

GENDER EQUALITY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE:
EXPERIENCES FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA

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TEXT BOXES

Indonesia: reducing maternal mortality through gender relations

Cambodia: gender mainstreaming machinery

Vietnam: gender equality and the PRSC

Timor Leste: strengthening women’s participation in politics

1. SUMMARY

Studies and discussions at a workshop of four aid-funded initiatives in different countries in South East Asia show that the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness offers a useful framework for assessing and strengthening government-led efforts towards greater gender equality and the achievement of the MDGs. The Paris principles provide the opportunity for governments, civil society and donors to work together in more genuine partnerships provided the search for efficiency gains is not at the expense of securing long term impact and that donors change their own organisational behaviour where this constrains gender equality efforts.

It also means supporting those seeking change rather than being over-discouraged by sections of government or society that are indifferent or even resistant. The challenge is for women's interest groups in and outside government to become more influential in the bodies that are responsible for the aid effectiveness agenda. Donors need to proactively support such efforts, something which according to the studies commissioned for this workshop has not always been the case. The presence of energetic and committed individuals on both government and donor sides combined with greater harmonisation of effort appears to be a key factor in successful policy ownership and alignment. This means donors appointing appropriate staff and rewarding their efforts, recognising that quick results may not be achievable and that sustainability of long term commitment is vital.

Governments must take a leadership role in changing those patterns of gender relations that have an adverse effect on women's lives but also donors must actively align with country specific agendas for gender equality rather than pushing priorities determined in their head offices. At the same time both governments and donors should recognise their mutual accountability for securing the realisation of women's rights through agendas for gender equality that reflect and report to the CEDAW framework.

The recent renewal of donors' commitment to promoting gender equality offers a significant opportunity for putting the aid effectiveness principles into practice. Both content and process are important. It means constructing partnerships that recognise and address power inequalities through genuinely inclusive processes where diversity of views are welcomed as an essential step for identifying the context specific and complementary aid modalities that are required for securing long term social change.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The challenge

In international aid circles, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is commonly referred to as a 'cross-cutting' issue, meaning that it has to be taken into account if results are to be achieved from investments in specific sectors such as health, agriculture or enterprise development. Equally importantly, it is a developmental goal in its own right – MDG 3. Because policy priorities of governments and NGOs often reflect structural inequities in power relations within the wider society the most difficult goals to reach and that need the most investment, paradoxically, tend to be those that get the least attention. For example, it is the reduction in maternal mortality (MDG 5) which is the Millennium Development Goal where least progress has been made. The Paris Declaration's emphasis on ownership, impact and accountability offers an important opportunity for aid recipient countries and their development partners to reverse this tendency. Yet the Declaration will not deliver on its potential for international aid to make a real and positive difference in millions of women's and girls' lives unless those working for women's rights take the fullest advantage of what the aid effectiveness agenda can offer.

In countries of the SE Asia region that are experiencing rapid economic growth, steady progress towards most MDGs and low levels of aid dependency, the aid context is one in which government leadership is being more easily asserted and the drivers for harmonised donor working are more prevalent. As a result of this (and other factors) South East Asia is proving to be the testing ground for a number of innovative approaches to aid effectiveness in Asia. These include reforms to consultative and working group practices amongst donors and governments; new forms of multi-donor office and multi donor strategies and programming as well as new aid modalities. In such a changing aid environment are there experiences and ways of working for promoting gender equality that can be usefully shared both within the region and more widely?

2.2. The Bangkok workshop

A steering group from regional offices of DFID, UNIFEM and the World Bank decided to deepen mutual understanding amongst development practitioners of the challenges and opportunities for implementation of gender equality objectives through the Paris Declaration in SE Asia. A workshop, held in Bangkok on 2-3 April 2007, had two objectives:

- (1) To strengthen the achievement of gender equality objectives within specific aid funded initiatives to be discussed at the workshop;
- (2) To produce recommendations in support of international processes aimed at strengthening the pursuit of gender equality within aid effectiveness agendas.

In preparation for the workshop and in consultation with the governments concerned, three consultants working in the region were commissioned to study aid-funded initiatives in Cambodia (Cheryl Urashima) Vietnam (Dipa Bagai) and Indonesia and Timor Leste (Sofi Ospina). They explored how these initiatives are promoting gender equality using the lens of the Paris Declaration's aid effectiveness framework.

Just as the case studies sought to capture and articulate different perspectives without providing any ready-made solutions, so the workshop itself was designed to ensure an inclusive process in which all participants could voice their experience and ideas as well benefiting personally from the critical learning taking place. The majority of participants were those from governments, civil society and donor agencies with a direct stake in the initiatives studied. There was also, however, regional/head office participation from ADB, AusAid and Focus on the Global South.¹

2.3 This report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the issues and views emerging from the case studies and the workshop. Section 3 provides a synthesis of the generic issues emerging from the case studies with the cases themselves in text boxes; section 4 summarises the workshop's collective recommendations to international aid practice in relation to aid effectiveness and gender equality while section 5 provides a brief commentary on the broader implications of these recommendations and the overall workshop process.

¹ See Annex A for the list of workshop participants and Annex B for the studies themselves, as used as inputs for workshop discussion.

3. AID EFFECTIVENESS AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY: THE CASE STUDIES

3.1 Not 'best practice'

The very diverse aid-funded initiatives studied for the workshop provide a representative cross section of current policy and programming actions in the context of current efforts to strengthen aid effectiveness. The Vietnam study looks at the Poverty Reduction Strategy Credit (PRSC) and the extent to which it includes gender-equality objectives; the Cambodia study concerns the machinery established to implement the Paris Declaration agenda at the national level and the efforts underway to 'mainstream' gender within that machinery; the Indonesia study relates to a multi-donor funded programme in two provinces in support of the fifth Millennium Development Goal (improving maternal health) and the Timor Leste example is of a focused UNIFEM coordinated effort to enhance women's leadership and promote gender responsive democratic governance.

Not only diversity of cases was sought but also diversity of views from those involved in them. When a case is framed as 'best practice' dissenting voices may self-exclude themselves from comment and thus from providing an alternative point of view that helps reveal the complexity of reality and that there are rarely quick fix and off-the-peg solutions. The purpose of the studies was not to show the rest of the world how well SE Asia is doing in terms of implementing the Paris Declaration in support of a 'cross-cutting issue' but rather to allow the participants (and an eventual wider audience) to identify issues, opportunities and challenges that can be taken up and responded to. For this reason both the case studies and the workshop itself took an approach in which a diversity of perspectives was welcomed and encouraged.

Despite the differences in the initiatives, the studies - and the associated workshop discussions and subsequent action plans made by the stakeholders in the initiatives examined - revealed some common themes and issues which the rest of this section considers within the framework of the five principles of the Paris Declaration.

3.2 Ownership

In all four cases, while there were some parts of government machinery and civil society strongly committed to securing greater gender equality, many other influential policy actors were indifferent or even openly resistant.

Indonesia – reducing maternal mortality through changing gender relations

To fight the high maternal and neo-natal mortality, the Ministry of Health has developed a national strategic plan for Making Pregnancy Safer (MPS), 2001-2010. A multi-donor programme in the two provinces of Nusa Tenggara Barat and Nusa Tenggara Timur in support of MPS aims to put in place an integrated health planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation system; to strengthen the emergency referral system; to ensure that clinical services meet national standards and complement health promotion activities and to empower communities, especially those in poverty, to access appropriate services. While there have been efforts to harmonise other elements of the programme, so far donors have made little effort to develop a joint framework for addressing the underlying gender issues in maternal mortality prevalence.

Questions from the workshop about this initiative included issues relating to:

- opportunities for the central government and donors to learn from this project for implementing national policy on gender equality within the context of decentralisation and social and religious diversity;
- incorporating gender analysis and gender equality objectives into provincial line departments, including health and the potential role of the gender equality unit in the central Ministry of Health therein;
- leveraging wider changes in gender relations through the use of available sex-disaggregated data;
- ensuring that government and donors have a shared and adequately resourced and costed gender equality results matrix for the two provinces concerned and holding them accountable for this;
- plans for involving civil society and the beneficiaries in shaping this initiative;

Agreed actions arising from the workshop were drafted within framework of the five principles of the Paris Declaration. *Ownership* for gender equality objectives within a decentralised structure requires working at all levels, including through the work of traditional birth attendants with the communities and with MPS review meetings at provincial and central levels, as well as with collating and updating local gender training materials. *Alignment* action includes making the MPS provincial budgets gender sensitive using the President's instructions on gender equality. Gender equality objectives could serve as a spearhead for *harmonising* donor support within the health sector and the team will take this proposal to a forthcoming national workshop; gender disaggregated data will be used for specific planning and budgeting for *results* and team will work to show the importance of gender equality for development and training to achieve results. The team will promote the introduction and monitoring of gender specific indicators in the MPS national framework and will draw on the experience of working with community groups in one district to strengthen *accountability* between government, donors and citizens.

Donors need to support those seeking change rather than be discouraged by the sections of government and wider society that are indifferent or resistant. Yet they should not be misled that commitment from some sections means commitment from everyone and assume that the task is easier than it is.

In *Timor Leste*, the manifest serious commitment by the highest level of government and other key civil society groups may mask scepticism and inaction in some sectors and at lower levels in the government and in other conservative groups in society. In the case of *Indonesia*, while a very favourable policy environment for reducing maternal mortality has been established through a presidential decree (9/2000) on gender mainstreaming and two ministerial decrees for gender mainstreaming in the health sector - and there is a commitment among local community leaders to tackling the high level of maternal mortality - senior staff at the provincial level do not see gender equality issues as a matter of concern.

While Indonesia and Timor Leste already offer possibilities of broader based civil society ownership - and in the latter instance the initiative under study has had active civil society engagement from the start - in Cambodia and to an even greater extent in Vietnam, civil society is nascent. Because it is even harder to present evidence of a broader-based ownership of an agenda that is ignored or resisted by many government officials, there is a tendency to prioritise support to champions within government. Under the leadership of the Minister of Women's Affairs the desire to build stronger government 'ownership' in *Cambodia* shaped the design the technical working group on gender and the gender mainstreaming groups inside each ministry.

In all four countries, the challenge is how women's interest groups in the government (such as the national machineries for women's affairs) and outside (NGOs, mass organisations) can become more influential in the bodies and mechanisms (such as the Consultative Groups) that are responsible for the aid effectiveness agenda.

3.3. Alignment

In *Vietnam* several donors and government representatives hold the view that the successful performance of the government on most gender parameters has actually made it more difficult to mainstream gender issues in the PRSC.

Cambodia: gender mainstreaming machinery

Although showing signs of improvement, gender inequalities continue to persist in Cambodia, reflected, for example, in unequal access by women to education and health services and representation in politics and policy making. The Cambodia case study concerned mechanisms to promote and support the integration of gender equality concerns into mainstream policies and programmes.

The Technical Working Group on Gender (TWGG) is one of a number of such working groups within the framework of the Government-Donor Consultative Committee (GDCC). Chaired by the Minister for Women's Affairs with two donor co-facilitators the TWGG aims at building overall government *ownership* of the responsibility for addressing gender disparities, *aligning* donor support for mainstreaming gender in government policies, *harmonising* resource allocations and providing a framework for *managing for results* and ensuring *mutual accountability* through the identification of clear targets and indicators. Between 2005-2007 - with the encouragement of the TWGG - Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) were established in 21 out of 26 line ministries as well as in central offices of state. So far Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs) have been developed by 9 ministries.

Questions from the workshop about this initiative included issues relating to:

- whether the donor co-facilitators of the TWGG could play more of a leadership role in ensuring that gender equality concerns are integrated into the other technical working groups;
- the role of the GMAGs in getting lead donors in their sector to champion gender equality and their sustainability;
- the political leverage of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) to mainstream gender into other line ministries and its potential for promoting gender equality objectives in the government reform agenda, for example through gender budgeting;
- arrangements for monitoring the impact of the ministries' gender mainstreaming action plans;
- the harmonisation of donors' capacity development initiatives in relation to gender equality and the strategic use of the current limited gender expertise capacity; and,
- the role of civil society in participating in and contributing more broadly to the formulation and achievement of gender equality objectives.

Agreed actions arising from the workshop are to focus on (a) strengthening communication and linkages between the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), the government body responsible for coordinating government-donor dialogue and contributions to implementation of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), including the Consultative Group; (b) prioritising efforts in a few key sectors (e.g., health, education, agriculture) where the ministries would be encouraged to integrate their gender action plans into their sector-wide plans and donors encouraged to ensure that MAG members are part of programme development and review processes. Other actions include the CDC recommending the designation of gender focal points in all technical working groups and obliging these groups to include progress on gender equality objectives in TWG reports to the GDCC; MOWA to take the lead in harmonising donor support for capacity development and for co-ordinating donor support for gender equality initiatives; and, MOWA will work with the Ministry of Planning to develop guidelines for ensuring annual progress reports on NSDP implementation are gender-sensitive.

Yet, the same point might apply to many other areas of policy reform that are nevertheless captured within the policy dialogue for the PRSC. Both government and donor staff can be selective as to which policies they see as priority for alignment and the challenge is to include other voices in making such choices.

A common theme is the link between the level of investment in both capacity development and research on the one hand and the prioritisation of gender equality for policy alignment on the other. For example, lack of priority means few resources for research which means there is not the evidence available for implementing results based policy. Donors' own priorities are a significant factor; the studies noted the mismatch between donor policies on gender equality and commitment of human and financial resources in practice.

The presence of energetic and committed individuals on both government and donor sides, as is currently the case in *Cambodia* and *Timor Leste* appears to be a key factor in securing successful alignment. In Cambodia, donors are increasingly aligning to the strategic plan of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) as compared with the past when donor funded initiatives within MoWA were pursuing varying approaches to mainstreaming gender.

3.4. Harmonisation

Although in many aid recipient countries, gender working groups for greater donor coordination were often the precursor for wider harmonisation processes, today donors appear to be struggling to harmonise their support in this area. Despite the success of donor alignment to the strategy of the MoWA, *Cambodia* is struggling to achieve the same outcome for donor support to gender equality objectives in specific sectors. It is more of a challenge for donors to apply a gender equality perspective to their joint programmatic support than to their separate stand alone projects, possibly because this involves donor staff for whom gender equality is not a priority. In *Vietnam*, according to gender equality advocates within government, donors lose sight of gender equality objectives when financing programmes like the PRSC.

In *Indonesia*, four donors have harmonised their support to Making Pregnancy Safer in the two provinces. Despite this very concrete example of harmonization some government officials do not consider that donors are coordinating adequately in terms of managing for results and equal quality of coverage of services.

Vietnam: Gender Equality and the Poverty Reduction Support Credit

Vietnam has made progress in recent years on mainstreaming gender equality issues in the health and education sectors and has recently passed a Gender Equality Law to strengthen women's participation in decision making. Major current concerns relating are the potential impact on women's empowerment of the rapidly changing nature of the Vietnamese economy. Those parts of the government machinery responsible for promoting gender equality objectives, such as the National Council for the Advancement of Women (NCAFAW) and the Vietnam Committee for Population, Family and Children (VCPFC) remain under-resourced and are not included in major capacity development programmes.

The Vietnam PRSC is a World Bank (WB) led general budget support operation designed to support the Government of Vietnam (GOV) reform strategy outlined in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS), now the Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006 – 2010, and other key planning documents. The WB leads this process with donors co-financing engaging in policy dialogue with the GOV. 19 donors are currently engaged and in 2005 the PRSC represented 10 percent of Official Development Assistance and 2.3 percent of total budgetary resources. There has not been an attempt so far to mainstream gender issues within the PRSC by including any comprehensive initiative with gender equality objectives, or at examining the gender equality impact of PRSC policy actions.

Questions in the workshop about this initiative included issues relating to:

- What could be done to ensure that gender equality objectives – including the implementation of the gender equality law - are reflected in the PRSC matrix?
- What actions are needed to overcome the lack of gender analysis capacity and the lack of incentives for gender mainstreaming amongst government, donors and civil society?
- How do you enable additional stakeholder groups beyond those parts of government and international aid agencies most directly involved in the PRSC to be included in the shaping and monitoring of the PRSC process from a gender equality perspective?
- How can donors support and enable the NCAFAW/Women's Union to be more proactive in the PRSC?
- Apart from the NCAFAW who are the gender equality champions (both formal and informal) in government and how can they be enabled to be more involved in the PRSC?

Agreed actions arising from the workshop were drafted within framework of the five principles of the Hanoi Core Statement (national version of the Paris Declaration) which in terms of *ownership* would be used as the rallying point for the gender equality agenda; with respect to *alignment* the VCPFC would share with donors the draft of the implementation guidelines of the Gender equality law and organise consultation workshops; a meeting would be organised between PRSC co financiers and GoV on PRSC roadmap for gender policy actions, connecting the aid effectiveness and gender people - both government and donors . For *harmonisation*, for the GoV and donors each to establish a single focal point for dialogue on gender equality policy and for *managing results* gender indicators will be included in the 2007 labour force survey.

3.5 Managing for results

In 3.3 we noted one of the challenges of current approaches to managing for results. Another is that donor timetables of looking for quick results may constrain their enthusiasm for including achieving gender equality objectives in any results matrix. This suggested the National Committee for the Advancement of Women is the challenge for the PRSC in *Vietnam*. In *Indonesia*, the national Ministry of Health aims to have 17% of all districts with a gender responsive action plans and budgets by 2009. Yet, attitudes of some decision makers within the health sector at provincial and district level who have not yet been convinced that gender considerations are important may undermine the achievement of these targets and curb enthusiasm.

Project initiatives, such as that in Timor Leste, face another kind of challenge, that of clearly articulating desired results and having these integrated into broader national planning and monitoring processes.

3.6 Mutual Accountability

In *Vietnam* there is little understanding of the mutual accountability principle in general, and from a gender perspective in particular, on the part of both donors and the government. The Women's Union were concerned that it was not possible for them to find out what impact the PRSC policy actions were having on women. Lacking both knowledge of the process and capacity, they could neither monitor the results nor challenge the policies. Some donors and NGOs also shared the concern of inadequate capacity to take advantage of the World Bank's openness in inviting them into the PRSC planning and review process.

The *Cambodia* study notes the government's responsibility for reporting on CEDAW but not that of donor governments although the comment is made that donors are lagging behind the Cambodian government in 'demonstrating a consistent commitment to gender'.

3.7 Summary

Each of the four initiatives studied demonstrated the opportunities and challenges in shaping the practice of aid to the five principles of the Paris Declaration. Shared commitment to social change between those giving and receiving aid appears to be the principal driver for making aid effective in improving women's lives and securing greater gender equality. In Timor Leste, the choice of a project based aid instrument combined with high level political support provides a solid grounding for broadening and deepening the policy

Timor Leste: Strengthening gender responsive democratic governance

Since 1974 women have been actively involved in the struggle for independence and promoting equal rights in Timor Leste. During the 1999-2002 United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) they lobbied for the creation of a Gender Affairs Unit (GAU), promoted a 30% per cent quota for women in decision-making positions within UNTAET, organized a women's network (REDE Feto) to promote gender equality within government and society, and created a women's caucus (Caucus Feto Iha Politica, referred to simply as 'Caucus') to support women in politics.

The current UNIFEM-led initiative aims to enable women at the local and national levels to become effective leaders in nation building and to participate actively in the electoral processes as candidates and voters and to serve as decision-makers in government and as members of pressure groups to influence policy and development programme design and implementation. More broadly, UNIFEM is currently working with the GoTL on a *High Level Gender Coordination Mechanism* (HLGCM) to ensure a coherent and coordinated gender strategy for Timor-Leste with sound coordination and communication

Questions in the workshop about this initiative included issues relating to

- How can the high level gender equality mechanism (HLGCM) involve all relevant stakeholders in its operations including its monitoring and evaluation?
- What could be done to strengthen and broaden government ownership in supporting women's participation in politics and decision making?
- What further support is needed for women in public life to actually make a difference and how are you going to measure their impact?
- What avenues and opportunities are available to gender equality champions in civil society, government and among the donors to join forces?
- How can there be developed a broad based constituency to enable UNIFEM to build on this initiative and exercise a leadership role amongst development partners for supporting Timor Leste to achieve its gender equality objectives?
- How will you ensure the sustainability of the positive changes coming out of this initiative?

Agreed actions arising from the workshop included that the membership of the HLGCM be expanded with more civil society and donors; a report back mechanism to be established between HLGCM and the Timor Leste Development Partners' Meeting to ensure that women's empowerment objectives in general and promotion of women as leaders and in governance in particular are included in the agenda of TLDPM; to ensure that the Local Governance Development Programme includes actions to promote women as effective leaders and support women's participation in local governance; to promote women's empowerment as a separate public expenditure budget line. Relating to *Managing for Results*, including women's empowerment objectives in the Annual Action Plan at the Directorate level and in the budget execution quarterly report; developing sex disaggregated data common gender targets and indicators that are clear, agreed and jointly monitored by government and donors; revisiting localized MDGs to include targets and indicators on women leadership; including women's empowerment objectives in the budget execution quarterly report and to *Mutual Accountability* promoting long-term commitment for the initiative and pooled fund from donors and government.

agenda within the framework of the Paris Principles, potentially stimulating in turn a greater and more sustained and harmonised commitment from donors than has been the case in the past.

In the case of Vietnam, workshop participants realised the benefit of frank and open discussion of the challenges facing both government and donor staff when working for gender equality and how greater alignment and harmonisation of their effort offered the potential for collectively influencing the wider policy agenda. The legal framework to support gender equality is gradually being completed, and the necessary institutional arrangements for implementing the government commitments to gender equality are now needed, including effective accountability mechanisms. Donors can provide resources to help implement mandates and to monitor progress.

Cambodia has made remarkable progress in establishing the institutional arrangements for mainstreaming gender equality objectives through the government and donor consultative machinery within the framework of the Paris Declaration but actual impact on sector policies and budget is still weak and a broader based constituency for changes needs to be developed, within government, among donors and with civil society.

Indonesia's challenge is how a commitment to gender equality at the national level can be successfully implemented in provincial and district level decision making – and what is the role of donors in this context of decentralisation where local conservative attitudes can block change? The multi-donor decentralization support facility to the Government of Indonesia may provide an opportunity to move forward. Some pilots could be established in which local governments and development partners, working in a single district plan, define gender outcomes and benchmarks to which the local government and donors are accountable.

4. WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS: HOW INTERNATIONAL AID PRACTICE CAN SUPPORT NATIONAL EFFORTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

As discussed in the next section, the key finding from the workshop was the *utility of the aid effectiveness framework* for assessing, strengthening and building on aid-funded initiatives for promoting gender equality.

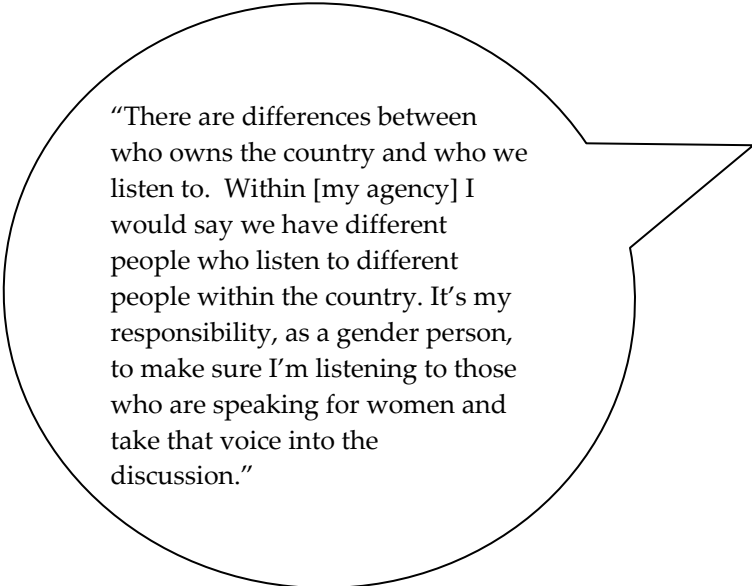
Based on their critical reflections and plans for future action in their own country initiatives workshop participants were asked to consider how the

overall approaches and practice of international aid could be more effective in promoting women's empowerment and gender. This section summarises their conclusions and captures elements of the concluding debate with a panel of donor agency representatives.

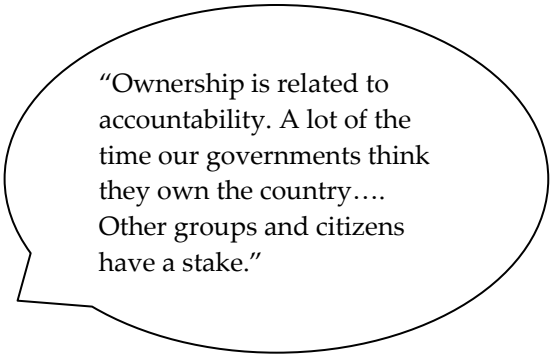
4.1 Ownership:

Recognising that there are many different points of view and making sure that gender equality advocacy gets its voice heard

Ownership is about recognising that the policy agenda belongs to many others beyond just some sections of government service or donor agencies and this is the key to securing real world changes in women's lives.



"There are differences between who owns the country and who we listen to. Within [my agency] I would say we have different people who listen to different people within the country. It's my responsibility, as a gender person, to make sure I'm listening to those who are speaking for women and take that voice into the discussion."



"Ownership is related to accountability. A lot of the time our governments think they own the country... Other groups and citizens have a stake."


Making national plans gender sensitive requires *wide consultation within and beyond government, including with civil society and gender equality advocates*. Donors need to encourage this process and include gender expertise in their technical assistance and policy dialogue around national development plans. However, ownership is not just at the national level. Governments need to ensure *mechanisms for realising national gender equality goals at sub-national levels* and need to work together to promote *regional co-operation* in matters important to gender equality such as migration, trafficking and environmental impact.

There are also a number of instruments associated with the aid effectiveness agenda around *assessing levels of ownership* and gender analysis has to be incorporated into these – for example the OECD/DAC survey on the Paris Declaration.

4.2 Alignment

Being context specific and assuring the necessary capacity and financial resources for backing the government's not donor gender equality priorities

Government and donors need to agree on the gender equality priorities. Such an agreement needs to be based on the country context (rather than donor's top-down agendas) with consultation and capacity development for gender analysis and policy formulation. Donors should use the Paris Declaration to discipline themselves and encourage governments to take the lead.



"Within the Paris Declaration there is a risk in alignment that when a government's gender equality policy is not clear, donors who want to align behind government have a really good excuse for not doing anything. It's important that we assure our senior managers that when there is a gap in policy it is good to engage in constructive criticism and dialogue."

"Even if [donors] have their own gender policy, it's better to work with governments to help them to develop strategies and policies. Don't just give funds in line with your own policy which will not get implemented. If donor policy does not suit the government then it will not work."

The case studies revealed that donors are under-performing in aligning their practice with their policies on gender equality. To improve their performance donors need to be clear about what they understand by mainstreaming and appreciate that is only one among several avenues for change and that policy alignment and harmonisation may require specific initiatives for women's empowerment with its own targeted funding. Donors also need to look at themselves and change their institutional norms, rules, procedures and culture, including with respect to budgetary allocations and performance appraisals.

4.3 Harmonisation

Agreeing a common framework while using a variety of aid instruments

Donors need a common framework and improved mechanisms for supporting gender equality in any particular country, including common targets and indicators; they should encourage the national machinery to take the lead in making this happen.

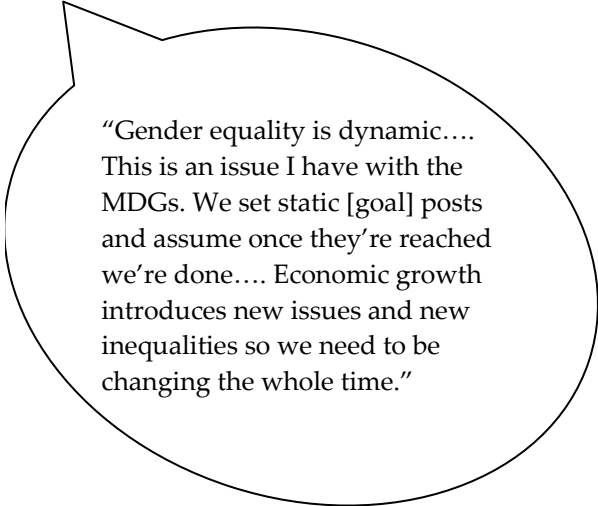
Harmonisation does not necessarily mean choosing a single aid instrument for promoting gender equality; the complexity of the challenges requires diverse and complementary responses. For example, political participation and strengthening voice often get left out and need other kinds of instrument. There are interesting examples of project support which maximise donor efficiency in the disbursement of funds and minimize transaction costs, for example the China Gender Facility which with pooled funding is a means by which NGOs and civil society can access funds.

4.4. Managing for results

Evidence of how gender sensitive programming makes a difference while being aware that qualitative methods may be required for capturing some of the most significant results in an ever changing world

Managing for results should include results at the intervention level and the national level as well as international comparators. Reporting on any aid funded initiative has to be gender sensitive and national policy performance and policy assessment frameworks should include national and international commitments to gender equality objectives (MDGs, CEDAW).

There is a continuing requirement for evidence that gender sensitive programming really delivers more impact for men and women, as well as evidence of linkages between gender equality and poverty reduction with more sector-specific examples of concrete actions that have delivered results on aid effectiveness and gender. At the same time, managing for results must promote interventions that require longer term financial and technical support.



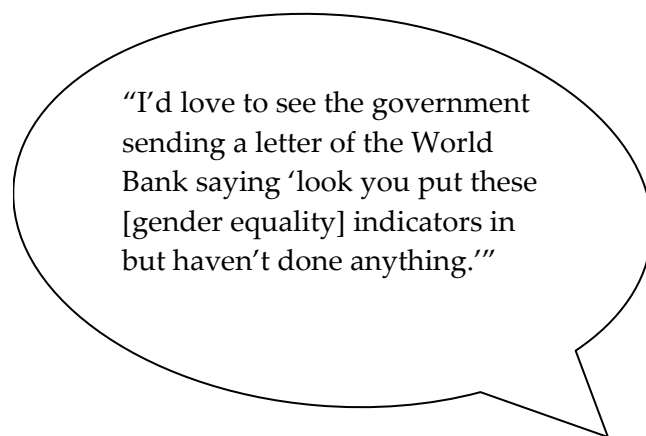
“Gender equality is dynamic.... This is an issue I have with the MDGs. We set static [goal] posts and assume once they’re reached we’re done.... Economic growth introduces new issues and new inequalities so we need to be changing the whole time.”

4.5 Mutual accountability

Joint monitoring and peer reviews against pre-established frameworks, rewarding success

Ratification of CEDAW provides a ready made mutual accountability mechanism for both donor and recipient governments and the various technical working groups and other government-donor co-ordination mechanisms offer excellent opportunities for peer reviews of progress on gender equality at sector, local and donor levels with champions identified and rewarded.

At the same time mutual accountability, as a concept, has to move from a general statement to accountability to specific identifiable groups, bearing in mind that different sets of women may have varying and even conflicting interests, as for example between elites and those living in poverty.



4.6 Summary

Both the case studies and the ideas for improving aid effectiveness for gender equality that emerged from looking at these demonstrate the necessity not only for governments to take a leadership role in changing patterns of gender relations that have an adverse effect on women's lives but also for enhanced donor performance in support of that leadership. This section has identified the main conclusions emerging from the workshop as to how donors could do this. The next and final section places these conclusions within a wider discussion of how the Paris agenda can be used creatively as a pathway of women's empowerment and for greater gender equality.

5. THE PARIS PRINCIPLES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

International aid has a chequered history of success in supporting long term processes of social change. Concerning women's empowerment and gender equality, there is a view that more was achieved in the last decade than the present one. Yet it is a policy agenda that can allow the implementation of Paris Declaration a significant opportunity to show how the five principles can be effective in making real and positive changes to people's lives.

We recently looked at the work we do on gender equality, and it showed us that while we'd had some successes, the truth is that we hadn't fully put gender equality into the heart of DFID's work. We're not alone in this. Our colleagues in Norway, and in the World Bank and at the UN came to the same conclusions"

Hilary Benn, UK Secretary of State for International Development, March 8th 2007

5.1 How supporting gender equality objectives can strengthen the implementation of the Paris principles

That the Paris Declaration is a potentially useful framework for making aid work better for women contradicts the view held widely in the international women's movement and in some donor circles that the Paris Declaration has been unhelpful in this regard. What, however, is at issue appears not to be the principles as such but the manner in which they are implemented and the other changes in international aid practice that have tended to be associated with the Paris agenda – such as reductions in staff capacity that are associated with programmatic spending or the diversion of such capacity to developing the management systems for alignment and harmonisation.

During the course of the country studies, one donor staff member lamented that she had spent two years working on procurement systems; she was frustrated because she saw little connection between this and making a difference to the lives of real people. Yet, in different shapes and forms, putting people at the centre of the international aid agenda has always been a challenge in which the rhetoric of the glossy booklets has been contradicted by bureaucratic incentives. Organisations tend to forget that effective aid – for example in achieving MDG 5 - means supporting locally owned processes of change and prioritising the appropriate human and financial resources to make that happen.

It is not the Paris Declaration that is at fault but some of the characteristics of the organisations responsible for implementing it. Harmonisation and alignment do not necessarily mean the deployment of certain aid modalities. Nevertheless, *efficiency* arguments favour sector wide programmatic support rather than small targeted interventions –e.g. with civil society - that may have greater *impact* for social change. Diversity of approaches and voices in policy debates may be minimised for the same reason – and those with less power may be excluded. Results and therefore strategies to achieve these are set by those with a seat at the table and even successful outcomes for gender equality may be disregarded and not built upon should they not fit the priorities of those with decision-making power to judge what a result is.

At the same time the gender equality agenda offers aid organisations significant opportunities to make more creative use of the Paris Declaration. The Indonesia team working on Making Pregnancy Safer showed how by adopting a holistic gender equality approach they are able to think outside the sector box, explore models of partnership across government and with civil society and emphasise and monitor results as judged by the end users of aid.

5.2 Constructing partnerships

The Paris Declaration is a welcome structural shift in power relations between aid giving and aid receiving governments with potential for genuine partnership as expressed through the principles of *ownership / alignment/ mutual accountability*. At the same time donors must take great care that debates – locally, nationally and regionally - on what needs to be changed to improve people's lives, and how to bring such changes about are not discouraged through a misapplication of *harmonisation / results based management*.

While there are obvious arguments for better co-ordination and more efficient use of resources, a balance has to be struck between this and encouraging diverse points of view for solving complex problems. Both consensus and contestation are equally drivers of pro-poor change and if the former dominates, there may be a tendency for questions about ownership, alignment, harmonisation and results to look only for a single diagnosis and solution, thus shutting down the possibilities of creative dialogue and the collaborative challenging of implicit assumptions about how the world works that closes down innovation and constrains imagination. In situations of unequal power relations or inequality of access to information, this risk is particularly high. For this reason the Bangkok workshop was explicitly designed as a process for strengthening partnerships through critical, strategic and constructive reflection; through learning from one's own and other's experience while recognising that what works in one context might not apply to another; and through making sure everyone has time to understand the issue and that their voice is heard.

Such a process means that those already better informed about international aid practice (donor staff who work full time on the issue as compared with government and civil society representatives whose focus of effort is on making change happen in their own country) - or for whom the language of the workshop is their mother tongue - must be patient and deliberately seek to include others in the discussion. The rewards are worth the time spent. One workshop participant remarked that if government-donor consultation meetings they attended were designed in the manner of this workshop there would be much greater potential for gender equality issues to be understood and addressed in the policy dialogue.

In brief, the process has to be got right - and resources of people and time have to be devoted to the process – if the Paris Declaration is to live up to its potential for making aid better support partnerships for social change.

**ANNEX A LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE BANGKOK WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANTS LIST ON AID EFFECTIVENESS AND GENDER
EQUALITY WORKSHOP, IN BANGKOK FROM 2 – 3 APRIL 2007**

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

1. Mr Marshall Elliott, Head of DFIDSEA, DFID Bangkok (Monday morning)
2. Mr Ian Porter, Country Director, World Bank, Bangkok (Monday morning)
3. Mr Tom Beloe, Senior Social Development Adviser, DFID Bangkok
4. Ms Ryratana Rangsitpol, National Programme Officer, UNIFEM
5. Ms Jean D’Cunha, Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM
6. Ms Sally Moyle, Gender Adviser, AusAid, Australia
7. Ms Gillie Brown, Senior Social Development Adviser, World Bank, Bangkok
8. Ms Helene Carlsson Rex, World Bank
9. Ms Ines Smyth, Gender Adviser, ADB, Philippines
10. Ms Sonomi Tanaka, Senior Social Development Specialist, ADB, Philippines
11. Mrs Chanida Chanyatat Bamford, Deputy Director, Focus on the Global South

CAMBODIA

1. HE Mrs Keth Sam Ath, General Director, MoWA
2. Ms Nhean Sochetra, Director, MoWA
3. Ms Kroesna Kang, MAFF
4. Ms Mia Hyun, Poverty Specialist, World Bank
5. Ms Heng Sokun, CDC
6. Ms Ky Nimol, NGO Forum
7. Ms Uch Sarom, Project Management Adviser, MoWA
8. Ms Anna Collins-Falk, Senior Policy Adviser, MoWA, UNDP/UNFPA
9. Ms Helen Appleton, Social Development Adviser, DFID
10. Ms Samvada Kheng, Gender Advisor, Cambodia Resident Mission, ADB

INDONESIA

1. Ms Jannette O'Neil, Technical Advisor MPS, GTZ
2. Dr Gertrud Schmidt-Ehry, Principal Advisor SISKES PLUS & HRD, GTZ
3. Ms Desti Murdijana, Chairwomen of PIKUL, NGO Forum
4. Dr Nardho Gunawan, Gender Mainstream Team in the Health Sector, Civil Society
5. Dr Hadiat, MA. Vice Director for Public Health, directorate of Health and Nutrition, Bappenas, Central Government
6. Ms Titien Supartini Djahari, Assistant Deputy for Gender Mainstream, State Ministry for Women Empowerment, Central Government
7. Ms Ferienawati A.R. SKM, Head Section for Family Planning Guidance & Evaluation, Dit. Maternal Health, DG Public Health, Ministry of Health, Central Government
8. Dr Reny Risjanty Bunyamin, Provincial Health Office, NTB in charge of Global Fund for HIV/STI

TIMOR LESTE

1. Ms Milena Pires, Programme Coordinator, UNIFEM
2. Ms Terezinha Cardoso, Director, Caucus
3. Ms Maria de Fatima Dias Ximenes, President of Boad, Rede Feto
4. Ms Maria Domingas Femandes, Commissioner, National Electoral Commission
5. Mr Florindo Pereira, Director, National Institute for National Administration (NIAP)
6. Mr Arcangelo Leite, Director, National Directorate for State Administration (DNAT)
7. Ms Maria Jose Sanches, Director, Office of Promotion of Equality
8. Mr Charles Lathrop, Head of Mission, Irish Aid
9. Ms Robin Scott Charlton, Counsellor D.C., AusAid, Australian Embassy, Dili

VIETNAM

1. Ms Than Thi Thien Huong, Social Development Adviser, DFID
2. Mr Ho Minh Chien, Director General of Labour Culture, Social Affairs Dept
3. Ms Tran Thi Mai Huong, Permanent Secretary, National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam
4. Mr Ha Binh Bon, Vice Director, Legal Affairs Department
5. Ms Elena Villalobos, Representative Peace & Development in Vietnam
6. Mrs Carrie Turk, Senior Poverty Specialist, World Bank
7. Mr Ger Steenbergen, First Secretary, Health and Gender, The Royal Netherlands Embassy
8. Mrs Doan Hoai Anh, Manager of World Bank Division, State Bank of Vietnam
9. Mr Phan Van Quyet, Translator

CONSULTANTS

1. Ms Rosalind Eyben, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex
2. Ms Dipa Bagai, Bangkok
3. Ms Sofi Ospina, Australia
4. Ms Cheryl Urashima, Cambodia

ANNEX B THE CASE STUDIES