gender equality in agency rather than achievements in well-being (Bardhan and Klasen 1999:986) by tracking progress in three areas:

1. Political participation and decision-making power, as measured by women and men's percentage share of parliamentary seats.
2. Economic participation and decision making, as measured by (a) women's and men's percentage shares of positions of legislators, senior officials and managers, and (b) women's and men's shares of professional and technical positions.
3. Power over economic resources, as measured by women's and men's estimated earned income (PPP US$).

The GEM uses indicators that are generally available, enabling broad coverage. But it focuses on the national level and the formal economy and thus fails to capture women's political and economic contributions at the local level and in the informal economy. Also, estimated earned income for both women and men in very poor sections of the community may be very small, so the measure may overemphasise the circumstances of the elite. And the measure is weighted by per capita GDP, and thus 'open to the same criticisms as the GDI' (UNRISD 2005:57). As with any composite measures, the GEM and the GDI are only as good as their component parts and underlying methodology.

Nonetheless, both measures provide useful information on gender inequality and its impact on development, and a shorthand way to track development that is not solely economically derived. They can help measure change in gender disparities over time and place in key areas such as education, health, income and political participation, enabling a focus on gender inequality, its causes and consequences, and the impact of efforts to address it (UNRISD 2005:57).

The World's Women series

The UN Statistical Division produces extensive information on the situation of women. Every five years since 1991 it has published The World's Women: Trends and statistics, comparing women's situation with men's worldwide in a broad range of areas and identifying priorities for further developing gender statistics. Since the fourth UN World Conference on Women in 1995 'the demand for sex-disaggregated data and the integration of a gender perspective in data collection, analysis and presentation has increased tremendously' (UN DESA SD 2005:6). But UN statistical products rely on data that are available from countries in the UN statistical system, which impacts currency, focus and level of detail. Data from censuses are generally collected in a 10-year cycle and household surveys are often not collected on a regular basis. Once collected, 'tabulation and delivery to the international statistical services can take years, particularly in the developing regions where there are scant resources for statistical activities. As a result, analysts must rely on data that are often not current ... thus limiting...
assessment of the most recent trends' (UNSD 2000).

The World's Women 2005: Progress in statistics reflects the significance of this issue by departing from the approach of previous reports, which compiled and analysed data on women's status worldwide using internationally prepared estimates. This report reviews and analyses the availability of data and progress made in national reporting of sex-disaggregated statistics relevant to gender concerns in the last 30 years (1975 to 2004).

Five indicators were selected as illustrative of national statistical capacity related to the production and reporting of gender statistics:

- population census conducted (1995-2004);
- birth registration completed, with at least 90 per cent of births registered (1995-2003);
- population reported by sex and age;
- births reported by sex of child; and
- economic activity reported by sex and age (UN 2006a).

Overall, the UN finds that '... there has been very little progress in the official reporting of sex-disaggregated data in the past three decades,' with Africa and Oceania lagging behind other continents (ibid:35). Of particular significance is the absence of even basic data in many areas where the situation of women is of most concern. '[O]fficial national data on basic demographic and social statistics relevant to gender are at times deficient, out-of-date, fragmented or simply unavailable' (UN DESA SD 2005:35).

National census: 26 of the 204 countries surveyed have not been able to conduct a census in the last ten years (UN 2006b).

Population data: pregnancy and child birth remain high risk experiences for many women in many developing countries. Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death and disability for women aged 15-49 in most developing countries. Information about the number of births and characteristics of those involved is crucial for shaping and monitoring policies to improve women's circumstances. Population data can also provide indicative information about the incidence of prenatal sex selection, female infanticide and discriminatory access to household resources (UNFPA 2002).

A large number of countries or areas (53) did not disaggregate their nation's population by sex and age in the last ten years, many more than in the 1980 and 1990 decades (29 and 28, respectively). In terms of population, this is also sharply up, from four per cent in the 1980 and 1990 decades to ten per cent in the 2000 decade.

The UN describes the current global reporting of births and deaths as 'quite bleak'. Over 90 countries did not report their births, and roughly the same amount did not report their deaths, through a civil registration system that covered the nation. So only 30 per cent of the world's population were residing in areas where births and deaths were registered, while 70 per cent were not. The ten largest countries where civil registration of births is incomplete (less than 90 per cent of births are registered, 1995-2003) are: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan and Vietnam. Combined these countries represent 54 per cent of the world's population (UN 2006c). Fewer countries still were able to regularly report data disaggregated by sex of child and age of mother: 95 for births by sex of child and 86 for births by age of mother. In the Least Developed Countries, data on births 'is acutely lacking and appears to have deteriorated with time' (UN DESA SD 2005:19).

Accurate information on fertility rates and age of child bearing is essential for projecting future population growth, and contributes to a better understanding of the status of women relative to men. Early childbirth among young girls is often associated with further limited opportunities for schooling and employment for the young mother and for her infant. Lower rates of fertility and later ages of child bearing are often associated with increased status of women and also with population decline. Poor or inadequate statistics of fertility and age at childbirth may result in flawed information for use in policy formulation, planning, and monitoring and evaluation of programmes necessary to improve the well-being and status of women (UN DESA SD 2005:17).

The absence of basic statistical information makes it difficult to address pressing reproductive health and fertility needs, and without action in these areas, 'the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved' (Annan 2002).

Economic activity: slightly more than half of all countries provide gender specific data on economic activity, employment and unemployment and roughly a third of all countries do so frequently (UN 2006c). Since 1975, there has been substantial improvement in the number frequently reporting the economically active population by sex and age (UN DESA SD 2006:58). But the production of basic labour force statistics is still a challenge for many countries: only 127 of 204 countries or areas, comprising 50 per cent of the world's population, reported the numbers of their economically active at least once during the period 1995-2003 (UN 2006d).

The biggest improvement by far has been in relation to reporting unemployment by sex (up from 45 to 114 countries or areas), although 108 did not report unemployment by sex and age. Information on the earnings gap between women and men remains very limited: less than a quarter reported wages by sex during the period 1995-2003 (ibid).

Time use surveys are key tools in capturing the full extent of women's work (paid and unpaid) and their contribution to
the national economy. The World's Women 2005 reports increasing usage but surveys remain ad hoc and there is no agreement on methodology and standards (UN DESA SD 2006:63).

Violence against women: inadequate statistics and methods have hampered development of programmes and monitoring of progress (ibid:69). Most countries still do not have an established system of statistics on violence against women and there is no official international data collection. There has been progress in developing methodologies and procedures and an increase in the number of countries conducting national surveys on violence against women, although only a small number do regularly. At least 68 of 204 countries or areas have conducted a survey since 1995, with at least 38 with national coverage (UN 2006e). But 'few of the available studies yield information that is comparable across countries or regions' (Grown, Gupta and Kes 2005:112).

The UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has suggested adding an indicator on the prevalence of intimate partner violence to assess progress towards goal 3.

Conclusions
There is an urgent need for 'greater investment in developing appropriate indicators and institutionalising them within official statistical efforts at the national and international levels' (UN DAW 2005). The World's Women 2005 (UN DESA SD 2006:i-xi) suggests three priority actions, with 11 strategies to achieve these:

**Strengthen national statistical systems**

**Strategy 1:** Secure sustained commitment at the highest level to strengthen the national statistical system.

**Strategy 2:** Maximise the use of official statistics.

**Strategy 3:** Build capacity among producers of statistics in data presentation.

**Strategy 4:** Develop human resources at all levels in national statistics offices.

**Mainstream gender in all aspects of production of statistics**

**Strategy 5:** Specify the development of gender statistics within the legal framework of official statistics.

**Strategy 6:** Support and strengthen gender statistics units.

**Strategy 7:** Foster dialogue between statistical offices and interested stakeholders, including women's groups.

**Strategy 8:** Train producers of statistics to incorporate a gender perspective into their work.

**Strategy 9:** Tap existing sources of data and enhance their usefulness for producing gender statistics.

**Strategy 10:** Make official national statistics a required component of international reporting mechanisms.

**Develop and improve concepts and methods where inadequate**

**Strategy 11:** Promote collaboration between international and regional organisations and agencies, national statistics offices and academic and research institutions.

**Notes**

1. A long and healthy life measured by life expectancy at birth, knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate and combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio, a decent standard of living, as measured by estimated earned income (PPP US$).

2. For example, the HDI for Australia in 2004 was 0.927, compared with a GDI of 0.901. For Saudi Arabia the HDI was 0.762 and the GDI, 0.514. The adjustment for gender inequality in each country is thus 0.010 (2.8 per cent) and 0.248 (32.5 per cent) respectively.

**References**


OECD
The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the principal body through which the OECD deals with issues related to cooperation with developing countries. It involves all of primary international aid donors and is the key mechanism for collection and collation of information, research, standard setting/ framework development, leadership and collaboration in relation to development assistance.

The DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation, published in 1999, reflect a dual focus on gender mainstreaming and specific efforts to enhance the role of women in development (DAC 1999:8,35), which is in turn reflected its statistics collection.

The OECD's creditor reporting system is the mechanism used to collect data from donors in a format that enables comparison between countries and over time. Donors are encouraged to report on the source, destination and purpose of official development assistance in a defined set of DAC sectors. The 'women in development' (WID) sector, which includes 'multi-sectoral WID projects and programmes, promotion and support to WID groups and networks, conferences, seminars' only covers aid activities targeting women or supporting women's organisations that do not fall within other sectors such as health, education or transport. Aid activities that have a primary purpose in another sector such as water but that benefit women or promote gender equality are reported as an activity in the primary sector.

The gender equality marker was developed to capture the extent to which activities in other sectors address gender inequality, ie, the extent of gender mainstreaming. For every aid activity, donors are encouraged to indicate whether gender equality is (i) a principal objective, (ii) a significant objective, or (iii) not an objective of the project.

The DAC network on gender equality and the DAC working party on statistics collaborated on a special report on development assistance in support of gender equality from 1999-2003, as a contribution to the Beijing +10 and MDG +5 reviews (OECD 2005). Because of data constraints, the report concentrates on basic education and basic health. About half of aid to these sectors targeted gender concerns in some way with about ten per cent being for the main purpose of promoting gender equality. Some countries appeared to be implementing a mainstreaming strategy, others promoted gender equality through a relatively small number of activities targeted to women and girls (OECD 2005:9).

The gender marker reports on programming, ie, intentions, although some donors have attempted to use it to track implementation and monitoring of activities (van Reisen 2005:24). Reporting an activity as gender equality focused 'does not necessarily mean it was possible to attain the objective within the activity.' This is particularly relevant for sector-wide approaches where integrating gender equality actions 'remains a challenge' (OECD DAC 2002). Additionally, not all donors report consistently against the gender marker, most notably the United States and France (OECD 2005:15). And while reporting on the marker has improved, 'some members experience difficulties in applying the methodology and there is a lack of comparable data from the multilaterals.' The available data 'nevertheless gives an indication of the extent to which most donors address gender equality in their aid programmes' (OECD 2005:15). But the problems say something important about the challenges of collecting gender equality data if even large donors with well-developed statistical capacity have difficulty reporting.

World Bank
The World Bank's online database of gender statistics, Genderstats, provides a summary gender profile, thematic data, gender monitoring and data by region. Information is also available on a country basis, enabling international comparisons. These statistics are published in the annual World Development Indicators handbook. The WID table in the 2006 volume includes the following indicators of gender (in)equality:

- female population (percentage of total);
- life expectancy at birth (males vs female in years);
- pregnant women receiving prenatal care (percentage);
- teenage mothers (percentage of women aged 15-19 who already have children or are currently pregnant);
- literacy gender parity index (ages 15-24);
• labour force gender parity index;
• women wage employees in the non-agricultural sector as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment;
• unpaid family workers (those who work without pay in a market-oriented establishment or activity operated by a related person living in the same household — percentage of male employment vs percentage of female employment); and
• women in parliaments (percentage of total seats in a single or lower chamber).

While notes accompanying the data provide a sound rationale for using these particular indicators, the selection of indicators is influenced by the availability of data. Nonetheless, the overall picture is unequivocal: 'despite much progress in recent decades, gender inequalities remain pervasive in many dimensions of life — worldwide' (World Bank 2006).

The World Bank played a significant role in advocating and supporting the integration of gender as an essential ingredient for achieving all the MDGs: 'Attempting to meet the MDGs without promoting gender equality will both increase the costs and minimise the likelihood of attaining the goals' (World Bank 2003:21). It has also sought to use its poverty reduction strategy papers process as a forum to adapt the MDGs to country circumstances and integrate gender into national strategies.

Other composite indicators

Concerns about the limitations of the GDI and GEM have prompted development of alternative composite indices based on measures of gender gaps in capabilities, opportunities and empowerment.

The Standardised Indicator of Gender Equality incorporates five measures of relative well-being:

(1) Education, measured as literacy ratios and primary and secondary enrolment ratios;
(2) Ratio of female to male life expectancy;
(3) Relative labour force participation rates;
(4) Female share of technical and professional, and administrative and managerial, positions; and

The African Gender and Development Index (AGDI), developed by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, combines two sets of data:

• Qualitative changes in the adoption and implementation of policies, legal framework and budgets. The African women's progress scoreboard aims to assess the performance of governments in meeting their obligations for women's empowerment and advancement under the international and regional conventions they have signed (ACGD 2004:11).

Sample indicators used in the AGDI to gauge progress include measuring numbers of:

• seats in parliament held by women (including numbers of women chairing commissions and committees in parliament);
• cabinet ministers (including undersecretaries of state) who are women;
• women who are members of higher courts;
• women in local councils;
• directors and secretary generals in the various ministries; ambassadors; and regional governors and directors of government institutions;
• senior positions (disaggregated by sex) of political parties, trade unions, employers' associations and professional syndicates;
• women, as compared to men, who are heading or managing NGOs;
• women leading community based or grassroots associations or unions (ibid:12).

The AGDI was piloted in 12 countries. A guide to its use was published in October 2004 (ECA 2004) and detailed results of the pilot were to be published in the 'African Women's Report' in 2005 but the report could not be located as at April 2006. Of particular interest will be the ease with which data can be collected and the index's capacity to deliver valid information on aspects of empowerment not readily captured by other measures, given the concentration of limited statistical capacity in Africa.

The capabilities approach and gender inequality

There has been considerable interest in alternative approaches to assessing gender inequality that might fill gaps, provide richer information or better capture certain dimensions of women's lived experience, to provide a fuller account of absolute and relative levels of well-being.

There is a growing body of work on using Amartya Sen's capability approach to assess gender inequality and empowerment, including an issue of the journal Feminist Economics. Sen criticises existing welfare economics literature on inequality measurement, inter alia, for being exclusively focused on income and seeking to assume away complexities or
ambiguities. Instead, he argues the focus should be on 'the real freedoms that people have for leading a valuable life' that is, on their capabilities or potential functionings (Robeyns 2003:63).

These include people's capabilities to undertake activities such as reading, working in the labour market, caring, relating to others, being politically active, or enjoying positive states of being such as health, being well-fed or literate (Robeyns 2003:61-2).

Sen recognises that people differ in their capacity to convert resources or commodities into functionings, for example because of physical capacities or social or other constraints such as caring responsibilities or discrimination. A person's capacities will depend on the individual and social conversion factors that affect their translation of available commodities into functionings. For example, gender discrimination in the labour market (such as wage differentials or barriers to progression resulting from work expectations that assume away family or other care responsibilities) will affect how women and men are able to convert the same commodities (say education) into achieved functionings such as financial autonomy (Robeyns 2001:8).

This focus beyond resources and the central acknowledgment of the relationship between individual and social diversity and capabilities, rather than using a gender blind (and thus gender biased) 'every person' for theorising well-being, produces an evaluative framework that has much to offer in assessing gender (in)equality. Sen (1992:125) summarises the fit thus:

... the question of gender inequality ... can be understood much better by comparing those things that intrinsically matter (such as functionings and capabilities), rather than just the means [to achieve them] like ... resources. The issue of gender inequality is ultimately one of disparate freedoms.

The following explanation from Robeyns (2001:7) provides a concrete illustration:

Income might reveal much of the well-being of a 'stylised individual' who is working full time, who is in good health and physical and psychological condition, and who is not caring for children or dependent elderly. But what does the income level tell us for an unemployed person, or a care taker, or a dependent person. This is not to deny that income is an important determinant of well-being, and can serve as a proxy in case other information is lacking or too costly to collect. The point is that the more a person 'deviates' from the model of an unattached healthy worker who has substantial control over his life, the more other factors influence the mapping from income to well-being. For example, for a young mother the availability of good quality subsidised child care might be an important determinant of her functionings well-being next to her income level, whereas for a single man this doesn't affect his well-being at all. Public goods, and social networks on which we can rely, are just two of the aspects that can have a profound effect on our well-being levels. The well-being of diverse people should be based on a multidimensional metric that can account for non-financial, non-material and collective constituents — and the capability approach offers this.

Sen's capability approach also recognises that an individual's well-being is intimately connected to others' actions, needs and freedoms, which, methodologically, fits well with the socially embedded nature of women's lives.

Other writers, notably Nussbaum and Robeyns, have used the capability approach to explore various aspects of gender inequality and to elaborate on Sen's general framework.

Robeyns argues that conceptualising and measuring gender inequality in functionings and capabilities 'focuses on the lives that individuals can and do choose to live' and avoids the flawed assumption of most household-based income measures of well-being that there is equal sharing of resources among household members (ibid:65-66). A focus on capabilities does not deny that resources contribute to well-being, indeed 'inequalities in resources can be significant causes of inequalities in capabilities ...' particularly in areas such as access to household resources or ownership and control of property. It also enables consideration of market and non-market settings, of particular importance in assessing gender inequality given that women spend much more time outside the market than men.

Inequality comparisons based only on the market economy, such as comparisons of income, earnings, and job-holdings, exclude some important aspects of well-being such as care labour, household work, freedom from domestic violence, or the availability of supportive social networks (ibid:64-66).

So, capabilities are arguably the appropriate evaluative space for a full assessment of gender (in)equality. But which capabilities? And are they all equally relevant?

Robeyns (ibid:68) argues that capabilities are by nature context dependent: 'there cannot be one catch-all list' of capabilities without narrowing Sen's approach. Appropriate and relevant capabilities must therefore be identified consciously for every specific application of the framework. The process by which the list of specific capabilities is developed matters, because process is important to issues of equity and justice generally, and because it is essential to retaining the integrity of Sen's approach in the translation from framework to application. Robeyns (ibid:70-71) suggests five process criteria:

1. Explicit formulation: 'the list should be explicit, discussed, and defended'.
2. Methodological justification: the method used to generate a list must be scrutinised and justified in terms of its appropriateness to the issue.
3. Sensitivity to context: the list's level of abstraction should fit our objectives: 'it is important to speak the language of the debate in which we want to get involved.'
4. Different levels of generality: if the aim is an empirical application or implementable policy
proposals, then an 'ideal' list should be developed first, 'unconstrained by limitations of data or measurement design, or of socio-economic or political feasibility'. This would be followed by a more pragmatic list that accounts for such constraints. Distinguishing between the ideal and the second best recognises that constraints can change over time.'

5. **Exhaustion and non-reduction**: the list should include all important elements and these should not be reducible to other elements.

Applying these principles, Robeyns (ibid:71-72) proposes the following list of capabilities at the ideal level for conceptualising and evaluating gender inequality in post-industrial Western societies.

1. **Life and physical health**: being able to be physically healthy and enjoy a life of normal length.
2. **Mental well-being**: being able to be mentally healthy.
3. **Bodily integrity and safety**: being able to be protected from violence of any sort.
4. **Social relations**: being able to be part of social networks and to give and receive social support.
5. **Political empowerment**: being able to participate in and have a fair share of influence on political decision making.
6. **Education and knowledge**: being able to be educated and to use and produce knowledge.
7. **Domestic work and non-market care**: being able to raise children and to take care of others.
8. **Paid work and other projects**: being able to work in the labour market or to undertake projects, including artistic ones.
9. **Shelter and environment**: being able to be sheltered and to live in a safe and pleasant environment.
10. **Mobility**: being able to be mobile.
11. **Leisure activities**: being able to engage in leisure activities.
12. **Time autonomy**: being able to exercise autonomy in allocating one's time.
13. **Respect**: being able to be respected and treated with dignity.
14. **Religion**: being able to choose to live or not to live according to a religion.

The method Robeyns uses to generate the specific list is straightforward: brainstorming; testing a draft list against existing academic, political, and grassroots literature and debates; engaging with other lists of capabilities; and debating the list with others.

Could this list be applied more broadly, to identify appropriate capabilities for assessing gender equality other than in technologically advanced, post-industrial liberal democracies? Robeyns notes that such societies have characteristics that reduce the effects of biological differences between men and women, and cultural, religious and gender norms are relatively weak. In other contexts, the impact of social, cultural and gender norms as a mediating factor would need further attention. Nonetheless, at a higher level of abstraction, some of the capabilities she identifies are relevant to developing contexts, and the process she outlines for generating a specific list of capabilities could be more widely applied.

Robeyns also explores the question of aggregation to develop an index or assessment of overall gender (in)equality. She argues that 'while we gain most insights into the nature and size of gender inequality if we look at inequalities in capabilities at the more disaggregated level ... one cannot conclude that women in general are worse off than men, or vice versa, without aggregating the functionings.' This raises the issue of whether all capabilities are equally important. Robeyns (2003:86-87) argues that 'ultimately, making an overall judgment implies making a normative choice regarding the weights that should be assigned to different capabilities.' Where gender inequality is evident in a significant majority of capabilities, however, the question of weights becomes rather academic.

This suggests that at a relatively high level of abstraction, it is possible to identify some core elements of a conceptual framework for analysing gender equality that could be used in developed and developing situations, with the precise meaning of those elements to be specified according to context. Sen (1989:41-58) argues that this context must reflect both 'the underlying motivation of the exercise as well as dealing with the social values involved.'

This is essentially the approach taken in UNDP's Human Development Reports (HDRs), which, with continuing input from Sen, have sought to balance practical operational needs while allowing for diversity and change (ibid:303).

HDRs have used two criteria in deciding which capabilities are most important: first, they must be universally valued by people across the world; and second, they must be basic, meaning their lack would foreclose many other capabilities. But the human development approach has deliberately remained open-ended in the choice of capabilities, letting them vary over time and place (Fukuda-Parr 2003:306).

In contrast, Nussbaum (2003:35) argues in favour of developing a list of fundamental human functional capabilities below which people would not be able to enjoy a good human life. She notes that Sen and the HDRs are 'suggestive but basically silent' on the central normative issue of what level of
health service, or what level of educational provision, a just society would deliver as a fundamental entitlement of all its citizens.' For Nussbaum (ibid:36) this is also a political issue:

[The capabilities approach will supply definite and useful guidance, and prove an ally in the pursuit of sex equality, only if we formulate a definite list of the most central capabilities, even one that is tentative and revisable, using capabilities so defined to elaborate a partial account of social justice, a set of basic entitlements without which no society can lay claim to justice.

Nussbaum (ibid:41-42) proposes the following list of fundamental capabilities:

1. Life: life expectancy and meaningful quality.
2. Bodily health: including reproductive health, adequate nourishment and shelter.
3. Bodily integrity: mobility, freedom from violence, opportunities for sexual satisfaction and reproductive choice.
4. Senses, imagination, and thought: being able to imagine, think and reason in a 'truly human' way, underpinned by adequate education, freedom of expression and belief and the opportunity for pleasurable experiences.
5. Emotions: broadly, emotional freedom and opportunity for development, connection and association without fear and anxiety.
6. Practical reason: being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.
7. Affiliation: to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another; being treated as a dignified being of equal worth.
8. Other species: 'being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.'
9. Play: 'being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.'
10. Control over one's environment: effective participation in relevant political choices, property and employment rights on an equal basis with others and work that respects one's humanity and the need for meaningful relations with others.

Given the level of abstraction in this list, the distance between Nussbaum, Sen and Robeyns is not so great.

Nussbaum's generality is designed 'to leave room for the activities of specifying and deliberating by citizens and their legislatures and courts that all democratic nations contain,' envisaging a process of further delineation that has some of the same elements as that envisaged by Sen and Robeyns (Nussbaum 2603:42). But as Robeyns notes, citing Alkire, 'Nussbaum's list is a "list of normative things-to-do", it has a highly prescriptive character and she makes strong universalistic claims regarding its scope' (Alkire 2002, cited in Robeyns 2003:54). Sen's work, in contrast, emphasises process, diversity and context. His capability approach is, in essence, a framework, with any specific list of capabilities necessarily context dependent.

**Note**

1. Robeyns notes that 'the difference between a functioning and a capability is similar to the difference between an achievement and the freedom to achieve something, or between an outcome and an opportunity' (Robeyns 2003:63).

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Do we sometimes get too obsessed with what can be counted and forget why we are counting it in the first place? Certainly, we can spend too much time and money focusing on the minutiae of data, and if it is not analysed well and the analysis is not distributed to inform policy and project design, then this is wasteful. On the other hand, if we do not have any or enough data there is no way for us to start a baseline and to measure progress. There is a need to balance the measurement with the objective, in this case, to track the progress of gender equality and the advancement of women.

There is a saying that 'not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted'. This is particularly true of gender issues which are often hard to 'count' in a traditional sense — consider the difficulties of quantifying the impact of violence on a woman's life. It is important to remember that being able to reliably count data on an issue does not change it; it merely provides further information with which to study it. Collecting data on violence against women does not stop it and continuing to count it will not reduce it any further; what is important is what we do with this information. We need to remember, however, that if we do not have any data on violence against women, we cannot judge whether prevention strategies are actually having an impact. Violence is not 'counted' as an issue in development unless there is data on which we can measure it, so indicators become incredibly important.

It is essential when we are critically examining gender indicators that we ensure they will reveal something meaningful about women's empowerment and equality; they cannot be an end in themselves.

Counting on empowerment

We can count the number of training sessions people attend on gender, we can count the number of girls and boys who attend school, and we can count the number of men and women who receive condoms; but how do we measure gender equality? This has been an elusive issue for development practitioners as measurement of women's empowerment is not an easily 'countable' statistic, yet it is still an undoubtedly valid goal of development work. The fact that there is no single indicator that measures gender equality or women's empowerment does not make it any less important to measure. On the contrary, it necessitates an understanding of the combination of elements that illustrate equality and empowerment.

The most recent international attempts to 'measure' gender equality and the empowerment of women were undertaken by the United Nations Development Program Gender Equality Measure (GEM) in 1995, and by the MDGs in 2000. The GEM is comprised of national gender indicators that measure political participation and decision making (percentage shares of parliamentary seats by sex); economic participation and decision-making power (percentage shares of positions as legislators, senior officials and managers by sex, and percentage shares of professional and technical positions by sex); and power over economic resources (estimated earned income by sex) (UNDP 2003).

Goal 3 of the MDGs (MDG3) is the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. This is measured by the ratio of boys and girls in education.
and literacy rates, seats in parliament held by women, and the additional recognition of the percentage of the female share of non-agricultural wage employment. This expands on GEM's gender indicators, but it still omits indicators that represent some key issues to women's empowerment such as freedom from violence, and access to sexual and reproductive services that provide women with the power and control over their bodies and their fertility.

A strong response from the women's movement, NGOs, research institutes and academics has led to a call for a more comprehensive and inclusive list of gender indicators to measure women's empowerment. The Millennium Project, led by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, formed a Task Force on Education and Gender Equality and produced the report 'Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women'. This text, published in 2005, set forward seven strategic priorities with 12 gender indicators (see overview, this issue). Combined, these indicators provide a more realistic assessment of women's empowerment, although it can still be claimed they are not exhaustive. They do encompass the additional areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights, violence against women, property rights and infrastructure (hours per day/per year men and women spend collecting fuel and water). These indicators are proposed for use by governments and international organisations to monitor progress towards MDG3.

Of course this combination of gender indicators is not enough to address gender equality, and the Task Force highlights the need to have a particular focus on three sub-populations: poor women in the poorest countries, adolescents, and women and girls in conflict and post-conflict. These sub-populations of women are disproportionately affected by development interventions and addressing their needs has the potential to create the greatest amount of positive change.

The Australian/New Zealand context

The indicators proposed by the Task Force are aimed at national statisticians. This in itself has some key implications for development practitioners, as we discovered from our Pacific colleagues working in statistical offices in Tonga, New Caledonia and Vanuatu, who attended the gender indicators symposium. Gathering the sex and age disaggregated data in these 12 indicators is currently beyond the capability of the statisticians in many Pacific countries, as much of this data does not exist. There is a need for development agencies to assist with financial and technical support and to invest in the collection of internationally comparable data for women's empowerment and MDG3 in Pacific countries.

Indeed, if we look at one gender indicator — the number of women in parliament — the Pacific region has the second lowest level of representation in the world, with 13.9 per cent of women in parliaments in 2005, ahead only of the Arab states (IPU 2005; see O'Callaghan paper, this issue). This highlights the need for Australian and New Zealand development practitioners to focus on addressing the inequalities in political representation apparent from this gender indicator. Under-utilising half the population of a country cannot assist development. In fact, one World Bank study (2005) claims there is an inverse link between the number of women in parliament and the level of corruption. Women are an important asset, and in many Pacific countries where corruption is an issue, increasing the number of women in parliament may be one of the most effective strategies in combating corruption.

In order to translate a national level gender indicator into a project objective one needs to look at practical solutions, such as encouraging and supporting women in parliament and senior government positions in the Pacific. This will entail working with local women to develop project level gender indicators that address this, including measuring the provision of appropriate training, scholarships, awareness and support programmes. This example illustrates that increasing gender equality, and monitoring this through the use of gender indicators, is not only a measure of good gender practice but reflects good development practice with community-wide benefits. If women remain constrained in their decision-making roles, the whole community suffers this loss, not just women and their children.

Is this just more gender mainstreaming? Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Theresa Gambaro's opening speech at the symposium (see Gambaro paper, this issue) is worth revisiting here:

Gender equality must be recognised as a core development objective ... For aid agencies and governments, gender indicators are a key tool for accountability, telling us whether our programmes are working.

As Australian aid agencies, academics, contractors and government workers, we need to ensure that our work leads to women's equality and empowerment, and gender indicators are a way of monitoring our progress towards this point. Noleen Heyzer, the Executive Director of UNIFEM in New York, states:

Assessing the progress of women against agreed targets reveals how much progress there has been — but also how much still remains to be done. We need to identify the institutions and individuals that can deliver on commitments to advance the status of women.

This emphasises that indicators are not an end in themselves, but rather a tool for measurement and accountability that informs a gender analysis. Although there have been problems with gender mainstreaming, mostly in implementation and monitoring, there is still a huge need to ensure that gender issues are integrated throughout the project cycle. This does not mean throwing away
all the old gender mainstreaming tools, but revising them, and ensuring that they have clear gender indicators, action plans and targets. These need to be realistic and based in a gender analysis which has adequate sex disaggregated data to understand the role, status and situation of women on the ground in the projects. Gender indicators need to be realistic and measurable, and strategies must be developed that will allow these indicators to be monitored. It is not enough that we have more data — this data must actually illustrate a change in the lives of women in the projects we are devising and monitoring.

**Institutional and project level indicators**

Transforming national level gender indicators into institutional and project level indicators for project monitoring is essential. That is why IWDA brought Geeta Rao Gupta to Australia for the symposium. Gupta is President of the International Centre for Research on Women in Washington and was the coordinator and author of the report from the Gender Equality and Education Task Force which developed the 12 gender indicators to measure gender equality and the empowerment of women. Bringing this expertise to Australia facilitated discussion among diverse development workers on how the Task Force indicators could provide a framework for practitioners in the Australian and New Zealand context.

In considering how gender issues are addressed within organisations, Juliet Hunt (private gender consultant) and Shireen Lateef (Director, Social Sectors, Mekong Region, Asian Development Bank [ADB]) both outlined practical ways that institutions have addressed gender issues. Hunt outlined a process of ‘gender audits’ which she has conducted for several aid agencies in Australia. Gender audits are a tool to measure progress at both an institutional level, within organisations, and on a project level, within the programmes and projects of the organisations. It consists of a series of questions, focus group discussions and analysis looking at issues of political will, technical capacity, accountability and organisational culture (see also Morris 1995).

In the USA, InterAction has developed a gender audit process through its Commission on the Advancement of Women. Discussions from the symposium have raised the possibility of this tool being used more consistently throughout Australia and New Zealand, in particular for non-government development agencies. IWDA’s currently discussing this opportunity for others in the community, and is looking at the possibility of a ‘train the trainers’ session in a standard audit process for Australian and New Zealand gender specialists. This discussion will continue through the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) gender equity working group chaired by IWDA.

Lateef referred to gender action plans (GAPs), which have been highly effective in mainstreaming gender into large scale ADB projects. GAPs are a gender mainstreaming tool which outline a roadmap for implementation, are easily replicated, easy to monitor, and most importantly are compulsory in the ADB context (see Lateef, this issue). A GAP begins with a gender analysis which identifies the key roles, activities and constraints that women and men face in a project context. Gender strategies are then devised with specific activities, targets, resources and responsibilities for implementation that are linked to loan objectives. They are developed using a participatory approach that has full ownership of the agency and which includes the building of gender capacity. Although this is a process which has been used for large scale projects at the ADB, it is easily transferable to smaller scale projects.

The gender audits and the GAPs are both tools which look at ways of mainstreaming gender into development projects and development organisations, and provide a context for accountability.

**Steps to the future**

There was a suggestion at the symposium that the ACFID gender equity working group be expanded to non-ACFID members interested in working on the implementation and monitoring of gender indicators and other tools aimed at integrating gender into organisational and project planning. This process has begun, and a task force has been established to follow up on the gender indicators and wider gender mainstreaming strategies. This process will begin with the development of some sector specific gender training using case studies from Australian and New Zealand agencies and contractors. This training is scheduled for November 2006 under the auspices of ACFID. It is hoped that the training, which will include reference to the GAPs and gender audits, will be run on an annual basis for new staff in the Australian and New Zealand development sectors, to ensure all staff have access to a common set of tools and the skills to develop clear, concise and measurable gender indicators.

This is only the beginning of a process which will encompass not only training, but the development of research into the implementation of gender indicators in the Asia-Pacific region, the strengthening of regional data collection, and the development of national strategies to increase the collaboration between stakeholders to further strategies for the harmonisation of gender indicators in practice.

IWDA invites all those interested in being involved in the task force to contact the IWDA office in Melbourne (61+3 9650 5574).

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Development Bulletin 71
Engendering a new millennium: Framing the struggle for women's empowerment within the context of the Millennium Development Goals

Salil Shetty, United Nations Millennium Campaign

The Millennium Declaration
The Millennium Declaration, signed by a record 189 Heads of State at the historic Millennium Summit in 2000, is a document designed to address the uneven distribution of the benefits and costs of globalisation. The declaration, and the eight MDGs that quantify its aims, situates development discourse within a human rights framework. This framework emphasises the importance of investing as much in the advancement of equality, tolerance, environmental sustainability and freedom as in specific economic infrastructures. Within this framework, the declaration defines extreme poverty as a phenomenon which must be addressed by attacking its myriad root causes, such as high illiteracy rates, increasing rates of infectious disease and pervasive gender discrimination. By identifying a causal link between gender discrimination and the persistence of extreme poverty, the declaration positions the goal of women's empowerment as an objective which must be obtained, not only to fulfil the basic human rights of women everywhere, but also as a necessary milestone for the successful eradication of poverty around the world.

This approach is different from many that have come before it. In the past, many development agendas have operated separately in pursuit of progress on singular or isolated issues relating to health, education, labour rights, gender equality... the list goes on. Even within the 'narrower' sub-fields of these broader issues, projects have been designed based on the rationale that sufficient investment of time and money in one area of an issue can ensure success independently of success in others areas. In an address to the General Assembly on the subject of the Millennium Declaration’s objectives, the Secretary General Kofi Annan (2005) clearly stated that this is not so, saying:

... there are items which seem more important to some than to others, and items about which some have reservations, while others consider them essential. The temptation is to treat the list as à la carte menu, and select only those that you especially fancy.

In this case, that approach will not work. What I am proposing amounts to a comprehensive strategy.

Applying this strategy to goal 3
Goal 3, the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, provides a good example of why the synergistic approach put forth by the Millennium Declaration and Secretary General is relevant. Data shows that the persistence of widespread poverty is intrinsically related to the systematic subordination and confinement of women to positions of social, political and economic disadvantage; it is no coincidence that countries with high levels of gender discrimination also suffer from high poverty levels. From the perspective of both human rights advocates and pragmatic policy makers, development efforts to reduce world poverty levels must be considered inseparable from initiatives to better educate and empower one half of the world’s population.

What is more, although goal 3 is the only MDG that is solely focused on women’s empowerment issues, it is not the only one of the MDGs with gender-specific targets or implications. For example, with regard to goal 1’s emphasis on extreme poverty reduction, it is impossible to discuss the population of 1.2 billion people that lives on less than one dollar without acknowledging that women compose over two-thirds of this group (UNAIDS 2006:1). Discussions about poverty reduction must therefore raise specific questions about why women, in particular, are so impoverished. What is it that prevents women, more than men, from advancing beyond the poverty line?

Points of intersection: Education and goals 2 and 3
There is arguably no answer more frequent to the question of what it is that women need to be empowered than education, a topic primarily addressed by goal 2. Education is, by far, one of the most central issues of relevance to the process of women’s empowerment, and thus to the overall process of reducing global poverty levels. Without the guarantee of consistent access to educational resources, women are systematically relegated to the informal and agricultural sectors, sectors in which financial stability is often volatile and opportunities for advancement are rare. The provision of girls with an education not only impacts their ability to participate in the skilled labour force (which
produces positive net gains for trade), it also has a positive impact on child and maternal mortality rates. For example, each year of schooling that women receive corresponds with a five to ten per cent lower mortality rate for the children they bear, a reduction which directly contributes to progress on goals 4 and 5 (Coleman 2004:3).

The strong positive correlation between women's education levels and other human development indicators relating to health, security and household incomes emphasises the logical importance of rapidly reducing the gender disparities in primary education. The attainment of equal rates of primary school attendance between the sexes by 2005 was one of the most important targets of goal 3. Though it is now widely acknowledged that investment in girls' education produces the highest rate of return for many of the world's poorest countries, this deadline, the first of all of the MDGs, was missed.

A sense of urgency?
While progress has been made on some of the goals, particularly in regions of Asia, there is much more to be done. In addition to the 2005 target regarding global levels of women's education, other important goal 3 deadlines indicating progress towards greater gender equality are in danger of being missed. For example, global wage/employment rates of women have not changed significantly since 1990 (United Nations 2006). Moreover, women remain vastly under-represented in national parliaments in most regions of the world. This under-representation is a significant indicator of the broader exclusion of women from the very political processes that can bring about the policy changes to empower them. The Millennium Declaration's overarching emphasis on improving governments' accountability to their citizen bases is inextricably linked with the improved democratisation of resource allotment processes. However, despite what many people think, the responsibility of achieving the goals does not only lie on the shoulders of policy makers and officials in government. In order for policy makers to be accountable to their constituents, they must first know what their constituents want! Now is the time for dialogue between voters and elected officials to encourage improvements in governance and political accountability. It was primarily to support this process of civic engagement in support of the MDGs that the Secretary General founded the Millennium Campaign in 2003.

The Millennium Campaign
In keeping with the structural provisions of the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, the Secretary General launched the Millennium Campaign in 2002 to support and strengthen citizens' efforts to hold their governments to account for their commitments to achieve the goals. As articulated by Kofi Annan after the launch, the campaign was founded on the principle that 'it is not in the United Nations that the MDGs will be achieved, [but rather] in each country by the joint efforts of the governments and people'. To this end, the campaign has worked to create a global coalition of country level civil society campaigns (composed of actors from NGOs, faith-based organisations, local authorities, celebrities, and trade unions) in both developed and developing countries. These campaigns have generated political content and messaging specific to their domestic political, social and cultural contexts to raise awareness of the goals and to build political will for their achievement. In particular, the campaign's mandate to help improve government accountability to domestic citizenries drives its work to empower traditionally excluded constituencies, such as women, within the political sphere.

In developed countries, the campaign's primary focus has been on achieving goal 8, the creation of a global partnership for development, and on specifying its demands with regard to aid, debt and trade reform. It has also worked closely with its campaign partners to demand rich countries to adopt specific deadlines and targets for realising the commitments they made by signing the Millennium Declaration. In developing countries, the campaign's primary focus has been on mobilising and enabling national civil society and parliaments to hold their governments to account for achieving goals 1-7 through improved governance (to which the campaign, as a mechanism for government monitoring, already contributes), MDG focused policies, and transparent pro-poor budgets.

Consistent with the goals' synergy, the campaign's activities surrounding goal 8 have the potential to contribute to significant gains on goal 3, women's empowerment. While progress on global trade reform has been slow and the persistence of exploitative labour and wage relations has hampered progress on the reduction of overall poverty rates, what little progress has been made in opening global markets has had positive impacts on women from Bangladesh to Madagascar, and from South Africa to Vietnam. Increased quantities of exports from these countries have generated greater numbers of opportunities for employment in export sectors. For women employed in these sectors, the opening of markets has contributed significantly to their economic empowerment by providing them with greater numbers of opportunities to secure gainful employment beyond informal sectors. While this progress is good, countries must continue to ensure that their female populations benefit from trade by analysing its impacts on women's land ownership, access to monetary credit and job skill training, and ability to command fair wages.

In particular, progress on women's equality indicators is contingent upon women's ability to access rich countries' consumer markets. Access to these markets by developing
countries is too often restricted by trade-distorting agricultural subsidies and tariffs. These protectionist mechanisms are most frequently levied against labour-intensive goods and services, such as agricultural products and garments, which are exactly the types of goods that poor women most often produce. For this reason, the reduction of subsidies and tariffs by developed countries is of particular importance to women's global economic betterment. It is therefore up to these countries to honour their goal 8 commitments and lead the way in opening their markets to developing countries, thereby contributing to the improvement of women's situations around the world.

**Translating the goals into policy**

The unsatisfactory rate of progress to date on the goals and targets addressing women's empowerment issues necessitates increased levels of activity in support of policy changes that prioritise progress on gender equality at the global, and particularly at the national level. The goals, though global in scope, are designed as guidelines for integration and implementation by individual countries into their domestically-defined policy platforms. The policy mechanisms by which national governments, particularly those of developing countries, have chosen to ensure 'gender mainstreaming' (that is, the strategy by which gender perspectives and a focus on the goal of gender equality are central to all activities) are varied and include the implementation of gender-specific quotas for positions of political representation; the special consultation of women in the production of poverty reduction strategy plans (PRSPs); the revision of school curriculums; the sex disaggregation of data on the MDGs; the passage of legislative reforms that remove barriers to, among other things, women's ability to inherit, acquire and control productive assets; and the practice of gender budgeting, a tool for ensuring the equitable distribution of public expenditures among men and women (Sharp and Broomhill 2002:1).

While gender mainstreaming strategies in developing countries are generally applied primarily to domestic policies, in developed countries, in keeping with their commitments to goal 8, the strategies are most effectively applied to both domestic and international initiatives. Gender mainstreaming strategies are an important part of goal 8 implementation plans as they help to ensure that rich countries' efforts to assist poorer countries have positive, intended effects for both men and women. One example of the different ways in which a developed country has and could incorporate further gender mainstreaming strategies into its domestic and foreign policy is exhibited by the case of Australia.

In the 1980s, Australia was a world leader in progressive policy implementation, at the domestic level, for the promotion of increased equality between the sexes. In 1984, it introduced the first ever gender-sensitive budget which resulted in a comprehensive analysis of federal expenditures, though not of revenues. Though this financial exercise was discontinued in 1996, the practice of gender budgeting has now been adopted, in some form, by over forty nations including Fiji, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Uganda, the United Kingdom, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Cagatay, Keklick, Lal and Lang 2000; Krug and van Staveren 2002).

At the international level, Australia could also have the opportunity to accelerate global progress on goal 3 by executing a gender impact assessment of its foreign assistance programme, AusAID, and by establishing systematic reporting mechanisms to continuously monitor the gender-specific outcomes of its international and domestic programmes. The value of these gender-focused evaluation procedures would be their capacity to identify, and thus allow the Australian Government to combat any negative effects on women that the development initiatives funded by its foreign aid might have. This gender-specific form of monitoring would also encourage the collection of gender disaggregated data which would shed light on development projects' implications for women.

The best way forward on the implementation of a gender impact assessment of AusAID is to increase civil society pressure on government actors to agree to enact such an initiative. Australia's most prominent civil society and anti-poverty campaign, the Make Poverty History coalition (MPH), has done a great deal to pressure the Australian Government to deepen its commitment to various aspects of the MDGs. In similar fashion, the Micah Challenge, a global Christian campaign and influential advocate for the poor, has also been an influential actor in the Australian campaign to improve Australia's record on the goals, particularly with regard to goal 8. Currently, Micah is working to ensure that the Millennium Goals play a central role in the political debates sparked by the country's upcoming federal elections in 2007.

Consistent with the Millennium Campaign's global strategy for developed countries, the predominant focus of Australia's campaigning coalitions has been on goal 8. Among the range of policy reforms that MPH has prioritised for its 2006 campaign is the Australian Government's fulfilment of its commitment to contribute to the education fast track initiative (FTI). FTI, a goal 8 policy establishing a global partnership between donor and developing countries to ensure the acceleration of progress on goal 2, the achievement of universal primary education by 2015, is of great importance to the global women's rights agenda. Although Australia has signed up as an FTI donor, it has not yet made any financial contributions to the programme.
Strengthening Australia's commitment to goal 8

Further to the Australian Government's need to honour its commitment to FTI and to increase the role of women in positions of political influence, the Government must improve its action on another important aspect: the omission of any specific reference to indigenous people's rights, to peace building/disarmament processes, and to women's sexual and reproductive rights by the MDGs. The inclusion of the MDGs reflects the reality that the goals are not fully comprehensive and has served as a source of contention among some special interest groups. However, the utility and novelty of the Millennium Declaration, and subsequently of the MDG, does not lie in its comprehensive catalogue of human development indicators and targets. Instead, these documents are of particular importance to development actors because they provide a holistic framework within which to situate and link independent reform agendas together for greater political impact. The subsequent strengthening of grassroots campaigns has improved the ability of civil society networks to engage their governments and to hold them to account to their constituencies, and to their promises.

As improvements in government accountability cannot be made without the further integration of women into decision-making processes, progress on this front is not possible without the engagement of women at every level. Australia, with its large budget surplus, has the resources to fulﬁl its commitment to the MDGs; now all that is left to cultivate is the political will to do so. Please join the MPH campaign and other local initiatives that support the goals to add your voice to the millions of others demanding that their leaders be held to account for achieving them. We are the first generation that can eradicate extreme poverty; let us not miss this historic opportunity.

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Monitoring progress toward gender equality

Sun-Hee Lee, Gender Unit, AusAID

The White Paper on the Australian Government’s overseas aid programme, ‘Australia aid: Promoting growth and stability’, places gender equality as an overarching principle (AusAID 2006). This is the first time that gender has been elevated to this level since the Australian Development Assistance Agency (now AusAID) first adopted the principles of women in development 31 years ago.

AusAID recognises that actively supporting gender equality is a key factor in reducing poverty and increasing the well-being of women, girls, their families and communities. As such, the needs, priorities and interests of women, as well as men, will have to be considered at all stages of development activities. Substantial progress has been made in advancing gender equality over the last three decades, particularly within the education and health sectors. However, inequalities are still evident in economic development, human development, empowerment and political representation. Advancing gender equality further is not just a women’s issue, but is a goal that requires the active participation of both men and women.

AusAID is currently developing a whole-of-government gender policy, taking account of the White Paper initiatives and lessons learnt. The policy is due to be launched in November 2006. One of the key challenges to achieving the gender equality goal is developing a simple and practical framework to monitor progress towards gender equality in our partner countries. The MDGs seem to be the only agreed set of gender indicators in countries in Asia and the Pacific, and this paper examines key issues within the implementation of that framework.

Which indicators?

Indicators are essential for tracking progress towards gender equality and for identifying broad trends and differences, but like all evaluation tools indicators have their limits. Concepts, definitions and methodologies underlying indicators vary, sometimes significantly, from country to country and over time within countries.

A common set of basic minimum indicators to measure each country’s performance against its objectives helps both partner countries and donors to have efficient and constructive dialogue on advancing gender equality. Such indicators should be formulated in a collaborative manner between donors and partners. As pointed out at an OECD conference in 2002, ‘monitoring indicators is only useful if it results directly from the definition of the Government’s objectives and policies, allows an analysis of the outcomes, and potentially leads to re-orientations of policies if outcomes are unsatisfactory (OECD 2002:7).

Input, output, process, outcome and impact indicators are all relevant for gender equality progress monitoring for policy makers. However, there seems to be an over emphasis on input or output indicators. Improvement in inputs and outputs alone does not guarantee improvement of services or the advancement of gender equality.

There is a clear need to focus more on outcome and impact indicators. Focusing on outcome indicators should lead to increasing ownership by partner governments of policy implementation in order to attain results. A focus on outcome and impact indicators will also enhance the credibility of development assistance, in partner as well as donor countries (OECD 2002).

Sex disaggregated data

While gender equality and empowerment of women is the stated aim of MDG3, they are also critical to the attainment of all the MDGs. According to the majority of national reports on progress towards MDGs, however, gender concerns and perspectives have not been mainstreamed adequately across the goals. One of the key constraints to this is a lack of sex disaggregated data.

Figure 1: Progress towards MDG1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of population living on less than $1 a day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to MDG1, for instance, a favourable global growth environment has helped poverty reduction efforts and indeed, achieving the poverty reduction (MDG1) target for East Asia and the Pacific is well within reach (see Figure 1), though the picture may look quite different if China is excluded from the forecast. What is not clear, however, is how sustained poverty reduction over the past 15 years has affected women and men differently. Increasing poverty reduction efforts means enhancing opportunities for the poor, most of whom are women. The inclusion of sex disaggregated data as part of reporting on all the MDGs is likely to have far-reaching impacts on national poverty policies.

**Adolescents**

Additional basic information such as age can help sharpen strategies to address gender issues. Many national efforts towards reducing maternal mortality ratios, the indicator for MDG5, are falling well short of the target (World Bank 2006). In developing countries, women's chances of dying from pregnancy-related complications are almost 50 times greater than in developed countries. Women's access to trained birth attendants, one of the key indicators of maternal mortality, shows strong improvement in East Asia, more modest gains in Latin America, but little gain in sub-Saharan Africa.

Disaggregating this data by age, a factor frequently overlooked in maternal mortality data, spotlights differential vulnerabilities of different age groups. Maternal mortality ratios from selected countries provide a very clear picture of who the main risk groups are: maternal mortality ratios are much higher among adolescent girls than those who are in their 20s and 30s (see Figure 2).

Addressing adolescent development issues are key to meeting the MDGs in the long term and therefore deserve special attention (see Siegmann paper, this issue). Reaching young women and men for provision of family planning services and information, in addition to improved health services, delivery of births by trained personnel, emergency obstetric care and improved transport becomes an important strategy for reducing maternal mortality.

Family planning can reduce maternal mortality by 25 to 35 per cent, and child spacing can reduce maternal mortality by up to 30 per cent (UNFPA 2004; Global Health Council 2002). Unmet need for contraception, especially the unmet need of young men and women, is very high. One-fifth of married women in the Middle East and North Africa and one-quarter of married women in sub-Saharan Africa are unable to access the contraception they need (Grown, Gupta and Kes 2005).

**National reports**

National reports on progress towards the MDGs contain a number of key points that are worth highlighting here (UNDP 2005):

1. In relation to poverty reduction, many national MDG reports highlight women's specific vulnerability to poverty and hunger. Causes of
women's poverty include low social status, lack of access to land and intra-household factors.

2. A number of MDG reports mention access to social services, decision making, land and productive assets, and wage gaps as key constraints to achieving gender equality.

3. Some countries link shortfalls in attaining the MDG education goal with socio-cultural factors such as early marriage.

The extent to which partner governments have the capacity to produce statistics that reflect various gender concerns varies significantly. *The World’s Women 2005* (UN DESA 2006) found relative stagnation in sex disaggregation within one of the most basic areas of data reporting — births and deaths. Between 1995 and 2003 in Africa, for example, 31 countries encompassing about 75 per cent of the continent’s population failed to report births by sex.

A review of national level reports spanning three decades concluded that a number of countries have initiated data collection on violence against women, the participation of women and men in the informal sector, and time use of women and men. The data collection on those issues, however, remains largely ad hoc and has not been incorporated into the regular national reporting systems. For developing countries, collection is often dependent on external resources or, in some cases, the support of national women’s machineries (ibid). The development of good statistical systems is closely linked to the income of countries and thus donor support for advancing gender equality should include provision for improving data and statistical collection capacities.

Extending basic health, education, water and sanitation to the poorest segments of the population can be difficult and costly.

Given the vast differences in health, education and economic outcomes among women from different income groups (World Bank 2006), pro-poor country policy choices need to be supported. These choices will hinge on countries’ ability to track outcomes by income group, gender, ethnicity, and region. The Australian aid programme, for instance, is supporting national monitoring and evaluation systems in several countries (see Hung and Petersen paper, this issue). Better information is a first step to better implementation of gender policies because as the saying goes, ‘what gets measured, gets done’.

**References**


Making gender mainstreaming a reality: Using gender action plans

Juliet Hunt, independent consultant and Shireen Lateef, Social Sectors, Mekong Region, Asian Development Bank

Introduction

Most multilateral, bilateral and non-government development agencies have found gender mainstreaming to be elusive. Responsibility for implementing gender mainstreaming has been 'everywhere but nowhere', capacity and understanding on gender equality strategies has been limited and accountability for achieving gender equality results has been very weak. Few examples of gender mainstreaming are documented in donor evaluations, and development agencies have been slow to apply proven lessons about effective strategies for making progress towards gender equality (Hunt and Brouwers 2005; Hunt 2004).

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB's) gender and development policy identified gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for addressing gender inequity in all ADB-financed activities (ADB 1998). ADB introduced project-specific gender action plans (GAPs) as a mechanism to facilitate the involvement of both women and men in project activities and to ensure equitable distribution of resources and benefits. Some GAP plans were developed during programme/project design and others were developed during implementation as mid-course corrections (ADB 2002).

This paper summarises findings on the effectiveness of GAPs for achieving benefits for women and progress towards gender equality in ADB loans. Gender assessments were undertaken of 12 loans in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Cambodia (Thomas, Lateef and Sultana 2005; Thomas 2005; Hunt, Lateef and Shrestha 2005; and Hunt and Kheng 2006). The loans reviewed included five rural development projects (agriculture, rural infrastructure and livestock), four human development/social sector loans (two health loans including one sector programme loan, and two education projects) and three governance loans (including one project and two policy reform loans).1

What is a gender action plan?

A GAP is a systematic framework for ensuring that women participate in and benefit from development programmes and projects. It is a roadmap to translate gender mainstreaming into concrete actions and to guide implementation of the gender design features of development programmes and projects.

A GAP is based on social and gender analysis that identifies key gender inequalities and constraints which will affect the implementation and results from a project or programme. A GAP may include specific strategies and targets for women's participation and benefits, activities, time-bound actions, monitoring indicators, and a budget allocation. GAPs should include strategies for gender capacity building with key stakeholders including partner and implementing agencies, contractors, NGOs and communities, and the provision of gender specialist expertise to assist with the development, implementation and review of project/programme-specific GAP elements.

GAPs are not stand-alone documents or separate components for women. An essential requirement is that strategies and targets for women's participation and benefits are identified for activities in each programme/project component. In order to track the main programme and project components, elements of the GAP should be fully integrated into programme/project design and implementation. GAP elements need to be included in project and programme design, monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Within the ADB, the implementation of GAPs has been included in loan assurances and/or covenanted in loan agreements. This means that it is mandatory to implement, monitor, review and report on the GAP.

Impact of the plans

GAPs have helped to achieve practical benefits for women and changes in gender relations. Of the 12 ADB loans assessed, three projects implemented comprehensive GAPs and three projects had GAPs which had partial or delayed implementation. Four projects had no GAPs but did have some gender provisions included in the project design. The remaining two were governance policy loans which had gender equality policy reforms as tranche release conditions.

The gender assessments showed that comprehensive project GAPs are an effective gender mainstreaming tool, because they provide a systematic framework for ensuring that women participate and benefit from all loan components. Gender equality results were demonstrated within sectors, across sectors and across the four countries included in the study.

1
Table 1: Example of a gender action plan - Bangladesh third rural infrastructure development project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project components</th>
<th>Gender action plan elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project goal: Poverty reduction</td>
<td>Poor women identified as a sub-group of the rural poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender-related indicators included in benefit monitoring and evaluation framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeder roads</td>
<td>Women labourers to be recruited (target 3,000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pay equity for female and male labourers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate facilities for women and men labourers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 women market sections</td>
<td>Shops to be allotted to women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate toilet and well facilities for women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training in shop management and trade skills for women shop owners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women to participate in market management committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth centre markets with areas allocated to women (279)</td>
<td>Space to be allocated to women, including separate toilet and well facilities for women in 200 markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women to participate in market management committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree plantation and routine road maintenance</td>
<td>Labour contracting societies (LCS) to be formed with destitute women with savings and skills development activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Train members of 230 LCS in income generating activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each woman responsible for 0.5 km of road for two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges, culverts, ghats (wharves), flood refuge centres</td>
<td>Women Union Parishad (local government) members to be consulted in design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific physical design features to meet women’s privacy needs (for example, separate waiting areas, women’s corners and toilet facilities).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women labourers to be recruited alongside men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Union Parishad buildings</td>
<td>Separate room and toilet facilities for women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women labourers to be recruited (target of 34 per cent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training — 400 Union Parishads, 50 local contractors</td>
<td>Gender and development training for all stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender and development training integrated into Union Parishad training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women Union Parishad members and traders included in all financial management training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training for contractors on employment equity and wage parity for women.</td>
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<td>(Thomas, Lateef and Sultana 2005)</td>
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</table>

Projects which refined GAPs during implementation had the most comprehensive results including practical benefits for women and some signs of progress towards changes in gender relations. Projects with delayed or partial implementation of GAPs demonstrated fewer results but had significant potential to deliver more benefits if GAPs were fully implemented. Projects without comprehensive GAPs achieved some benefits due to specific gender provisions, but demonstrated the least progress towards changes in gender relations. Two governance policy loans achieved significant gender equality policy reforms at macro level due to tranche release conditions which were met by partner governments.

Loan projects which implemented GAPs resulted in:
- increased participation by women in project activities, particularly through community based organisations;
- more equitable access to project and programme resources, including employment opportunities, skills training, technology and government services;
- improved practical benefits for women such as increased income, greater financial security and increased livelihood options; and
- progress towards gender equality, including changing decision-making patterns in the

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household, female membership and leadership of community based organisations, and increased mobility for women.

Most projects encouraged the participation of women in loan activities to some extent. However, this did not always translate into sustainable access to resources, benefits, or progress towards gender equality. GAPs helped to ensure that women's participation was effectively translated into practical benefits for women and their families.

Gender equality results: Bangladesh case study

The Bangladesh third rural infrastructure development project is a good practice example of how rural infrastructure can be designed to benefit women and reduce poverty, due to the development and implementation of a comprehensive project GAP (Thomas, Lateef and Sultana 2005:11).

Women participated in all project elements:
• women were involved in decision making about rural infrastructure such as women's market sections, flood shelters and landing ghats; and
• both women and men were engaged in the operation and maintenance of infrastructure.

Women had increased access to economic resources, training and savings:
• 2,200 destitute women were employed and became members of labour contracting societies. All received orientation training in tree planting and maintenance; 915 of these women were also trained in income-generating activities;
• 816 shops were allocated to 816 female traders in 133 women's market sections;
• 733 female traders received training in shop management. New small business skills were acquired and put into practice; and
• 180 women Union Parishad members received orientation training on their roles and responsibilities, local resource mobilisation and gender and development, while 938 women Union Parishad members were trained in financial management, local resource mobilisation and in the operation and maintenance of markets and ghats.

Practical benefits for women included:
• employment in infrastructure construction, tree planting and maintenance (4.62 million work days were generated for women, compared with 14.56 million generated for men);
• household nutrition improved due to women's increased incomes;
• destitute women and female petty traders had enhanced livelihood options and reduced vulnerability to poverty;
• women's specific needs for privacy were addressed in infrastructure construction including women's private corners in 14 flood refuge centres, women's waiting rooms and toilets in ghats, and separate women's rooms and toilet facilities in 74 Union Parishad buildings.

Progress towards changes in gender relations at the household level included:
• women traders had enhanced status in the family due to their new role in what was previously an exclusively male activity; and
• women in labour contracting societies controlled their income, had formal bank accounts for the first time, and had increased confidence and status from their employment.

Progress towards changes in gender relations at the community level included:
• progress was made towards wage parity for women in construction work, and there was increased recognition of women's value as workers;
• there is increased access to local governance structures, facilitated by women Union Parishad members and the women's room in Union offices;
• women Union Parishad members participated in community decision making on infrastructure;
• women UP members were included in market management committees; and
• there was increased mobility for women, who were more likely to go to markets to purchase goods from women traders, and there was increasing community acceptance of female traders.

Gender action plans role in achieving project objectives

GAPs assisted with achieving overall project objectives, by reducing the vulnerability of women and their families to poverty. By targeting women, projects which implemented GAPs also effectively targeted the poor.

For example, in rural development projects in Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, women who previously earned little or nothing had access to cash income, a savings discipline, and new skills. Increased income was spent on essentials such as food, education and health care. In some cases women planned to invest income into new income generating enterprises.

In Nepal, the introduction of a GAP assisted the third livestock development project to achieve the project goal of reducing poverty. Poor families in Nepal are unable to invest in
or care for large livestock. Women are responsible for small livestock such as goats and chickens, and are more likely to control income from their sale. Sixty per cent of the project’s 17,522 farmers were in small livestock groups, and 71 per cent of these group members were women. Women who had little or no income before the project had cash to spend on food and other essentials. Microcredit from group savings was used for health emergencies, school fees and in some cases small enterprise development (Hunt, Lateef and Shrestha 2005).

**Gender action plans and sustainability of project benefits**

GAPs improved the quality of project implementation by identifying constraints to poor women and men participating and benefiting, and by developing strategies which required a balanced approach between hardware components such as physical infrastructure, and software components such as training and community organisation. The process of developing and refining GAPs enabled project implementers to sequence these different types of components to maximise benefits. These factors help to improve the sustainability of benefits for the poor. Sustainability was also enhanced by establishing women’s community-based organisations, linking these organisations with existing government services, providing skills training to women, and providing greater financial security through women’s savings and lending groups.

Significant benefits for women and progress towards gender equality has been achieved in a variety of challenging social contexts. All projects were faced with challenging cultural and social obstacles to women participating and benefiting. Comparing results across different sectors in the same country demonstrated that these obstacles could be addressed in non-threatening ways when comprehensive GAPs were implemented.

For example, in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal there are significant constraints on women’s mobility and traditional views which prohibit or undermine women’s involvement in community-based organisations, their interaction in public spaces and decision making, and their access to productive resources, education and training. All these factors make it very difficult for women to participate in large loan projects.

Projects with GAPs identified feasible strategies to address these constraints, including the establishment and nurturing of women’s groups, and mechanisms to ensure that they accessed project resources such as training, technical services and financial support for new livelihood options. The motivation and solidarity provided by women’s groups enabled individual women to challenge and change the attitudes of family members, particularly husbands, who were initially opposed to women taking on new roles and developing new skills. These strategies fostered progress towards greater equality, empowered women to participate in decision making, and provided entry points to deliver practical benefits such as increased income, particularly in rural infrastructure construction projects.

GAPs provided a systematic framework and concrete activities for putting gender mainstreaming into practice, based on social and gender analysis. They encouraged project partners and implementers to develop a shared rationale for targeting women and to identify strategic entry points and realistic targets for women’s participation linked to activities in each project component. This ensured that women could access a range of project resources and receive a share of project benefits. These targets and strategies sometimes required interventions which challenged cultural practices.

**Achieving practical benefits for women**

In the projects studied strategic interventions were often needed to achieve participation, access to resources and practical benefits for women.

For example, in four agriculture and rural development projects in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal women were targeted by supporting their membership of community-based organisations (Thomas, Lateef and Sultana 2005; Thomas 2005; Hunt, Lateef and Shrestha 2005). Through these organisations, women received training and new technology, and had access to financial and other services. They were able to participate in project activities, access resources, and benefit from increased income, savings and improved infrastructure. In some cases, women were also encouraged to participate in community decision making.

These were new roles for women that contributed to changing gender relations. Men’s approval and support for women’s participation was also an important positive change. Sometimes, these interventions led to other strategic results, such as increased access to political representatives, expanded social and economic networks, increased access to government services beyond the life of the project, and increased self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Role of gender specialists**

Loans which achieved the most comprehensive results for women benefited from guidance from local gender specialists in ADB resident missions and in partner agencies or project teams. This included technical advice for the development of GAPs, capacity building, and ongoing follow up, monitoring and dialogue on the implementation of GAPs and policy reforms.

It is essential for gender specialists to be included in programme/project preparation and implementation to ensure that adequate social and gender analysis is undertaken, and that this analysis is applied to project/programme design, implementation and review.
Dialogue with partner agencies
Commitment to challenge social and cultural obstacles has not developed in a vacuum. Those partner agencies which demonstrated the strongest leadership and commitment to addressing gender inequalities had been engaged in long-term dialogue and negotiation with ADB and other donors.

At the project level, dialogue with partner agencies needs to focus on:
- the rationale for targeting and benefiting women;
- how women's participation and benefits contributes to poverty reduction and overall loan objectives;
- capacity building on social and gender analysis, and on the identification of strategies to address constraints to women's participation and benefits;
- ensuring that GAPs and provisions are implemented; and
- demonstrating results, which encourage partner agencies to replicate effective approaches in other projects and sectors.

GAP approaches have been replicated by some partner agencies. Good management and strong leadership from the partner agency facilitated the implementation of GAPs. A capacity to innovate, flexibility, a teamwork approach, effective communication patterns, the capacity to learn and the ability to adapt strategies based on experience were strong features in the partner agencies whose projects achieved the most comprehensive results.

The effectiveness of GAPs at delivering poverty reduction results has prompted some partner agencies to replicate GAP strategies in other projects and areas of work. Positive results have reinforced commitment by partner agencies to address gender equality issues and to institutionalise gender mainstreaming approaches. Both in Bangladesh and Nepal, the positive results from GAPs led to GAP design being replicated across the sector. For example, the Nepal Department of Livestock and the Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department now acknowledge the importance of participatory approaches to community organisation and gender strategies to maximise returns on investments. The Nepal Department of Livestock has replicated small-livestock groups and community mobilisation approaches for targeting women in non-project areas (Hunt, Lateef and Shrestha 2005). Rules for managing women's market sections have been adopted by the Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department, along with the design of Union Parishad buildings to include a separate women's room and facilities.

Developing effective project gender action plans
GAPs are most effective at delivering results when they incorporate a number of good practice elements. No single element by itself is a formula for success. These good practice elements include the following:

- Undertake quality social and gender analysis: identify constraints to women and men participating and benefiting, and develop strategies for each loan component to ensure that women and men participate and benefit.
- Re-visit gender design strategies at inception to develop a detailed GAP: gender strategies or plans included in project designs are an essential roadmap for implementers.
- GAPs must be fully owned and understood by partner and implementing agencies: use a participatory and flexible approach to developing the GAP. A clear rationale is needed for targeting and working with women, which is directly linked to overall project objectives.
- Identify realistic targets linked to loan objectives: targets and strategies enable step-by-step progress on addressing gender inequalities, bringing incremental changes and challenging culture without threatening it. Linking targets to loan objectives helps all stakeholders to understand the rationale for focusing on women. Targets facilitate the monitoring of women's participation and benefits.
- Include gender capacity building in the GAP: both formal training and ongoing support and mentoring are needed for developing skills, ownership and commitment by partners, implementing contractors and NGOs.
- Provide adequate skills and resources for implementing GAPs: long-term gender specialists in the partner agency or project team and adequate resources have ensured that GAPs are implemented. NGOs contracted to implement project activities should have demonstrated capacity for addressing gender inequalities, for empowering women and for working with both women and men to advance gender equality.
- Monitoring and follow up of gender related targets and activities: systematic follow up is needed to ensure that policy reforms and GAPs are implemented. Routine monitoring and reporting promotes good results. Gender-sensitive indicators and gender-related risks must be included in project monitoring and evaluation and logical frameworks.
- Use mandatory conditions to ensure GAPs are implemented and reviewed: conditions on the release of funds have helped to achieve positive gender equality policy reforms in governance.
Policy loans leveraged high level support for gender equality

Policy dialogue and the incorporation of tranche release conditions was used to leverage high level support for gender equality policy reforms in the two governance policy loans studied. In Pakistan's decentralisation support programme, for example, a local government ordinance was passed which required 33 percent reserved seats for women. A national gender reform action plan (GRAP) and three out of four provincial GRAPs were approved by national and provincial governments. GRAPs include far-reaching and comprehensive reforms for government administration, employment and service delivery.

In Pakistan, gender equality is increasingly seen as a core issue in good governance, and as a legitimate subject for discussion and debate. The inclusion of gender-related policy reforms in a broader governance project resulted in gender equality issues being elevated to the national policy reform agenda. Gender equality policy reforms will help to build an enabling environment for further strategic gains for women, providing that they are implemented. For example, the Federal Government of Pakistan has allocated funds to implement the national gender reform action plan, which includes increasing women's political participation and employment in the public sector, and reforming institutional structures and budgeting practices.

Conclusion

The design and implementation of GAPs should be integrated into the programme/project cycle. Findings from gender assessments of twelve ADB loans provide clear guidelines for the steps which need to be taken to implement ADB's gender and development policy to ensure that women participate and benefit equally with men. These findings and guidelines could be adapted and applied to bilateral and non-government development activities.

GAPs should be prepared during the design phase for all projects and programmes which provide direct benefits to communities. Gender specialists should be involved in programme/project preparation and implementation to ensure that adequate gender, social and poverty analysis is undertaken and applied to design and implementation. Gender specialists are needed in partner agencies and project teams to provide ongoing technical assistance, support, capacity building and monitoring of the implementation of the GAP, and to monitor gender equality results.

Notes

This paper is based on gender assessments undertaken in 2004 as part of ADB's review of the implementation of its 1998 Gender and Development Policy. Findings will be published in Hunt J, S Lateef and H Thomas (forthcoming), 'Gender action plans and gender equality results: Rapid gender assessments of 12 ADB projects', Asian Development Bank, Manila.


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While the last few decades have seen progress for women, gender inequality remains pervasive and ubiquitous. Maintaining the momentum on gender requires work in a crowded policy environment. More than ever we need to be strategic and focus efforts where they will have most impact.

The MDGs provide an internationally agreed framework for focusing the world's efforts on achieving eight global development priorities by 2015. While goal 3 specifically addresses the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, it is widely acknowledged that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the achievement of all other MDGs. The UN Millennium Project Task Force Report, 'Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women' elaborates seven key strategic priorities to catalyse change on gender. It also urges a focus on three subpopulations of women for whom action on these strategic priorities is seen as particularly critical:

- poor women in the poorest countries and in countries that have achieved increases in national income, but where poverty remains significant;
- adolescents, who constitute two-thirds of the population in the poorest countries and the largest cohort of adolescents in the world's history; and
- women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings. (UN Millennium Project 2005a:3).

This paper puts forward some ideas and issues to help frame and prompt a focus on poor women. It also seeks to encourage reflection on how we understand poverty and how this can influence the nature and focus of development work. The key question is: what investments and approaches are most important for enabling quality gender work that makes a real difference to the lives of poor women, the impact of which we can and do measure?

Why emphasise poor women?
The Millennium Project Task Force sets out the justifications for focusing on poor women in clear, simple terms:

A focus on poor women is justified for several reasons. Gender inequalities exist among the rich and the poor, but they tend to be greater among the poor, especially for inequalities in capabilities and opportunities. Moreover, the wellbeing and survival of poor households depend on the productive and reproductive contributions of their female members. Also, an increasing number of poor households are headed or maintained by women. A focus on poor women is therefore central to reducing poverty (UN Millennium Project 2005a:4).

Gender inequality intersects with economic deprivation to produce more intensified forms of poverty for women than men. As Kabeer (2003:xiii) puts it, if 'gender inequality is part ... of the processes of causing and deepening poverty' then it must be part of measures to eradicate it.

Who do we define as 'poor women'?
This depends in part on what we mean by poverty. The Task Force report does not define 'poverty' and 'poor women', perhaps because the contested nature of the term makes such definitional tasks complex and the authors did not want to distract from the report's primary action focus.

The issue of how poverty is measured and what is measured reflects fundamental assumptions as to its nature and causes (Lok-Dessallien 1999:1). The conceptualisation affects what gets seen and what gets measured and the policies designed in response:

Poverty can be conceived as absolute or relative, as lack of income or failure to attain capabilities. It can be chronic or temporary, is sometimes closely associated with inequity, and is often correlated with vulnerabilities and social exclusion. The concepts used to define poverty determine the methods employed to measure it and the subsequent policy and programme packages to address it (ibid).

Continuing conceptual debates underline the complexity of poverty and of the factors that affect and reproduce it, and thus the need for multidimensional understandings and responses. For those concerned with gender issues, looking beyond traditional income or GDP-based measures of poverty is particularly important. These obscure or under-value women's contribution and activity levels by leaving out areas of (unpaid) work where women dominate, such as child rearing or housework, and work in the informal or non-market sector. Income tells us very little about many dimensions of women's lives. As it is generally assessed at the household level and assumes equal distribution of resources, it can tell us little about the situation of women.

Redefining poverty and inequality: Sen's capability approach
If poverty is acknowledged as multidimensional, then analytical concepts, associated measurement tools and policy responses
also need to be broad and multidimensional. In this context, Sen's capability approach offers a way to embrace and address the complexities and subjectivities of poverty assessment, rather than assume them away.

Sen's work has been hugely influential on the way in which development and poverty are conceived. His analysis effectively shifted the development paradigm from a preoccupation with economic growth to a focus on human flourishing and well-being. For Sen, development of human capabilities — defined as 'a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy' — should be true goal of welfare economics, with poverty redefined as the deprivation of basic capabilities (Davidson and Strickland 2000:5).

Ultimately, the process of economic development has to be concerned with what people can or cannot do, eg, whether they can live long, escape avoidable morbidity, be well nourished, be able to read and write and communicate, take part in literary and scientific pursuits, and so forth. It has to do, in Marx's words, with 'replacing the domination of circumstance and chance over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstance' (Sen 1983:754).

The first Human Development Report, published by UNDP in 1990, owed much to Sen's conceptual work, defining human development as 'the process of enlarging a person's "functionings and capabilities to function, the range of things that a person could do and be in her life"' (Sen 1989, in Fukuda-Parr 2003:303). Development is to be assessed not primarily in economic terms but by 'how well it expands the capabilities of all people' (Fukuda-Parr 2003:304). Our focus is shifted to the 'the real freedoms that people have for leading a valuable life' (Robeyns 2003:63), to 'the power that she has to be the person she wants to be and to have the kind of life she wants to lead' (Robeyns 2001:4).

Implications for measurement
A broader understanding of inequality and well-being avoids some of the problems associated with income based measures since many capabilities and functionings (such as health, education, integration, mobility and so on) can be measured at the individual level and thus gender differentials within households can be identified.

But new perspectives on the complex causes and manifestations of poverty and inequality bring significant challenges, not least because they require development practitioners 'to expand conventional sets of indicators to reflect a broader understanding of the phenomenon' (Lok-Dessallien 1999:1). Existing statistical capacity is limited in many developing countries. A recent UN report described official national data on basic demographic and social statistics as 'at times deficient, out-of-date, fragmented or simply unavailable' (UN Demographic and Social Statistics Branch 2005:35). So while we need more complex indicators to get an accurate picture of the extent and nature of poverty, national data sets are unlikely to provide the kind of information needed outside the OECD, for the conceivable future.¹

For the time being, we may have to choose between more nuanced and insightful indicators that pose significant data collection challenges, and more straightforward indicators that have significant conceptual and practical limitations but for which data is readily available. Although there is general agreement on the inherent limitations of the income approach to poverty assessment, it 'continues to be the most widely used means of measuring poverty, partly because of the relative abundance of data and partly because of its simplicity' (Lok-Dessallien 1999:10).

Ultimately, though, while a broader human capability 'implies a messier approach to measurement ... [it] results in richer and more well-rounded policy guidance. This broader approach is intellectually more challenging, but the pay-offs in terms of policy and programme implications are potentially high' (Lok-Dessallien 1999:16).

The practical challenges of data collection should not stop us from identifying and arguing for those indicators that give us a more accurate picture of gender inequalities. Even if data is not initially available, agreement on the value and use of an indicator can increase the pressure to collect and produce the relevant data ... [T]he opportunity afforded by the expectation to measure performance towards achievement of the ... MDGs should be fully utilised to enhance measurement in the area of gender equality' (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006:22).

Implications for identifying 'poor women'
Rethinking poverty in terms of human capabilities suggests a much broader group that might be defined as 'poor women'. Using a capabilities approach, not being poor would mean that women could sustain the capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living, have the ability to cope with stresses and shocks, and maintain and enhance these without undermining the natural resource base. In a world of pervasive gender inequality, many women do not have the capabilities to live the kinds of lives they want and that would benefit their families and communities.

So we need to put the Task Force's focus on the poorest in perspective. Many women continue to face significant constraints on their capabilities, in most countries. The Task Force report is all about the need to focus on women in order to achieve global development priorities, with an emphasis on interventions that particularly benefit the poorest — those whose capabilities are most constrained.
If poverty is understood as limiting opportunities to live a life one has reason to value, then in a world where gender is a significant barrier, focusing on women becomes a means by which to focus on the very poor. Defining poverty differently shifts who we see as experiencing poverty.

**Reaching poor women: It's about how as well as what**

Reaching poor women is not just about what we do but about how we work. A focus on poor women involves seeing development from the perspective of poor women and understanding the specificity and complexity of their context.

For example, a defining characteristic of very poor women is their exposure or vulnerability to shocks. When you have no buffer, it's hard to take risks or see beyond the short term. If we want to involve very poor women, we might consider incorporating ways to mitigate or socialise aspects of risk in our development activities. We also need to recognise and address the opportunity costs of participation for women, for example, by providing food or child care.

Meaningful participation is a key step in ensuring that social and other investments deliver real benefits to poor women. Women, especially poor women, stand to benefit most from investments in community infrastructure (and public goods in general) so they have a very direct interest in ensuring these are appropriate, accessible and maintained. They should be involved from the start in issue diagnosis, decision making, implementation and management of community infrastructure. Indicators that measure the extent of women's participation in determining goals, objectives and performance indicators would be useful here.

Women's involvement has a significant impact on outcomes. A World Bank (2006) evaluation of 122 water projects found that the effectiveness of a project was six to seven times higher where women were involved than where they were not. This is all very familiar territory, but still it doesn't happen enough, despite its importance. Too often, development activities are supply-driven, institution-driven, expert-driven, with a focus on technical inputs, services and production.

**But what and where do matter**

Poor women's circumstances and lives mean that some interventions are more likely to reach them than others (but you will only know this if you conduct detailed gender analysis and gender needs assessment). Interventions reaching poor women include agriculture, nutrition, education, women's empowerment, child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, access to essential medicines, water and sanitation, environment, improving the lives of slum dwellers, science and technology, transport and energy infrastructure (UN Millennium Project 2005b). Tracking budget allocations going to these kinds of interventions can help focus on poor women.

Investing in basic infrastructure is a key way to benefit women, particularly the very poor.

Lack of basic sanitation and safe water is an acute problem for the women and girls who live in poor and overcrowded urban slums and in the rural areas of the developing world. Many ... have to wait to relieve themselves until dark, sometimes confronting the fear and the reality of harassment and sexual assault ...

In many countries, school attendance by girls is lower and drop-out rates are higher in schools that have no access to safe water and no separate toilet facilities for boys and girls ...

(W)omen and girls in low-income countries spend 40 billion hours every year fetching and carrying water from sources which are often far away and may not, after all, provide clean water. From this standpoint, it is simple to understand that a woman could be empowered by having a nearby pump that conveniently supplies enough safe water for her family (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council 2006).

Focusing in the informal sector will also reach poor women. The poorest women in the world are employed in agriculture or the informal sector and their work is vastly undercounted in employment statistics. Women's share of self-employment and informal sector employment is also increasing faster than that of men. In poor countries, many women (and some older girl children) are engaged in non-market production that is not captured in standard income concepts used in household surveys (Osterreich 2005). They nevertheless produce valuable outcomes, such as better health, education, and nutrition of their families and children. Neither their contribution nor the outcome of this is directly visible in an income-based concept of pro-poor growth. Making women's contribution visible is valuable in its own right, and because it enables us to understand the constraints on poor women's time and how these might be addressed. The kinds of indicators that would contribute to assessing gender inequality in the informal sector include:

- employment in the informal economy;
- a 'decent work' indicator that reflects local circumstances;
- the extent to which women are paid a living wage;
- number of women agricultural workers who own land;
- sex differentials in income from employment;
- occupational segregation; and
- effect of small children in household on work participation (reflects differences in family care responsibilities)

**Implications of a focus on poor women**

Potentially, a focus on poor women has significant implications for how we work — as specialists, as donor agencies, within country programmes and with other donors. It demands, inter alia:
• more information, more analysis, better partnerships and more time;
• especially more and better gender analysis;
• participation of poor women at all stages of an activity;
• participatory methods for impact analysis such as wealth ranking — communities can provide a context-specific understanding of who is really poor and what has changed;
• development and use of context-specific, gender-informed indicators; and
• better monitoring of development impact, and of organisational performance to address ‘policy evaporation’ (van Reisen 2005).

More generally, we need to think much more holistically about the things that poor women might be very vulnerable to, the assets and resources that help them thrive and survive the poor women respond to threats and opportunities, and the sort of outcomes poor women aspire to.

Note
1. Even within the OECD, statistical collection policies may lag behind shifts in understanding and tend to reflect dominant perspectives and priorities. For example, time use surveys are key tools in capturing the extent of women's work (paid and unpaid) and their contribution to the national economy. While usage is increasing in developing as well as developed countries, surveys remain ad hoc and irregular and there is no international agreement on methodology and standards (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2006:63).

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Shaping women's property rights through indicators: A human rights approach

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The way in which property rights are conceived in human rights law has always been controversial (van Banning 2001). This is hardly surprising as property law plays a central role in shaping the contours of our economic and social relationships, including those of gender. While it would be true to say that the concept of 'property' is universally accepted, property rights exist in vastly different forms, reflecting diverse cultural histories and identities. In many parts of the developing world for example, and in indigenous communities globally, property is owned and inherited according to customary forms of tenure and land ownership, some of which are matrilineally structured.

No matter which systems of rights in land and housing prevail, property rights are nevertheless best understood as a bundle of rights, among which 'ownership' or 'title' is only one, albeit a particularly strong form of right. Other forms of property rights coexist with 'ownership' and may be held by people other than the owner, including possessory rights, usufructory rights, water rights, many forms of tenancy and tenure rights, inheritance rights, and intangible rights, like intellectual property and rights to government benefits and assistance that may attach to land. Formalising women's property rights can have both unintended as well as intended consequences. Who determines the model, and whose interests are served by it, are important foundational questions because ultimately, the form in which property rights are recognised is constitutive of everyday social and economic relationships.

Proposed indicators: A cautionary response

One of seven strategic priorities identified by the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality is to 'Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights' (Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005). The Task Force has proposed that this strategic priority be monitored by the following indicators:

1. What particular property regime is promoted by these indicators and, as a consequence, what set of economic and social relationships, including those of gender, do they construct?

The indicators measure property rights that are recognised by formal systems of land and housing title, which reflects a choice, already made, that land titling is the solution to gender inequality in the enjoyment of property rights. In the past, systems that formalised ownership and establish title to land have either completely ignored customary systems of land law, or severely compromised them. They have also, notoriously, recognised men as title holders, even where women have held significant property rights according to custom. In the context of the MDGs, the indicators uncritically adopt a market-oriented development model, as promoted by the World Bank's emerging global land policy. In this model, land that has not been brought into a formal system of property rights is considered to be 'dead capital', despite its importance in ensuring subsistence survival, essentially because it cannot be used as collateral for loans. Embedded in the World Bank's understanding of the productive potential of formal land rights are assumptions about ownership providing enhanced incentives for family members to contribute labour, without incurring the contractual costs of hiring workers (Manji 2005:165-6). In other words, it is women's unpaid domestic labour, made possible by unequal gender relations in families, that underpins the increased productivity anticipated as a result of the formalisation of property rights. This paradigm is uncritically embraced by the Task Force in its chapter on women's property and inheritance rights, where it says in the opening sentence:

It is now widely recognised that ownership and control over assets such as land and housing provide economic security, incentives for taking economic risks that lead to growth, and important economic returns including income (Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005:75).

Patently, individual ownership is prioritised because of its expected economic productivity, and any associated potential to enhance women's equality is a secondary concern.

Secondly, ownership is the only form of property right measured by the indicators. There may be some situations
where this is appropriate, as in many post-conflict situations, where titling practices during reconstruction can ensure gender equality. However, the focus on ownership seriously misunderstands the many forms of rights in property that may be crucial to women’s survival and well-being, such as being able to take out a lease and enjoy security of tenure in urban settlements, and exercise customary rights to cultivate agricultural land and glean food and medicines from common land.

Thirdly, the title is imagined as individual, as held by a male or a female, or jointly by a ‘married’ couple. This makes many traditional systems of ownership disappear entirely from the economic and social landscape. The household unit constituted by the indicators is predicated on a particular form of the family — the heterosexual nuclear family — which threatens to radically reshape many non-Western familial relationships and, in any event, does not have a good track record in promoting gender equality. The indicators erase the existing diversity of household arrangements, including those of extended families and single women.

In sum, the indicators prioritise individual ownership over all other forms of rights in property, which serves the marketplace by turning land into capital. Instead, the indicators need to promote an approach that builds from existing property arrangements, promoting gender non-discrimination and equality in their enjoyment and enabling the recognition of diversity within those arrangements. Curiously, the indicators do not measure discrimination that denies widows, single women, lesbians, single mothers and others who are not in a heterosexual marriage relationship equality in the enjoyment of property rights. Arguably, these women are among the poorest and most disadvantaged, and it is their situation that MDG policies should be primarily addressed.

Questions to consider:

• Can the indicators be stretched to measure and protect enjoyment of these property rights that are meaningful to the poorest women, who are likely to be homeless and landless, like access to adequate housing, security of tenure, and usufructory rights necessary for subsistence?

• How can the customary practices that provide land or housing security for women be retained in the face of the hegemony of market-oriented practices?

• Can the indicators be expanded to promote the elimination of discrimination against women who are widowed, divorced, single or marginalised for other reasons, in the enjoyment of property rights?

2. To what extent do the indicators allow us to move beyond measurement of formal gender parity to measuring the quality of any apparent change towards gender equality?

The indicators are also problematic because they do not ‘look behind’ the formal legal arrangements. Ownership is not necessarily control, as is amply illustrated by the prevalence of ‘sexually transmitted debt’ in the West, the mixed experience of joint titling in India (Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005:86), and the many examples of matrilineal property regimes where women enjoy property rights in name only (see Lockley, this issue). This is the same criticism that the Task Force makes of the primary MDG indicators when they say that:

none of the proposed indicators measure the quality of equality, the process that brings it about, or the nature of the outcomes. Achieving numerical balance (parity) is clearly important in a world where even this goal has yet to be attained. However, necessary by itself parity is not a sufficient condition for achieving the greater goal of gender equality (Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005:123).

To their credit, the indicators go further than measuring whether the law ‘on the books’ grants women equal property rights, by seeking to measure the implementation of such laws. However, they do not allow us to ‘look behind’ formal ownership and measure whether decision-making about management of the property is equally shared or whether any benefits derived from the property are equally distributed — in short, whether ownership of property has qualitatively enhanced gender equality within families, households and communities. This is not for a moment to deny that property rights can be empowering. Indeed, inequalities in ownership and control of property, and in the distribution of household resources, can be a significant cause of inequality in the enjoyment of other human rights like political participation, waged work and freedom from violence.

Questions to consider:

• How could the indicators be supplemented so that the quality of change in women’s formal enjoyment of property rights is measured?

• For example, does ownership enhance women’s bargaining power within households; decrease the prevalence of domestic violence; empower women to make decisions about how the land is managed? Or does ownership lead to an increase in women’s unpaid domestic/family-related labour?

3. Will the indicators tell us something meaningful about women’s empowerment and equality, or have the indicators become an end in themselves?
Another problem with the indicators is that they rely on an ambitious programme of data collection that does not yet exist. The Task Force recognises this problem and makes various recommendations about how it should be addressed (Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005:127-8). Yet when there has been little progress in the reporting of sex-disaggregated data in the last 30 years and the most basic data on births and deaths is only registered for about 30 per cent of the world’s population (Crawford 2006:11), what chance is there of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data about land ownership by 2015?

As many have already warned, advocates of women’s equality need to be careful that collecting statistics does not become an end in itself (Goetz 1991). In this instance, the caution seems well-warranted. In order to seize the opportunities presented by the MDGs, with their identification of specific and time-bound targets, indicators must be used that can be immediately applied. Further, it is important to develop qualitative measures to deepen our understanding of the picture drawn by quantitative measures, help to localise the global targets, and keep the focus on achieving meaningful results.

Questions to consider:

- Are there indicators that can draw on data that is already collected, or that can be more easily collected?
- What qualitative measures could supplement the quantitative indicators and help to interpret and deepen our understanding of the quality of the impact that the indicators measure?

A human rights approach

It is widely accepted that development goals, like achieving ‘a decent standard of living, adequate nutrition, health care, education and decent work education … are also human rights’ (UNDP 2000:8). In this context, the failure of the MDGs to take a human rights approach, and its absence in the strategic priorities identified by the Task Force, seem inexplicable. It suggests that free-market economists still prevail over the voices of human right advocates in the field of development; and that there is continuing disquiet among development practitioners about adopting a human rights framework.

What international human rights law offers is a universally agreed normative and value base, backed up by legal obligations, which provides a powerful framework for the identification and realisation of the MDGs. People are conceived as rights bearers, as full human subjects, rather than as primarily economic actors or as dependent on the charity of humanitarianism. Rights grant entitlements that give rise to legal obligations on the part of states, including to seek and/or provide international cooperation and assistance. A human rights framework emphasises four central principles (Hunt, Nowak and Osmani 2002):

- non-discrimination and equality;
- participation and empowerment;
- accountability; and
- recognition of interdependence of rights.

I will focus on these principles to suggest ways that some of the shortcomings of the indicators might be responded to.

1. Non-discrimination and equality

The principles of non-discrimination and equality lie at the heart of human rights law, drawing attention to the most marginalised groups in society. To this end, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1981) takes a much broader approach to women’s property rights than ownership, emphasising gender non-discrimination and women’s equality before the law, including equal rights to conclude contracts and administer property (Article 15), and the same rights as men to family benefits, bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit (Article 13(a) and (b)). Specific to the rights of women in rural areas, CEDAW obliges states parties to ensure that women ‘benefit directly from social security programs’, have ‘access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes’ and ‘enjoy adequate living conditions’, including adequate housing (Article 14(2)(c), (g) and (h)).

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR 1976) protects the right to ‘adequate housing’, rather than the right to housing title or land ownership. The Committee that monitors the ICESCR has interpreted adequacy of housing as living somewhere in ‘security, peace and dignity’ (ICESCR General Comment 4:para 7). Adequate housing includes seven components: security of tenure, availability of services, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and cultural adequacy.

Indicators suggested:

- whether women enjoy full and autonomous equality before the law;
- whether women have independent access to credit, loans and social security entitlements;
- whether women in married or de facto relationships own an equal share of ‘marital’ property during the marriage and at its dissolution, and are able to exercise that ownership (CEDAW General Recommendation 21:paras 30-31);
- whether women and men in the same degree of relationship to a deceased are entitled to equal
shares in the estate and to equal rank in the order of succession (CEDAW General Recommendation 21:para 34);

• whether women equally enjoy the right to adequate housing that is affordable, accessible, habitable, culturally adequate and has security of tenure, services available and location; and

• whether there are effective anti-discrimination laws that prohibit all forms of discrimination against women in the enjoyment of all forms of property rights, including on the basis of marital status, sexual orientation, widowhood, HIV status, employment, social status and so on.

2. Participation and empowerment
Human rights law emphasises the processes by which rights are articulated and realised; that rights will only be realised through the empowerment of rights bearers. Therefore women (and men) need to be actively engaged in determining the model of economic development through which they are granted property rights, as well as the detail about what kind of property rights will best promote gender equality. Clearly, the most disadvantaged women need to be at the centre of formulating and implementing housing and land rights. This would ensure that customary practices that benefit women are identified and retained, and that priority is given to the realisation of those property rights that are most important to poor and marginalised women.

CEDAW emphasises women's right to participate equally in public and political life (Article 7). In the context of rural development, States parties must ensure to women the right to participate in 'the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels' (Article 14(2)(a)), to 'participate in all community activities' (Article 14(2)(f)), and to 'organise self-help groups and cooperatives in order to gain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment' (Article 14(2)(e)).

Indicators suggested:

• whether land and housing laws, reforms, policies and practices have been determined through meaningful consultation with those women who will be most affected by them;

• whether there are education and training programmes that keep women informed about local and national land and housing issues, and of their related human rights, which enable them to effectively participate in decision making; and

• whether women are encouraged to pursue economic opportunities through the formation of women's self-help groups and cooperatives.

3. Accountability
Accountability is in many ways the raison d'être of a human rights framework. A 'right' is meaningless in the absence of mechanisms that hold duty-holders accountable. Although legal rights provide the strongest form of accountability, courts are not always the most appropriate form of ensuring that states have fulfilled their human rights obligations. Accountability can be achieved through administrative complaints mechanisms, national human rights institutions, ombuds offices, political advocacy, monitoring mechanisms, reporting procedures and local customary mechanisms. Whichever form of accountability is available it must be transparent, effective and accessible to all women, especially those most disadvantaged.

CEDAW also emphasises the important role that positive measures or affirmative action can play in overcoming the effects of entrenched gender disadvantage on women's capacities and opportunities. States have specific obligations to adopt special temporary measures 'aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women' (Article 4(1)).

Indicators suggested:

• whether effective complaints mechanisms have been established to monitor women's equal enjoyment of land and housing rights;

• whether information and legal literacy programmes are available in order to ensure that women know how to hold the state accountable in the event that they are unable to enjoy equal property rights;

• whether education programmes are provided to ensure that judges, administrative decision makers, politicians, local authorities, business men and women, and others with power, understand their obligations with respect to women's equal enjoyment of land and property rights; and

• whether special measures have been adopted to accelerate the achievement of women's equal enjoyment of property rights.

4. Interdependence and indivisibility of rights
Finally, a human rights framework emphasises the interdependence of all human rights. Thus it is recognised that change in one area may be thwarted if not accompanied by changes elsewhere. For example, women will be unable to enjoy property rights if they are afraid of domestic violence, have no access to contraception, or must still do what their husbands, fathers, brothers or de facto partners tell them. The idea of indivisibility helps to focus on the whole context and draws attention to the need to commence with a contextualised analysis...
of local gender relations. Unless the underlying structural causes of women’s inequality are addressed, conferral of property rights to women will remain de jure (formal), rather than be realised de facto (in practice). The Task Force and others recognise this interdependence when they acknowledge that women’s empowerment and equality is central to the achievement of all MDGs (Crawford 2006:22).

One of CEDAW’s unique features is the requirement that States parties take measures that will ‘modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women’ (Article 5(1)). This provision supports efforts to address the structural dimensions of the change that is necessary before women’s equality will be realised.

Indicators suggested:

• whether the state is actively promoting and supporting the idea of women’s equality in the public and private spheres in all its policies and practices;
• whether educational bodies and training programmes, at all levels, use gender-inclusive curriculum; and
• whether the State is implementing laws, policies and programmes to eradicate discrimination against women in every sphere of life.

Conclusions

Linking the Task Force’s indicators to states’ human rights obligations is important for a number of reasons. It provides a moral framework which asserts the importance of women’s equality as an end in itself, which can work against other paradigms that treat women’s equality instrumentally, as a means to further economic development and improve the welfare of families. A human rights framework emphasises grassroots empowerment and participation, which makes it more likely that the voices of the most disadvantaged people will be heard and their needs addressed. It links directly with states’ international legal obligations, highlighting the need for accountability mechanisms, which means the work of the human rights treaty monitoring bodies can be drawn on to support and reinforce strategies towards realising the MDGs. Not only do the treaty bodies monitor country-specific implementation of human rights obligations, but they also elaborate more detailed content of human rights through interpretation and application of the treaty texts, which can help to shape specific indicators. A final advantage, for present purposes, is that Australia and New Zealand have both ratified all of the major human rights treaties and therefore have assumed obligations to provide international assistance towards the realisation of women’s human rights everywhere.

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Using indicators to seize the opportunity for promoting gender equality in post-conflict settings

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Background

For the last decade, attention has been given to the gender dimensions of conflict recognising the different impacts on women and men, boys and girls. Although men suffer as a consequence of conflict, women and children are the most vulnerable segment of the civilian population in a conflict situation. Women and children comprise around 80 per cent of the refugees and internally displaced people (IDP), and the gender dimensions of conflict are exacerbated in patriarchal societies where women and girls access services and opportunities through male relatives who are guarantors of female relatives' personal security.

Women and children are often used as weapons of war and forced to join combatant camps either as soldiers, porters, cooks or sex slaves. Violation of women's rights in the form of systematic rape, torture, murder and forced pregnancies have been used to demoralise civilian populations and discourage resistance movements in Timor-Leste, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo and Sierra Leone, provoking indelible suffering (UN 2001:E, 84).

Another consequence of conflict is damage and disruption to a country's physical infrastructure, institutional fabric, social and basic services as well as its economic capital, and each of these impacts women and men, girls and boys differently.

Two major international legal frameworks address the gender dimensions of conflict. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 call for parties in conflict to take account of the specific needs of women, to protect their rights, to promote their role in national peace and security and to involve them at decision-making levels in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction. Resolution 1325 institutionalises a broader gender mandate in which all institutional and civil society actors are requested to address women's rights, peace and security in their peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building operations; and also to adopt a policy of gender balance in their staffing (including senior management positions).

This paper argues that post-conflict situations are a time of risk for women's empowerment but also offer a unique window of opportunity to promote gender equality and the advancement of women.

The post-conflict period constitutes a time of risk because the males with leadership positions during the conflict, often spanning years of struggle and hardship, will want to keep power and control over decision making during the post-conflict reconstruction phase. The relative empowerment women may obtain by participating as soldiers and supporters in the armed conflict, during which gender relations may be more equal than they were pre-conflict, may be lost when peace is restored. Females who were leaders during the conflict may be 'sent back to the kitchen' losing any degree of empowerment gained during the struggle.

Another potential risk is that pre-conflict rules and regulations, including those that may have protected women's rights, are often discarded and it takes time for new ones to be installed. Pressure to develop institutions and legislation quickly may cause women's issues to be overlooked if it is not ensured from the outset that women are represented in peace negotiations, peace building and decision making.

But post-conflict nation building is also a time of opportunity because there is often strong desire for peace and 'democracy' which favours discussion of equal rights for women and men. The new constitution, legislation and government institutions including the civil service provide an opportunity to enshrine gender equality. The new political and electoral processes can be made gender sensitive and involvement of UN and NGO organisations can lead to the promotion of gender equality in line with UN guidelines.

None of these opportunities will be seized automatically, however. They all require advocacy, planning and concrete action including the establishment of mechanisms to ensure they will happen. Actions (and the indicators to measure them) should aim to reduce the risks and maximise opportunities provided by post-conflict reconstruction.

Tracking progress on gender equality

MDG3 provides an additional framework and key indicators that can be used in conflict and post-conflict settings, however, some adaptations to the specific post-conflict context are needed. Gender-sensitive indicators that are difficult to measure in a normal situation of peace and stability are even more difficult to measure in a post-conflict setting. The overall indicators of
gender equality proposed under MDG3 are unlikely to be measurable or sensitive in a period of rapid change. So, how can the indicators for MDG3 be used in the post-conflict context? How can development partners help promote and monitor gender equality in this context and set the stage for long-term development? A series of process indicators are needed that are specific to the evolving situation.

One important principle is that from the outset all data collected should be sex disaggregated and gender analysis undertaken for every proposed area of action during the recovery period. Each post-conflict situation is different so indicators should be adapted to the specific context.

I will focus on four of the seven strategic priorities identified by the UN Millennium Task Force on Gender Equality where I believe specific indicators for the post-conflict period are particularly important. For each of the four areas a set of sub-indicators is suggested for tracking progress in the promotion of equality in post-conflict settings based mostly on experience gained in Timor-Leste (Ospina 2003; 2006).

The four strategic areas on which I will focus are: women's involvement in politics and decision making; property rights; employment; and violence against women.

Health and education are obviously critically important too. The indicators to be used to measure progress in these sectors may, however, by and large, be similar to those used in normal stable situations. Women in post-conflict settings face reproductive health issues ranging from access to sanitary supplies in refugee and IDP camps to basic health care for pregnancy and delivery, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf 2002:38-39). It is critical in the post-conflict setting to improve access to reproductive health services as a matter of priority. Rates of contraceptive use and unmet need, for example, are pertinent indicators in this context as elsewhere. Post-conflict reconstruction offers opportunities to promote girls' education, gender-sensitive curricula and special needs for girls, for example, building schools with separate toilet facilities. Sex disaggregated data for gross and net school enrolment and completion rates are as relevant in post-conflict settings as in countries with established peace and stability.

Before going to my four areas of interest I would like to mention two additional pieces of information that are important in the post-conflict context. They are essential to quantify two target groups that are often neglected in the planning process of post-conflict reconstruction.

The first is the number/proportion of female-headed households. Periods of conflict typically increase the 'feminisation of poverty' often with a large increase in the number of households headed by, and dependent on, women. The proportion of female-headed households in post-conflict societies may be as high as 30-40 per cent. Where such households' livelihood depends on agriculture the shortage of labour poses particular problems. Women have to share their time between household chores, caring for children and the elderly, and agricultural work.

The second is the number/proportion of women among registered ex-combatants. It is important to be vigilant at the time of the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process to ensure that women are also registered. DDR programmes should acknowledge women's participation in the fighting forces (both with weapons and without) and ensure they will benefit from the reintegration measures for former combatants such as cash allowances, job placement and opportunities, skills training, credit schemes, and scholarships. DDR has been identified by the World Bank and donors as a key component for long-term peace and stability. In Timor-Leste it is well known that women participated in both the armed struggle for independence and especially in the civilian clandestine movement. Nevertheless, not a single woman was among the over 37,000 veterans and former combatants registered and only 30 per cent of 39,000 people registered as civilian cadres were women.

Women's participation in politics: Possible indicators

The post-conflict situation is an opportunity to influence the political landscape and help lay important foundations of the emerging nation. Nation building often involves political, security, and legal reforms, elections and the writing of a new constitution.

Indicators that can be used to monitor the gender dimension of this crucial time of political change include:

- the proportion of women/men in any provisional/transitional governing bodies (including in senior and executive positions); and
- the proportion of women in the constituent assembly, constitution drafting
- committees and popular consultations.

It is important that the first election sets the scene for gender equality. The new electoral law should include equal rights for women and men as voters and candidates and affirmative action for women. For example, it may include a quota for women, incentives for political parties to include women candidates, and special media access and campaign support for women. The drafting of the electoral law should be very precise to ensure it will protect women's rights of full participation and cannot be manipulated. For example, it should stipulate that any elected woman who resigns should be replaced by another woman so that women cannot be used by the party to win seats and then forced to step down.
Other important indicators to monitor are:

• the proportion of women/men:
  o in political party candidate lists (including in winnable positions);
  o elected to legislative bodies such as the national parliament and local councils; and
  o among ministers and cabinet members.

The existence of a women's parliamentary committee and/or a caucus of women parliamentarians, and of a national machinery for women, are indicators that women's issues are being taken seriously (see O'Callaghan paper, this issue). In their absence it is unlikely that women's interests will be promoted and protected.

It is important also to ensure and to monitor gender awareness training in relation to the political process at all levels including drafters of electoral law, political party leaders and candidates, civil society organisations and the general population.

This may appear a long list of indicators but if we simply wait to measure the proportion of women in the parliament and in local government bodies we will have missed the opportunity to influence these outcomes. Efforts to secure women's involvement in politics need to start as soon as possible in the post-conflict reconstruction period and to continue actively in every stage of the electoral process. The purpose of the indicators should be to ensure and measure this engagement. It is essential to recognise that if we are not monitoring it, we are not managing it.

Property rights: Possible indicators

Property rights again represents an area of risk and opportunity for women, post-conflict. Here, the monitoring of selected indicators can help ensure that we limit risks and seize opportunities. We should, for example, monitor the following:

• The proportion of women/men:
  o among beneficiaries of post-conflict land (re)distribution;
  o among beneficiaries of land allocation to ex-combatants, for example, DDR should consider women ex-combatants as well as widows of ex-combatants; and
  o in land conflict resolution bodies.

To achieve fair treatment for women it is important to include them in post-conflict property dispute resolution bodies and to ensure they have legal support. Access to legal representation for women in post-conflict land disputes, especially for female heads of households, should therefore be monitored.

Provisions for women's and men's equal rights to ownership/inheritance of property should be ensured in the drafting of a new constitution and legislation. Legislative reform in post-conflict reconstruction may provide an opportunity to address existing shortcomings in the property and succession law by introducing provisions of equal rights to inherit, acquire, hold, transfer and sell property. Ownership and inheritance laws that uphold rights of men only, may exclude women from access to credit and means of production, and thus from opportunities for economic empowerment.

Employment: Possible indicators

Development partners working in emergency and reconstruction should make every effort to involve women when creating job opportunities. Most of the jobs generated in emergencies and rehabilitation such as drivers, guards and construction workers are likely to be considered male roles so efforts must be made to ensure women are involved in reconstruction work and related training and skills upgrading.

The indicators below are possible ways to measure women's involvement in job opportunities:

• Proportion of women/men in:
  o emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation work programmes, for example, quick impact projects, shelter and clean up campaigns, road and water well rehabilitation;
  o employment/income generating schemes, for example, small and medium enterprise development, agricultural seed and tool distribution and extension services;
  o reinsertion programmes for ex-combatants;
  o employment through the UN and NGOs, for instance, should set the example; and
  o civil service at all levels, especially the highest ones.

It is particularly important to ensure that in the recruitment of the civil service, targets for women are set and achievement of them is monitored throughout the recruitment process.

In all of these areas it is important to increase women's chances of employability through skills development training tailored to women's needs but not restricted by gender stereotypes.

Violence against women: Potential indicators

During times of conflict women and girls are even more vulnerable to violence including sexual violence. In addition they may be forced to use sex as a bargaining tool to negotiate their own survival and that of their families. They may be abused by men on both sides of the conflict, and ostracised by their families and communities if they bear a child as a consequence of rape.

An end to the conflict does not necessarily bring an end to violence against women. In the transition to peace, gender
violence often shifts to the private sphere with an increase in domestic violence (Bouta et al. 2005:xxi).

The true prevalence of domestic violence (defined as the proportion of women aged from 15-49 who report experiencing physical violence in the past year by an intimate partner) can only be measured by surveys, and then with difficulty.

In the post-conflict situation, however, it is important to record the number of reported cases of domestic violence, sexual assault and rape reported to the police or other bodies (for example, women's NGOs). Simply counting the number of cases will draw attention to the issue but it is critical to also monitor the number of cases investigated and the outcomes of investigations, for example, conviction rates.

As an example, in Timor-Leste, where domestic violence is a widespread problem, of 492 cases of gender violence reported to the police during 2005 only 118 cases were eventually referred to the prosecutor. Two explanations were given for this situation: the police encouraging women to use the traditional system of conflict resolution instead of the legal system, and women withdrawing their accusations. In both scenarios the lack of awareness of the police on how to apply the law as well as the role of social pressure have been highlighted.

Indicators are also needed in relation to services and counselling for victims and perpetrators of violence against women, for example, in relation to the three issues shown here:

- access to shelters, legal and medical assistance, psychological counselling for victims;
- preventive counselling for male ex-combatants and counselling and support groups for perpetrators;
- inclusion of gender sensitisation and gender based violence issues in the training of new army and police forces and judges.

Again it is important to seize the opportunity of the drafting of new legislation, in this case to ensure development of adequate laws on violence against women.

Conclusion

No gains in women’s empowerment should be considered as permanent. The advancement and protection of women’s rights is a continuous process. In Timor-Leste, for example, women made remarkable progress in the parliamentary and local elections of 2001 and 2005. To ensure that these gains will be maintained in the 2007 elections requires action in every step of the process.

The current situation in Timor-Leste illustrates how the process of nation building is fragile. Within this fragile process the empowerment of women is particularly vulnerable. Post-conflict nation building is, however, also a time of change, and change presents opportunities. Opportunities for women’s empowerment can best be seized if there are clear goals, and progress towards their achievement is carefully nurtured and monitored from the outset.

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Using gender-sensitive health indicators to help achieve equity and equality in mainstream policy development and programme delivery

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Introduction
Performance indicators have become commonplace in public policy, including health policy. Consequently, developing gender-sensitive indicators has been advocated as an approach for mainstreaming gender in policy development and programme delivery. The World Health Organization Centre for Health Development in Kobe (WKC), Japan, commissioned the La Trobe Consortium to conduct a comparative evaluation of indicators for gender equity and health in 2002. Subsequently WKC sponsored global meetings in Kobe and Tanzania to progress the recommendations from this report. These included the development of a draft core set of gender-sensitive leading health indicators and the set is under various stages of pilot testing in China, Canada and Tanzania.

This paper discusses the rationale for gender-sensitive indicators, reports on the work of the Consortium in assessing the usefulness of currently available indicators, considers an optimal set of indicators, and identifies implementation issues. The health indicators work conducted 2002-2006 by the Consortium and WKC provides a useful platform for further work and application by agencies involved with international development.

Rationale for using gender-sensitive indicators
Over the past decade, many countries, agencies and NGOs have mainstreamed gender, giving line departments and agencies carriage of ensuring positive outcomes for girls and women. Simultaneously the resourcing of gender focal points in government, agency and NGO machinery was reduced with the expectation that line areas would deliver positive outcomes for girls and women. This expectation did not eventuate (Mehra and Gupta 2006).

Governments, agencies and NGOs are now renewing their efforts to attain gender equality and equity. Strategies include:

- strengthening political will, leadership and support from the top;
- re-empowering gender focal points;
- using gender analysis, audits and gender action plans;
- gender sensitising mainstream design and implementation, including the use of surveillance data and gender-sensitive indicators to strengthen accountability and performance measurement; and
- greater collaboration between those working on gender equity and those working in health, education and other fields.

The working premise for the Consortium report was that gender-sensitive indicators constitute one tool for achieving gender equality and equity. They can be important for raising awareness of issues and improving the evidence base for decision making. Indicators can help identify issues that need to receive priority attention, at present and in the future. In contributing to better accountability for the health system, indicators also contribute to improving health system performance and responsiveness (WKC 2003).

Usefulness of available indicators
When considering the development of gender-sensitive health indicators, a first question is whether current indicators are adequate — both in providing gender-specific information (through sex disaggregated data) as well as being able to reflect gender relations. Taking a broad definition of health, the Consortium identified 1,095 indicators used in routine reports by the key international organisations involved with health policy or in reports concerning women’s health, as well as indicators proposed at key international meetings (see Table 1).

These indicators were mapped against the Health Information Framework (HIF), developed initially by Canada and later adopted by Australia, the OECD and the International Standards Organization (ISO) in order to assess the extent to which they covered the full range of issues of interest to health policy makers and planners (and to identify what gaps might exist).

The HIF (see Figure 1), modified by the Consortium to take account of gender and equity issues more explicitly, identifies four tiers of information:

- health status (overall health of a population);
- determinants of health (inclusive of individual, household/community level proximate factors);
• health system performance (design and delivery of health services and how well the system is performing in relation to major goals of access, effectiveness and cost); and
• community and health and welfare system characteristics (national contextual factors that affect the population as a whole).

Table 1: Numbers of reported and proposed indicators from selected sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators by reporting status:</th>
<th>Total indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Routine reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CIHI Canadian health indicators (part) 2002</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators on: Contraceptive prevalence rate (various sources), female genital mutilation (WHO), low birth weight (UNICEF), illiteracy (UNESCO)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD Development indicators 1998</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD Health data 2002</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD Society at a glance 2001</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAHO Regional core health data 2001</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Common country assessment 1999</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP The human development report 2002</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSD Millennium goals, targets and indicators 2002</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO European health report 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO World health report 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO World health report 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO World health report 2002</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO World health statistics annual 1997-99</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Bank Institute, DEPweb: Explore Sustainable Development 2001</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>833</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Special reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSD The world's women 2000: Trends and statistics</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM Progress of the world's women 2000</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO World report on violence and health 2002</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>146</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proposed indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Benchmarks for measuring progress towards ICPD goals 1999</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECLAC Gender indicators for follow-up and evaluation of the regional programme of action for the women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and the Beijing Platform for Action 1999</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniels et al. Benchmarks of fairness for health care reform 2000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGASS HIV/AIDS Core indicators 2001</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO Proposed benchmark reproductive health indicators 2001</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,095</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1,095 indicators were also assessed according to criteria for technical quality and gender sensitivity developed by Beck (1999). In particular, they were considered for:
• disaggregation according to sex, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic group;
• reporting over time;
• inclusion of comparators;
• whether there had been participatory development; and
• whether they were accompanied by gender analysis.

Analysis of indicators

The audit, the mapping, and the analysis against the literature suggested that despite the large volume of indicators in use, there were few potential indicators that satisfied Beck's criteria. In general, current routine administrative reporting offered little to enable monitoring of gender equity and health. In comparison, special reports (eg, UNIFEM reports) provided a more gendered collection of indicators, to fill this information gap, but could not provide trend data for ongoing monitoring purposes.

In relation to the four tiers in the HIF, the tier of health system performance held the fewest indicators, reflecting a major weakness in national and global capacity to monitor gender equity within the healthcare system. The absence of gender-sensitive indicators for health system performance points to a lack of engagement between those working on gender equity and those working on health sector reform. Issues of service access, responsiveness, affordability, appropriateness and safety, including gender differentials beyond reproductive health services, are of concern to women in their myriad of roles including as health service consumers, carers, healthcare workers, and citizens (Lin 2000). Improving indicators for monitoring of health system performance is, therefore, an agenda receiving insufficient attention from a gender perspective.

In terms of indicators related to health status, health problems for women outside of reproductive age (that is, older women and young girls) and aspects of female health not related to reproduction (eg, mental health) were seldom captured. Also absent were indicators related to priority population groups (eg, indigenous, socio-economically disadvantaged and culturally and linguistically diverse groups).

Looking at determinants of health, there was a plethora of indicators related to socio-economic status. However, other aspects such as psychosocial factors, social and community factors, and household factors were largely absent, suggesting that women's economic status has been more 'studied' than other determinants of health. Furthermore, indicators on the life course and life course effects were also largely absent.

In relation to the technical construction of the indicators reviewed, the major limitation was that the majority of routinely reported indicators lack sufficient specificity to contribute to a
The strengths of currently used indicators, especially those using international standards (e.g., mortality and morbidity) lie in their histories of use as comparative data to assess trends over time across different countries. The challenge is to retain this comparability while developing standard indicators to provide more complex information that includes gender-sensitive and equity-sensitive information.

The result of this comparative evaluation pointed to the value of further work on indicators for health system performance and for monitoring risk and protective mechanisms for health. As there is seldom the opportunity to introduce new systems for measurement and monitoring, the key to successful mainstreaming would seem to lie with the effective modification of existing data collections, through partnership between researchers and advocates (within and outside government), and use of such indicators to drive and monitor strategies in relation to particular policy concerns.

The large number of existing indicators raises questions about who uses them, and whether greater application in advocacy and policy making requires a smaller list that can be tracked over time.

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### Tier 1 HEALTH STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well-being</th>
<th>Illness, injury, and health related states</th>
<th>Human function</th>
<th>Life expectancy and deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Tier 2 DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental factors</th>
<th>Socio-economic factors</th>
<th>Social and community factors</th>
<th>Household factors</th>
<th>Health-related mediators: Health behaviours and psychosocial factors</th>
<th>Biomedical factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Tier 3 HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>Service/programme effectiveness</td>
<td>Technical efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Allocative efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service access</td>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability/responsiveness</td>
<td>Continuity/continuous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competence/capability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tier 4 COMMUNITY AND HEALTH AND WELFARE SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic resources</th>
<th>Human settlement</th>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Health and welfare system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Key equity issues:

gendered and/or equity analysis of health and healthcare systems.
time. Given the clear need to improve the adequacy of current indicators as well as to develop new types of indicators, the Consortium proposed that a core set of gender-sensitive, leading health indicators be developed to enable comparisons across peer countries and communities. Use of a manageable number would contribute to the likelihood of indicators being used and would enable more rigorous data collection. The term 'leading health indicator' denotes a group of indicators that could:

- point to underlying issues that are common for a range of health problems (e.g., upstream determinants of health);
- suggest current issues that require priority attention; and
- act as alerts or early warning for future problems and be predictive of other problems.

Towards an optimal core set of indicators

Making health indicators gender sensitive involves both: identifying an appropriate conceptual framework for understanding health which links health determinants and health outcomes and includes gender as a central component; and applying the lessons about gender-sensitive indicators to the development and use of indicators to the extent possible (that is, both the technical and process aspects of indicator development).

The equity focus is an important aspect to be considered at every step of the way. Equity in health should result in minimising avoidable disparities in health and health determinants. Analysis of health equity issues is incomplete if it does not account for the role gender and ethnicity play in inequality (Gomez 2000).

Gender equity approaches should focus on the role of gender relations in the production of vulnerability to ill health, disadvantage within health care systems and the conditions promoting inequality in access to and utilisation of services (Standing 1997).

The content of a group of gender-sensitive leading health indicators could include an array of measures, such as health-related quality-of-life, protective health behavior, risk behavior, social and environmental factors, access to key services, and the policy environment. A comprehensive information framework (Figure 1) is a useful starting point for ensuring that various information domains are systematically considered, gender sensitivity is improved for existing data, and informational gaps are filled. Measures of equity—including gender, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status—should also be specified from the outset.

The criteria for selecting indicator content could be based on those proposed by the US Institute of Medicine committee, convened to recommend leading health indicators to the Healthy People 2010 campaign, which were suggested with consideration for policy advocacy and practice change. These included that the content was:

- worth measuring: the indicators represent an important and salient aspect of the public's health;
- measureable for diverse populations: the indicators are valid and reliable for the general population and diverse population groups;
- comprehensible to people who need to act: people who need to act on their own behalf or that of others should be able to readily comprehend the indicators and what can be done to improve the status of those indicators;
- able to galvanise action: the indicators are of such a nature that action can be taken at the national, state, local and community levels by individuals as well as organised groups and public and private agencies;
- able to anticipate practicable improvements to health: there are proven actions (e.g., changes in personal behaviours, implementation of new policies, etc.) that can alter the course of the indicators when widely applied; and
- measureable over time to reflect results of action: if action is taken, tangible results will be seen indicating improvements in various aspects of the nation's health (Chvatal and Bulger 1999).

The choice of indicators may also depend on the level at which they will be used as evidence needs to be matched to decision making, and there will be different requirements at the local, community, national, regional and international levels. Women, as the 'affected community', should be involved in determining which indicators (and other forms of evidence) are most meaningful at each level.

For example, an organisation pursuing its priorities will want to identify the best way to meet its objectives and will want evidence on its institutional client base (including diverse population groups), expertise needed, programme costs and outputs. In contrast, a provincial government developing policies will want to identify the most effective approach which aligns with community values and will want evidence of distributional/gender impact, costs, potential harm and benefits of current and proposed policies and community values (Butcher 1998).

Indicators can also be incorporated into all aspects of a policy cycle—from identification of problems, to setting policy objectives, to implementing policy and evaluating policy outcomes. Questions which inform indicator selection include: what is the issue to be addressed? What changes are we trying to effect? How will we know if we have succeeded? What activities need to occur to bring about change? What resources will be required? Monitoring will require indicators about inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes.

For decision makers, effective communication of timely, accessible comprehensible data is essential. The uptake of data
into decision making requires attention to a range of social and organisational factors, including the context of decision making, the disposition of decision makers, and the dissemination strategies adopted (Oldenburg et al. 1997). The values and beliefs, professional or educational backgrounds, and the organisational imperatives of the decision makers are often important influences (Tranmer et al. 1998).

Health policy and programme development and monitoring processes should have the input of civil society interest groups, consumers and community groups. The use of indicators has become an important part of consumer empowerment.

Implementing a monitoring system

A monitoring system is often thought of as a series of reports with quantitative data. We suggest that a monitoring system comprise indicators which are technically sound and a social process that is concerned with inclusive decision making (Lin, L'Orange and Silburn 2005).

The WKC expert group meeting (EGM) in 2003 identified the following features of an optimal reporting system from a technical perspective:

- offer sufficient specificity (including where possible sex, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status);
- monitor and understand risk and protective indicators, including highlighting action potential, in such a way as to increase monitoring and understanding;
- provide quantitative and qualitative analyses;
- enable analysis and reporting of trend data on core set of indicators; and
- enable analysis and appropriate reporting by appropriate peer groupings for comparative performance assessment.

The EGM also agreed on several features important for the structure and processes of an optimal monitoring system:

- linkage with governance processes, including with other reporting and monitoring systems (eg. CEDAW);
- linkage with and contribution to health system development and health sector reform processes, including monitoring of health system performance;
- a designated national focal point, located within an appropriate setting with accountability for data collection and dissemination;
- a regular reporting timeframe, eg. not less than every two years;
- adequate and sustainable infrastructure for collection analysis and reporting;
- analysis and interpretation that addresses key policy concerns and potential for action;
- accessible, appealing user friendly reporting style that engages stakeholders;
- creation of a continuing social process for accountability, by developing mechanisms to bring together key stakeholders at both national and global levels to review and discuss action requirements arising from leading health indicators;
- capacity building processes to train in and support enhanced understanding of meaning and action potential of the set of leading health indicators integrating gender perspectives; and
- a built in regular process to review the indicators system, including data elements and definitions, collection methods, and analysis and reporting.

A good monitoring system requires not only adequate infrastructure for collection and collation of valid and reliable data but also a participatory process (involving women and communities) through which the meaning/s of indicators are reviewed, implications for action are distilled, and decisions are taken to effect greater equity. Such an ongoing system of monitoring will also contribute to the identification of emerging issues that need to be researched or acted upon. The most cost-effective system would be to build on (ie, gender sensitise) existing infrastructure for data collection and analysis, as well as link in with mainstream policy and management decision making.

Practical application of gender-sensitive indicators for policy monitoring and advocacy has been identified in a number of countries, including:

- a programme to promote the equitable use of eye services and reduction of eye disease and blindness in Tanzania, India, Egypt and Nepal (Courtright 2004; 2003);
- a multi-sectoral, gender-sensitive public health response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic implemented in Botswana following the use of several global indicators that revealed the increasing vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS (de Korte et al. 2004; Watson undated);
- the US 'Report card', which assesses the overall health of women nationwide. The 'Report card' is distributed to policy makers and women's health advocates nationwide. It is an advocacy tool that uses a broad definition of health and evaluates 34 health status indicators, 67 health policy indicators, and assesses the nation's progress, or lack thereof, state by state, in reaching key benchmarks related to the status of women's health; and
- the 'Profiling domestic violence' nine country study which uses household and individual-level data from the demographic and health surveys programme to examine the prevalence and
correlates of domestic violence and the health consequences of it for women and their children. Nationally representative data from nine countries — Cambodia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Haiti, India, Nicaragua, Peru, and Zambia — are analysed (Kishor and Johnson 2004).

Cross-sectoral learnings
Although the Consortium’s work for WKC was on women and health, its findings have application more broadly in sectors delivering programmes to improve the general well-being and quality of life of girls and women. Some learnings from the health indicators work are:

1. The potential value of a short, core set of gender-sensitive leading health indicators that can be tracked over time and enable harmonisation and comparisons across peer countries and communities.

2. That indicators should include an expanded concept of well-being, incorporate a life cycle approach, include attention to indigeneity, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, and ensure conceptual clarity and soundness particularly in relation to ‘gender’ and ‘sex’.

3. The importance of retaining the comparability of currently used indicators, especially those using international standards (eg, mortality and morbidity) while also developing standard indicators to provide more complex information that includes gender-sensitive and equity-sensitive information.

4. That a cost-effective monitoring system should build on (ie, gender sensitise) existing infrastructure for data collection and analysis, as well as link in with mainstream policy and management decision making. Work is needed on improving specificity of national reporting and harmonising provincial data systems; building on indicators proposed through key international consensus and reporting frameworks; using proxy indicators when collecting additional data is not feasible; having designated jurisdictional focal points, located within appropriate settings, with accountability for data collection and dissemination; and ensuring data collection dissemination analysis and reporting processes are ethical and sustainable.

5. The importance of capacity building mechanisms at provincial, regional and community levels to support enhanced understanding and use of indicators that integrate gender perspectives. Mechanisms are also required to bring together key stakeholders at national regional and global levels to review and discuss action requirements arising from leading indicators, and there should be greater engagement between those working on gender equity and those working in other fields, such as health system reform.

6. The need for an accountability process for regular review and evaluation of the whole leading indicators system.

It must be recognised that adopting such mainstream policy tools as indicators is not sufficient for assuring gender equity. Indicators point to issues which require additional gender-based analysis as well as advocacy.

References
Addressing the needs of adolescent women

Lauren Siegmann, Marie Stopes International Australia

The United Nations Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has identified adolescents as one of the three key sub-populations whose needs must be addressed if we are to reach goals and targets for gender equality. This paper will outline the rationale for addressing the needs of adolescent women as outlined in the Task Force report, the benefits of using gender indicators when addressing the needs of adolescent women in a reproductive health context, and it will examine ethical considerations to reflect on when working with adolescent women.

My professional background has focused principally within the domain of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and provision of SRH services to adolescents. Consequently this paper will focus largely on issues which are specific to SRH programming with a practical rather than theoretical focus. While this seems specific to the reproductive health sector, my reflections are also relevant for adolescent populations across a range of contexts.

Rationale for addressing the needs of adolescent women

There are four very simple reasons why we should focus on adolescent women. Firstly, adolescents constitute two-thirds of the world's population and this sub-population forms the largest population in the poorest countries; in addition, this figure represents the 'largest cohort of adolescents in the world's history' (UN Millennium Project 2005:3). By sheer virtue of their demographic might, addressing their needs will affect wider society and national outcomes.

Secondly, interventions can dramatically affect life outcomes. The Task Force report asserts that 'adolescence is a formative period between childhood and adulthood and a time when interventions can dramatically alter life outcomes' (ibid:4). In other words, it makes good sense to invest in a sub-population where you expect that the consequences of intervention over a long period of time will have such a big pay off.

Thirdly, adolescent women deserve significant attention as a sub-population due to the fact that they are a significantly marginalised and vulnerable group. This point will be elaborated further in the course of this paper. Finally, ongoing investments are required to enable adolescent women to 'complete secondary schooling, support transition from education to work, develop a healthy sexuality' and feel their physical safety is guaranteed (ibid).

Gender-sensitive indicators and adolescent women

A number of key issues have been identified as being of particular importance when working with adolescent women, and these issues should underpin the development of any gender-sensitive indicators. I will outline below some of the issues that the SRH sector might focus on if they were to improve the quality of services delivered to adolescent women.

Despite the existing body of information, gaps exist in knowledge of and services for adolescent women. Young married and unmarried girls are among the most underserved groups, yet their needs 'continue to be the most pressing' (UN Millennium Project 2005:86). Despite so much that has been written, it continues to be the case that governments and service providers do not recognise needs among this age group, particularly among unmarried adolescent women (UNFPA 2005). Despite an apparent wealth of information, there is still much we do not understand about adolescent sexual behavior. Indicators which are carefully designed and targeted for adolescent female populations and which measure the state of adolescent women's SRH cannot only measure progress towards goals but can also help identify the barriers for adolescent women and design activities to deliver effective programmes.

In addition to measuring progress towards the MDGs and relevant national level indicators, from a SRH perspective there are three very practical reasons why we would measure impact of programming through the use of gender-sensitive indicators for adolescent women who are beneficiaries of SRH activities:

- it would identify the gender-related obstacles for adolescents seeking reproductive health-care;
- based on the identification of obstacles we could include or modify activities targeted to adolescents to try to reduce those gender-related obstacles; and
- we can add indicators to monitoring and evaluation plans to measure the success of the activities designed to lower gender-related obstacles (Yinger et al. 2002).

Ethical considerations

The key issues connected to collecting data on gender-sensitive indicators within the adolescent population include ensuring the accuracy of the indicators, that the indicators are actually used to improve the situation of adolescents, and that the
indicators delineate qualitative as well as quantitative data to capture not only what is happening but why it is happening. It is also essential that the way in which we collect data is ethical.

Debates surrounding indicators and data collection in my work have usually touched on the difficulties of gathering data from adolescents in a way that accurately reflects their situation, is not exploitative, and does not create barriers to access of reproductive health services. For instance, if SRH clinical services have a policy of not asking clients their age, this may provide a more accessible service for an adolescent woman who does not feel comfortable in disclosing her age to clinic staff. However, this also means that valuable information on adolescent reproductive health needs, which can be used to advocate for improved response from government, is lost. How do we find the balance between advocating for these women and providing services for them which respect their privacy?

There are, however, several practical issues which need to be addressed when collecting data from adolescents for indicators, in order to maximise the accuracy, quality and effectiveness of the data.

**Accuracy:** There is evidence that under-reporting is an issue for adolescent populations, and that adolescents are particularly liable to inaccurate reporting. This is usually attributed to fear of social stigma and is a particularly significant issue for young unmarried women when you consider the enormous barriers they face due to societal attitudes to sexuality. Research methodologies that are based on repeat interviews and visits are more adept at dealing with this issue (Population Council et al. 2006).

**Promote inputs from adolescent women:** An even higher level of participation and disclosure is attained when local participants set the agenda for the study, determine the questions, gather the information, and become integrally involved in the analysis and use of the information (UNFPA 2006). Using participatory methods, interviewers can create a rapport with adolescent women so that they are encouraged to respond more frankly.

Active participation can be relatively easy to implement; a focus group or similar type of interaction allows adolescent women to express their concerns directly rather than just responding to survey questions, or having no input at all. When conducting any type of interview or group work, it is also crucial to disaggregate groups by gender as adolescent women frequently are less inclined to talk when their male counterparts are present. And female interviewers need to be part of the data collection team (Population Council et al. 2006).

**Ethical considerations:** We need to be sensitive to the pressure that adolescent women may feel to participate in research, and ensure that collecting data does not interfere with access to a service, even in an indirect way. As discussed earlier, this is particularly an issue when considering data collection in the context of service delivery. We cannot afford to collect data in such a manner that would cause a young woman to choose not to use a service due to perceived intrusive questioning.

**Summary**

There are several key issues that this paper does not examine. These include how gender-sensitive indicators can be utilised in programming and measuring progress at an international level. Nor does it address adolescents as a cross-cutting issue which is regrettable, as there is a significant need for harmonisation and development of indicators for adolescents outside an SRH context.

For instance, UNFPA conducted a review of 31 country poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) and concluded that only 16 per cent viewed young people as a focus for integrated interventions. Many poor countries overlook the needs of young people as a group, as well as any different needs according to gender. Although an increasing number of countries are making some reference to young people in their PRSPs, the initiatives are often piecemeal and hence limited in their scale and potential impact (UNFPA 2005).

The needs of adolescents outside of the domain of SRH require consideration, and this issue is of particular relevance to the Task Force report on gender equality. Despite the report's authors' assertions that adolescents as a sub-population must be addressed as a cross-cutting issue across a range of strategic priorities, a search of the report reveals that adolescents are referred to 81 times, and approximately 40 (or approximately 49.4 per cent) of these are in relation to adolescent SRH, including endnotes (UN Millennium Project 2005).

**References**


Striving to measure improved gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Pacific

Samantha Hung, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, and Linda Petersen, Pacific Women’s Bureau, Secretariat of the Pacific Community

The Pacific region’s commitment and capacity to measure and monitor degrees of gender (in)equality and the status of women remains partial at best. Many important indicators about Pacific gender issues remain uncounted, miscounted or under-counted. Although all Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) have endorsed the Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (PPA), all but three independent countries (Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu) in the region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); several have national women’s/gender action plans/policies, but few have demonstrated their genuine commitment in the sense of devoting adequate resources to implementation and reporting.

Only three Pacific island countries (PICs) have formally submitted a CEDAW report to the UN CEDAW Committee, and national women’s machineries mandated to implement government’s gender commitments remain extremely under-resourced and marginalised within governments, and few PICTs have made significant inroads in making the legal and institutional changes that are required to fundamentally improve the status of women and influence decision makers. The fact that comprehensive sex disaggregated data and gender indicators remain the exception rather than the norm in the region exacerbates the lack of policy attention to gender issues.

**Gender indicators in the Pacific**

As highlighted by *The World’s Women 2005*, the Pacific region (defined as Oceania), along with Africa lags behind other regions. Attention to gender statistics and indicators has been reinvigorated somewhat by the MDG agenda and subsequently the 2005 Beijing+10 and 2004 PPA reviews, leading to the endorsement of the Revised Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005-2015. These and related initiatives, including the 2004 Pacific Regional MDG report have repeatedly highlighted the dire state of gender statistics and indicators in the region. This sad state of affairs is reflected in only partial visibility of PICs in the UNDP’s composite gender empowerment measure (GEM) and gender development index (GDI), due to unavailability of data for the indicators which make up the GEM and GDI.

The two overarching findings of the PPA review were that there is both a lack of gender indicators by which progress can be measured, and a lack of baseline data in most countries or absence of time frames to monitor such progress. Other key findings of the review were that despite the PPAs comprehensive coverage of gender issues, it was non-strategic in focus, a common problem of development plans in our region. The PPA was also found to not adequately distinguish between national and regional actions, making the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at regional level difficult. Essentially there needed to be a prioritisation of issues with the setting of some measurable targets, much like the MDG process, so as to facilitate improved baseline data collection and widespread analysis.

In response to the PPA review, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) agreed to establish certain capacities within the organisation to improve the situation, such as the creation of a social statistician position. This is part of a bigger plan to develop a PPA database to track progress on the status of women in the region and make it widely accessible for improved policy and decision making in PICTs. The position is only now under recruitment and will be part of a revamped SPC human development programme aimed at assisting governments to prioritise and mainstream thematic policy issues such as gender, youth and poverty.

Despite the positive contributions of the MDG framework and the 2004 PPA review, it is fair to state that there remains a fundamental lack of attention to the collection and analysis of data to measure gender equality and empowerment of women. Unfortunately there also does not appear to be much political will to improve the situation. Although national statistical offices (NSOs) exist in every PICT with all having conducted a population census in the last ten years and analysed some of the data, and preparations have begun for the next census round, none have mainstreamed gender into their systems and processes. Reasons for this are varied, but essentially the issues are about a lack of political will, perceived competing priorities and low levels of gender awareness and capacity across the board.

Hopefully this will change with the recent endorsement of Pacific island Forum leaders of the landmark Pacific plan for
strengthening regional coordination and collaboration. The plan includes a stand-alone strategic objective to improve gender equality and, inter alia, identifies the upgrade and extension of country and regional statistical information systems and databases across all sectors to support effective policymaking through the provision of sex disaggregated data. Periodic Pacific plan reporting against the improved gender equality strategic objective will require improved gender data at national level, based on the GEM, GDI, MDGs and PPA.

It is important to note at this point that the status of other types of statistics in the region is not necessarily much better and the same can be said for other thematic development issues such as poverty, culture and youth. In most countries, analysis of census data takes significantly longer than necessary; it is often difficult to access sectoral data and information; and regularising data collection and analysis systems across sectors in order to standardise reporting on national policy implementation is a challenge due to 'territorial' attitudes and data ownership issues. As a result, developing mechanisms and processes for coordinating all of this valuable information for the purpose of reporting on international commitments such as CEDAW and the MDGs remains a huge challenge. Even more so, when already over-burdened national planning and statistical offices are approached in a fragmented manner.

In the case of gender commitments, responsibility for implementation and reporting is usually relegated to under-resourced national women's machinery (NWMs) which have little influence over central agencies. It would seem however that the above difficulties could be relatively easily overcome if there was the common understanding and purpose to the collection, analyses and dissemination of statistical information towards improving development outcomes, to which gender perspectives could be effectively mainstreamed. Bringing these policy frameworks together and building bridges between NWMs and central agencies, so that national data and statistical systems are improved to support national development as a whole — rather than remaining segmented and uncoordinated — is critical.

Localising international indicators and targets

The endorsement of MDG3 on gender equality and the empowerment of women provides a strategic entry point for mainstreaming gender into national development plans and for better gender data and indicators on which to base public policy. The MDG process has also brought high level international understanding of the centrality of gender for development and the achievement of all the MDGs. Nonetheless, MDG targets and indicators can be gender blind if not interpreted by gender-aware policy planners and statisticians. In the Pacific region, it is fair to say that significant work remains to build understanding among government bureaucrats of the fundamental role and attention to gender as a strategy for positive human development. Also that MDGs can be appropriately engendered to provide an accountability framework which will assist reporting against other government gender commitments such as CEDAW. This is an area where regional organisations can play a key value-adding role if we are serious about a cohesive approach to sustainable development.

It is now generally accepted international gender discourse that MDG3 on gender equality is very narrow and that its corresponding targets and indicators are completely inadequate to measure the breadth of what it means to improve gender equality and empower women. This argument can be viewed as particularly relevant to the Pacific if one considers the critical emerging gender issues that have been highlighted in the revised PPA such as HIV/AIDS, globalisation, labour migration, tradition and religion, media/information communication and technology, and peace and security. MDGs also fail to measure specific gender health issues which prevail in the Pacific such as birth complications, access to and availability of contraception and age-specific fertility rates (teenage pregnancy). The challenge therefore is to expand on and localise MDG3 to the Pacific context in a way which makes collection policy relevant and comparable.

PICs are performing relatively well against MDG indicator 9 (male:female ratio at all levels of education), although progress is more mixed, and data less readily available at secondary and tertiary levels. While education is indeed relevant, one can argue that this is not a sector through which the true extent of real gender inequity in our region can be demonstrated. More attention needs to be focused on the quality of gender-equitable education rather than access/enrolment rates in support of gender equal education. Similarly, PICs generally fare well against MDG indicator 10 (male:female literacy ratio), with PIC female:male literacy ratios well into the 90s in 2000. This does not, however, measure literacy in its broadest sense or in ways that are most relevant to women in PICs, such as basic legal literacy, business literacy for employment and livelihood in a traditional subsistence economy.

MDG indicator 11 (share of women in waged employment in non-agricultural sector) is clearly relevant to the Pacific as women still tend to be under-represented in official labour force statistics (all PICs in 2000 measured women's share to be less than 50 per cent). Nevertheless this indicator fails to reveal the type or status of waged employment that women are in, gender gaps in wages, and working conditions. Pacific women remain over-represented in the informal sector, making data collection and regional comparison difficult. The definition of employment activity is particularly problematic for the Pacific due to the
blurry definitions of the 'informal' sector' and 'subsistence economy'. Pacific islands rely heavily on subsistence activities for example, fish smoking, traditional crafts, preparation of food and weaving (see Thomas this issue). While these may not fall into formal definitions of employment, they are crucial in the informal economy and heavily reliant on the contribution of women.

MDG indicator 12 (proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments) is indeed relevant to the Pacific, as the region fares the worst in the world alongside Arab states in terms of women's representation in legislatures (see O'Callaghan, this issue). Currently there are five PICs with no women in parliament and unless concerted effort and political will is accorded to this issue, it is highly unlikely that any PICs will progress significantly against this indicator. However, there remains a need to develop indicators that measure the relative status of women in decision making in local government and traditional forms of leadership.

Significant groundwork to expand MDG3 through the identification of seven priority areas, 12 indicators and three sub-populations, carried out by the UN Millennium Project's Task Force report on education and gender equality provides a highly valuable reference point to ensuring more holistic measuring and monitoring of gender equality progress within the MDG framework. That being said, these indicators will need to be further contextualised for ownership and relevance in the Pacific regional context.

For example, land ownership and property rights as a measure of women's rights and empowerment needs to take heed of the legal framework which governs whether or not women have the right to own land. In the case of Tonga, where women currently do not have the legal right to own land, such an indicator would be obsolete for purposes of comparison. Similarly, customary land rights need to be taken into account as the majority of land in the Pacific is not owned by individuals and land passage is matrilineal in some areas. Women's greater access to, ownership and control over property, and associated natural resources undoubtedly signifies advancement in their rights. However, the extent to which land ownership titles can define women's access or control to the land or resources can't be assumed as they are largely defined by Pacific culture and custom. In fact, land reform processes which essentially privatise land to individual ownership may actually constitute an erosion of matrilineal rights as there is no guarantee that women will be consulted, have decision-making power, or indeed retain 'ownership' on paper under legalised terms.

Difficulty in localising international gender indicators such as the MDGs to the Pacific region, or even agreeing on a regional set of gender indicators such as those embodied in the PPA, are compounded by the sheer diversity between national and sub-national contexts in the Pacific, the priority gender issues that countries identify with as a result, and subsequent challenge of building national ownership for regional indicators.

Furthermore, it is important to remind ourselves that women's empowerment is largely qualitative and must be self-defined. Empowerment indicators therefore can not be defined by international indicators unless their relevance and value is also shared and defined by Pacific women themselves.

Building national capacities

Engagement with Pacific governments regarding statistics and indicators is essential if the region is going to seriously evaluate progress towards gender equality and commit the necessary political will to advance gender issues. Otherwise it will remain lip service with little concrete benefits for Pacific women.

Regional agencies, development partners, donors and NGOs must continue to stress the importance of collecting sex disaggregated data and, more importantly, lead by example. Many PICT governments still may not be sufficiently gender aware to appreciate the importance and urgency of this due to competing priorities and limited resources. Moreover, even if data is sex disaggregated, it will only become gender aware if it is used to illuminate a gender issue and/or illustrate a change in gender relations over time. A lot of data and statistics, even disaggregated by sex, may not be shared with the right players, presented in a useful way, and/or used for gender analysis, and therefore is not used to advocate for gender-responsive policies and programmes.

Beyond sex disaggregation of statistics, there is a need for NSOs to revamp data set definitions to reflect a balanced gender perspective. An obvious example is economic participation data, partly due to the historical heritage of Pacific countries from colonial economies where formal waged employment dominates. Definitions of economic activity which are based on paid employment are inevitably inaccurate in terms of women's economic contribution when a large proportion of their economic activity is subsistence related and in the informal economy. It follows that time use of women is not captured, and women's role in producing and reproducing society is not acknowledged or valued.

There is an urgent need for large scale investment of resources to gender sensitize NSOs and build gender mainstreaming accountability mechanisms into all aspects of statistical production, dissemination and usage. Implicit in the process of defining appropriate gender indicators lies closer cooperation and the setting up of strategic consultative mechanisms between NWMs, NGOs and NSOs. NWMs must be empowered to work alongside NSOs to develop the evidence-based research needed to strategically influence other government departments to allocate the necessary budgetary resources for implementation.
of more gender-responsive policies and programmes. Equally important is accountability for gender mainstreaming, so that the added value of improved gender data for informing decisions is maximised. It is here that initiatives to progress freedom of information (FoI) legislation in the region can produce positive synergies, if women's organisations and civil society are educated about the benefits of FoI to hold governments accountable to their gender policy commitments.

All the above needs will require significant technical support from regional and international agencies, coupled with harmonisation and coordination across agencies. For example, the SPC is now home to an AusAID-supported statistics planning project which is essentially about helping NSOs get their act together, regain efficiency and fully perform their mandate. Hopefully in time this will help provide governments and a wide range of users with the statistical information and capacity needed to build the evidence for better informed policy and budgetary decisions. Such initiatives provide windows of opportunity for increased institutionalised attention to gender statistics in NSOs.

Towards a core set of Pacific gender indicators

A key focus of the SPC Pacific Women's Bureau over the next 18-24 months, in close collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, will be to establish a core set of gender indicators for PICTs to better monitor progress on gender equality commitments at national and regional level. This is being pursued in consultation with SPC statistics and demography division, UNIFEM, the demography and social statistics division of the UN statistics department, and other interested partners. The aim is to identify the best core indicators in terms of regional importance, but also to prioritise which indicators are 'essential' to allow for a practical, workable and meaningful comparison of gender equality progress across countries in the region. Such a core set of regional gender indicators assists with a range of international reporting requirements including the MDGs, CEDAW and PPA, and is very much in line with the overarching goal of regional cooperation and integration being pursued through the Pacific plan.

Steps in the process include:

- review and streamlined existing PPA indicators for quality, relevance, availability, and practicality to collect;
- rationalise into a proposed core set of gender indicators;
- advocate for ownership of the indicators in national planning processes at key regional forums, eg, heads of statistics, national planners, and Forum economic ministers;
- facilitate training for NSOs, academic institutions and CSOs to develop and improve gender statistics at national level;
- strengthen SPC statistical database mechanisms to improve status of gender statistics;
- collaborate with key partners, to promote the use of accurate gender data; and
- provide evidence to raise awareness of key regional gender issues to influence decision making.

Due reference will also be made to ongoing UNIFEM work on CEDAW legislative indicators for the Pacific region to assess countries' levels of legislative compliance with CEDAW, based on minimum baseline standards.

As mentioned repeatedly in this paper, resources and machinery for the advancement of gender issues in regional agencies are far from being able to do all of the above, despite much effort. There is a huge need for investment from governments, development partners and donors in the process. Most important is the political commitment and investment of government NSOs, planning offices and finance departments.

Note

- Views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat or the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.
Indicators of violence against women

Martha Macintyre, Centre for Health and Society, The University of Melbourne, and IWDA Board member

The final strategic priority proposed at the symposium on the harmonisation of gender indicators states categorically 'combat violence against women'. The indicator suggested is an apparently simple one: establish the prevalence and track. Let's turn our minds to that end.

I have worked for 25 years in Papua New Guinea in several contexts: as a designer of projects, as a gender advisor on a police project, as a consultant monitoring the social impact of mining on local communities, and as an academic researcher with a special interest in women and gender relations. In each of these roles the collection of factual material that identifies social problems and establishes their dimensions is crucial. But having the facts and tracking their transformations does not ensure that interventions can be made nor that policies will ensue.

Data collection: A reality check

Let's begin with some more 'facts'. Collecting reliable, verifiable statistical data on women's lives is difficult. It is often intrusive. It is sometimes revelatory, but it often simply confirms what we already knew with numbers attached. It is also time consuming. If your data collection is to withstand scrutiny and provide useful information for designing, implementing and evaluating projects aimed at improving women's lives, status or well-being then it has to be done with accuracy, care and dedication. It is an extremely expensive process. It is therefore not surprising that 'few national statistical bodies collect data on the topic [of violence against women] and few of the available studies yield information that is comparable across countries or regions' (Grown et al. 2005: 112).

In Papua New Guinea in the 1980s a large research project on domestic violence was undertaken under the auspices of the Law Reform Commission. A series of volumes was produced. The data were solid, the analyses compellingly presented, the findings terrible. Prevalence rates in some areas were greater than 70 per cent. The recommendations were impressive. The actions taken were limited. There were few attempts to evaluate the effects of interventions, policies and programmes that ensured.

It stands now as a distant baseline study. For such studies to be valuable as tools for effecting change they must be followed up by further studies, and that too is a costly business.

Methodological issues

With that in mind, let me raise some of the methodological problems with prevalence studies and their usefulness. First the study has to be designed so that claims of representivity can be made. To begin with, you need to know, with reasonable accuracy, how many women are in the population. There are three main ways that people collect data on violence against women: through police reports of crimes reported, through direct surveys of populations of women, and through examination of medical records. All are fraught with problems of reliability. In Papua New Guinea women in communities repeatedly report the failure of police to act on complaints of domestic or partner violence. In my own work, monitoring crime in an area where there is a large mining project, I note the reports that are recorded in the occurrence book, noting every person who comes and speaks to the police officer at the desk. I also note whether any action was taken, any investigation or charges laid. Does she withdraw the charges? Does this lead to a court case? Does the victim of the crime turn up to court? Is the person convicted? Depending on which data set I chose to go with I could have a prevalence rate of 0.5 per cent or 15 per cent. I know that under-reporting is a problem in all countries, but how do I decide what to multiply it by to estimate actual prevalence?

I can also ask women in meetings to put a cross on a small piece of paper if they have been physically assaulted, or a circle if they have not. Interestingly, my ethical concerns about privacy and confidentiality are not shared by the women who often recount their stories publicly with much discussion. On the basis of these studies the figures are consistently between 60-70 per cent. Perhaps the context allows women to speak more freely, but even then there are likely to be some women who feel ashamed or embarrassed. Certainly, many who work in a medical setting report that women are reluctant to discuss violence.

At the clinic, women who present with injuries consistent with violent assault are not always recorded as having experienced violence. Interviewing medical staff yields more complicated data; many observe minor injuries when they are dealing with a patient with malaria. Women, they believe, lie about the causes of some injuries that are presented or detected to save face or because the perpetrator has actually brought them for treatment. The data are suggestive but unreliable.
What if we were to depend on police statistics and found that in the period during a project for the empowerment of women the number of reported criminal assaults by intimate partners soared? Numbers are not transparent. Is this because the project has led to women asserting themselves at home and getting beaten up more? Is it because police involved the project are taking women’s reports more seriously, recording or investigating them more diligently? Is it because women, recognising their rights as citizens to protection against assault, are reporting crime more often? Or is it because coincidentally a bus service has been established, linking villages to the town where the police station is, enabling women to travel there? Statistics have to be qualitatively analysed and interpreted.

Conclusion
Undertaking the collection of good verifiable data that demonstrates the effectiveness of programmes supporting women’s development will be an expensive business. It will take time. At present in the Pacific most of this work would have to be done by highly educated people from Western countries. It would need to be done rigorously and would require cooperation between numerous agencies within Australia and in other countries. It would require training programmes wherever it was to be done. In the Australian context it would require that the anti-intellectualism and suspicion that often characterises the responses of public servants and aid providers to academics is set aside; that researchers and people working in development find ways of working together — dare I use the word — productively.

At present, Western advanced capitalist countries are entranced by the values of corporatism. The jargon that was first generated in corporate boardrooms when ‘auditing’ procedures were extended beyond the realm of finance permeates other institutions. There is widespread agreement that achievements must be measurable, that transparency and accountability must be demonstrable. Words like ‘outputs’, ‘value-added’, ‘productivity’, and so on, formerly confined to consenting businessmen in the privacy of their boardrooms, trip off the tongues and into the reports of educators, aid project managers and public servants. We work in an environment where words and deeds increasingly have to be represented in numbers.

The numbers and graphs will sit dully between the covers of reports unless they are used. The prevalence of violence against women in all countries is undisputed. Wherever you look for it you find it. Counting it accurately will not reduce it. Indicators do not solve problems, they have to be used to inform effective programmes aimed at eliminating violence, by people who are committed to improving the lives of women.

In conclusion, I would like us to keep in mind the words of a formidable mathematical genius, Albert Einstein: ‘Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts’.

Reference
A piece of land or a piece of paper? Gendered indicators of property rights

Anne Lockley, Pacific Programme, Oxfam Australia

Introduction
In relation to property rights, the UN Millennium Task Force on Gender Equality has proposed (a) land ownership by male, female, or jointly held; and (b) housing title, disaggregated by male, female, or jointly held as indicators for tracking progress on strategic priorities to promote gender equality and empower women.

There is no doubt that increases in women’s access to, ownership of, and control over property, and subsequently over productive resources, signifies advancement in women’s rights and empowerment. However, the extent to which quantitative measures of ownership, such as numbers of titles, accurately depict women’s control over, or even their access to, those resources is questionable.

Whose indicators?
It is important to bear in mind the distinction between changes which may be desired by women themselves and those which are deemed desirable by an organisation. However valid the latter might be, they will not constitute evidence of women’s empowerment until and unless their value is shared by women themselves (Kabeer 1998:16).

Debates about land and property rights, both formal and informal, are bound in culture and custom, and bring with them fears of dissolution of families and the replacing of traditional systems with something foreign. Such debates often take place without the involvement of the different sections of a community or society which they affect, particularly women themselves. The extent to which quantitative measurement of land ownership and property titles will actively represent women’s rights and equality and, as is the purpose of the MDGs, poverty reduction, will depend on the perspective of those being measured and the way ‘control’ and ‘access’ are constructed in their context. Further, whether these indicators are interpreted from a women’s rights perspective or from a family welfare or poverty alleviation perspective will affect their validity as a true measure of gender equality.

The diversity and complexity of an issue such as gender and property rights is more than could be captured by two quantitative indicators. This paper illustrates some of this complexity via two cases: the first presents an opportunity for these indicators to be used as a measure of advancement of women’s rights; and the second discusses how the indicators could be misleading. This second case particularly discusses the importance of this debate in reforms to land tenure system such as that being put forward in Australia’s White Paper on the Australian Government’s Overseas Aid Program (White Paper).

Land and housing titles: True indicators of advancement?

Case 1: Post-disaster reconstruction
An earthquake that struck the Latur and Osmanabad district of India’s central Maharashtra in September 1993 affected 84 villages, left over 8,000 people dead, and razed property worth millions of rupees. Out of this disaster came an opportunity for improving the long-term situation for women. Pressure and persuasion from women’s organisations prompted the local administration to issue titles for reconstructed houses to both husband and wife. Widows, the destitute and other particularly vulnerable groups were also given separate houses where eligible. In the Latur case, the State Government of Maharashtra entrusted the responsibility of settling approximately 400 disputed cases to Stree Aadhar Kendra, a local NGO and Oxfam partner, so that they could provide counsel and ensure women benefited. This was a radical step for the Maharashtra administration at the time.

This disaster occurred 13 years ago, and now the issuing of joint titles is becoming common practice in post-disaster situations in India. After the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, and after the 2005 floods, common titles were issued in most of the NGO and donor programmes. Oxfam partners Self Employed Women’s Association and the Disaster Mitigation Institute have constructed shelters in joint names, and the title deeds carry joint ownership titles. Joint titling of housing is not yet law in India, but is gaining momentum and is slowly becoming an accepted norm. This meets the long-term strategic gender interests of women and helps them change structural inequities. The number of titles in this case does become an indicator of improvement in women’s rights (Bokil 1997:14, 41).

The reconstruction phase of a post-disaster situation can offer a window of opportunity for advancing women’s rights. As one study, which drew on an example of a post-conflict situation, has pointed out:

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[The absence from their communities compels women into decision making roles … [this experience] coupled with the discrimination women encounter in the post conflict situation with respect to land, housing and property has resulted in the emergence of women’s organisations that are focused on women’s livelihood issues including women’s rights to land, housing and property (UNHCS 1999:3).

But this opportunity is not always seized. Examples of what can happen when specific action is not taken to strengthen or protect existing women’s property rights were documented by Action Aid in its Tsunami response assessment. It found that ‘women’s rights to equal participation in the decision making processes have … been ignored and women’s rights to own property have been largely undermined’ (PDHRE 2006:47).

Specific examples include:

• Women who owned land in their own names in Sri Lanka prior to the tsunami, particularly Muslim women who had received property as part of their dowry, are concerned that they are not considered eligible for compensation. Even in cases where the original house or land was in the woman’s name, the government deposits compensation payments in the name of the man.

• Banks in the northeast of Sri Lanka reportedly asked women to sign a letter relinquishing their rights to the house and land to their husbands in order to facilitate compensation payments.

• In Thailand, women who lost their partners have not received compensation if they cannot produce a marriage certificate, even if they had been living together for many years and have children together.

In situations where an external event such as a disaster or conflict creates a space for advancing women’s right to own land and property, collecting data on the issuing of titles by sex may provide a useful measure of progress. The indicators may also act as a prompt to get this issue on the agenda of aid donors and implementers at times when gender-sensitive responses are defined more by their meeting of practical rather than strategic needs.

Case 2: Gender issues in land reform

The White Paper includes a recommendation to pursue ‘a collaborative and demand-driven Pacific land mobilisation programme to explore ways to overcome the major land tenure constraints to growth in the region’ (AusAID 2006:12) making this discussion of indicators timely close to home. The Land briefing paper prepared for the Pacific 2020 Report which is ‘a practical manifestation of the White Paper commitments’ (Downer 2006), provides a good analysis of land issues in the Pacific, except for its failure to even mention the relationship between women and the land in Pacific societies.

In Melanesia in particular large areas of land were under customary tenure at the time of independence — 97 percent in Papua New Guinea, 84 per cent in Solomon Islands, 83 per cent in Fiji, while in Vanuatu all land reverted to customary ownership (Fingleton 2005:7). The need for economic growth to support an expanding population, changing patterns of settlement, and conflicts over land use has prompted a rethinking of land tenure systems, both within the region and externally.

In land reform processes such as that indicated in the White Paper, there is often a move to assign all rights to a single holder, rather than having multiple claimants on the resource. While it reduces transactions costs and facilitates market exchange of the resource as a commodity, assigning single holder rights cuts off many who formerly had customary access to the resource for the production of goods and services, particularly women. Women often have less access to money, political connections, and other resources needed to acquire title. In the process of privatisation women and marginal users have repeatedly been shown to be the ones that lose out (Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997:18).

So what does this mean for the relevance of the proposed indicators? At first glance the potential for further marginalisation of women could lead us to emphasise that such indicators should be incorporated in the development of any reform strategies, which is indeed the case. But first it is necessary to explore women’s rights in existing customary systems. In brief:

• Both matrilineal and patrilineal systems of land inheritance exist in the Pacific. In matrilineal systems land rights pass through women, and women have some rights and a certain amount of power, but these rights are secondary to men (Jalal 1998:64).

• Even in matrilineal societies there is no guarantee that women will be consulted or have an active role in decisions about land usage. For example in one case reported by Solomon Islands women from Ysabel province, a woman’s brothers and male cousins sold her land to another male Solomon Islander, without her knowledge (ibid).

The experience of women in Bougainville where land is also passed through matrilineal descent is another example.

• While matrilineal land passage does not indicate ‘ownership’ in a western sense, it does contribute to women’s status and security. Titling in joint names may actually institutionalise male control over land in matrilineal societies rather than enhance women’s rights.

There are wider reaching issues in the way power and control over productive resources is constructed in Pacific societies that can be progressed by formalising land ownership via issuing
titles or otherwise registering land. Even where custom allows for women’s property rights, there is no guarantee that they will be upheld. The assumption cannot be made that ownership, especially joint ownership, will automatically translate into access and control.

Global experience in land reform efforts highlights some of the pitfalls that land reform in the Pacific may experience if a women’s rights analysis is not placed at the forefront, and if it doesn’t proceed with an understanding of the diversity in land tenure systems not only between countries, but within provinces and islands. As summarised in a World Bank review of land administration projects:

There has been a lack of understanding of the complexity and diversity of land tenure patterns, including women’s rights, by most land administrators, by project managers, and by those providing technical assistance. There is a belief that addressing gender issues only means issuing titles or co-titles to women, with little appreciation, for instance, for what happens in subsequent transactions, (b) in enforcement and actualisation of those rights, (c) in realizing the benefits that may stem from formalising women’s rights … and (d) in altering decision-making powers within households (World Bank 2005:18).

The example of the Maharashtra earthquake response and the findings of subsequent research (UNHCS 1999) points to the centrality of local women’s organisations in getting the issue of property rights on the political agenda. It also highlights the importance of education and awareness-raising on the status of women’s national and international rights in relation to land, housing and property, and of on-going pressure and follow-up of what happens after a title is issued. Quantitative data on the numbers of titles issued would need to be contextualised by qualitative information on social movements towards real reforms in land access, control and ownership for the proposed indicators to have any meaning.

Conclusion
In cases where there is local sustained action to ensure legal framework for property rights, awareness of that legal framework, and how to use it — particularly of women who need it — and the implementation of that framework, the indicators presented would be a useful measure of changing status and roles.

But if indicators are to be used as ‘a key tool for accountability, identifying and monitoring the impact of policies and programs on women and men’ or as ‘tools that capture change in women’s status and gender relations’ (Crawford 2006:4) then the proposed indicators that measure numbers of titles, but do not accommodate the difference between usage rights and decision-making power as opposed to ownership, will give an inadequate, and perhaps also inaccurate picture. Consequently, they do require further consideration.

Note
1. A women’s rights perspective distinguishes between ‘independent’ rights and shared rights. Independent rights are formally united to male ownership or control.

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Women in parliament: Thoughts on how to achieve meri kirap*1

Margaret O’Callaghan, former United Nations Population Fund representative in Zambia and Papua New Guinea

Introduction
The indicator for MDG3 — the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women with the priority being to increase women’s share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies — is change in the percentage of seats held by women in national parliament. This indicator seems to assume that increasing the number of women in parliament will improve women’s empowerment, or at least help achieve equity. This paper considers whether this indicator is useful and does indeed accurately reflect the situation. It also suggests alternative indicators, and suggests ways in which changes to the political status quo could be achieved.

Women in parliaments: The data
There is accurate, up-to-date, readily available and generally comparable quantitative data on the number of women in most of the world’s national parliaments from a common source, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2006. This is the source of the data that follows. This quantitative information provides a useful overview of the situation globally, including percentages of total members of parliament (MPs) and trends, as well as data on the number of women in the most senior positions.

Figure 1: World average of women in parliaments 1995-2005

Source: IPU 2005:2

Women members of parliament
As Figure 1 shows, globally, there has been a gradual but steady increase, from 10.9 per cent in 1975 to 16 per cent in 2005, with the fastest rate of increase being over the past decade (both houses combined). In 1995, 63 per cent of countries had less than ten per cent representation, and by 2005 the figure was 37 per cent. Sixteen out of 177 countries have reached the ‘critical mass’ of 30 per cent or more. Of the 20 countries with 30 per cent or more, nine are developing countries (including Cuba, Mozambique and Burundi). One country has exceeded 50 per cent (Sweden).

Women in two countries still do not have the vote (Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates), while Kuwait moved out of this category in 2005. In 2005 there were no female representatives in eight countries (including the Federated States of Micronesia, Saint Kits and Nevis) and Papua New Guinea has been on the edge of this category off and on over the past 15 years.

The overall rate of increase is 0.5 per cent a year, but varies from ‘slow (but constant) tracking’ countries (including Japan, Swaziland and Kenya) to ‘fast tracking’ countries (such as South Africa and Rwanda which have leapt to more than 40 per cent since 2000). Progress is not necessarily even, with some countries slipping backwards at times.

Some clear patterns have emerged. Several regions have been consistently high in their rates including Scandinavia with a 40 per cent average in 2005, while others have been consistently low including Pacific island countries with a 3.2 per cent average, and Arab states with an 8.2 per cent average. Post-conflict countries tend to have relatively high levels of female representation for their new parliaments, including Eritrea (22 per cent), Rwanda (48.8 per cent), and Iraq (31.5 per cent). Most Caribbean countries have relatively high levels of representation including Cuba (36 per cent) and Grenada (27 per cent). Some countries with high levels of education and economies have surprisingly low levels of representation including the US (14 per cent) and the UK (18 per cent) but even Australia (25 per cent) and New Zealand (32 per cent) are low compared to the Scandinavian countries.
Women at the top

Women have not reached the highest levels of decision making to the same extent as they have become MPs, and progress has been erratic:

- In 2005, 14.3 per cent of all ministers were female;
- Sweden has the most (52.4 per cent in 2005) followed by Spain (50 per cent);
- In 1995 there were 12 female heads of state compared to eight in January 2005;
- There have been 44 female prime ministers (PMs) since 1960; and
- Ten per cent of presiding officers in 1995 were women, eight per cent in 2005.

Countries in transition are more likely to have women speakers than so-called developed countries. The first two women PMs were elected in developing countries (Sri Lanka and India in 1960 and 1966 respectively). Since 1974, 28 countries have had an elected female president, with some holding the position more than once, including Sri Lanka, India and Liberia.

Quantitative data

The indicator of the percentage of women in national parliaments therefore could be said to be useful (up to a point), providing trends, highlighting positive developments as well as highlighting those countries which have yet to move off first base (or even get there, in the case of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). The data could be useful for demonstrating to the lower ranking countries how far they lag behind and act as a stimulus to action to redress the situation. But the same could be said for all those countries with less than 50 per cent representation. That some post-conflict countries have installed high quotas could be indicative of a positive change in global attitudes, or the influence of the UN in supporting the restoration of good governance. The data also shows those countries which have achieved a 'critical mass' which is presumed to enhance their effectiveness (this point is examined further below).

The quantitative data therefore shows that 'meri are kinap'ing' in gradually increasing numbers, and in almost all countries have entered the portals of previously male-dominated power. But is this increase meaningful, in terms of enhancing women's empowerment?

It could be assumed that increasing numbers of women being appointed to ministerial positions is indicative of women increasing their access to power. However, the IPU data also shows that the majority of women MPs hold or have held portfolios related to 'soft' social areas such as social affairs, women's affairs and education — which tend to side-line women from the main areas of power. Relatively few have held defense, finance and foreign affairs portfolios.

The social sectors in developing countries, especially under structural adjustment programmes, have often been sorely under-resourced, which impedes their ability to be effective in managing their portfolios — making it a no-win situation. While some women definitely earn their ministerial positions, others are token appointments, to appease the gender lobby. A similar story goes for the type of committees they serve on, and their position in them. Another issue is whether they get to hold especially influential positions such as speaker, deputy speaker or whip; only one in ten have ever done so, with eight per cent holding such posts in 2005. Interestingly, of these, nearly one-third comes from Caribbean countries.

One feature of women PMs is that some obtained their positions because of family connections, rather than through their capacity or popularity. They could be considered to be continuing a male-led dynasty rather than demonstrating women power, examples of these include Indira Ghandi, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Megawati Sukamoputri and Benazir Bhutto. Consequently it cannot be extrapolated that having a woman as a PM is necessarily good for women, it may well be just a reinforcement of male power bases. Also, some PMs are commonly regarded as being 'more male than the men' and would never regard themselves as feminists and representing women in general.

This quantitative information is readily available and can be seen as providing some degree of commentary on the position of women MPs, as long as the type of ministry is analysed and there is some determination of the degree of tokenism in the appointments; the latter is not easy for outsiders to determine, however.

Impact

Quantitative data on women in politics has its uses. It does not, however, indicate the impact of women in parliament on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women through legislative outputs which, if budgeted for and implemented, have the potential to improve women's lives.

It is widely assumed that once in parliament, women will work for women's issues. Once they are elected their supporters may expect them to effectively generate support for women's concerns, ensure that policies are translated into new patterns of service delivery, set new standards, and so on. Women in top positions, however, aren't necessarily interested in these issues (due to class or self-interest) or free to promote women's issues (because they may be beholden to the party leadership). What is more, their constituents may well have other more pressing issues.

It is also wrong to assume that only women promote women's issues and there is a need for data on the number of male MPs who promote issues which are advantageous to women; obviously over the years some achievements have been gained through the support of some male MPs.
There is some evidence to indicate that organisations representing women's interests outside parliament play a more effective role in bringing issues to the attention of parliament than the women MPs themselves may do.

Whether there is any impact in having increased numbers of women in parliament, especially after achieving a 'critical mass' is a key question to ask. The answer may depend on how cohesive women are, especially as an active caucus; it should never be assumed that this will happen. One study shows that globally, there appears to have been an association between the number of (cohesive) women in parliament and the promotion of abortion rights (UNRISD 2005). We saw this in Australia in early 2006 within the abortion pill RU486 debate. But, surprisingly, there is little evidence of a strong female lobby in regard to gender-based violence.

There is no systematic cross-national comparative data on the type of programmes supported by women MPs, although it is known that women are more likely to introduce bills that address issues related to women's rights, family or children. There are also some country-specific studies. For example in Egypt it was shown that political parties and constituencies influence the choice of focus, economic issues were most commonly focused on, followed by services (Karam 1998).

Conclusions on quantitative data
The global data is quite illuminating and should be a useful tool for lobbying gatekeepers about improving the situation for women candidates and MPs. To assume that the number of women MPs is an accurate and useful indicator of women's empowerment is only correct so far as individual women who are elected are concerned, and on grounds of equity. It is not an indicator of the likelihood of women's empowerment more generally. It also assumes that male MPs do not promote women's issues.

Increasing women's presence in parliament, however, does help to raise the profile of women, by reminding male MPs that women's issues are important and may be different to those of men. It also helps, gradually, to de-masculinise the culture, provide role models for other women and is likely to increase attention to women's issues.

More accurate indicators which could meaningfully reflect improvements in women's empowerment might be:

• extent of the increase in the amount of legislation which (if budgeted for and implemented) would benefit women/girls, such as abolishing school fees;
• extent of the increase in the number of women sensitive and positive budgets such as taxes on tampons and the imposition of hospital fees; and
• extent of the increase in the number of commissions, inquiries and so on which address women's issues, for instance, extent and nature of gender-based violence.

This data would more accurately reflect the situation within each parliament. The first two indicators would require some research and analysis whereas the latter could be included in normal annual quantitative reporting requirements.

Promoting women's representation and issues
There are a number of key points that may be useful for development agencies looking for best ways to support women candidates and MPs as well as male party officials and MPs to help women. Some of these are highlighted below, and laid out in Table 1.

1. Political parties are the key gatekeepers. They play an ever-increasing role in the management of parliamentary politics, and it is essential to influence them to implement the principle of equality, both pre-election and within parliament (IPU 2006).
2. Affirmative action plays a leading role in putting women into politics. Half the countries in the world use forms of affirmative action, such as electoral quotas, either reserved seats, voluntary party quotas or legislative quotas, including South Africa's 'zebra list' (ibid).
3. Regional pressure also exerts influence. The southern African countries, for instance, put pressure on its member countries with the South African Development Community declaration of 1997 that all member countries should have at least 30 per cent of seats held by women (SARDC 2005).
4. Campaign subsidies can be very helpful to women who often don't have a good supply of funds. Such support helps to reduce their dependency on party leaders and other influential males in their communities.
5. Violence and other forms of intimidation and bribery, especially against women candidates, can deter them from entering politics. Character assassination is also common, including in the media, which focuses on a woman's looks and/or private life, especially if she is single. Dealing with other candidates offering bribes is a very difficult issue to deal with, especially in poverty affected countries.
6. Few women want to stand for election because politics looks like more trouble than it is worth, being very difficult to get into and even more challenging once elected. One of the solutions to increasing women's representation is to change the character of politics, which would also help male MPs to live more balanced and satisfying lives.
Table 1: Enhancing the election to and effectiveness of women in parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencing factors</th>
<th>Tells us</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Possible strategies</th>
<th>Information source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constituencies factors: positive or negative, eg, media, male support, geography, culture, extent of violence and bribery, dual burden, type of economy, resources</td>
<td>Likelihood of being elected and issues which need to be addressed as much as possible during the campaign</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Support NGOs and government to work with media, public education, training of candidates and provision of logistical support</td>
<td>Case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics such as education, income, class, personality, family support/connections</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Support of NGOs who are identifying and capacity building potential candidates, pitched at appropriate level, not just for highly educated</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituents' response to MPs' performance</td>
<td>Likelihood of being re-elected (but could be other influences eg, bribes and bad publicity)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Training of MPs to prioritise, strategise, work for tangible outputs, demonstrate results, use the media, logistical support for regularly visiting their constituents, use of legal mechanisms to deal with bribery</td>
<td>Election results and popularity surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of consecutive terms</td>
<td>Increased knowledge, credibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Election results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of outside influences eg, women's NGOs, international conference declarations</td>
<td>Strength of support network to lobby MPs on particular issues</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Meetings, literature, financial support for INGO/NGOs to lobby, support for MPs to participate in international meetings</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women MPs in senior positions (ministerial, committee chairs, speaking)</td>
<td>They are closer to/part of where the real power resides</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Indirectly by capacity building/opportunities eg, training, study tours which build know-how and confidence</td>
<td>Donor and government reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of male MP support</td>
<td>Increased likelihood of getting women's issues through system</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Training of male MPs on gender issues/tours, etc. and training of women MPs in strategising/lobbying them</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary culture</td>
<td>How hard it is for women to perform</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Education of Speakers and other influential parliamentary staff on the issues, study tours to other parliaments eg Scandinavians</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women MPs who actively promote women's issues, caucus together</td>
<td>Extent of possible pressure, likelihood of being effective if numbers constitute a critical mass</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Training in strategic planning, focused study tours</td>
<td>Surveys of no. of women (and men) promoting women-related bills, asking questions, requesting information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to learn the rules, use them and change them</td>
<td>The extent of their effectiveness</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Capacity building of parliamentary staff to train MPs in parliamentary methods</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence and having the 'hide of an elephant'</td>
<td>Likelihood of succeeding</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mentors who support candidates and MPs through difficult times</td>
<td>Surveys, media analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. This paper has not explored the issue of how useful it is to have gained experience at local level before entering national politics but it is probably an important factor.

8. The ability and willingness of women to work together in a strategic manner on issues is very important (especially when they have a 'critical mass') as is obtaining the support of powerful male MPs.

9. Collecting data on the personal characteristics of women who do get elected may reveal interesting trends, such data might include age, education, class, income, professional background, experience in local government, personality and motivation, experience in leading a woman's organisation or success in business, and whether they are daughter, wife of another MP or other senior leader or businessman.

10. It is a reasonable assumption that the more terms a woman serves, the more likely she is to be effective. However, because so few women MPs have been in parliament long enough to have developed real expertise it might not be useful to measure their effectiveness at this point in time. Being re-elected may not necessarily reflect a constituencies' recognition of their MP's effectiveness.

11. There are other factors influencing female (and male) ability to make a difference within parliament. For instance, the budgets of some countries are controlled by international financial institutions rendering influence difficult because of a macro-economic focus to the neglect of the social. Aid dependency can also limit effectiveness of interventions, as can strong pressures to divert scarce resources to defence services in some countries.

12. Dominated by men for generations, parliamentary cultures tend to be very masculine, including on the floor of the house, in the bar and perhaps the golf course, where many deals are made. These factors present social constraints to women's effective participation and need to be addressed. Another important factor in terms of women MPs' well-being within parliament is the existence of supporting mechanisms, including the existence of female toilets, reasonable sitting hours and childcare facilities.

Conclusion
Changing the status quo requires a review of the major facilitating factors which help women to be elected, to survive in the culture and the system, and to be more effective in contributing to decision making and sharing what, after all, is a national burden.

If these factors were addressed it would help women achieve parity, if not equality, and then perhaps eventually there would not be a need for positive discrimination mechanisms in voting systems and legislative seat allocations. The influencing factors highlighted here provide suggestions as to the type of issues which need to be addressed and the type of support that political parties, male MPs, parliamentary bureaucracies, governments and development partners could give which would help to increase women's participation in politics. They should also include helping to improve the capacity of men to address women's issues more often and effectively. It is hoped that such reflections will be useful in helping meri kirap so that equity is attained within parliament and ultimately that ALL meri kirap as a result of positive legislative outcomes, from both male and female MPs.

Notes
* This paper is dedicated to Aung San Suu Kyi and to the nine-year-old girl in Southern Highlands who was killed in cross-fire during the 2002 PNG elections.
1. Meri kirap is pidgin for women arise.
2. Exceptions are where there have been recent bi-elections so data is out of date, where countries don't release (or have?) such data and very new countries, where there are one or two houses and women in one but not the other, or both, and where a President appoints some MPs as in Zambia.

References
Does women’s share of wage employment indicate
gender equality and empowerment?

Pamela Thomas, Development Studies Network, Australian National University

Introduction
The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is one of the four indicators for measuring progress towards MDG3, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

For the last 35 years, measuring women’s employment and economic contribution have been fraught with definitional disagreements and data collection difficulties. In 1970, Esther Boserup’s book Women’s role in economic development, suggested that women’s contribution to national economies was underestimated and misrepresented; it still is, as the International Labour Organization (ILO) points out. Definitions as to what constitutes women’s economic work continue to be disputed and too often data collected has little explanatory power or value to the contributing country. Of all the MDG indicators, there is far less information available on women’s employment and its collection is the most difficult.

Despite many improvements available statistics still undercount women’s employment and reflect only its most visible dimensions (UNIFEM 2000:86).

This paper considers the development and use of employment indicators. It reviews the international discussion on the MDG employment indicator (identified as indicator 11) and considers the assumptions underlying MDG3. It suggests that the indicator provides lessons for those wishing to more usefully measure gender equality in employment. Clearly, measuring women’s empowerment requires both more extensive and more in-depth information than that provided by the education, employment and political participation indicators for MDG3.

The employment indicator
ILO has responsibility for the international collection, storage and analysis of data for this indicator. ILO and a number of other commentators have recognised, however, that the indicator has limited value as a measure of women’s employment or of women’s share of paid employment in the non-agricultural sector, and even less as a measure of their empowerment. It is hard to see how it could provide information that might be used to benefit women at international, national or community levels as it includes such a restricted perspective of women’s employment. Problems with the indicator include:

• an urban focus and middle class bias;
• inconsistent and limited data;
• no differentiation between formal and informal employment;
• does not capture gender gaps in pay and working conditions;
• does not address women working in the agricultural sector (the majority of women in developing countries);
• does not account for unpaid economic work;
• has little explanatory power; and
• does not indicate improvements in women’s lives.

Assumptions: Most indicators and development targets are based on a set of assumptions which need to be as value free as possible and clearly stated. Underlying the indicators for MDG3 there appear to be two main assumptions, both of which need to be challenged. They are:

• that education leads to employment; and
• that an equal share in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector leads to gender equality.

While education is a prerequisite for access to many types of wage employment and has been shown to be linked to improved employment opportunities, it does not necessarily result in a job, as the unemployment rates for secondary and tertiary educated people in many developing and some developed countries show. The website data for MDG indicator 45 highlights continuing high levels of unemployment among educated young people of both sexes.

While there are links between employment and women’s empowerment, the current experience among the very poor in poorer developing countries suggests otherwise — employment and the need for employment may result in disempowerment. As UNIFEM (2002:75) points out:

At the same time as women’s share of paid employment in industry and services is rising, the rights associated with such employment are often falling.

Elson and Keklik (2002:31) show that an increase in women’s share of employment can increase their work burden.
Grown, Gupta and Khan (2003:9) point out that equal access to the labour market does not imply equality of income, equality in the type of work undertaken or in working conditions or work security.

There is also a less obvious assumption that development-related assistance and intervention will result in employment equality and women's empowerment, or at least provide improved access to paid employment. These assumptions need careful scrutiny as changes in agricultural production and related assistance and intervention will result in employment and more importantly, it does not consider the extensive involvement of women in the subsistence and semi-subsistence economies. This is true of most developing countries where almost all rural women have a vital role in household economies.

**Collecting the MDG data on women's employment**

Currently ILO has statistics on total and paid employment disaggregated by sex for 196 countries and territories but for many developing countries the information is not complete and not consistent. Data is based on national records which include labour force surveys, taxation and other administrative records where these exist, and official estimates. In response to the need for data to measure MDG progress on women's employment, ILO asked national statistical offices for additional information on wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, by sex, as from 1990.

Fifty-four countries, including most Pacific and African countries, did not have the resources to provide this information. For some other poor countries ILO generated estimates based on total employment figures, the total of economically active population in non-agriculture, and the total number of employees. To provide international comparability, statistical models and imputed values have been used for much of the developing country data. This produces sometimes questionable results that are not responsive to dramatic change, for example, the impact of conflict, emergencies, rapid political and economic change or rapid increases in globalisation.

When the results provide limited information, apart from trends and a rather dubious international comparison, it is hard to see how this either assists developing country policy and planning or benefits women. However, the data available can provide the basis for follow-up and more in-depth research.

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**The data on women's paid employment in the non-agricultural sector**

**Some patterns:** The 1990-2004 available data, published on the MDG and ILO websites, shows that women's overall share of non-agricultural paid employment in developing countries is slowly increasing with declines in a few countries, including Vietnam and Cambodia. As Table 1 shows, countries where women consistently have an equal share with men, or higher, include Belarus (56.0), Latvia (53.2), Estonia (52.2), and Bulgaria (53.0). In developing countries there is considerable variation between countries like Cambodia (51.3) and Vietnam (49.1) and countries such as Pakistan (8.6) and Niger (7.8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacific islands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltic and Balkans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Looking behind the data:** If this type of data is to have any explanatory power or to be of value to planners, policy makers or those overseeing progress on the achievement of the MDGs it is necessary to look behind the data — to identify patterns and then seek to explain them. For example, why is women's share of wage employment equal or higher to that for men in countries like Belarus, Latvia, Estonia and Bulgaria? Why is women's employment so high in Cambodia and Vietnam and how can its current decline be explained? Why is it so low in some other countries?

Without additional data we do not know if increases in the proportion of women with paid employment in the non-agricultural sector result from better education or reflect increased poverty, increased urbanisation, political ideology, or the impact of globalisation and the relocation of manufacturing from developed to developing countries where labour is plentiful, very
cheap and unregulated. Could the high shares of employment in the countries mentioned above be linked to the political economy rather than international efforts to empower women? Could the high levels of employment among women in the Baltic and Balkan states be a factor of their affiliation to the former USSR? Similarly, could high women's employment levels in Vietnam and Cambodia be related to their Communist links and could the decline in women's share of wage employment in Vietnam be the result of the loss of the extensive USSR market for a wide range of manufactured goods and the resulting closure of thousands of small factories which employed large numbers of women? In the early 1990s there were numerous small factories in Vietnam where women manufactured hand made carpets and other hand crafted goods for the USSR market.

While the data collected for indicator 11 can provide us suggestions for more in-depth research, it fails to inform us about gender equality in wage employment or whether wage labour is empowering or disempowering.

As globalisation has spread ... women's share of non-agricultural wage employment has increased. But women remain in primarily sex-segregated jobs with lower pay and less job security. They also suffer disproportionately from the slowdown in the global economy, which has forced many into informal precarious work with few rights or benefits ... very little of this is evident in the indicator chosen to track the realization of goal 3 ... Thus, as with the other indicators, this should not be seen as an indicator of women's well being, but of the extent to which women have equal access to this type of employment (Elson and Kedik 2002:30).

In seeking to measure empowerment, the inability of indicator 11 to differentiate between formal and informal work is a major limitation.

Women are less likely than men to hold paid and regular jobs and more often to work in the informal economy which provides little financial security ... informal employment is persistent and widespread ... the average earnings are too low to raise households out of poverty (Chen et al. 2005:7).

As Table 2 shows, in developing countries a high proportion of wage employment for both men and women in the non-agricultural sector is in the informal sector. It is hard to equate this type of employment with empowerment as much of it is exploitative and, like its European historical precedents, results from agricultural change, poverty, urbanisation and rapid industrialisation where men, women and children work for little money in appalling conditions. Today, a common sight in urban areas in Southeast Asia and Africa are the lines of men and in some places women waiting outside building sites, quarries and factories for a day's employment. It would probably be true to say that in informal employment in the non-agricultural sector women and men have achieved a kind of equality in that both are exploited, neither earn enough to lift them above the poverty line and the experience for both is more likely to be disempowering than empowering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The way forward

Academics, international organisations including ILO, and a variety of NGOs have put forward suggestions for including other employment indicators that would provide greater understanding of the situation and perhaps a more robust basis for reviewing changes in gender equality and women's empowerment. An important basis for a new approach is the concept of 'decent work' outlined by ILO (2005) and Chen et al. (2005:7) who call for a critical mass of institutions and individuals at all levels to work together on a set of core priorities which include:

- promotion of decent employment for both women and men;
- increased visibility of informal women workers in rational labour force statistics, using employment by type and earnings;
- promotion of a more favourable policy environment for the working poor, especially women, through improved analysis; and
- support for and strengthening of organisations representing women informal workers (Chen et al. 2005:7).

The Task Force on Education and Gender Equality (Grown, Gupta and Kes 2005:102) suggests a change in the goal to 'decent, productive work for all' and ILO has established a 'decent work' initiative. In place of women's share of paid non-agricultural employment two indicators are recommended:

1. The share of women in wage employment and self-employment by type (which subsumes the current indicator); and
These indicators would show women's different types of employment — agricultural and non-agricultural, and formal and informal wage employment and self-employment — as a percentage of total female employment.

ILO already has some of the data for the first and is already assisting some countries in its collection. More work is required on the second to test and prepare methodological guidelines.

This expanded information will provide greater understanding of women’s access to employment, the kinds of work they do and for what rewards. But to use this data to help measure women’s empowerment will still require being able to identify the forces that determine the situation. Again, it will be necessary to look behind the data and ask why.

**Conclusion**

While quantitative data of this type provides information on trends and the opportunities for international comparison, without greater explanatory power it has limited value to developing countries or to aid organisations wishing to promote gender equality. Qualitative, country and project level research is essential to understand what work women and men do, why they do it, what they do with their earnings, whether or not their situation is improving, and what constrains their access to decent paid employment. This is the kind of information required as the basis for improving employment opportunities for women and for measuring their involvement in economic work. It may also assist in measuring their empowerment.

Finally, in any research into gender equality, in any sector and at any level, it is vital when developing quantitative or qualitative indicators to question the assumptions upon which the research is based.

**Note**

1. In many countries, especially developing countries, non-agricultural wage employment represents only a small portion of total employment. As a result, the contribution of women to the national economy is underestimated and therefore misrepresented (ILO 2004:1).

**References**


Indicators of conflict and peace: A gender-sensitive early warning system

Annalise Moser, gender specialist*

Introduction
Armed conflict is a familiar feature of many countries in the world today, and this is reflected in much international gender policy and practice. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality both recognise the need to pay special attention to monitoring the situation of women as well as men in conflict settings. The collection and analysis of gender-sensitive data concerning conflict and peace raises the possibility of utilising gender-sensitive indicators not only to monitor the situation of women and men, but also to assess the risks of conflict and potential for peace. Conflict early warning is a critical field through which to examine this dual use of gender-sensitive indicators, as well as to strengthen women’s roles in conflict prevention and peace-building processes.

This paper explores the methodology and lessons learned from UNIFEM monitoring peace and conflict using gendered early warning indicators project in Solomon Islands, one of a global series of gender-sensitive conflict early warning pilot projects.

Why gender and conflict early warning?
Conflict early warning is the systematic collection and analysis of information from areas of crisis, to anticipate the escalation of armed conflict. The process involves the collection and analysis of data using indicators, as well as the development of appropriate response options, which are communicated ‘up’ to policy makers and ‘down’ to communities for the purposes of decision making and action (see also CPR Network 2005; Krummenacher and Schmeidl 2001; Ampleford 2000).

To date, conflict early warning systems have largely ignored gender issues, and are therefore missing out on gender-sensitive information and fail to hear the perspectives of women. In addition, women are excluded from playing active roles in the conflict prevention and peace-building process. UNIFEM’s project sought to fill this gap and examine the process and outcomes of a conflict early warning system with an explicitly gender-sensitive perspective and approach.

Context of the armed conflict in Solomon Islands
The armed conflict in Solomon Islands, known locally as ‘the tensions’, erupted in 1998 and continued until the arrival of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in July 2003. The causes of the conflict were multiple and interlinked. Key issues included the cultural differences between different ethnic populations, and increasing competition for limited resources around the centralised capital Honiara, particularly competition for land and for commercial and development opportunities (see Fraenkel 2004; Moore 2004). The conflict resulted in 150-200 deaths, around 450 gun-related injuries, and more than 35,000 internally displaced persons (Muggah 2004).

Men and women played different roles during the tensions. Men’s roles included active involvement in fighting, supporting families, and decision-making roles in mediation and reconciliation. Women’s roles often overlapped with these, and included productive roles in supporting the family while men were absent, social welfare roles in caring for family and community members, and engaging in informal peace processes. The impacts of the tensions on both men and women included being victims of multiple types of violence — including rape, for women — economic impacts especially surrounding loss of income, breakdown in domestic relationships and psychological impacts such as grief and anxiety. However, women also often experienced increased empowerment resulting from taking on traditionally male roles during the tensions (see Moser 2005).

Methodology
UNIFEM worked with five partners in Solomon Islands to implement the early warning project, including NGOs and government departments. Five field sites were selected through which to monitor community-level data, all of which were ‘hot spots’ during the tensions. To date, conflict early warning systems have largely ignored gender issues, and are therefore missing out on gender-sensitive information and fail to hear the perspectives of women. In addition, women are excluded from playing active roles in the conflict prevention and peace-building process. UNIFEM’s project sought to fill this gap and examine the process and outcomes of a conflict early warning system with an explicitly gender-sensitive perspective and approach.

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Methodology
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Development of gender-sensitive conflict early warning indicators
One of UNIFEM’s key achievements in this project was the development of a robust set of gendered early warning indicators, with a scope which combined broad application with connection to context-specific dynamics. They were designed to monitor
Box 1: Examples of gender-sensitive conflict early warning indicators

- Women's involvement in community resolution of land disputes: women are rarely involved due to their lack of decision-making roles in the community, even in matriarchal societies where women are land custodians. Land disputes are one of the key underlying causes of the tensions.

- Male youth unemployment: a destabilising factor during the tensions as unemployed male youths used compensation demands to gain cash income. Increased criminal activity is still associated with young male unemployed ‘drop-outs’.

- Avoidance of markets/gardens due to fear: it is generally women who walk to remote gardens, or walk to take produce to markets. During the tension women were too afraid to carry out this work, which in turn reduced food security and cash income.

- Incidence of crime: especially linked to male youth unemployment (see above). Crime is on the increase in Honiara, and is becoming more violent.

- Fear of reprisal from prisoners: an issue highlighted by women, with evidence that women are being threatened and subjected to retribution from men released from prison over tension-related crimes.

- Incidence of rape: women and girls suffered high incidences of rape during the tensions, with high incidences still reported well after the peace agreement.

- Trust between ethnic groups: linked to prevalent negative stereotypes about different ethnic groups, and to strong in-group identification, especially among men. This plays a significant role in fuelling violent conflict.

- Domestic abuse: a high-risk indicator linked to alcohol consumption, economic insecurity, and the aftermath of the tensions; anecdotal evidence suggests the rate climbed dramatically during and after the tensions.

- Informal negative discourse (gossip): significant prior to and during the tensions. Also a gendered issue, as women are frequently associated with gossip, especially during the tensions when women’s gossip was often considered to fuel conflicts.

- Marriage breakups: incidence of marriage break-ups rose significantly during the tensions, associated with alcohol abuse and the increasing ‘culture of O2A’ (second wives, mistresses). Perceived as a high risk indicator by women, but not by men.

not only levels of conflict, but also levels of peace. An initial set of indicators was developed in consultation with partners and representatives from other organisations in Solomon Islands and other standard early warning indicators, as well as gender-sensitive indicators, were then incorporated into this local set. These indicators were pre-tested in communities to assess their relevance. Box 1 provides examples of some of the indicators used in the Solomon Islands project, and their relevance to the local conflict.

The final set comprised 46 indicators. For analytical purposes, the indicators were divided into six categories: governance and political institutions, land and natural resources, economics, public security, social and ethnic relations, and peace building. The category of peace building added an important dimension by including a focus on the progress of the work of peace builders, rather than focusing wholly on conflict issues. These gendered early warning indicators have been widely recognised as appropriate issues to track in the context of Solomon Islands.

**Gender-sensitive data collection**

The UNIFEM early warning project utilised a wide-ranging data collection methodology, both in order to ‘test’ a number of different methods, as well as to allow for triangulation of results. The methodology went beyond the event data standard for most early warning systems, and combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This project also utilised an approach which valued both micro-level data from women and men at the community level, as well as macro-level data at the national level, based on the assumption that monitoring micro-level changes can help anticipate conflict before it spreads to higher levels. In this sense, UNIFEM’s approach differed from many other conflict early warning approaches which are often based on event data.

Indicator data was collected at six-month intervals using three different data collection instruments, each targeting equal numbers of male and female respondents:

- self-monitoring templates were completed by the 20 male and female project participants who were trained in monitoring peace and conflict indicators at the community level;

- community surveys were carried out among 200 respondents across the five communities where the project operated. Of the respondents, 50 per cent were youths and 50 per cent adults; and

- national surveys were conducted among 200 ‘informed specialists’ and ‘experts’ at the national level in Honiara, including employees of NGOs, churches and other national and international organisations.
Additional forms of non-indicator based data were also included in the data collection process. Focus groups were held with separate groups of men and women, at times convenient to the community members, in order to develop deeper qualitative context behind the indicator data. A structural data set was compiled using national statistics, although this was hindered by a lack of up-to-date data. In addition, a media scan of the national newspaper was carried out on a daily basis, to monitor coverage of peace and conflict related articles and their gender representation.

Analysis and reporting of early warning data

All indicator-based data collection instruments used a five-point measurement scale. Where necessary, the results were inverted in analysis so that a higher score indicated higher risk. The results for each indicator were averaged, and converted to a color-coded 'risk level', from 'low risk' (green), through to 'high risk' (red). Trend data was calculated to show increasing or decreasing levels of peace or conflict over time. Male and female responses were disaggregated to highlight any differences between women's and men's perspectives of conflict and peace issues.

This data was presented in color-coded tables, and analysis meetings were held with partners to address: high-risk indicators, notable differences between the perceptions of men and women, 'surprising' results, and other current risk factors not covered by the indicator data (such as the emergence of a militant separatist group).

The reporting of the gender-sensitive conflict early warning data, combining statistical data with qualitative analysis, was a critical aspect to the success of the project (UNIFEM 2005). The reports were targeted towards a local audience, and aimed to use appropriate language and be very concise. Another key element was clear and engaging presentation of data, including color-coded graphs and tables. The gendered early warning reports were distributed widely in Solomon Islands, and simplified summaries were distributed in the field site communities.

Advocacy and response

One of the most critical elements of any conflict early warning system is the link from warning to response. In the case of UNIFEM's Solomon Islands project, for each of the 46 indicators a set of corresponding response options was developed by male and female community members and partners, taking into account a gender perspective. Response options were developed for the community level — initiatives and actions which communities themselves identified and could undertake — as well as for the national level, including initiatives and policies for government, national NGOs, churches and donors. These were included in matrix form in the early warning reports.

Much of the advocacy around the early warning reports centered around facilitating various organisations' use of the response options in their planning and operational work, with particular regard for gender and women's issues. Many national and international organisations utilised the data and response options to inform strategic planning processes, and as a dialogue tool with others working on peace building. More recently, the indicators have been used by other international organisations to conduct conflict assessments. In all of these cases, the organisations are — by using gender-sensitive and sex disaggregated data and response options — implicitly utilising a gender perspective in their work.

Lessons learned

Beyond the methodological issues examined above, the gendered early warning project in Solomon Islands also noted several important overarching outcomes for women, peace and security.

Firstly, the gender-sensitive approach to early warning helped to build the capacity of women's organisations working for peace. Implementing the conflict early warning project with an emphasis on gender built the capacity of national women's organisations, and individual women with whom the project worked in partnership. Working with the conflict early warning project raised the profile of these women's organisations, provided them with skills and knowledge about early warning as a means of conflict prevention, strengthened their research skills, and strengthened their analytical skills.

Secondly, it raised the profile of gender among 'non-gender oriented' conflict prevention organisations. For government, donors and NGOs who bought into the 'new' concept of conflict early warning, an engendered project enabled national-level individuals and organisations to engage with and advocate for gender issues, despite relatively little previous gender work.

Thirdly, these two outcomes were achieved thanks to the use of an appropriate and robust set of gender-sensitive indicators, which ensured that data concerning conflict included important gender issues. In addition, sex disaggregating the indicator based early warning data — that is, highlighting women's responses versus men's responses to the indicators — promoted in-depth gender analysis of peace and security issues. For example, noticing that women were more dissatisfied than men with the provision of government services elicited analysis about women feeling impacts more keenly than men due to their interests in providing food, education and health care for families.

The experiences of the project suggested that three cornerstones of gendered early warning practice contributed to positive gender and peace-building outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 1.
The cornerstones of the gendered conflict early warning framework in Solomon Islands were:

- **gender-sensitive early warning indicators**, which ensure data is collected on topics relevant to gender issues in conflict and peace building;
- **sex disaggregated early warning data**, such that men's responses and women's to the gender-sensitive indicators were highlighted; this strategy prompted in-depth analysis of gender issues where there were differences in men's and women's responses; and
- **women and men were involved in data collection, analysis and development of response options**, such that they play active roles in conflict prevention and peace building at the grassroots and national levels, and such that these processes are shaped by adequate attention to gender issues.

Combined, these three factors contributed to the following outcomes:

- **gender-sensitive conflict prevention programming**, through the application of the lessons from early warning data and gender-sensitive response options into the programme planning of conflict prevention and peace-building actors;
- **supporting women's and men's roles in peace building**, both through training and empowering project participants at the grassroots, as well as strengthening those in key organisations at the national level.

Particular elements which contributed to the success of the gender-sensitive conflict early warning system included:

- **broad methodological approach** going beyond event data to community perceptions and expert opinion, combining statistical data with qualitative analysis;
- **strong network in communities** of trained women and men;
- **close partnerships at high levels** with key women and men working in peace building, to enable substantive analysis of data, and to facilitate high level buy-in for response options;
• gender-sensitive indicator set which is appropriate to the specific context and which is considered representative of key conflict issues by local people;
• gendered conflict early warning reports with color-coded data, in appropriate language for a local target audience, and including realistic response options;
• strong advocacy strategy such that national actors are on board with the gender-sensitive approach and use the reports as a planning and dialogue tool.

Conclusion
This paper illustrates the rationale behind utilising a gender perspective and supporting the roles of women and men in conflict early warning processes. In particular, it demonstrates the value of gender-sensitive early warning indicators for monitoring the situation of men and women before, during and after armed conflict, as well as for monitoring the risk of conflict and the progress of peace building. While the indicators and lessons discussed here are specific to UNIFEM's project in Solomon Islands, they are also more widely applicable and adaptable to different contexts.

Notes
• Annalise Moser is a gender specialist, focusing on peacebuilding and gender mainstreaming. She has worked on gender and development issues for various UN agencies, bilateral agencies and international NGOs. Moser managed UNIFEM's early warning project in Solomon Islands and, while this paper owes much to the project partners and participants and to the UNIFEM Pacific Regional Office, the views expressed are those of the author.
1. This paper draws principally on a recent UNIFEM report (Moser 2006).
3. While some early warning systems aggregate indicators into composite indexes, this assumes that such indicators are comparable and relies on judgments as to their relative weight or, equally problematically, assumes that all indicators are equal. For these reasons, the indicators were not aggregated.

References
Gender self-assessment as an approach for monitoring
gender equity in organisations:
The Africa Region experience

Fatuma Hashi, World Vision International, and Florence Ghamunga, World Vision Tanzania

Mainstreaming gender has been one of World Vision's priority areas since the early 1990s. Gender has been defined by the organisation as a cross-cutting theme that ought to permeate all aspects of the organisational culture and practices. By the year 2000, the organisation felt a need to monitor the extent to which World Vision national offices around the world had integrated gender equity analysis and planning in their organisational culture and practices. World Vision selected the gender self-assessment tool to assist in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Gender self-assessment (GSA) is a tool and a process developed by InterAction’s Commission on the Advancement of Women (CAW), for organisations to use in identifying staff perceptions on how gender issues are addressed in their programming portfolio and internal organisational processes; this also helps organisations to identify strengths and challenges in gender mainstreaming (InterAction 1995). World Vision worked with InterAction to adapt the GSA questionnaire to fit World Vision’s context and needs.

Over the past five years, World Vision’s Gender and Development Office has provided technical assistance and support to build the capacity of the staff in national offices to conduct GSAs in their respective offices. As a result, by early 2006, 22 World Vision offices — eight of which are in Africa — had conducted the GSA in a participatory process which included senior managers and staff from different departments.

The GSA procedure is a two-stage process:
1. The first stage of the GSA process is the GSA questionnaire, which is distributed widely to staff. The questionnaire is designed to help organisations assess the range of understanding, attitudes, perceptions and reported behaviour among staff. The responses to the questionnaire also serve as a baseline of staff perceptions on the status of gender equity in their organisation's programmes and processes (at programming and organisational levels).
2. The second stage of the GSA process is the discussion, analysis and planning phase. Staff conduct a focused review of the results of the GSA questionnaire. The review provides the basis for action planning to support the organisation's gender equity framework.

The World Vision GSA process involved a self-examination of the organisation in its main core areas, including World Vision’s mission, systems and structures, programming, staff competence and capacity, gender policy, personnel policy, partner organisations, advocacy and communication, monitoring and evaluation and the organisational culture. These aspects are seen as crucial to understanding World Vision’s current status and forces of influence, progress and challenges, and hindrances and opportunities for change.

The process: Africa Region experience
The GSA process, administered by most of the national offices, began with a staff workshop where a facilitator explained the rationale behind GSA in the organisation. The process was explained and staff were able to internalise various elements of the questionnaire and discuss basic gender concepts and definitions. The initial stages of the process raised several questions among the staff indicating that for some, the level of gender awareness was low or gender equity issues had been taken for granted. Both reasons were eventually proved true with the completion of the process.

For many organisations, including World Vision, when the issue of gender is raised the main challenge faced is denial that men and women are treated differently within the organisation. Since World Vision is a Christian organisation that stands for justice, most of the staff, especially men, had assumed that gender equity issues were well-integrated in all programmes, policies, systems and culture. There is a presence of women at World Vision African offices, at least in simple headcounts, that seems to support this belief. Yet some of the women questioned wondered why whenever gender issues are discussed the discussion easily drifted to 'women's issues' instead of discussing men and women in a balanced manner. These initial reactions demonstrated that the level of gender awareness among the staff before the administration of the questionnaire was quite low. Their attitudes tended to accept and perpetuate women's traditional place in the organisation, just as in the society.
The next stage of the GSA was the administration of the questionnaire. From the start, the questionnaire appeared quite appropriate to staff at both national offices and field levels since all the elements of the questionnaire related to World Vision systems and operations. The questionnaire was administered in a workshop situation where respondents were seated together and filled out their responses independently. However, there was still room for group interaction in cases of common concerns. The format of the questions was slightly changed from the original CAW questionnaire for easy and common understanding by the respondents. Some areas were also added to the questionnaire to capture staffing information in terms of numbers, gender, position, placement, and staffing trends in recent years differentiating between national office and field positions. This information was important for assessing equal opportunities between men and women in terms of recruitment, promotion, and placement and working conditions.

Outcomes

After completing the questionnaire and the focus group discussions, the staff found the process to be quite helpful as it brought them to a common understanding of gender concepts such as equity, equality, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, and gender sensitivity. It also helped the staff to understand and contextualise gender issues in regard to their specific sectors and areas of work. Furthermore, the GSA gave staff an opportunity and a forum to raise their concerns. In some cases staff were pleased to learn that their voices were heard and, as a result, the leaders were able to take appropriate actions.

Immediately after the GSA, most of the countries created engendered action plans which were quite practical, achievable, and responsive to the specific needs of a particular national office. They were developed to bridge the gender mainstreaming gaps that were identified through the GSA. Generally, all of the plans addressed priority issues such as national gender policy, recruitment of gender coordinators, gender training of the staff and community, proposals for funding gender activities, implementation of the GSA in additional countries and enhancing gender mainstreaming at both organisational and community levels. The action plans ranged from a period of one year to three years.

In Ghana, most of the activities that arose from the GSA results of 2002 were achieved in 2005. In Tanzania one of the recommendations from GSA of 2003, which has been successfully implemented with remarkable results, is the training of women leaders at the national and field levels in leadership skills, self-assertiveness and confidence building. Women at both levels have been trained, and in one of the area development programmes where training was conducted three women contested and won the local council elections the following year. The three women, who are now councillors of their respective constituencies, attributed their success to the gender training. Other women who participated in the training have been nominated as members of the area development programmes committee.

Countries like Burundi and Somalia are in the process of implementing GSA recommendations through activities such as the recruitment of a gender coordinator in Burundi. Some of the national offices, including Ghana, Somalia, Uganda and Burundi have formed gender committees/teams composed of both men and women from different work divisions at national and field levels. The purpose of these committees is to plan and monitor gender mainstreaming within the organisation up to the community level. In some offices, like Somalia, focal point units were formed to plan and monitor gender mainstreaming activities in the organisation by involving other divisions and units.

In East Africa, commitments have been made by national directors to ensure that all the remaining offices conduct the GSA by the end of 2006. This has been coupled with a commitment to explore appropriate ways of staffing to ensure that gender mainstreaming processes receive necessary technical and regular support in the region.

All these initiatives seem to be indicative of leadership commitment and ownership of the process and hence sustainability in mainstreaming gender equity issues in World Vision's national offices.

Challenges

Cultural beliefs and practices are deeply embedded in both male and female staff. Even exposure to modern education and other cultures often does not seem to counter the embedded and widespread belief that a woman should be, and even believe herself to be, inferior to a man in society. Such attitudes prevent people from seeing that development can impact men and women differently and that gender considerations need to be taken in any intervention and at all levels in order to benefit both women and men equally.

To a certain extent, a perception that gender perspectives were integrated into programmes and projects were revealed, implying that gender is mainstreamed which therefore eliminates any further need for gender budget allocation. However, the GSA results showed that the organisation has a long way to go in order to complete the gender mainstreaming process.

The formation of gender planning committees, as a result of GSA, is an affirmative action that deserves applause. However, members of these committees are fully occupied in their own job-related activities and rarely have time to attend the planning meetings since gender is not clearly included in their job descriptions nor is job performance assessed in this area. Hence, in most cases, the gender mainstreaming process is slow because of a lack of staff capacity and time.
Lessons learned
A diversity of learning experiences was captured during the GSA process across the African countries. The countries who participated in the assessment varied in their responses in terms of the duration, size and coverage of the interventions. The degree of the political will of senior management was one of the main driving forces for implementation of the GSA and resulting action plans. Cultural and religious diversity can also affect the level of gender awareness and hence the extent to which gender equity issues have been mainstreamed across these countries.

The following are the main lessons learned:

1. Strong political will is required in order to promote gender mainstreaming. As the assessment showed, significant progress was made in gender mainstreaming in those countries where the political will was strong.

2. Establishing a gender focal point person in programmes and another in the human resources department can simultaneously enhance gender integration in the programme cycle and in the personnel policies, which are constantly reviewed by human resources staff. The two gender focal point persons then work from different fronts as a team.

3. There is a need for human and financial resource allocation for the continuous capacity building of staff to enable them to acquire skills in gender analysis and planning, for identifying practical and strategic gender needs, and analysing the organisational culture through a gender lens.

4. Intentional actions toward gender mainstreaming need to be reflected in the budgets and by promoting qualified and capable women to higher levels of the organisation.

5. Undertaking GSA allows the process of gender mainstreaming to be known and to be owned by the staff across different sectors and units. National and programme directors of all the offices should be fully involved in the entire process in one way or other and allocate enough funding and time for all staff to be involved. This will enable the majority of the staff to be available, ensuring full participation and representation of different departments and sectors.

6. The extent of gender awareness and integration in a national office and in the community will depend greatly on the involvement of the leadership and senior management teams at organisational level and of the local, religious, traditional and opinion leaders at the community level. In Somalia, involvement of a Moslem sheikh in the GSA process moderated the negative feelings of those who attacked the process as foreign to a Moslem culture.

7. Cultural attitudes about the place of women in society were not confined to the male staff but included many female staff who seemed to wonder 'why all the fuss about gender equity issues?' Surprisingly, it was the male staff who explained the importance of a gender perspective in the programme cycle and in staffing. This should caution those who think that only men are resistant to issues of gender and warn against the mistake of planning women-only training to the exclusion men.

8. In order to make gender mainstreaming sustainable, there is a need to include gender criteria in job descriptions and staff performance assessment criteria, such as key performance indicators, in order to clearly define the accountability of every member of staff in gender mainstreaming.

In conclusion, it can be said that World Vision's GSA initiative is another milestone in the path toward gender mainstreaming and implementation of the organisation's mission and core values. The process now needs to be owned, nurtured and even propagated to the remaining World Vision national offices, as it has proven to be effective in creating gender awareness among the staff.

Further action and use of tools developed in response to the GSA should lead to the integration of the GSA recommendations into all organisational systems, policies and programmes to make the process more practical and beneficial to all the stakeholders, propelling gender mainstreaming in World Vision and with other partner organisations.

Note
1. InterAction is an umbrella organisation of international NGOs based in the US.

Reference
Imagine the world's horror if three jumbo jets carrying 1,600 pregnant women crashed every day. The death toll, 585,600 annually, would be the equivalent of how many women die in the world from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Sadly these deaths are nearly all preventable and yet little is being done about this 'tolerated tragedy' (Chamberlain 2005). Imagine also how quickly governments would respond if those jets were full of men in grey suits.

When we talk about sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, what do we mean? In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 179 governments agreed that ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for all and the protection of reproductive rights were essential strategies for improving the lives of all people. In the years since ICPD, evidence has accumulated that when people can exercise their reproductive rights, they experience far-reaching benefits throughout their lives, as do their families, their communities, and their countries. These benefits include:

- safer pregnancy and childbirth;
- children are less likely to die in infancy;
- girls are more likely to complete primary education;
- women, men and youth are better equipped to protect themselves against sexually transmissible infections including HIV;
- greater empowerment for women to make strategic life decisions and greater participation in all spheres of society; and
- because of the effect that SRH has on so many aspects of people's lives, it also contributes to reducing poverty.

As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2002) said in his statement to 5th Asian and Pacific Population conference:

The Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed. And that means stronger efforts to promote women's rights, and greater investment in education and health, including reproductive health and family planning.

HIV and sexual and reproductive health

Among young people aged 15-24, 62 per cent of those living with HIV/AIDS are female. The overwhelming majority of HIV infections are sexually transmitted or associated with pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. Poor SRH and greater vulnerability to HIV infection also share common roots, including poverty and discrimination based on gender. Yet far too many policies and programmes for HIV and SRH do not take account of these commonalities, and this oversight undermines efforts to effectively address both.

For most women, SRH services are the most logistical and accessible entry-points for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. Both malaria and HIV increase the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, and when pregnant women have both diseases the risk of death is greater than for each condition alone.

World Summit

At the 2005 UN World Summit (UN 2005) world leaders agreed that implementing ICPD and achieving the goal of universal access to reproductive health is crucial to achieving the MDGs. Specifically, they committed to:

Achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015, as set out at the International Conference on Population and Development, integrating this goal in strategies to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration aimed at reducing maternal mortality, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, promoting gender equality, combating HIV/AIDS and eradicating poverty (World Summit Outcome 57).

Following the summit, the World Health Organisation's department of Reproductive Health and Research (RHR) worked with the Inter-Agency Expert Group (IAEG) on MDG indicators to provide input in reproductive health related discussions. The group reviews MDG indicators and suggests ways for improvement of indicators. Despite the clear message from the summit on integrating the universal access goal, mechanisms to include an RHR target are still unclear. The inclusion of new reproductive health indicators in the MDG monitoring framework has been agreed on but are not yet

September 2006
confirmed. They are: contraceptive prevalence rate; unmet need for family planning; age specific fertility rate 15-19 years; and coverage of antenatal care.

**National and international commitments**

Governments also agreed that by 2006 they would begin implementing comprehensive national development plans to achieve the MDGs and other development goals.

They also agreed to:

- increase resources to strengthen health systems in developing countries so that they have the personnel, infrastructure, and supplies necessary to achieve the health-related MDGs (Outcome 57a);
- increase resources for and commitment to combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, including by increasing the capacities of adults and adolescents to protect themselves from HIV (Outcome 57);
- establish policies to ensure adequate and sustainable investment in health and other basic services (Outcome 25a); and
- promote gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination, including by implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and eliminating gender inequalities in education; guaranteeing women's rights to own and inherit property; ensuring equal access to reproductive health; and ending impunity for discrimination and violence against women and girls (Outcome 58).

It is important we recognise that this is a 'heads of state' document, adopted by the presidents, prime ministers and, in some cases, monarchs, and other high-level representatives of 191 countries. This gives it far greater weight politically than either the ICPD Programme of Action or the Beijing Platform for Action. And because of this it is a particularly powerful tool that can be used to press governments where it really matters and has the greatest impact: at the national level.

**How NGOs can assist**

1. NGOs can raise awareness of the MDGs, the importance of sexual and reproductive health, and hold governments accountable to their commitments.
2. NGOs can bridge the often far-too-wide gap between policy makers and communities. They are uniquely positioned to advocate on behalf of specific groups of people and/or issue areas, making sure that policy makers take into consideration and address diverse needs and concerns in relation to reproductive health. This is particularly important for the needs of traditionally under-served and marginalised groups, including for example women, young people, indigenous communities and poor communities.
3. NGOs can contribute their specific expertise in the field of sexual and reproductive health providing guidance and technical assistance in policy-making processes as well as in implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In low-resource settings, NGOs may be the only service providers of reproductive health services. As such, NGOs are important implementing partners in development strategies to increase RH access.
4. NGOs should hold local and national governments accountable. They are best positioned to pressure governments to ensure that they live up to their commitment to achieve universal access to RH by 2015; that policies are developed in an inclusive and transparent way and that all relevant stakeholders are at the table during the policy-making process; that budgetary allocations meet real needs, that funds are used for effective interventions and, above all, that public funds are used transparently; and finally, that these policies are implemented in a way that is responsive to the needs of their populations and with respect to human rights.

**What are we doing?**

The Australian Reproductive Health Alliance's (ARHA's) working document 'Chronology of SRH commitments made at UN conferences by Australia since the Tehran International Conference on Human Rights in 1968' reviews Australian commitments at Beijing, Monterrey, ICPD, MDGs' summit in 2000, the UN's General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS and specific Australian statements and commitments. We use these documents to assist us in making Senate submissions, writing letters to parliamentarians about particular issues and informing them, advising our policy statements and publications and informing our international partners. We can remind governments of past commitments they have made no matter how long ago and ask 'has the policy changed?'

We network with academics, service providers, contractors and other NGOs concerned with women's issues at an international and national level to arrive at position statements and collaborate on action.
Parliamentary work

We refer to Australian commitments in informing members of the Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (PGPD) for which ARHA is the Secretariat. Our chair is Minister Sharman Stone and the vice chairs are Senator Claire Moore (Australian Labor Party) and Senator Lyn Allison (Democrats leader). These three women were instrumental in securing the anti-abortion drug RU486 vote in favour of the drug being evaluated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and not the Health Minister.

Parliamentarians are often unaware of what Australia has agreed to and are keen to ensure that we meet those commitments. The PGPD for example made a submission to the White Paper on Australia’s Overseas Aid Program based on some of these commitments and they saw for the first time in many years, a commitment to sexual and reproductive health and gender equality reflected in the White Paper and a willingness by Government to engage in these issues.

We also undertake many other activities and are armed with all the social, economic, human rights facts that provide compelling arguments for change. But all of these efforts mean nothing if we do not also mobilise the political will to ensure that targets and indicators are up there as priorities to be met. We could also get better at holding institutions — governments, development banks, NGOs and the UN — accountable for committing to budget lines. Without the bottom line, money and resources, we are letting those who make the commitments off the hook. Easier said than done, I know, but we must always have the budget at the forefront of our efforts.

References


Gender-sensitive indicators and working with poor women

Clare Seddon, World Vision Australia1

Introduction
The UN Millennium Project Task Force Report on Education and Gender Equality identifies ‘poor women in poorest countries and in countries … where poverty remains significant’ as one of three essential sub-populations that need to be targeted to ensure the attainment of MDG3 (UN 2006a:3). The report maintains there are seven strategic priorities necessary for achieving this goal and within these priority areas suggests indicators for measuring change.

Based on World Vision’s experience, this paper will highlight practical considerations to establishing gender-sensitive indicators and measuring progress towards gender equality when working with poor women. This paper also seeks to underscore the importance of including poor women when measuring change and harmonising gender-sensitive indicators.

Who are poor women?
The Task Force report does not define this group, and classic economic definitions which define extreme poverty as living on less than $US1 per day offer only partial explanation. However, gender-sensitive research has broadened the understanding and measurement of poverty from an income/consumption approach to a multidimensional approach. Crawford (see paper, this issue), for instance, provides further clarification on this broader definition of poverty and poor women.

Generally, poor women are less empowered and have reduced opportunities compared to other members of society, and also have limited capacity and ability to control their security (UNIFEM 2002). However, being a woman in a developing country should not necessarily be equated with ‘vulnerable’ or ‘poor’. The use of the term ‘poor women’ must be examined in the light of specific gender relationships and links to poverty. Equally, terms such as ‘poor women’ can mask the various vulnerabilities and realities of different groups of women. The needs of a poor woman living with a disability may be different from a poor woman with HIV/AIDS (Chant 2003).

Why target poor women?
What is clear is that women and men experience poverty differently, both quantitatively (in terms of incidence and severity) and qualitatively (influenced by other contextual factors); this point is elaborated below. Sex disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators inform this understanding (World Bank 2003).

Additionally, gender inequality is greater among the poor than the wealthy (World Bank 2001). The link between improving gender equality and poverty reduction is well established and working with poor women increases opportunities for poverty reduction and livelihood improvement. The following points illustrate the strategic importance of the focus on poor women for the attainment of the MDGs:

• Women are more likely to be poor than men, although the universal claims that 70 per cent of the world’s poor are women and that female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households are now discounted (Quisumbing, Haddad and Pena 1995; Chant 2003; Marcoux 1998).

• Women have a significantly lower share of GDP than men (UNDP 1999). They have a lesser share of income and consumption within the household (DFID 2000). Women earn on average about half of what men earn, because they are concentrated in low-paying, informal and consequently insecure jobs, they earn less for the same work, and they work fewer hours due to their unpaid household labour (UNIFEM 2005; UNDP 2006).

• There is a significant reproductive health gap between poor and wealthy women with poor women on average having children younger, marrying at an earlier age and tending to have larger families (UN 2006b).

Research demonstrates that having many children puts families deeper into poverty, reduces nutritional status of all children in the household and undermines children’s education, especially girls. Fewer children also correlate to higher educational and economic opportunities for women that result in healthier and more prosperous families (UNICEF 2004).

• Compared to men, women have higher rates of HIV/AIDS, more restricted access to education and social and economic assets such as land and property (Pangestu and Sachs 2004).

• Women also have less power in the household, typically with less power over decision making, livelihoods, expenditure and distribution of resources (Sweetman 2002).

• Women who live in poverty are more vulnerable to gender-based violence (UN 2006a).
Working with poor women

With varying degrees of success, World Vision International has mainstreamed gender as a cross-cutting issue. Gender mainstreaming has been pursued through a variety of mechanisms including gender coordinator positions, Gender Self Assessments of World Vision offices, specific gender projects, and incorporation of gender-sensitive measurement into standardised longitudinal studies and research called transformational development indicators (TDIs) with World Vision's partner communities.

As TDIs are part of a new process, only 79 projects have undergone this measurement process with the aim of using this information as a comprehensive benchmark for further contribution studies. In this process, qualitative and quantitative information is generated from the utilisation of gender-sensitive indicators such as enrollment and completion of primary school, and time taken to collect water. Additionally, single sex and mixed focus groups which discuss the roles and responsibilities of boys and girls, men and women within the community are held; topics discussed include decision-making rights and control of assets within the family.

Gender-sensitive indicators

Based on my experience with World Vision, I have identified a number of key considerations that can assist in ensuring that poor women remain in focus when considering gender indicators.

*Indicators need to be transformative:* rather than serving to control the process of change within the community, indicators must capture dimensions of women’s empowerment, be transformative for poor women and contribute towards learning and action (Taylor and Soal 2003). Moser and Moser’s work (2005) has highlighted this issue, and others such as Malhotra et al. (2003) have developed indicators that attempt to capture economic empowerment.

World Vision’s TDI work has indicated that measuring change can be a catalyst for discussion, can inform future activity and drive change. The use of simple gender indicators and gender analysis tools such as the 24 hour clock (which tracks the labour distribution of men and women across 24 hours) and collecting sex disaggregated data has led to recognition in communities about the unequal distribution of workload between sexes and has resulted in changes in behaviour. As a woman in Muteshi, Zambia declared: ‘We have learned about men and that now poverty is going to end’ (James-Sebro 2005:124).

*Poor women must participate:* poor women need to be involved in the establishment and collection of data about gender indicators (Beck 1999). This is vital in ensuring that the measurement system is derived from the reality of poor women and not from the perspective of a donor or international agency (Taylor and Soal 2003). For example, experience from projects in Burundi indicates that poor women defined increased decision-making in the household as being able to lend household utensils without needing approval from their husbands. This nuanced indicator would not have been considered if indicators were established without the participation of poor women.

*Indicators and associated monitoring systems must be simple and time efficient:* set appropriate indicators. Indicators need to be suitable for the level of education or literacy of the men and women with whom we work. We need to ensure that indicators serve the strategic and practical needs poor women face. For example, poor women are often involved politically at a local level through informal politics and grassroots networks. So indicators for improvement of gender equality could also focus on informal structures. And we should choose indicators that adequately capture the process of working towards gender equality as well as the outcome of our work.

*Ownership of the data:* gender indicators can be used to measure inputs and raise awareness of gender concerns, but they also have strategic use in measuring the results of our intervention (Crawford 2006). In the TDI measurement process, the community owns the information gathered by the monitoring and evaluation system and only synthesised reports are available for donors. The gathered information is owned by the community and the partner World Vision office. Measurement and gender indicators need to be packaged appropriately for both the participants and donors. Broader questions remain about how we use the information generated by gender-sensitive indicators across the sector and how much information is required by the industry to be confident that gender equality is improving.

*Balance qualitative and quantitative data:* the Task Force report highlights quantitative gender-sensitive indicators in the seven strategic priority areas as well as highlighting the significant value in tracking qualitative aspects of changes in gender equality. Measuring the power dynamics in households or quality of the education received by girls versus boys is informative and provides another perspective on the progress of gender equality. While there is merit in measuring qualitative aspects of gender equality, there are methodological challenges that need to be addressed, such as common definitions and coding systems, if we as a development sector aim to accurately capture and meta-analyse data and produce information that is statistically significant.

*Targeting work and measurement:* past evaluations of World Vision projects in particular micro-enterprise projects have shown that the ‘poorest of the poor’ have not always been reached (Uotila 2006). We must be confident that we have effectively defined and targeted poor women consistently, as the sub-population of poor women can mask the disadvantages or advantages associated with sub-groups with particular vulnerabilities.
Resources and capacity: to ensure reliability in measuring changes in gender equality, it is evident that significant resources are required to appropriately train community members to accurately monitor and evaluate processes. For example, for World Vision to ensure a significant sample size in measuring TDIs, 700 household surveys and various focus groups per project are required. This amounts to significant training and resources. As a development sector, we need to determine if there are more resource-friendly approaches to measuring gender equality that can be adopted across the sector.

Improving accountability systems: gender-sensitive indicators must form part of our accountability system. However, these accountability systems can often err on the bureaucratic end of the measurement/management spectrum. We must value creativity and flexibility while also honouring the managerial standards incumbent upon us (Taylor and Soal 2003).

Serving sustainability: working to simpler sets of key standards on a smaller number of core aspects of our work is one key to efficiency. But ensuring that communities own the measurement processes and actual outcomes requires that we constantly innovate with community engagement disciplines and regularly adapt them to ensure that they are meaningful and reflect ongoing learning and ownership.

Remember men: we must continue to engage with men and ensure they are part of the dynamic of tracking improvements in gender equality. Without involving men, the power imbalances in social relationships and women’s increased vulnerability to poverty will not be addressed (Baden 2001). World Vision’s experience in conducting gender audits in 25 offices around the world reinforces the need for the involvement of both men and women in the measurement and pursuit of gender equality.

Conclusion

Taylor and Soal (2003:12) summarise the challenges for practitioners when they write that in ‘seeking to understand our impact more deeply through measurement we must generate better questions rather than superficial answers’. We must, they continue, ‘measure our practice in ways that inspire, challenge and make us more conscious, always building on the mundane towards transformation’. The challenge remains to ensure that poor women actively participate both in mainstreaming gender and its measurement in a way that transforms not only poor women but development workers.

Note

1. This paper is the view of the author only and does not necessarily represent the views of World Vision Australia or World Vision International.

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Gender indicators online:
A resource of the South Australian Government

Rhonda Sharp, Hawke Research Institute, University of South Australia, Ray Broomhill and John Spoehr, Australian Institute for Social Research, University of Adelaide

Governments have a patchy record on the development, storage and use of gender disaggregated data. Readily accessible and up-to-date gender disaggregated data is essential for the development of gender indicators to monitor progress on gender equality, facilitating gender analyses of programmes and policies and the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Despite the widespread use of internet web based technologies for accessing and disseminating information, and analysis by policy makers and governments of developed countries, relatively few have availed themselves of the opportunity to develop online gender disaggregated databases. This is particularly so at the state, provincial and local levels of government. In August 2006 the South Australian Minister for the Status of Women launched Gender Indicators Online (GIO), the first web based gender disaggregated database of its kind at the state level in Australia. Moreover the database is exceptionally user friendly and relatively cheap to set up and maintain. As such it provides a viable option for developed and many developing countries. This paper outlines the conceptual framework utilised for the development of GIO and the nature of the resource.

Background

GIO is a collaborative initiative of the Premier’s Council for Women, Office for Women, Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Australian Institute for Social Research at the University of Adelaide. The project arose out of a review of the Office for Women’s 2004 publication Statistical profile of women in South Australia undertaken by researchers at the Australian Institute for Social Research, University of Adelaide and the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies, University of South Australia. The resultant report, ‘Gender data online — the development of a gender disaggregated data management resource’ (Spoehr, Sharp, Broomhill, Martin and Medlin 2004) outlined a rationale, framework and series of indicators for the establishment of GIO.

Why develop gender indicators?

A range of arguments appear in the literature in support of the desirability and value of developing gender indicators. Gender indicators are widely recognised as important in informing the development and evaluation of policies and programmes designed to achieve greater gender equality. Policies that do not recognise the different and unequal position of women in society tend to perpetuate and exacerbate gender inequalities. Gender statistics and indicators therefore have an essential role in the elimination of gender blindness in the formulation of policies (Hedman, Perucci and Sundström 1996:41). Gender indicators enable an assessment of where we are now
Gender indicators

Gender-sensitive indicators demonstrate changes in gender relations in a given society over a period of time. They are a tool to assess the progress of a particular development intervention towards achieving gender equality. Gender indicators can be quantitative or qualitative benchmarks used for measuring or assessing the achievement of objectives or results. They can assume the form of numbers, facts, opinions, or perceptions that illustrate a specific condition or situation and provide a means of measuring changes in that situation or condition over time.

The international literature identifies a wide range of possible gender indicators. For example, the Irish Government’s discussion document on gender indicators (Breitenbach and Galligan 2004) groups the options for developing gender equality indicators as:

- Gender disaggregated statistics across a range of policy areas. These may be compiled for separate areas of policy, or combined as a compendium. Such data provides a description of the position of women and men in relation to specific areas of policy, though it does not measure performance in itself. It can also be used to raise awareness of the extent of gender inequalities.

- Performance indicators which measure success in achieving specific goals and targets. Such indicators seek to measure the success of specific policy measures and should be an integral part of policy making. Gender disaggregated statistics are likely to inform the development of such performance measures.

- High level composite indicators. These indicators are formed by bringing together data from a range of areas into a single combined index, where such
Gender analysis
The production of gender statistics requires more than all official data being sex disaggregated. It also requires that 'concepts and methods used in data collection and presentation adequately reflect gender issues in society' (Hedman, Perucci and Sundström 1996:42). Therefore a coherent and sophisticated gender analysis is required in order to develop and utilise gender indicators effectively.

Gender-based analysis is about collecting reliable gender-disaggregated information about the policy area under study, and understanding gender trends in the economy that might have an impact on a proposed policy, program or piece of legislation. It allows us to construct a better picture of the effects of a policy by looking at its potential impact on women and men. It is used to better inform decision-making at the outset to save time and money later.

Gender analysis is necessary to frame key policy question about women and men's roles and relations. The aim of such analysis is to formulate and develop interventions that are better targeted to meet both women's and men's needs and constraints.

Gender mainstreaming
The development of gender indicators is an essential and integral component of a strategy of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming aims to make gender equality a 'central part of all development interventions, including analyses, policy advice, advocacy, legislation, research and the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects' (FAO 2001:1).

Similarly, others have argued that gender mainstreaming has become the most important development in the conceptual framework within which gender equality policies are now being pursued:

Mainstreaming is a relatively new approach to policy making in which equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices are integrated into the every day work of government and other public bodies from the outset, involving 'every day' policy actors in addition to equality specialists. It is a long-term strategy to frame policies in terms of the realities of people's daily lives, and to change organisational cultures and structures accordingly. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to create a fairer society (Mackay and Bilton 2003:2).

Gender Indicators Online
The report's recommendation that GIO be developed was taken up by the South Australian Premier's Council for Women. The Council brokered a collaborative arrangement for the project involving the Office for Women and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, with the Australian Institute for Social Research (AISR) under the leadership of John Spoehr being contracted to establish and maintain the website.

In developing the South Australian GIO website a number of requirements were sought by the Office for Women and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. These included:

- the need to recognise that the target audience of policy makers within government were often 'time poor', requiring the site to provide rapid access to current gender indicators including tables, figures and related spreadsheets. This material needed to be easily downloadable in Excel format for use in reports, briefings and cabinet submissions;
- the site had to be usable without the necessity for training; and
- the site had to be developed within a modest budget, prohibiting the purchase of commercially available web based database software that entails significant licensing costs.

A review of various web based delivery mechanisms was undertaken by AISR to identify an appropriate method of online delivery for GIO. Given the resources available and the need to ensure ease of use, the Institute developed an innovative hierarchical 'content management' system using the thematic indicator structure identified below. A simple select and click system with drop down menus was developed to provide access to indicators. This is a cost effective alternative to sites that utilise web accessible databases which enable real time calculation and manipulation of data. While such a system is attractive it can be cost prohibitive and it is normally more complex and time consuming to use.

The gender indicators framework for GIO includes nine broad indicators themes and a wide range of sub themes containing numerous indicators. The broad themes are:

- crime and justice;
- education and training;
- employment;
- informal networks and community engagement;
- health;
- income;
- leadership and decision making;
- population and demographics; and
- recreation and leisure.
Tables and graphs are provided for most indicators. An excel spreadsheet containing indicator data is also provided for downloading. This is seen as important by policy makers who wish to make adjustments to the data. An additional feature is the dynamic excel worksheets provided for selected indicators. These enable spatial and temporal comparisons to be easily made, automating changes to tables and figures as different geographical areas or time periods are chosen. They also serve to increase the number of gender indicators.

The GIO site has a number of other features including:

• an overview of the rationale for using gender disaggregated data and indicators;
• access to a database of gender related publications drawn from the South Australian Policy Online (www.sapo.edu.au);
• latest news on gender indicator data releases and reports; and
• links to a wide range of data available on other sites.

The indicator content of GIO will be significantly expanded over the next few years as additional resources become available to support this work. A wider range of indicators and dynamic excel worksheets will be incorporated. A number of additional features will be added including a geographical information systems mapping tool. The GIO website can be accessed at: www.aisr.adelaide.edu.au/gio

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Women's empowerment in Timor-Leste: A popular education approach

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This paper arises from research undertaken in Timor-Leste over the past two years, investigating how popular education contributes to post-conflict peace building in Timor-Leste (Durnan 2006).

My focus is on the process of mobilising and empowering Timorese women for post-conflict transformation. The vast majority of these women live a traditional subsistence farming lifestyle, support several children, are often the head of the household, are illiterate and have experienced little, if any, primary schooling. Almost all were subjected to violence under the Indonesian military rule.

I argue that popular education, which is a particular approach to adult education, is an effective model for engaging most of these women on significant and complex issues of political and social development in Timor-Leste where peace, security and democracy remains fragile.

The popular education approach

The Timorese NGO Fokupers (Women's Communication Forum) plays a key role in the Timorese women's movement, which has its roots in the popular education work of Rosa 'Muki' Bonaparte, a FRETILIN leader of the mid-1970s. In 1974, Muki set up Organizaca de Mulher Timor (OPMT; Popular Women's Organisation of Timor-Leste) to struggle for the equal rights and status of Timorese women as part of FRETILIN's movement for decolonisation and national independence (Hill 2002).

Fokupers was established in 1997 to build upon the work of OPMT, working with those who had resisted political and domestic violence as well as social inequality. Much of Fokupers' work since 2001 has focused on education and mobilisation, assisting women to examine their current context and social structure, tell and reflect upon their histories, and to work collectively to resolve personal, family and community issues and conflicts. This involves assisting women to analyse and challenge traditional and colonial patriarchy. In other words, Fokupers is working with women for social and political transformation.

To do this work, Fokupers adopted a popular education approach. Fokupers, along with around 35 other Timorese NGOs and community based organizations, are members of Dai Popular, the Timorese popular education network. This network has revived the Timorese popular education tradition championed by national independence leaders such as Rosa Muki, Vincente Sa'he and others from 1974-1978 as a critical strategy in the national liberation movement.

Today Dai Popular defines popular education as:

...more than simple methods of teaching and learning — it depends on a political analysis of power and a commitment to equality and democratic process ... a collective process that seeks to give voice to those who have been silenced, to empower those who have been disempowered, and to bring about liberation, on both personal and societal levels. Liberation grows out of social awareness, community organizing, creative action, self-reliance, the use of local resources and culture, and a persistent commitment to human dignity (Lao Hamutuk 2002).

Their concept of popular education derives from Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire's work in South America and Portuguese Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. Jane Thompson, the British feminist popular educator, describes Freire's approach as one which:

...is based on asking questions about the root causes of social and political problems rather than focusing on the symptoms — in order to plan strategies to address them. According to Freire, oppressed people need ... to be able to critically assess the kinds of ideas, contexts and relationships which are usually 'taken for granted' or accepted as inevitable (Thompson n.d.:2).

Popular education in practice: Timor-Leste

With assistance from international agencies, the Dai Popular network has participated in exchanges and professional development programmes aimed at deepening understandings of the theory and practice of popular education and examining ways of applying it to the Timorese context.

For example, Fokupers staff with support from a Malaysian NGO embarked on an intensive, months-long training programme for community organisers to develop and evaluate their popular education practice with women in sasos (villages). As a result of this process, in 2003 Fokupers changed the way they worked. For example, the community organisers now live in the villages, embed their gender awareness work within locally identified issues, work from village women's houses instead of a Fokupers office, include men in their work, and focus efforts on a limited number of villages where a community commitment exists in order to achieve sustainable outcomes.
Fokupers' commitment to and success with popular education as an effective approach with women at village level began in 2001. At this time, Oxfam engaged the internationally renowned Indonesian popular educator Mansoer Fakih to deliver a programme for gender transformation. The aim was to enable Timorese women to have effective input into the national campaign for constitutional development. Fokupers, as one of the lead agencies in this campaign, enrolled for the Oxfam programme.

It was a two-phase project which involved getting gender issues on the election platforms of Constituent Assembly candidates and then following the election, ensuring that gender issues were incorporated into the draft Constitution. A key part of the project was a seven-day workshop led by Fakih involving representatives from eight of Timor-Leste's 13 districts (Rosa 2002:4).

The workshop comprised two parts. The first considered the concepts of gender, identifying the issues of particular concern to Timorese women, and then examined international examples of women's charters and rights in Constitutions, including that of South Africa. The second part was about building women's capacity to advocate for gender issues in the constitution process, in particular by learning about advocacy and lobbying strategies. Some of the things the women learned were community mobilising and alliance building, using popular and community media ('media socialisation') and producing resources such as posters, leaflets and T-shirts. Fakih modeled the popular education approach while teaching the participants how to apply the approach to their own lives (Fakih 2001).

Charter of women's rights
The workshop produced a draft 'Women's Charter of Rights', consisting of ten articles including social, cultural, economic, political and civil rights, which was eventually used in the campaign over the following months (Rosa 2002:5). The success of the campaign, to which this workshop made a significant contribution, was reflected in the final outcomes. In the Constituent Assembly election, 30 per cent of candidates were women and 26 per cent of those elected to the Assembly were women, of whom 17 were from FRETILIN, the party which formed the Government (Retboll 2002:7-8). The Constitution adopted by the Assembly included nine of the ten points in the Women's Charter of Rights. While women played a crucial and courageous role in the independence movement at all levels during the Indonesian occupation, it is only as a result of this campaign that their equal status was recognised legally. This has ensured that women will play a substantial role in the country's future decision-making process.

The work of Fokupers and OPNT are examples of the kind of adult education needed if post-conflict nation building is to include the most marginalised and impoverished. Popular educators in Timor-Leste reject not only the traditional classic or deficit model of education, but they oppose the 'elite formation' which they argue will occur or be strengthened if the focus is exclusively on the formal education system and, in particular, the school system.
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Women’s rights and regional regulations in provincial Indonesia

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Introduction

Since the implementation of Indonesia’s regional autonomy in 2001, 34 regional regulations (Perda) have been documented and many more are in the process of being enforced. As a consequence, for the first time since Indonesia’s independence in 1945, provincial level governments have the autonomy to regulate laws in their own province, and the enforcement of many of these regulations have been aimed at regulating behaviour and implicitly reinforcing syariah law.

Regional regulations have been implemented in Pamekasan-Madura and Jember (East Java); in Kerawang, Cianjur, Tasikmalaya, Garut, Indramayu and Tangerang (West Java); in Banten; in West Nusa Tenggara in Sumbawa; in Bengkulu in Sido Urip village; in Solok and Padang (West Sumatra); in Bulukumba, Enrengkang, Maros, Gowa and Takalar (South Sulawesi); in Riau and Aceh.

Although the syariah laws vary from place to place, most relate to the enforcement of Muslim attire for women, restrictions on women being outdoors after hours unless accompanied by nearest kin, restrictions on gambling, alcohol, prostitution, illicit drugs use, promotion of Quranic literacy, and laws aimed at reducing violence against women and children. Although some of these acts are clearly criminal, and others may help curb domestic violence, the implementation of syariah law has strong implications for the women’s movement in Indonesia. Thus these regional regulations can be seen as a set-back to the progress and developments of gender equity in Indonesia.

Development of regional regulations

Indonesia has the world’s largest Moslem population, and 88 per cent of Indonesians adhere to Islam. Soon after Indonesia’s democratic political environment flourished after the fall of Soeharto in 1998 and the implementation of the regional autonomy law in 2001, many regions of Indonesia started to implement regulations based on syariah law.

The implementation of the regional syariah laws disadvantages women in many ways and can be seen as a set-back to achievement of the MDGs. For example, 11 women in Tangerang-West Java were arrested and brought to a regional court under charges of being commercial sex workers (CSW).

Some of these women were arrested while drinking ice tea on the street at 10 pm; another woman was arrested while she was waiting for public transport after returning from work; one was arrested for being alone in a hotel despite her protestations that she was waiting for her husband to return from buying food.

The clause in the Tangerang regional regulation used to arrest these women states:

Any person whose attitude or behaviour is suspicious can be assumed to be a CSW, a person cannot loiter around the streets, sports field, boarding house, hostel, hotel, dormitory, community houses, rented houses, coffee stalls, entertainment places, entertainment buildings, on street corners, alleys or other places in rural areas (Soekirno and Pambudy 2006).

Thus any women can be mistakenly arrested because the regional police assume that she is a CSW. The following case study sheds more light on one of these cases:

Lilis Lindawati, 36, mother of two, two months pregnant, works as a waitress in a restaurant. She was captured by the Tangerang authorities who mistook her for a CSW while she was waiting for local public transport to take her home after finishing work at 10 pm. After a night’s stay in jail, she appeared before the court the next day and was charged with prostitution and fined Rp300,000 (A$44). Because she could not pay the fine she was jailed for three days. The prosecution was carried out in public so the community could witness the court process ...

Some of these women were arrested while drinking ice tea on the street at 10 pm; another woman was arrested while she was waiting for public transport after returning from work; one was arrested for being alone in a hotel despite her protestations that she was waiting for her husband to return from buying food.

Enforcement of syariah law in some districts in South Sulawesi has developed so rapidly that it regulates daily clothing for women requiring the use of a head scarf as well as a long skirt. In Cianjur-West Java, women are asked to wear Muslim-style clothes to work (Mohammad, Anthony and Rasyid 2006). In South Sulawesi’s provincial capital Makasar, Mayor Ilham Arif Siradjuddin issued a regulation on 28 June, 2006 requiring all female high school students in public and private schools to wear long skirts. He told the Jakarta Post (2006) this was partly to 'improve their morality and behaviour', and prevent sexual harassment.
It is clear here that female students are seen as sexual objects that can invite sexual harassment if they do not cover their legs. Female students are also viewed here as the cause of sexual harassment that might arise because of their morality and the way they behave. Prospective perpetrators are not regulated. It is difficult to promote gender-sensitive policy and programmes when those in power understand neither gender issues nor how to establish policies and programmes that do not stigmatise women.

Similar regulations are found elsewhere in Indonesia. In Taikmalaya-West Java, for example, where female students at elementary school and secondary schools, along with those in other training institutions and universities, have to wear Muslim clothing. In Cianjur, also in West Java, syariah law is being disseminated through religious sermons that define the ideal family as consisting of a husband who is the head of the household and a wife who is the mother of the household, who must ask for her husband’s permission whenever she wants to leave the house (Soekirno and Pambudy 2006).

In another documented case, this time in Aceh on 2 October 1999, a group of unidentified masked men stopped a bus carrying women workers. The women were made to get off the bus, and the men cut off their hair by force because they said the women had dared to go out without covering their hair (Serambi Indonesia 1999, cited in Noerdin 2002:179). Noerdin argues that the implementation of regional autonomy has inflamed the development of local customary law and syariah law that marginalises many women in Indonesia.

Social restrictions
In accordance with the implementation of regional syariah law, members of Indonesia’s parliament in 2006 drafted the Anti Pornography and Porn Action Law (APPL) apparently aimed at curbing the proliferation of entertainment, television shows and publications regarded by many in the community as pornography. There is no entertainment ratings system in place in Indonesia, thus no warning in place on television programmes intended for adult viewers only, no restrictions on children attending screenings of adult films; nor is a patron’s age questioned when entering night clubs, discothèques, bars and other adult entertainment venues. Children under eighteen, therefore, can easily have access to adult entertainment. The same also applies to buying cigarettes, alcohol and pornographic magazines.

The draft APPL may also have been triggered by the rapid development of regional regulations based of syariah law. The content of the draft APPL has attracted heated discussion within and among Muslim organisations, the community and members of the parliament, and is yet to be passed.

Pornography is defined in the draft APPL as any media content or other communication medium that prepares to enact any idea that exploits sexuality, pornography and or erotica (Draft APPL Section 1 No.1). Pornography is defined as any behaviour that exploits sexuality, pornography and/or erotica (Draft APPL Section 1 No.2). The draft APPL consists of nine sections and aims to protect human rights and help form a noble community that adheres to God’s will. The draft law also aims to protect and educate the community on moral issues.

Major issues covered in the draft law include regulations enforcing the covering of body parts that can stimulate sexual arousal, prohibiting nudity, erotic dancing and movement, kissing on the lips, masturbation, heterosexual intercourse, homosexual intercourse, necrophilia, bestiality, orgies and sex shows. It could be argued that the draft law is not needed as it overlaps with existing law such as the Criminal Code Law, Media Release Law, Press Law and Motion Picture Law.

Despite the wide debate, a majority of the Indonesian parliament (82 per cent) have indicated that they want the draft law to be passed (Kompas 2006). Those members of parliament who do not agree point out that the draft law is not in accordance with the 1945 Law which founded the Indonesian State, where there is no reference to adherence to syariah law. Regional regulations inspired by syariah law may also violate national legislation such as Law No. 32/2004 on regional governance which states that religion is not under the jurisdiction of a regional governance authority (Gatra 2006).

If the draft APPL is passed and more regional regulations are implemented, Indonesian women who work nights and early mornings such as nurses, waitresses, sellers, female entertainers, female migrant workers, women working in salons and CSWs, would need to be accompanied by a relative. The financial losses that families could incur if this discouraged women from working in these occupations needs to be considered. Even though a gender wage gap (Utomo 2005a) and the breadwinner model still strongly persists (Utomo 2005b), many Indonesian families depend on money brought home by women as the only source of income or as a top-up of the husband’s income.

Pro-empowerment policies and programmes
Gender equity in Indonesia took great strides after the fall of Soeharto with significant contributions attributed to the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and head of the National Coordinating Board of Family Planning (BKKBN) Khofifah Indar Parawansa, who was appointed in 1999. Her contributions enabled significant changes in the course of policies and programmes on gender equity and women’s empowerment, most visibly perhaps in the changing of the ministry’s name from the Ministry for the Role of Women to State Ministry of Women’s Empowerment to reflect the state’s role in promoting women’s rights and gender issues.
Other landmark reforms instituted under Parawansa's leadership include the passing of the Presidential Instruction on Gender Mainstreaming in 1999/2000; the establishment of mechanisms within the Central Bureau of Statistics for sex-disaggregated data; the establishment of special police investigation rooms and women's crisis centers to deal with cases of violence against women; and the setting of a 30 per cent quota for women in the top two echelons of the state positions and the legislative (Parawansa 2002). Her accomplishments also inspired the inclusion of a statement within the 2000-2004 National Development Plan of the importance of women's empowerment and the implementation of gender budgeting in the national project development agenda.

It was during this peak of political democracy that NGOs working on women's legal status, women's rights, women reproductive health issues, violence against women and female migrant workers blossomed. Indonesia is a signatory to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, thus equity for women is guaranteed by law. Indonesia has also signed all of the UN treaties on women's legal status, women's rights, women and development, and the Beijing Platform of Action. Since the fall of Soeharto, much progress has been achieved in Indonesia's commitment to women's rights and development. Indonesia is a signatory to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and the setting of a 30 per cent quota for women in the top two echelons of the state positions and the legislative (Parawansa 2002). Her accomplishments also inspired the inclusion of a statement within the 2000-2004 National Development Plan of the important of women's empowerment and the implementation of gender budgeting in the national project development agenda. The 1994 ICPD and the Beijing Platform of Actions have been adopted and implemented in Indonesia. The establishment of the Law 23/2004 on the abolishment of domestic violence has proven its effectiveness. Since it was implemented, NGOs working on women's legal issues, such as Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan (Women's Legal Aid Group) and Mitra Perempuan (Partners of Women) have reported an increase in reporting and filing of cases of violence against women (Pambudy and Hartiningsih 2006).

**Conclusion**

Since the fall of Soeharto, much progress has been achieved in regards to laws, policies and programmes on gender equity and gender empowerment in Indonesia. The democratic political environment with the strong leadership of many Indonesian women in positions of power in the bureaucracy, legislative and at grassroots level, as well as the donor agencies, has raised national awareness of the importance of gender issues. Decentralisation has ushered in negative impacts in the establishment of regional regulations based on *syariah* law that limit women's movement and activities in the public domain. The implementation of these regulations also emphasises the importance of domestication for Indonesian women, stereotyping the domestication of women roles and stigmatising female bodies as the cause of sexual arousal or sexual harassment. The implementation of such regional regulations, along with the possible implementation of the draft APPL, represents a set-back to the progress that has been achieved with regard to gender empowerment and gender equity in Indonesia.

**Note**

1. *Perda* is the abbreviation of *Peraturan Daerah*, which literally means regional regulations. In 1999 the Indonesian Government established a law on regional autonomy (No. 22/1999).

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Tertiary e-education: Is it feasible for Ni Vanuatu women?

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Introduction

Providing women with access to education at all levels is critical to advancing the status of women. The advantages of educating women are internationally well recognised. Education is essential to achieving gender equity and the empowerment of women (Kirk and Garrow 2004). The target of MDG3 states: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels of education no later than 2015 (World Bank Group 2005).

As researchers such as Kirk and Garrow (2004:1) have pointed out:

education enables girls and women to better understand and take care of their own reproductive health, better protect themselves against HIV/AIDS and raise healthier children who then also go to school. It also enables them to contribute to the economic security of their family, community and society.

In 2002, the Ministry of Education in Vanuatu undertook a gender analysis of the education sector in Vanuatu. Among other disparities, the analysis found that fewer women than men applied for tertiary scholarships at the ratio of 1:3. When women did apply, they were proportionally awarded scholarships (Strachan 2004). The reluctance of some women to apply for scholarships can be attributed to the social disruption study can cause to their lives: many have family responsibilities, including children, or are in paid employment; some families do not encourage female family members to go on to tertiary study as they either fear for their safety when overseas or they do not prioritise women's education (Strachan, Samuel and Takaro: under review). Whatever the reason, the end result is an under-representation of women in tertiary education.

E- or electronic education is a relatively new form of distance education. Many reputable tertiary providers around the world offer qualifications that can either be partly or fully studied online and allows students to study at a time of the day that suits them. An online student can 'talk' to other students enrolled in their course and the online teacher in a format similar to email. Assignments are submitted via the Internet. Essential reading materials are either posted online and/or mailed to the student.

The feasibility study outlined in this paper investigated whether or not e-education for Ni Vanuatu women at tertiary level was technically, economically and socially feasible. The study also examined three different ways women could be provided with greater access to online tertiary education: through home-based study, by establishing a new and separate facility for women, or by expanding existing facilities. The study found the take-up of one method will depend upon a number of factors; cost is only one of factor.

Information for the study was gathered in Vanuatu using interviews, written responses, estimates and public domain information. Interviews were carried out in English, French, the local language Bislama, or a combination of these languages with staff from local tertiary providers, local businesses, government departments, NGOs, bilateral donors and students studying online.

What follows is a break-down of the findings of the viability of the three different e-education study options.

Home-based study

Students can study online from home if they have the necessary equipment (a computer with enough capacity) and Internet access. As long as the tertiary provider accepts their enrolment and they pay the required fees, a student can study independently of any scholarship programme; some students in Vanuatu already do this. However, for many Ni Vanuatu this is seldom an option because the cost of studying independently is very high (tertiary fees, hardware and software and internet access).

Another online study option, however, could be for scholarships to be awarded to students who study from home. The scholarship could pay for a laptop plus the relevant software, fees, Internet access, a living allowance and other associated costs such as printing. The advantages of studying from home include:

- no travel, which is both cost and time saving;
- unlimited access to a computer; and
- study hours not limited by the opening hours of an online facility.

However, there are a number of problems with this option, these include:

- laptops are more susceptible to breakdown;
- it is more difficult to monitor a student's progress;
- there may not be a dedicated study space in the home;
- interruptions and distractions can be caused by the demands of family life; and

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it may be difficult to monitor the downloading of inappropriate material such as movies, music and pornography that has the potential to be distracting and costly.

Even though studying from home would be the cheapest option, it is because of the above difficulties that offering scholarships for study online at home is not recommended yet. That does not mean that this could not be a future option, but the outlined difficulties would need to be overcome.

Providing a women-only facility
Setting up a dedicated facility for women may be considered discriminatory as it disadvantages men. Vanuatu is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), however, and Article 4 of CEDAW allows for temporary special measures for women to be implemented until equality with men has been reached. More men than women in Vanuatu have and are receiving tertiary education and more men have already obtained a tertiary qualification. The situation is improving, but until there are equal numbers of men and women graduates then taking special measures to increase the number of women accessing tertiary education is not discriminatory.

In this feasibility study the costs of providing a women-only facility were based on providing permanent Internet access for 12 computers networked to a laser printer. It included utilities, insurance, security, software, hardware, salaries, telephone, Internet access, computer literacy training, accommodation, allowance, travel and international fees for 12 students (based on Australian and New Zealand tertiary fees for international students).

It is important to stress that the cost estimates are indicative only for cost comparisons between study overseas, at home, within a dedicated facility, and using existing facilities. The final cost of a dedicated facility will depend upon a number of factors such as whether an online facility for women receives Ministry of Education approval to be classified as an educational organisation. If it does, then costs will be reduced.

Reductions on other costs, such as the Internet, are also possible. As discounts are negotiable on a case-by-case basis, the fixed commercial Internet access rate, which is a package that best suits the needs of an online facility, is quoted in this study.

The total set-up cost is estimated at $A68,567. This calculation did not allow for any cost recovery. To cater for both full-time and part-time students, the costs are based on the facility being open 16 hours per day for six days a week, 12 months of the year as this would allow for students to use the facility for online courses offered during summer and winter schools. The costs include salaries of two full-time administrators and 24 hour security, but do not include costs for student support services. In addition, on-going costs are calculated at $A278,475 per annum.

Using existing facilities
Vanuatu has a number of ICT facilities available that could be used for e-education. These include both private businesses and educational organisations such as Agence Universitaire de la Francophone and the University of the South Pacific. There were wide differences in the amounts each would charge for the use of their services. But even when the most expensive option was factored in it was cheaper than establishing and using a dedicated facility.

The comparative costs for 12 women studying online using an existing facility (a local business) is $A661,352, which is around half the cost of studying in New Zealand or Australia ($1,270,000) for three years. Using a dedicated facility for women ($A827,626) is 65 per cent of the cost of studying face-to-face in either Australia or New Zealand. These calculations do not include medical costs for students resident in Vanuatu. When students pay fees at either a New Zealand or Australian university this includes free access to the university medical services. Again, it is important to stress that these costs are only estimates and only indicate approximate cost differences.

Although home-based study would be the cheapest option there are many difficulties that need to be overcome. Using existing facilities is cost effective and the most immediately available. Establishing a dedicated tertiary e-education facility could be a medium- to long-term strategy and has the advantage of providing women with a safe learning environment where they don't have to compete with males for computer access. All three options are considerably cheaper than sending students overseas to study.

Discussion

Technical feasibility
Vanuatu currently has the technical capability to offer online tertiary education in either Port Vila or Luganville, but not in the outer islands. Technical support, hardware and software and computer literacy courses are available. Computer literacy courses help familiarise students with computers and the Internet which is particularly important for students who have had little computer experience.

Internet speed is a problem in Vanuatu and can be very slow especially at peak usage times, which can be very frustrating when people have limited time and assignment deadlines to meet. Once cheaper and more reliable telephone and possibly wireless Internet services are provided to more outer islands, it is feasible that women will be able to access tertiary study online from their home island.
The present computer laboratory capacity of existing tertiary education providers may struggle to provide the necessary access to computers if the number of students studying online increases dramatically. More computers would be needed and opening hours extended to ensure adequate access for online students. These problems could be overcome by using more than one facility, including private businesses and/or by establishing a dedicated facility.

**Economic feasibility**

Studying online is cost effective. The cheapest option would be for students to study from home, once outlined difficulties are overcome. Using existing facilities avoids many of the costs associated with establishing a new facility and is more sustainable. Establishing a dedicated e-education facility for women is also cost effective when compared to the cost of sending students overseas to study.

If a woman is not awarded a scholarship, then online study may be a more affordable option for her. If able to pay the fees, she can take one or two courses a year while resident in Vanuatu and over time build up credit towards a tertiary qualification.

If studying online means vast reductions in the cost of tertiary study, more scholarship places could be offered at no additional cost to the donor, including scholarships for part-time study. This potentially gives more women access to tertiary education. At present, there are so few scholarships available that many very able women and men are unable to access tertiary education.

By keeping more students in Vanuatu more money is put into the local economy for services such as transport, food, accommodation, technical support, provision of ICT equipment and furniture, security, purchasing the use of existing facilities and computer literacy courses. If a separate facility was established then some employment opportunities would also be provided. In addition, if the number of scholarships provided for online students is increased, then support for local providers of tertiary education is also increased.

**Social feasibility**

Online tertiary education will not suit all women and there are cultural and social benefits that accrue from living and studying in another country. E-education particularly suits those women who have family, work or other responsibilities and are not able to travel overseas to study. If online education was an option, there could well be an increase in scholarship applications from women, especially if donors are prepared to offer scholarships for part-time study. When students study in-country the social disruption is less and families may be more willing to support a scholarship application.

There are a number of social benefits for women studying online. E-education is flexible and particularly suitable for people who are in paid employment or who have family responsibilities.

As the Internet becomes more available throughout Vanuatu, it is possible that women will be able to study on their home islands. This could reduce the social disruption that can occur when women have to leave their families to study overseas. However, as yet this is not an option as there are no publicly available Internet facilities outside the main population centres, and the costs of provision are very high.

Studying online can help develop excellent study habits. Online students have to be disciplined and organised. Accessing online study at a special facility can also be advantageous as the distractions and interruptions that are part of family life are avoided. Also, some research indicates that males can dominate the use of computers in a computer laboratory situation (Crow 1997/1998). Females find it difficult to get equal access time and to ask males to vacate a computer so they can use it. Having a dedicated facility for women would avoid this situation and would also help to reduce study isolation. Because studying online can be socially isolating, support systems will be needed so students receive support and help when needed.

**Conclusion**

E-education as a method of increasing women's access to tertiary education in Vanuatu is technically feasible and makes economic and social sense. For it to be successful, however, a coordinated policy approach is necessary and stakeholders need to work together. Donors need to come on board and dedicate some scholarship programmes (including scholarships for part-time study) to include more scholarships for e-education the programmes can start immediately; there would be no waiting for a special facility for women to be established.

Donors have shown some willingness to sponsor online courses and programmes can be offered online but these need investigating for quality as there are many providers of online programmes and the quality of their delivery and content will vary; this could be overcome by using tertiary providers that already have donor approval. The online study providers also need ongoing monitoring to ensure they meet required standards. The range of course options also needs to be promoted so those wishing to apply for scholarships know what is available.
Studying online while resident, and maybe also in paid employment, in Vanuatu has many advantages. Some courses encourage international students to use their own context as a basis for assignment work, and this is much easier when the student is still living within that context. This also means that assignment work will be more contextually relevant and useful, and this is not always possible when students are resident in another country.

What are the wider implications of this study? Firstly, donors need to be brought on board so the advantages of e-education for some women (and men) can be translated into more scholarships. Secondly, other Pacific countries who are part of NZAID’s and AusAID’s scholarship programme may also benefit from the increased opportunities that e-education can offer. The potential for e-education to deliver a more socially just scholarship programme is not yet being realised.

References
Symposium report and recommendations

IWDA symposium on the harmonisation of gender indicators

June 15-16, 2006 Canberra, Australia

Background
The symposium on the harmonisation of gender indicators brought together 90 participants from diverse institutions including NGOs, government bodies, private consulting firms, academics and gender specialists to discuss Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3), 'To promote gender equity and empower women'. Dialogue centred around seven priority areas, 12 indicators and three sub-populations identified by the UN Millennium Project’s Task Force Report on Education and Gender Equality, which was co-chaired by Geeta Rao Gupta. Gupta was keynote speaker and facilitator of this symposium.

Indicators for tracking progress on strategic priorities to promote gender equality and empower women, as proposed by the UN Millennium Task Force on Gender Equality:

Education
- the ratio of female to male gross enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education; and
- the ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied; and
- adolescent fertility rate.

Infrastructure
- hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel.

Property rights
- land ownership by male, female, or jointly held; and
- housing title, disaggregated by male, female, or jointly held.

Employment
- share of women in employment, both wage and self-employment, by type; and
- gender gaps in earnings in wage and self-employment.

Participation in national parliaments and local government bodies
- percentage of seats held by women in national parliament.
Cross-cutting themes

Three sub-populations of women the taskforce recommends focusing on if poverty is to be reduced:

- poor women in the poorest countries and in countries where poverty remains significant;
- adolescents, who constitute two-thirds of the population in the poorest countries and the largest cohort of adolescents in the world's history; and
- women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.

The symposium was hosted by International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA), with advice and support from the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) gender equity working group. The purpose of the symposium was to identity ways to fill the gap between gender policy commitments and actions taken, in view of the growing demand for accountability and results, and coinciding with the recent Australian White Paper that placed gender as an overarching principle, and recognised the need to operationalise a new gender policy. The work of participants over the two day symposium resulted in a variety of insights regarding gender-specific indicators that act as accountability mechanisms, measuring the impact of gender mainstreaming. These include:

1. Criteria for selecting indicators should be simple; few in number for each priority; policy relevant; comparable; affordable and appropriate to context.
2. Indicators should be utilised at national, project and institutional levels.
3. The process of collection and interpretation of data should always consider the question 'to what end?', considering context and ensuring the process itself is not exploitative or puts women at risk.
4. The need to move beyond sex disaggregation to account for ethnicity, caste, age, disability, race, religion, sexual preference, and so on.
5. Care should be taken in the interpretation and the storage of data.

Key recommendations

1. Form a working group to consider the recommendations and implement high priorities, with a subgroup to develop training modules. This could be formed from an extensive of the ACFID gender equity working group to include wider sector members.
2. Recognise the value of mandates in ensuring gender is included, and explore ways of making performance on gender a milestone for payments in contracts.
3. Use the Gender Action Plan (GAP) framework, as outlined by the Asia Development Bank (see Hunt and Lateef paper, this issue).
4. Request ACFID monitor gender mainstreaming within its member organisations and prepare training modules on gender mainstreaming and working with gender indicators.
5. Aim for all organisations to conduct periodic gender audits and address the issues which emerge, including conducting additional training. Share resources, so smaller in-country NGOs also benefit from learnings.
6. Build the capacity of women in the Pacific and strengthen women’s organisations working in gender indicators and statistics, such as the Pacific Women’s Bureau.
7. Seek university linkage grants to explore issues relevant to taking work on indicators forward — eg, methodologies for pooling data, research and review organisations and practices in terms of gender.
8. Seek agreement within the sector on issues of indicators including sex disaggregated data by age.

Strategic priorities

• Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education;
• Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights;
• Invest in infrastructure to reduce women’s and girls’ time burdens;
• Guarantee women’s and girls’ property and inheritance rights;
• Eliminate gender inequality in employment;
• Increase women’s share of seats in national parliaments and local government bodies; and
• Combat violence against girls and women.

Criteria for selecting indicators

• Simplicity;
• Few in number for each priority;
• Policy relevance;
• Comparability;
• Affordability; and
• Appropriate to context.

Workshop insights

• Need for clarity of concept and goal to select appropriate indicator;
• Importance of process in determining appropriate indicators — poor women at the centre;
• Always asking — to what end?
• Care in interpretation of data;
• Context is all;
• Need to move beyond sex disaggregation to account for ethnicity, caste, disability, race, religion, sexual preference, and so on;
• Need for sensitivity in defining research focus and gathering data to ensure process itself is not exploitative or puts women at risk for introducing new gender practices;
• Post-conflict provides a window of opportunity and risk;
• Need to expand our interest in adolescents beyond sexual and reproductive health;
• Indicators can be transformative — if done right, research itself can be empowering;
• Developmental approach to this as everything else; work from where we are; and
• What happens to the data, how is it stored and how is it accessed.

Ways forward
• Form a working group to consider recommendations, prioritise and action high priorities;
• Form subgroup to develop training modules so that pilot training can be held before 2007;
• Seek AusAID funding for same;
• Ensure training contextualised in real case studies of successful gender action plans and utilisation of indicators;
• Feed into YWCA young women’s conference in Melbourne in 2007;
• Design advocacy and media strategies around MDGs, highlighting positive results of having gender indicators built in to work;
• Working group to include specific gender indicators in land mobilisation programmes in the Pacific;
• Develop indicators at a project level with partners in partner countries;
• Explore ways of making performance on gender a milestone for payments in contracts;
• Consider developing an industry award to demonstrate good outcomes in this area;
• Circulate proceedings of symposium widely;
• Share examples of Gender Action Plans in practices and other case studies;
• Conduct a symposium on gender mainstreaming in institutions in a year’s time to share progress, learnings in giving effect to these outcomes;
• Recognise the value of mandates in ensuring gender is included;
• Inclusion of gender performance requirements in individual jobs;
• Requesting ACFID to monitor gender mainstreaming within its member organisations;
• Requesting ACFID to prepare training modules on gender mainstreaming and working with gender indicators;
• Aim for all organisations to conduct periodic gender audits and address issues emerging including conducting additional training;
• Facilitate collaboration with academic institutions re methodology and improvement of statistical skills within national statistical institutions;
• Harmonise approaches to enable feeding up of project indicators into national indicators;
• Share resources, so smaller in-country NGOs also benefit from learnings, so there is a chain of learning from CEOs to the field;
• Collaborate and share with Pacific women, such as South Pacific Commission; and
• Work with the office for women’s secretariats to hold government accountable.
Workshop group reports

Discussion was around indicators needed at national, project and institutional levels for each of the strategic priorities.

Education

Task Force indicators

- The ratio of female to male gross enrolment rates in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- The ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Discussion of qualitative versus quantitative indicators

Quality indicators

- Teacher registrations (sex disaggregated data).
- Ratio of teachers to students.

Education at project level

- A gender analysis is needed.
- Needs to be questioned why are girls not going to school eg, security issues, teacher quality, separate toilets, school fees, uniform, child labour, buildings, availability of classes/teachers.

Critical that there is a quality focus at the project level

- Curriculum use and content.
- Building quality.
- Safety for girls and boys to attend school.
- Shelter/boarding schools?
- Achievement and passing/course accreditation.
- Representation.

Sexual and reproductive health rights

Task Force indicators

- Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied.
- Adolescent fertility rate.

Other indicators to consider

- Universal access to reproductive health services.
- HIV prevalence in 15-24 year old pregnant women.
- Condom use during high risk sex.
- Percentage of the population aged 15-24 with comprehensive and correct knowledge of HIV.
- Maternal mortality rate.
- Proportion of births attended.

Sexual and reproductive health rights: Project level

- In monitoring and evaluation, gender should be specifically addressed in addition to objectives and outputs, etc.
- Regardless of project sexual and reproductive health rights should be considered and reflected distinctly in project design and monitoring and evaluation.
- Indicators devised and analysed. Up and down logic models for example logframe: goal, purpose, objective, outputs and activities.
- Project level indicators should be coherent and synthesised with national indicators.

Additional thoughts

- Need four measurable indicators for involving women in sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- All will be filtered by reality.

Sexual and reproductive health rights: National level

- High risk sex definition: 'outside primary relationship'.
- Unmet need, generally understood but there are limitations in information collected, eg, married women.
- Keep contraception prevalence rate and unmet need?
- Should HIV be changed to sexually transmitted infection (STI)?
- Sex education: does adolescent need to be redefined as 10-19 years old?
- There is a conflict in not altering the indicator but rather altering measurements and outcomes.
- Maternal mortality rate maintained and skilled birth attendants maintained.

Agreements

- Prevalence of condom use among men having sex outside of primary relationship.
- Contraceptive demand satisfied.
- Adolescent fertility rate (10-19 years).
- Maternal mortality rate measured.
- Percentage of schools offering comprehensive sexual health education.
- Proportion of 15-24year olds with comprehensive and current knowledge of STIs.
• HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women.

Sexual and reproductive health rights: Institutional level
• Implementation issues (as per GAPs presentation). Structural base and associated training. Handover mechanisms required.
• Intersection of gender into progress.
• GAPs/gender audit; Asian Development Bank guidance.
• Positioning of gender (AusAID/White Paper).

Infrastructure
Task Force indicators
• Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel.

Additions
• Need to add fetching and carrying produce as well as water and fuel.
• Time use detail needs to be collected by sex and age.

Infrastructure at project level
• Project level needs to include quantitative and qualitative data of time use by gender and age.
• Women participating in design, implementation and management of infrastructure projects.
• Market access.
• Spin offs.
• Changes in time use.

Property rights
Task Force indicators
• Land ownership by male, female, or jointly held.
• Housing title disaggregated by male, female or jointly held.

Constraints/problems with the current indicators
• Customary rights not taken into account.
• Need initial gender analysis, eg, GAP analysis, to ensure context is respected.
• Achieving and maintaining subsistence is the first goal, involves recognising access rights as basic rights before economic developments.
• Urban squatter populations not included, different from rural issues.
• 'Property rights' is not just land holdings, wealth can depend on ownership of customary objects.

Important indicators of women's empowerment through property rights
• Education, awareness, advocacy groups on women's property rights. Measured by education progress, number of organisations, legal literacy (whatever legal system operated including customary systems).
• Women's equal legal status with respect to recognition of property rights (in custom and formal systems as relevant).
• Post-conflict and post-disaster contacts provide important opportunities for promotion of gender-inclusive titles and for collection of data required for indicators.
• Equal, effective and informed participation of women in decision making about property including in land commissions and other decision making bodies.

Employment
Task Force indicators
• Share of women in employment, both wage and self-employment, by type.
• Gender gaps in earnings in wage and self-employment.

Employment: National level
• Important to understand gaps in earnings.
• Who has access to the labour market?
• What is defined as employment activity, eg, subsistence farming.

Employment: Project level
• Contextualise the target group, vulnerable stratified.
• Indicators linked to sound gender analysis.
• Empowering indicators linked to employment, eg, nutrition.
• Most significant change, method of qualitative data gathering.
• What choices are available to women, access and control required.

Participation in national parliaments and local government
Task Force indicators
• Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament.
• Percentage of seats held by women in local government bodies.
Discussion

- Need to measure political participation occurring at a grassroots level or in less formal ways.
- Supplement with national indicators that measure the percentage of women in leadership positions in NGOs.
- Project level indicators, measure the percentage of women involved in decision making associated with the project.

Violence against women

Task Force indicators

- Prevalence of domestic violence.

Violence against women: National level

- Need to expand to include all forms of violence against women, not just domestic violence.

- Measure if there is national legislation on domestic violence and sexual assault, operationalise
- Measure number of services for female victims and male perpetrators

Violence against women: Project level

- Qualitative data on men's attitudes to violence against women.
- Qualitative data on women's perception of safety, legal processes.
- Reporting.
- All services providers trained on gender-based violence (police, health, etc).

Note

If you are interested in becoming a part of this ongoing discussion or working group please contact Executive Director of IWDA, Suzette Mitchell, on (613) 9650 5574 or smitchell@iwda.org.au
Gender equality landmarks in Australian Government Aid

Juliet Hunt, independent consultant

1975:
- First public acknowledgment by the Australian Development Assistance Agency (now AusAID) of the role of women in development (WID).

1976:
- First ministerial commitment to equality of opportunity for women in the Australian aid programme.

1980:
- Appointment of first WID adviser, responsible for internal lobbying and for the promotion of women’s interests.

1984:
- WID policy articulated and circulated to staff and partner governments.
- The ‘Jackson Committee Review of the Australian Overseas Aid Program’ makes recommendations on special efforts needed to assist women.
- Establishment of the WID Fund with an allocation of $500,000.
- First guidelines and procedures for integrating WID put in place in the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB).

1985:
- First staff training programme on WID.

1986:
- Preparation of the WID plan of action.

1986-1988:
- A series of reviews on the progress of integrating women, particularly in training awards and bilateral projects.
- Further incorporation of women’s concerns into AIDAB manuals and procedures.
- WID training policy aims to achieve a 50/50 ratio of training awards offered to men and women across all AIDAB training programmes by 1997.

1988:
- First gender analysis training for AIDAB staff.

1989-1990:
- Gender analysis team appointed; focuses on reviewing procedures, training and advice to the bilateral country programmes’ areas.

1990:
- Review of the WID Fund.

1991:
- Development of the first WID operational strategies for Thailand and Philippines country programmes.
- Review of the integration of WID policy into AIDAB programmes (WID review), with wide-ranging recommendations to strengthen the process. Report and recommendations were accepted by AIDAB, although many recommendations were not implemented.

1992:
- Increase in staff allocated to WID, including WID outposted officers located in programme branches; establishment of a WID Unit; and increase in the WID Fund allocation from $0.7m to $1.5m.
- Ministerial endorsement of new policy on WID, which identifies strategies for the achievement of WID policy objectives and emphasises the importance of internal accountability.
• WID markers introduced to assess the extent of integration of WID concerns into all phases of AIDAB’s activities.

1993:
• First gender analysis training course for Australian contractors, auspiced and funded by AIDAB.

1994:
• Restructuring of WID unit to the gender, education and social development section, including abolition of WID outposted officer positions.
• Purchasing and consultancy contracting procedures explicitly require technical appraisal panels to take into account contractors’ ability to satisfy WID policy and to undertake gender analysis.
• Contractors advised that resume should include details of professional development activities, particularly gender analysis training.

1995:
• Australia proposes that the 4th United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing be a ‘conference of commitments’.
• AusAID adopts the term gender and development.
• Allocation to the WID small grants scheme doubles to $3m.

1996:
• Abolition of WID small grants scheme.
• Restructuring of responsibilities in AusAID to social sector and gender section.

1997:
• Gender and development policy launched by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
• ‘Guide to gender and development’ produced to assist AusAID activity managers, contractors and NGOs to include gender perspectives in development activities.
• ‘Equal partners’ booklet on gender and development updated.
• ‘Simons review on the Australian aid program’ devotes one chapter to gender, concludes that AusAID has had mixed success with mainstreaming gender perspectives, and recommends regular audits, greater quality assurance and increased staff resources.
• ‘Better aid for a better future’ (the Government’s response to the Simons review) indicates there will be ‘a periodic review of the activity cycle’ and that a specialist adviser with gender expertise will be appointed as soon as possible.

1997-1998:
• AusAID participates in a series of inventories on good practice in gender mainstreaming in three sectors (environment, sexual/reproductive health and education) with the development assistance committee of the OECD.

1998:
• AusAID organisational restructuring locates the gender and education group in sectoral and advisory services, program quality group. AusAID appoints the first gender adviser, in addition to one full-time and one part-time staff working at policy level.
• Introduction of gender and development markers to be completed for all activities.
• Corporate plan (1998-2000) includes promote gender equity as one of ten key result areas.
• AusAID sectoral advisers undertake gender analysis training for the first time.

2000:
• AusAID publishes data on the gender and development markers for the first time. The markers show that 64 per cent of bilateral and NGO activities which are assessable for gender integration (40 per cent of total ODA) have addressed gender considerations in 1998/99 compared with 56 per cent in 1997/98.
• Guidelines on water supply and sanitation added to ‘Guide to gender and development’.
• The gender and education group is merged with health to become the gender, health and education group.

2001-2002:
• AusAID undertakes a review of the implementation of the gender and
development policy. Summary report published in 2002 highlights the importance of addressing gender dimensions in country strategies, activity design, capacity building, monitoring and reporting.

2002:
- AusAID restructure: two gender and community development advisors have responsibility for gender mainstreaming in programme branches, with one part-time staff position at policy level.

2002-2003:
- AusAID undertakes an international review on gender and evaluation with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the development assistance committee of the OECD. Of 18 evaluations undertaken by AusAID between 1999 and September 2002, four included more than one piece of information on gender equality (22 per cent), eight had limited and unsatisfactory attention to gender equality issues (44 per cent) and six had no references to women or gender issues (33 per cent).

2003:
- Reduction in staff resources dedicated to gender issues with no staff allocation in policy branch.
- AusAID prepares an implementation strategy to address recommendations from the 2001/2002 gender and development review. However, the strategy was not published or implemented.

2004:
- Further reduction in staff resources dedicated to gender issues from two to one gender and community development advisor.

2005:
- No gender and community development advisor from July. Health, population and gender group established in July with one part-time and one full-time staff allocation.
- Regular gender training for AusAID staff in Canberra resumes in August 2005 after a break of three years.
- A DAC peer review of Australian aid finds that AusAID could improve its performance by increasing the visibility of gender in AusAID documents, adopting a programmatic institutional approach to implementing gender policy, increasing the knowledge of staff, updating tools, and adopting a monitoring and evaluation mechanism on gender equality.
- The 'Core group recommendations report for a white paper on Australia's aid program' recommends promoting gender equality by strengthening gender mainstreaming and by emphasising women's and girls' education and health.

2006:
- Establishment of a gender unit in March with two full-time staff, and an allocation for one gender advisor appointed in July.
- The 'White paper on Australian Aid: Promoting growth and stability' adopts gender equality as an over-arching principle which will apply across all aspects of the strategic framework for Australian aid.
- Preparation of a new policy on gender equality for the Australian aid programme.

Note
New Books

Arab Women and Economic Development
Heba Handoussa (ed) 2005. ISBN: 9774249666, 204 pp, US$22.50. Published by American University in Cairo Press, New York Office, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018-2729, USA. Tel: +1 212 730 8800; Fax: +1 212 730 1600; Email: cterry@aucegypt.edu; Web: http://aucpress.com

This volume highlights the frequent and visible discrimination against women in the development process, and discusses means by which traditional and conservative constraints to their increased participation in social, political, and productive life can be overcome.

The six studies in this volume reflect the views of diverse regional experts and several international organisations, brought together at a seminar held in Kuwait under the auspices of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Monetary Fund.

Challenging the NGOs: Women, Religion and Development in India
Tamsin Bradley 2006. ISBN: 1845111524, 276 pp, US$74.95. Palgrave MacMillan, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA. Tel: +1 888 330 8477; Fax: +1 800 672 2054; Email: customerservice@vhpsva.com; Web: http://www.palgrave-usa.com

Bradley examines the interfaces between religion, gender, anthropology and social development and focuses on the operation of grass roots NGOs. She argues that these agencies need to adopt a new methodology if they are to increase efficiency. Her argument is illustrated by a series of ethnographic case studies documenting the experiences of three Rajasthani village women.

Gender and Development: The Japanese Experience in Comparative Perspective
Mayumi Murayama (ed) 2005. ISBN: 140394941352, 288 pp, £55. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, UK. Tel: +44 1256 329242; Fax: +44 1256 328339; Email: orders@palgrave.com; Web: http://www.palgrave.com

Although Japanese economic development is often discussed, less attention is given to social development, and much less to gender related issues. By examining Japanese experiences related to gender, the authors seek insights relevant to the current developing countries. Simultaneously, the book points out the importance for Japanese society to draw lessons from the creativity and activism of women in developing countries.

Gender, Conflict and Development: Toward Gender Equality in Conflict-Affected Countries
Tjeard Bouta, Georg Frerks and Ian Bannon 2004. ISBN: 0821359681, 224pp, US$20. Published by World Bank Publications, PO Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172-0960, USA. Tel: +1 (800) 645 7247 (703) 661 1580; Fax: +1 (703) 661 1501; Email: books@worldbank.org; Web: http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce

Gender, Conflict, and Development was written as an effort to fill a gap between the Bank’s work on gender mainstreaming and its agenda in conflict and development. The authors identify a link between gender and conflict issues and provide a comprehensive review of external and internal sources on gender and conflict, with a particular focus on policy relevance for multi-lateral institutions. The book highlights the
also identifies emerging issues that need to be addressed by the Commonwealth in the decade ahead.

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**Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice**

Sandy Ruston (ed) 2004. ISBN: 0855985143, 240 pp, US$19.95/£12.95. Published by Oxfam Publishing, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DZ, UK. Tel.: +44 (0)1865 312255; Fax: +44 (0)1865 312393; Email: publish@oxfam.org.uk; Web: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/publications

Oxfam Great Britain's Gender Equality and Men project has been seeking since 2002 to address men and boys more fully in the organisation's gender work through regional workshops, internal training, piloting new approaches, and policy and practice change. This book draws upon conclusions from this project, and shares knowledge about, and experience of, work with men on gender equality in programmes run by Oxfam GB and other organisations.

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**Gender and Health: A Global Sourcebook**

Minke Valk, Sarah Cummings, Henk van Dam (eds.) 2006. ISBN: 0855985712, 150 pp, £16.95. Oxfam Publishing, BEBC, PO Box 1496, Parkstone, Dorset BH12 3YD, UK. Tel.: +44 1202 712933; Fax: +44 1202 712930. Email: oxfam@bebc.co.uk; Web: http://publications.oxfam.org.uk

Health, the provision of primary health care, and HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, and other major communicable diseases are all part of the ongoing concerns of organisations engaged in development work, particularly given the current focus on the UN Millennium Development Goals. Gender and Health brings together case studies from around the world at a range of scales, showing how people and organisations are working together to make health provision more sensitive to the needs of marginalised people.

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**Gender, Time Use, and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa**


The papers in this volume examine the links between gender, time use, and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. They contribute to a broader definition of poverty to include 'time poverty,' and to a broader definition of work to include household work. The papers present a conceptual framework linking both market and household work, review some of the available literature and surveys on time use in Africa, and use tools and approaches drawn from analysis of consumption-based poverty to develop the concept of a time poverty line and to examine linkages between time poverty, consumption poverty, and other dimensions of development in Africa such as education and child labour.

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**Gender, Water and Development**

Tina Wallace, Anne Coles (eds.) 2005. ISBN: 1845201256, 256 pp, £16.99. Published by Berg Publishers, 1st Floor, Angel Court, 81 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AW, UK. Tel: +44 1865 245104; Fax: +44 1865 791165; Email: mail@oraobookservices.co.uk; Web: http://www.bergpublishers.com/uk/home.htm

A close analysis of current policy and practice shows that organisations providing improved water supplies to poor communities typically neglect the gendered nature of access to and control over water resources. The resulting gender bias causes inefficiencies and injustices in water provision and reduces the effectiveness of well-meant efforts. This book shows how in different environmental, historical and cultural contexts gender has been an important element in water provision.
Liberation from Liberalization: Gender and Globalization in South East Asia
Roksana Bahramitash 2005. ISBN: 1842774395, 240 pp, £18.95. Published by Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK. Tel: +44 20 7837 4014; Fax: +44 20 7833 3960; Email: sales@zedbooks.net; Web: http://www.zedbooks.co.uk

This book focuses on Southeast Asia and the role the state has played in the economies of Taiwan, Indonesia and the Philippines. While showing that the role of women in the economy has contributed significantly to economic growth, limiting the role of the state under the influence of neo-liberal globalisation, particularly with welfare state reduction, has been responsible for growing poverty, especially among women. The book argues in favour of a system that incorporates women's groups into the decision-making process of the state while making sure the state remains both transparent and subject to the political advocacy of its citizens.

Mainstreaming Gender in Development: A Critical Review
Fenella Porter, Caroline Sweetman (eds.) 2005. ISBN: 0855985518, 112 pp, £9.95. Oxfam Publishing, BEBC, PO Box 1496, Parkstone, Dorset BH12 3YD, UK. Tel: +44 1202 712933; Fax: +44 1202 712930. Email: sales@oxfam.co.uk; Web: http://www.oxfam.org.uk

This volume offers a critical review of gender mainstreaming and aims to be enabling and practical, offering ways to help identify solutions and move past dilemmas into action. Articles discuss how gender mainstreaming has been understood in different organisations; provide examples of good work, which supports the empowerment of women; and look beyond gender mainstreaming to what new possibilities exist for transformation.

Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women
Carol Groom, Gerta Rao Gupta, Adiham Ks 2005. ISBN: 1844072223, 224 pp, £25. UN Millennium Project Taskforce on Education and Gender Equality. Published by Earthscan James & James, 8-12 Camden High Street, London NW1 0JH, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7387 8558; Fax: +44 (0)20 7387 8998; Email: orders@earthscan.co.uk; Web: http://www.earthscan.co.uk

Taking Action details some of the practical steps that can be taken to foster gender equality, including strengthening opportunities, increasing access, investing in infrastructure, guaranteeing rights, eliminating inequality in employment, increasing women's representation in government and reducing violence against girls and women.

The Other Half of Gender: Men's Issues in Development

This book is an attempt to bring the gender and development debate full circle — from a much-needed focus on empowering women to a more comprehensive gender framework that considers gender as a system that affects both women and men. The chapters in this book explore definitions of masculinity and male identities in a variety of social contexts, drawing from experiences in Latin America, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa. It draws on a slowly emerging realisation that attaining the vision of gender equality will be difficult, if not impossible, without changing the ways in which masculinities are defined and acted upon.

The Women, Gender and Development Reader
Nalini Viswanathan, Lynn Duggan, Laurie Nisonoff (eds.) 2005. ISBN: 8189013327, 396 pp, Rs.595. Published by Zubaan Books, K-92, First Floor, Hazr Khaz Enclave, New Delhi - 110016. India. Tel: +91 11 26212008; Email: contact@zubaanbooks.com; Web: http://www.zubaanbooks.com

The Women, Gender and Development Reader is a useful compilation of articles on the subject. The book presents a selection of literature, with sections on theoretical matters, the household economy, the global economy, the impact of social transformation on women, and women's movements in the developing world.

Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice: Institutions, Resources, and Mobilization
Jane S. Jaquette (ed) 2006. ISBN: 0822336987, 364 pp, US$23.95. Published by Duke University Press, PO Box 90660, Durham, NC 27708-0660, USA. Tel: +1 919 687 3600; Fax: +1 888 651 0122; Email: orders@dukeupress.edu; Web: http://dukeupress.edu

Highlighting key institutional issues, contributors analyse the two approaches that dominate the field: women in development and gender and development. They assess the results of gender mainstreaming, the difficulties that development agencies have translating gender rhetoric into equity in practice, and the conflicts between gender and the reassertion of indigenous cultural identities. Focusing on resource allocation, contributors explore the gendered effects of land privatisation, the need to challenge cultural traditions that impede women's ability to assert their legal rights, and women's access to bureaucratic levers of power.
Journals

Development Bulletin

Pamela Thomas (ed), ISSN: 1035-1132. Subscription covers four issues. Institutional rate £148/US$247 (domestic and international), individual £88/US$100 (domestic/ international), student £66/70 (domestic/ individual). Published by Development Studies Network, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia. Tel: +61 (0)2 6125 2466; Fax: +61 (0)2 6125 9785; Email: devnetwork@anu.edu.au; Web: http://devnet.anu.edu.au

Each issue of 'Development Bulletin' provides a number of concise papers on a significant and topical development issue written by respected professionals. 'Development Bulletin' provides a variety of perspectives from different disciplines and development experiences as well as reports from the field, NGO activities, book reviews and recent publications, contact details of organisations and web resources, and conference reports. Gender-specific back issues include: Gender and Governance (No. 51), Political Participation in the Pacific: Issues of Gender, Race and Religion (No. 59), and Gender and Development: Bridging Policy and Practice (No. 64).

Gender and Development

Caroline Sweetman (ed). ISSN: 1355-2074 (print); 1364-9221 (online), three issues per year. Institutional rate £148/US$247 (print and online access), £111/US$235 (online only); personal rate (print and online access) £59/US$98. (Reduced rate of US$38 available to subscribers in low- and middle-income countries as defined by the UNDP Human Development Report). Published by Carfax Publishing. Tel: +44 1256 813002; Email: tf.processing@csfirma.co.uk; Web: http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals

'Gender and Development' aims to promote, inspire, and support development policy and practice which furthers the goal of equality between women and men. It offers a forum for all concerned with the theory and practice of gender and development to exchange views, record experience, analyse good practice and disseminate information about networks and resources. It features articles, case studies, conference reports, interviews and resources and book reviews.

Gender, Technology and Development

Cecilia Ng, Mari Osawa, Thanh-Dam Truong, N Veena, Pierre Walter (eds.). ISSN: 0971-8524, three issues per year. Institutional rate US$237 (print and online), US$225 (online only), US$227 (print only); individual US$69 (print only). SAGE publications; SAGE Publications Ltd, 1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London, EC1Y 1SP, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7324 8701; Fax: +44 (0)20 7324 8700; Email: subscription@sagepub.co.uk; Web: www.sagepub.co.uk; or SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi 110 017, India. Tel: +91 11 2649 1290; Fax: +91 11 2649 1290; Email: sage@sageindia.com; Web: www.indiasage.com

This special issue of the 'Journal of Human Development' examines the United Nations Development Program's GDI and GEM. Papers include Chant's 'Re-thinking the feminization of poverty in relation to aggregate gender indices', Cueva Beteta's 'What is missing in measures of women's empowerment?', Klasen's 'UNDP's gender-related measures: Some conceptual problems and possible solutions', and Dijkstra's 'Towards a fresh start in measuring gender equality: A contribution to the debate'.

Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society

Barbara Hobson, Ann Shola Orloff, Fiona Williams,lined Mahon (eds.). Online ISSN 1468-2893; Print ISSN 1072-4745, four issues per year. Institutional rate: US$159 (print and online), US$143 (online only), US$152 (print only); Individual rate: US$83 (print), US$27 (student rate). Oxford University Press, 1-17-5F, Mukogawa, Bunyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0023, Japan. Tel: +81 3 3813 1461; Fax: +81 3 3818 1522; Email: owp@sp.iiijnet.or.jp; Web: http://sp.oxfordjournals.org/

'Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society' examines political systems and cultural institutions through the lens of gender. It addresses changes in family, state, market, and civil society, employing several disciplines and drawing from a variety of cultures to illuminate these areas of research.
Reports

Framework for Assessing Gender Equality in Results


This framework was designed to provide a means to undertake a corporate level assessment of CIDA's performance on gender equality as a cross-cutting theme and thus support continuing progress in this area.

Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap


The report assesses the current size of the gender gap by measuring the extent to which women in 58 countries have achieved equality with men in the areas of economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health and well-being.

Gender Achievements and Prospects in Education: The GAP report (Part One)

UNICEF, 2005. ISBN: 9280639463, 100 pp, US$10, free online at http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_29995.html. Published by United Nations Publications, 2 United Nations Plaza, Room DC2-853, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: +1 212 963 8302; +1 800 253 9646; Fax: +1 212 963 3489; Email: publications@un.org; Web: https://unp.un.org/

The report reviews progress on the gender-specific MDGs within the Asia-Pacific region, and looks at the gender dimensions of progress on the other Goals. It suggests challenges facing the region, gives examples of promising initiatives and gives recommendations.


United Nations, 2005. ISBN: 9211614821, 184 pp, US$25. Published by United Nations Publications, 2 United Nations Plaza, Room DC2-853, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: +1 212 963 8302; +1 800 253 9646; Fax: +1 212 963 3489; Email: publications@un.org; Web: https://unp.un.org/

The World’s Women 2005 uniquely reviews and analyses the current availability of data and assesses progress made in the reporting of national statistics, as opposed to internationally prepared estimates, relevant to gender concerns. Analysing statistics reported by 204 countries during the past 30 years, The World's Women 2005 sets out a blueprint for improving the availability of data in the areas of demographics, health, education, work, violence against women, poverty, decision making and human rights.

Pathway to Gender Equality

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, German Development Cooperation and UNIFEM http://www.un-ngls.org/MDG/Goal_3.htm

A resource tool for field practitioners pooling the knowledge, experience and commitment of the German Development Cooperation and UNIFEM.

Pursuing Gender Equality through the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific


The report reviews progress on the gender-specific MDGs within the Asia-Pacific region, and looks at the gender dimensions of progress on the other Goals. It suggests challenges facing the region, gives examples of promising initiatives and gives recommendations.
A Gender Review of National Millennium Development Goals' Reports


This global review of national MDG reports is a follow-up to a pilot exercise commissioned by the UNDP's Bureau of Development Policy in 2003. The findings provide an additional gender dimension to the review of national reports, and demonstrate the added value of including a gender equality perspective in future reporting and tracking of progress in the implementation of the MDGs.

Roars and Whispers: Gender and Poverty: Promises vs Action


Tenth annual report produced by Social Watch, an international network informed by national citizens' groups aiming at following up the fulfillment of internationally agreed commitments on poverty eradication and equality.

The report documents the progress towards the MDGs around the world. Included in this report is a basic capabilities and a gender equity index.
Organisations and Programmes

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
UNIFEM Headquarters, 304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA Tel: +1 212-906-6400; Fax: +1 212-906-6705; Web: http://www.unifem.org/. Contact details for regional offices at http://www.unifem.org/about/contact.php

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality.

International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)
PO Box 64, Flinders Lane, VIC 8009, Australia. Tel: +61 3 9650 5574; Email: iwdaiwda@iwda.org.au; Web: http://www.iwda.org.au/

IWDA is an Australian based NGO which undertakes projects in partnership with women from around the world, giving priority to working with women who suffer poverty and oppression.

International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW)
International Centre for Research on Women, 1717 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 302, Washington, DC 20036, USA. Tel: +1 202 797 0007; Fax: +1 202 797 0020; Email: info@icrw.org; Web: http://www.icrw.org/

ICRW is a private, non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of women in poverty, advancing equality and human rights, and contributing to broader economic and social well-being. It undertakes research, capacity building and advocacy on issues affecting women's economic, health and social status in low- and middle-income countries.

Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO)
355 Lexington Ave, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA Tel: +1 212 973 0325; Fax: +1 212 973 0335; Email: wedo@wedo.org; Web: http://www.wedo.org/

WEDO is an international organisation that advocates for women's equality in global policy. It seeks to empower women as decision makers to achieve economic, social and gender justice.

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
215 Spadina Ave, Suite 150, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2C7, Canada. Tel: +1 416 594 3773; Fax: +1 416 594 0330; Email: awid@awid.org; Web: http://www.awid.org/

AWID is an international membership organisation connecting, informing and mobilising people and organisations committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. It facilitates ongoing debates on fundamental and provocative issues and builds the individual and organisational capacities of those working for women's empowerment and social justice.

The Global Fund for Women
1375 Sutter Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94109, USA. Tel: +1 415 202 7640; Fax: +1 415 202 8604; Email: gfw@globalfundforwomen.org; Web: http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/

The Global Fund for Women is an international network of people committed to a world of equality and social justice. It advocates for and defends women's human rights by making grants to support women's groups around the world.
Human Rights Watch —
Women’s Rights Division
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th floor, New York,
NY 10118-3222, USA. Tel: +1 212 290
4700; Fax: +1 212 736 1300; Email:
brunyp@hrw.org; Web: www.hrw.org/
women

News, facts and articles on women’s rights
around the world. Human Rights Watch
is an independent NGO supported by
contributions from private individuals and
foundations worldwide.

Centre for Asia-Pacific Women in
Politics (CAPWIP)
4227-4229 Tomas Claudio Street,
Baclaran, Parañaque City 1700
Philippines. Tel: +63 2 8516934; Fax:
+63 2 8522112; Email:
capwip@capwip.org; capwip@gmail.com;
Web: http://www.capwip.org

CAPWIP is a non-partisan, non-profit
and non-governmental regional
organisation dedicated to promoting
equal participation of women in politics
and decision making. CAPWIP supports
its network of national affiliates through
technical assistance in organisational and
programme planning, training, research
and information sharing.

Asiapacific Gender Equality
Network (APGEN)
United Nations Development Programme,
7th Floor, NEDA sa Makati Building,
106 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village,
1229 Makati City, Philippines. Tel: +632
892 8638; Fax: +632 893 9598, 816
4061; Email: rosanita.serrano@undp.org;
Web: www.undp.org.ph/apgen/home.htm

APGEN strengthens regional coordination
and cooperation towards addressing issues
of feminisation of poverty and gender
inequality in decision making. APGEN
focuses on: developing methods for
measuring women's unpaid work and
integrating it into economic and social
policies, mainstreaming issues of women's
access to science and technology in poverty
reduction policies and programmes,
strengthening capacities of women leaders
in public and private sectors and civil
society in gender responsive governance
and transformative leadership, and
strengthening capacities of state parties and
women activists in CEDAW
implementation, monitoring and
reporting.

Development Alternatives with
Women for a New Era (DAWN)
PO Box 13124, Suva, Fiji. Tel/fax: +679
314 770; Email: dawn@isu.com.fj

A Third World feminist network which
looks at the cultural and economic factors
related to women's participation in the
development process. Today, DAWN has a
network of some 4,500 researchers,
activists and policy makers and produces
newsletters and publications.

Isis International Manila
3 Marunong St, Barangay Centrai,
Quezon City, Philippines 1100. Tel: +632
928 1956; Fax: +632 924 1065; E-mail:
admin@isismen.htm; Web: http://
www.isismen.org

ISIS was created in 1974 as an
international channel of information and
communications between women and now
has connections in over 150 countries.

WOMANKIND Worldwide
2nd Floor, Development House, 56-64
Leonard Street, London EC2A 4JX, UK.
Tel: +44 20 7549 0360; Fax: +44 20
7549 0361; Email: info@womankind.org.uk; Web: http://
www.womankind.org.uk

WOMANKIND works to give women the
confidence and opportunities to articulate
their needs; and it funds and supports tackle
the specific issues in a particular area. Its
projects are connected to enabling women
to understand their legal rights and to use
these rights to benefit their daily lives.
Where new legislation is needed to protect
women or improve their status,
WOMANKIND helps its partners secure
this too.

Asian-Pacific Resource and
Research Centre for Women
(ARROW)
2nd Floor, Block F, Anjung Felda, Jalan
Maktab, 54000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 292 9913; Fax: +60 3 292
9958; Email: arrow@pa.jaring.my

ARROW works with local, national and
global women's organisations and networks
to improve the capacity of women NGOs
in Asia and the Pacific to influence health,
population and family planning
organisations at national, regional and
international levels. ARROW also
facilitates the generation and utilisation of
new information and analyses on policies,
programmes and organisations related to
women's health through collaborative
research.

International Women's Health
Coalition (IWHC)
International Women's Health Coalition,
333 Seventh Avenue, 6th floor, New York,
NY 10001, USA. Tel: +1 212 979 8500;
Fax: +1 212 979 9009; Email:
info@iwhc.org; Web: http://www.iwhc.org/

IWHC works to generate health and
population policies, programmes and
funding that promote and protect the
rights and health of girls and women
worldwide.

Women's Global Network for
Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)
NZ Voorburgwal 32, 1012 RZ
Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 20
620 96 72; Email: Contact via website at
http://www.wgnrr.org/
home.php?form=formcontact; Web:
www.wgnrr.org
WGNRR Rights is an autonomous network of groups and individuals in every continent aiming to achieve and support reproductive rights for women.

**Australian Reproductive Health Alliance (ARHA)**

PO BOX 41, Deakin West ACT 2600, Australia. Tel: +61 2 6282 8922; Fax: +61 2 6282 8933; Email: arha@arha.org.au; Web: http://www.arha.org.au

ARHA aims to promote public support for enhanced reproductive and sexual health in Australia and internationally, and to promote the advancement of the status of women and girls.

**MATCH International Centre**

201-15 Grenfell Crescent, Nepean, ON K2G 0G3, Canada. Tel: +1 613 238 1312; Fax: +1 613 238 6867; Email: info@matchinternational.org; Web: http://www.matchinternational.org

MATCH is a Canadian women's international organisation guided by a feminist vision of sustainable development which recognises the diverse realities of women and respects their efforts for self determination. It supports and funds women's projects in the Third World and also does public education work in Canada. Key areas of interest are violence against women, leadership training and community organisation. MATCH produces a bi-annual newsletter, available online.

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)**

1 rue de Varembe, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Tel: +22 919 7080; Fax: +22 919 7081; Email: wilpf@iprolink.ch; Web: http://www.wilpf.int.ch

WILPF works on issues of peace, human rights and disarmament at the local, national and international levels, participating in the ongoing international debates on peace and security issues, conflict prevention and resolution, on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and the promotion and protection of human rights.

WILPF is an international NGO with national sections in 37 countries, covering all continents. WILPF has had consultative status with the UN through the Economic and Social Council since 1948.

**Gender and Science and Technology Association (GASAT)**

GASAT 12 Secretary, School of Education, M108 Mayfield House, University of Brighton, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9PH, UK. Email: gasat12@doinggender.com; Web: http://www.gasat-international.org

GASAT is an international association of people concerned with issues arising from interactions between gender, science and technology.
Asia Pacific Online Network of Women in Politics, Governance and Transformative Leadership  
http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/  
onlinewomeninpolitics.org was borne out of the vision of Asian Women Leaders to explore creative ways in organising a network of Asia-Pacific women involved in politics, governance, decision making and transformative leadership.

Briefings on Development and Gender (BRIDGE)  
http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/  
Supports gender advocacy and mainstreaming efforts by bridging the gaps between theory, policy and practice with accessible and diverse gender information in print and online. The BRIDGE site acts as a free 'virtual bookcase' where you can download BRIDGE publications.

Development Studies Network: Women, Gender and Development in the Pacific  
A collection of 87 excellent papers on Pacific women, gender and development originally published in back issues of Development Bulletin. The papers are available for free download with assistance from AusAID, and clustered under six major headings:  
• Conflict and Peacemaking: Gender Perspectives;  
• Women, Legal Issues and Human Rights;  
• Women and Governance;  
• Gender, Civil Society and Political Participation;  
• Women, Status and Social Change; and  
• Women and Gender Mainstreaming.

Eldis Gender Resource Guide  
http://www.eldis.org/gender/  
Lists websites, library collections and bibliographical databases on gender and development.

International Women's Tribune Centre  
http://www.iwtc.org/  
An international NGO, IWTC focuses on providing communication and information to women's organisations and community groups working to improve the lives of women. Contains extensive annotated directory of global and regional women's NGOs.

Genderstats  
http://genderstats.worldbank.org/  
Electronic database of gender statistics and indicators maintained by the World Bank. A summary gender profile, thematic data, gender monitoring and data by region and by country is available.

Siyanda  
http://www.siyanda.org/  
Siyanda is an online database of gender and development materials from around the world. It is also an interactive space where gender practitioners can share ideas, experiences and resources.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Women's Empowerment  
http://www.undp.org/women/  
The Women's Empowerment website provides an extensive range of online resources.

WomenWatch  
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/  
WomenWatch is a gateway to the information and resources on the promotion of gender equality throughout the UN system, including the United Nations Secretariat, regional commissions, funds, programmes, and specialised agencies. Created in March 1997, WomenWatch provides Internet space for global gender equality issues and supports the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The web site also provides information on the outcomes of women-related UN meetings and conferences. It also informs about efforts to incorporate gender perspectives into the follow-up to global conferences.
Author Guidelines

Manuscripts and Copyright

Manuscripts are normally accepted on the understanding that they are unpublished and not on offer to another publication. Once published by the Development Studies Network (the Network), however, manuscripts, articles and reports may subsequently be published elsewhere. Acknowledgement of the Network as the source would be appreciated. No acknowledgement is needed for conference reports, other notices or lists of publications.

The Network cannot assume responsibility for any loss of or damage to manuscripts. Contributors are therefore encouraged to retain a complete copy of their work.

Word length

Submitted papers are to be short and concise, with a minimum of 1000–1500 words and a maximum of 2,500–3,000 words. The word limit includes subheadings and footnotes and excludes references. Conference reports: 800–1000 words.

Presentation and Style

Manuscripts should be double spaced with at least 2.5cm (1") margins. Subheadings, footnotes and references need to be clearly indicated in the text. Quotation marks should be single, double within single. Spelling is English (OED with ‘-ise’ endings).

Documents can be sent as email attachments, on disk or in hard copy. Documents sent electronically should be saved as Microsoft Word files, or in .rtf format. Email attachments are preferred in Word or .rtf format. A virus check is requested prior to any material being electronically sent. No .pdf files please as these cannot be edited or corrected prior to printing.

Referencing

A minimum of references and/or footnotes is requested due to space constraints. All references referred to or cited in the text are to be included in the reference list. Book titles and journal names should be italicised or underlined; titles of journal articles and book chapters are in single inverted commas.

The Harvard style of referencing is preferred: author’s surname, forename and/or initials, date of publication, title of publication, publisher and place of publication. Journal references should include volume and issue number, date and page numbers. Detailed guidelines on the Harvard style of referencing are available online at:
http://www.uwe.ac.uk/library/resources/general/info_study_skills/harvard2.htm#book

Examples:

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