
Exploring gender practices

in projects & organizations

Matilda Rizopulos

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Student: Matilda Rizopulos

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Van Hall Larenstein, University of Applied Science, Wageningen

Supervisor PSO: Tessa Roorda

Supervisor Van Hall Larenstein: Annemarie Westendorp

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Abstract

Gender is a fascinating and challenging subject. This research paper brings in experiences, gender approaches- and practices from projects globally as well as gender approaches and practices of Dutch development organizations. It focuses on 'good practices', practices that have contributed to gender equality. The research paper further describes the capacity, motivation and challenges on working with gender and gender equality in seven Dutch development organizations. The seven development organizations are all members of the capacity development association PSO.

The purpose of the research has been to identify strategies for PSO to support their member organizations with knowledge generation, learning and capacity development on gender. Projects chosen by the development organization on the criterion of being successful in contributing to gender equality. They were analyzed by using a compiled Gender assessment tool. Additionally interviews were conducted with staff from the Dutch development organizations.

The 'good practices' that were identified in the projects are in brief: inclusion of women in activities and access for women to resources; capacity development of women in decision making positions; involvement of various groups in the community; gender training; and sharing of experiences. The data from interviews concludes that Dutch development organizations are committed to develop and work with gender. The main challenge for organizations is to understand how to 'do' gender in relation to their specific working field. The responsibility of incorporating gender in the organizations is mostly in the hands of a few staff members when it should be a collective effort. Opportunities evident are gender networks and thematic learning groups. PSO can support the member organizations in various ways, but special attention should be given to specific thematic knowledge, different levels of knowledge, organizational change and discussions on power and power relations.

Keywords: Gender equality, gender approaches, gender mainstreaming, development organizations, good practices, PSO

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Gender is a fascinating and challenging subject. It deals with social relationships and power distribution between men and women. Gender inequalities can be found in many dimensions of life; in households, social institutions and in the economy. Gender inequalities in development mostly understood with the exclusion and discrimination by gender in basic rights, in access and control of resources, in employment and in political voice (World Bank, 2001). International development organizations have for decades worked on trying to eliminate gender inequalities and contribute to gender equality. The approaches and practices to gender equality in projects and within organizations have been many with several challenges. Gender mainstreaming is referred to as the ‘most modern’ approach to gender equality (Daly, 2005). It involves the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in all aspects of development.

This research project is commissioned by PSO association and looks at gender approaches and practices of Dutch development organizations. It investigates gender approaches and practices in projects and programmes globally, with focus on ‘good practices’, practices that have contributed to gender equality. The research paper describes the capacity, motivation and challenges on working with gender and gender equality in seven Dutch development organizations.

1.2 PSO and gender

Capacity development

PSO stands for ‘Personele Samenwerking met Ontwikkelingslanden’ (Capacity building in developing countries). PSO association shapes and facilitates learning-by-doing on the subject of capacity development of civil society in international co-operation. PSO has more than 50 Dutch development organizations as members and stimulates learning and innovation with the member organizations, within the members’ international relations, and in the development sector as a whole. The relations between the member organizations and their partner organizations are at the center of attention. PSO examines what impact interventions have on empowerment of partner organizations and their networks. PSO has set up various work groups in which PSO members focus on specific themes. The instruments used by PSO focus on reinforcing the capacity of civil society organizations in the Netherlands and in developing countries.

For the above mentioned purpose the following instruments are used:

- Strategic financing
- Adaptive and collective research
- Collective learning
- Evaluation
- Learning by doing trajectory
- Special learning programmes
- Experimentation

Gender

One of PSO's knowledge and learning issues is capacity development on the subject of gender equality. The learning group on gender consists of two staff members and has been running since 2008. During these two years several activities and initiatives have developed in the area of gender in the association, with both internal and external events and training. PSO is continuously looking for new strategies and activities to support its members on gender. Member organizations are for example encouraged to develop gender policies and improve gender equality practices.

PSO's definition of gender:

PSO stands for equal rights of men and women considering opportunities and equal participation in decision making processes. Both men and women should have the right to make their own life choices.

PSO's Gender policy

PSO is together with the member organizations actively advocating for equal rights for men and women. The gender policy of PSO has a gender equality focus and aims to support transformation processes of systems and institutions. The gender policy consists of four levels for addressing gender equality. The levels are; member organizations, the relation between partner organizations and the member organizations, the partner organizations and the own organization.¹

Former research

In 2008, PSO conducted a research about gender practices in projects and programmes of some of their member organizations. In general the research took stock of gender approaches and – strategies of member organizations and the outcomes of these. The research gave insights for several concrete learning activities and – trajectories with member organizations and ideas for linking up with relevant institutions in the south. The research also showed that member organizations call for examples of gender aware programmes and good practices in various sectors.

¹ For more information see PSO document 'Notitie Gender en Capaciteits ontwikkeling PSO'

1.3 Purpose and Problem definition

PSO has from its work with members and through the former research on gender a general knowledge on what the situation of the subject is in the various organizations. However PSO wants to obtain more insights on how gender is put into practice, how gender equality is addressed and what can be learned from different 'good practices' in projects. PSO therefore feels the need to re-analyze the gender strategies of the member organizations, and identify successful strategies to contribute to gender equality on a project and programme level. The purpose of the research is to identify strategies for PSO to support their member organizations with knowledge generation, learning and capacity development on gender.

Practice is translating an idea into action

Good practice is one that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model.

Source:

Practice: a definition (n.d)

Retrieved May 25, from

www.wikipedia.org,

Good practice: a definition

Retrieved May 25 from

www.humandynamics.org

1.4 Research questions

Based on the outcomes of former research, the following questions will be answered:

1. What practices have the member organizations of PSO and their partners used in projects and programs to contribute to achieving gender equality?

Sub questions:

- a. What has been the goal(s)?
- b. What activities, strategies, resources, instruments have been used?
- c. What has been successful, not successful (Strengths, Weaknesses)?
- d. Which factors contribute to success?

2. What is the capacity and motivation of PSO member organizations on working with gender and gender equality?

- a. What are the internal resources, approaches and strategies?
- b. What opportunities and developments are there?
- c. What are the challenges and what can be improved?

1.5 Report structure

This first chapter has introduced the subject and PSO. It has described the purpose and the research questions. Chapter two moves deeper into theory on gender and gender equality by defining the most commonly used gender concepts, a summary of the approaches to gender, women and development since 1950 and theory on gender and organizational

change. Chapter three presents the research methods and chapter four gives the results of the Gender project analysis of the on gender practices in projects and programmes. Chapter five is based on interviews with staff of the seven Dutch development organizations. In chapter six conclusions are drawn on gender practices and the capacity of organizations to address gender. Recommendations for PSO on how to support the organizations is also articulated.

2 Literature review

Chapter 2 presents findings of a theory study on gender and gender equality. It starts with defining the most commonly used gender concepts and a few discussions of these concepts. It continues with a summary of the approaches to gender, women and development since 1950, with extra focus on gender mainstreaming. Finally the chapter explores the theory on gender and organizational change.

2.1 Gender concepts

The information used for this paragraph has derived from a great number of gender and development journals, gender manuals, Oxfam publications and books.

Sex and gender

Sex is the biological differences between men and women. It refers to visible differences in genitalia and related differences in procreative function. Gender on the other hand refers to the socio-cultural definition of man and woman; the way societies distinguish men and women and assign them social roles and responsibilities. The experience of being man or woman differs highly from culture to culture and from time to time. (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay, 1999: Bhasin, 200)

Gender inequality, equality and equity

Gender inequalities can be found in many dimensions of life; in households, social institutions and in the economy and affects both men and women directly and in turn families, communities and nations. Gender inequalities in development mostly mean exclusion and discrimination by gender on disparities in basic rights, in access to and control of resources, in employment and earnings, and in political voice (World Bank 2001).

Inequality is caused by many factors other than gender alone, particularly economic status, race or ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, physical or mental disability, and sexuality. Situational factors such as systemic poverty, environmental degradation, or rural neglect can also lead to serious hardship and inequality (UNDP RBEC, 2002)².

The concept of gender equality is a contested notion in the feminist theory and a concept that is repeatedly brought up in debates and dilemmas. Verloo (2007) writes in her book about *the multiple meanings of gender equality* and refers to the lack of consensus among politicians, civil society and academia on what gender equality actually means and should mean. It is therefore a concept which is conceptualized differently by particular organizations and scholars. Mostly known internationally are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international guidelines for the global action to eliminate poverty by 2015 with the Goal 3 “to promote gender equality and empower women”. While only this goal explicitly addresses gender equality and the empowerment of women, it is now widely

² Regional Programme of the United Nations Development Programme’s Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS.

recognized that achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is central to fulfilling all the MDGs.

Definitions of gender equality by three development institutions:

FAO, the Food and Agricultural organizations of UN:

"Gender equality means that women and men should equally benefit from resources, services and chances within their societies and in political life. In addition to this men and women should have equal participation in decision-making, equal ability to exercise their human rights and equal opportunities in employment and other aspects of their livelihood. These rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on if they are born male or female."

Oxfam UK, development agency

"Gender equality gives women and men the same entitlements to all aspects of human development, including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights; the same level of respect; the same opportunities to make choices; and the same level of power to shape the outcomes of these choices."

World Bank

"Gender equality is defined as equality under law, equality of opportunity (including equality of rewards for work and equality in access to human capital and other productive resources that enable opportunity), and equality of voice (the ability to influence and contribute to the development process)."

Gender equity is slightly different from gender equality. It denotes the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources. The goal of gender equity, sometimes called substantive equality, moves beyond equality of opportunity by requiring transformative change. It recognizes that women and men have different needs, preferences, and interests and that equality of outcomes may necessitate different treatment of men and women (Reeves and Baden 2000).

Gender relations and roles

Gender relations are social relationships and power distribution between men and women in both the private life and in the public sphere. These relations are mostly based on power that tend to disadvantage women. Gender relations are constituted by a range of institutions, such as the family, legal systems and markets as well as they interact with other social relations like ethnicity, class, caste and race (Reeves and Baden 2000).

Gender relations are as other social relations multi-dimensional and different cultures impose different expectations upon men and women. Gender roles are deeply rooted in the culture, traditions and the norms and values within. Most often, gender roles are not based on biological or physical imperatives, but rather result from stereotypes and presumptions about what men and women can and should do. Gender roles become

problematic when a society assigns greater value to the roles of one gender - usually men's (UNDP RBEC, 2002).

Gender analysis

A gender analysis is a systematic gathering of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify gender inequalities. It is a tool to understand gender issues, for project or policy design, implementation, and evaluation. Different approaches to gender analysis can be used for different purposes. Gender analysis can use a variety of methodologies – from a desk study of existing data to in-depth large-scale sociological research projects. The depth and level of analysis depends on your specific situation and policy needs (UNDP RBEC, 2002). The gender analysis most referred to is the Harvard Analytical Framework which was one of the first developed frameworks, published in 1985. The Harvard Analytical Framework aims to demonstrate that there is a division of labor and resources between men and women that should be taken into account in project planning. Since the Harvard tool was developed, numerous analysis tools have been invented by individuals and organizations to apply to a specific field. However, according to Warren (2007) frameworks and analytical tools alone are insufficient. She reasons that they need to be combined with other skills and knowledge, along with a clear strategy and a commitment to implementing it. As Warren (2007) states *“In addition to simply understanding the theory, methodologies, and limitations of gender analysis frameworks, it is also crucial to develop the necessary skills needed to use them effectively and appropriately. These include the ability to listen to, consult with, and learn from the communities about, and for whom, information is being gathered.”*

Additionally a key lesson learned by the NGO Oxfam UK is that it is insufficient to provide partners with analysis tools, they need to develop these themselves. It is also crucial that staff and partners carry out their own gender analysis, so that they feel ownership of the tool and incorporate it into their way of thinking and about the reality they intend to address with their programmes (Dawson, 2005).

Gender training

Gender training is a practice that is recognized by governments, NGOs and the UN to be an important tool to bring about gender aware changes on all levels. Gender training refers to a wide range of activities including gender analysis, gender research and gender education. The training varies widely in what the training programme entails; the vision and purpose, the methods and understanding of the concepts (Mukhopadyay and Appel, 1998). There are several ongoing discussions and debates about what gender training should include, how it should be performed, where and by whom. Mukhopadyay and Wong (2007) are questioning why 'training' is commonly seen as the main way to increase gender awareness, change practice and strengthen skills. They believe that the why-question is not asked or answered in the current mainstream of development. They also identify challenges related to discomfort by development institutions to addressing issues of power in gender relations in the gender trainings. Murphy (1998) has recognized that effectiveness of gender trainings is improved if the emphasis is on gender relations (as relations of power) rather than gender

roles. However, Murphy (1998) explains that gender training of a few staff members or community members will not be sufficient to empower and create social changes. Further Mukhopadyay and Appel (1998) stress the fact that gender training should not make a separation of practical and theoretical gender practices but involve 'thinking, doing, theory, practice, reflection and action'.

2.2 Approaches to gender, women and development

WID, GAD and more

De Waal (2006) has summarized the gender approaches from the 1950s on. The structure of this paragraph is mainly based on her article '*Evaluating gender mainstreaming in development projects*'. She begins with describing the welfare approach to gender equality which started in the 50s and thereafter the whole range of various approaches that followed.

The welfare approach was focused on women's practical and material needs within the existing gender order in labor, resources and rewards. In the 1970s the Women in Development (WID) approach came which called for more attention to women in policy and practice. The WID approach advocated for the implementation of separate or integrated projects for women. Women-only projects were seen as the right solution to address women's marginalization. The impact of the WID approach can be seen in the discussions and research it generated. It also gave growth to institutional mechanisms in development organizations with a mandate to integrate women in development (Razavi and Miller, 1995). This approach was developed at the same time as the anti-poverty approach that emphasized the need for a focus on underdevelopment rather than gender subordination. By the end of the 1970s the WID approach developed into the Gender and Development approach (GAD). The shift was most likely a response to the criticism of the WID approach, that it did not take gender (power) relations into account, which led to little improvement in women's status (Mukhopadhyay, Steenhouwer and Wong 2006). The GAD approach gave an alternative to WID by focusing on meeting women's practical- and strategic needs by challenging existing gender roles and relations (Reeves and Baden, 2000). The equity approach which came into the spotlight of 1975-1985 concentrated on the necessity to reconsider policies and programmes to take account of men and women's different realities and interests (De Waal, 2006; Reeves and Baden, 2000).

The efficiency approach of the 1990s recognized that understanding men's and women's roles and responsibilities as part of the planning of development projects and programmes improved the effectiveness and efficiency (Momsen, 2004).

The empowerment approach was adopted as a term by a few development organizations in the mid 1990s. The empowerment was linked to participatory approaches and often meant working with women at community level with a focus of strategic needs as identified by the women themselves. (Momsen, 2004) .

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming has been developed over decades through the approaches above mentioned. It is referred to as the 'most modern' approach to gender equality which is used frequently in policy circle (Daly, 2005). The concept of gender mainstreaming was proposed at the Third World Conference in Nairobi in 1985. In 1995 it really became a part of the global agenda. Then at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, governments across the world signed the Beijing Platform for Action that endorsed a policy to promote gender equality and empower women. This was demanded by the women's movement that saw the importance of a different kind of development, which was sustainable and based on commitments to equality between men and women and between North and South (Sweetman, 2002). Gender mainstreaming is in general not seen as an end in itself, but as a mean to reach the goal of gender equality. That involves the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in all aspects of development (see Box).

UN Economic and Social Council (1997, 28) explains gender mainstreaming with following definition:

*“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. **The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.**”*

Since the Beijing conference in 1995 several stages and challenges have been recognized through assessments and interactive seminars with International development institutions and other stakeholders. Gender mainstreaming has been looked at and reviewed by Moser (2005) in four stages. The review by Moser (2005) is based on gender mainstreaming practices of bilaterals, International Financial Institutions, UN systems and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The progress of gender mainstreaming can be seen in four stages:

- Stage one refers to embracing the terminology of gender, gender equality and women empowerment which can be summarized as 'gender as a good idea' (MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel, 1997).
- Stage two is the development and adoption of a gender policy.
- Stage three is the implementation of gender mainstreaming. This means that the policy documents are translated into operational strategies and implementation strategies.
- Stage four, the evaluation of the practices.

Within the international development organizations Moser (2005) makes it clear that most organizations have adopted the terminology and developed gender mainstreaming policies (Stage one and two). The strategy among all the international institutions participating in Moser's review have as a strategy chosen the dual strategy/approach of gender mainstreaming. The two components of the dual strategy are: firstly the integration of women's and men's concerns in all policies; and secondly specific activities aimed at empowering women. She describes further that at the level of implementation significant challenges remain (Stage three). Signs of policy evaporation (when good policy intentions fail to be followed through in practice) have been evident. Moser also states that assessments of gender practices have focused more on institutional inputs than on the operational and programming implementation (Stage four).

Integration or transformation

In practice there are two interrelated ways that gender equality concerns can be mainstreamed; Integration or Transformation. In Jahan's study (cited in Mukhopadhyay, Steenhower, and Wong, 2006) the two components are described. Integration refers to integration of gender concerns within existing development approaches and Transformation aims to transform the existing development agenda with a gender perspective. Integration and Transformation require work at two different institutional levels. Additionally Mukhopadhyay (2004) explains: "*While integration involves working within development institutions to improve the "supply" side of the equation, a transformative agenda requires efforts to create constituencies that demand change*". Rao and Kelleher (2005) believe that transformative goals exist uneasily within large development organizations as transformation is fundamentally a political and personal process. They further state to that all approaches to gender equality should have a political component given that gender relations exist within power relations, and power is maintaining existing privilege. If power, dynamics or cultural change is not dealt with, organizations cannot develop strategies that bring outcomes that change inequalities.

On Track with gender Trajectory

The '*On Track with gender*' Trajectory is a Dutch initiative that is devoted to taking stock of what has been done so far with regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the Ministry for Development Cooperation, Dutch NGOs and universities. The trajectory was carried out within the framework of the Development Policy Review Network (DPRN) and organized by CIDIN, Hivos, Ministry of foreign affairs and Oxfam Novib. It started in 2008 and will be finished in November 2010.

Several challenges of gender mainstreaming have been identified through the first phase of the trajectory. A number of these challenges are briefly mentioned below in this paragraph³.

Firstly gender mainstreaming has had the risk of being an integration strategy instead of a transformative one due to an insufficient focus on context and organization. Secondly

³ For further information see www.ontrackwithgender.nl

gender often becomes an instrumental and administrative aspect narrowed down to check lists and numbers. Thirdly the gender mainstreaming has had an effect on specific budgets for women and gender programmes and organizations - the budgets have decreased. This also results in the expectancy of fewer individual staff members to take the responsibility for gender issues in the organization. Finally there is a lack of clarity and practical examples of gender mainstreaming. Often there is more clarity about gender inequalities than gender equality. The outcomes from the first phase of the trajectory provide the basis for a second phase in which a 'Reversed Dialogue' with Southern institutes and experts on women's empowerment, gender equality and gender mainstreaming will take a central place.

2.3 Gender and organizational change

Many practices that successfully promote women's empowerment and gender equality are not integrated in the day-to-day routines of international development organizations.

A necessity in the work towards gender equality is to change inequitable social systems and institutions. Organizational change is stated to be a requirement for addressing root causes of gender inequality (Rao and Kelleher, 2005). It starts with the willingness of the organization to change and the ability of the organization to see the need for it. The organizational change depends on collective learning by the organization and the existence of a tradition of transparency and accountability. Collective learning means that the whole organization is engaged in learning and in developing tools and mechanisms to be able to do so. The change and learning of gender relations and gender issues tends to be linked with individuals within the organizations instead of the effort of the whole organization. It is also noted that the appointed gender experts in organizations are responsible to look after the gender aspects of all different departments. This is far beyond their appointed task of working on gender issues in for example programmes in the South (MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel, 1997).

The problem of building capacity only of individuals instead of building the organization's capacity is also identified by Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999). They imply that organizations must build a team of well-trained, committed and well-placed people, and nurture and sustain efforts toward gender equality. A perfect team committed and well trained is of course a great base, however there are a lot of constraints before reaching that stage. Especially constraints in relation to personal attitudes have a big influence on the fact that gender issues will be put on the agenda or not. Other constraints on changing organizational policy and practice on

A number of strategies to carry the aim of gender equality forward in an organization:

- Revisiting the mission statement and objectives
- Stakeholder analysis
- Policy formulation
- Strategic planning
- Training
- Allocating budgets
- Setting targets of gender parity in staffing
- Altering recruitment criteria
- Restructuring departments to mainstream gender
- Appoint change agents
- Make the workplace more women friendly

Source: Gender and Organizational change, (MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel, 1997).

gender are people's difficulty to understand change processes and their resistance to accepting them; *'it always seems easier not to change than to change'* (MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel, 1997).

Positively, many development organizations have acknowledged the importance and need to address gender issue both internally in their organizations and externally in their programs (Mukhopadhyay Steenhouwer, and Wong, 2006). They have as MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel (1997) express 'accepted gender as a good idea' and the first stage of gender mainstreaming (Moser, 2005). However, an organization might become gender aware but still have problems achieving gender equality because of its internal structures, which are many times patriarchal (MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel 1997). These structures are referred to as the 'deep structures' of organizations with regards to values, history, culture, and practices that form the way on how an organization is working and performing. It is important for organizations to examine in which ways hidden values and assumptions may inhibit gender equality (Rao Stuart, and Kelleher, 1999). Development organizations have at times, for example demanded gender aware programming whilst not addressing gender inequity within their own organizations (Mukhopadhyay, 2006). As Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999) summarize; *"If the organization is gender-biased on the inside it is incapable of producing gender-equitable outcomes"*.

3 Research methods

3.1 Research approach

The research covers seven organizations that are members of PSO, (Association for Staff Cooperation with Developing Countries) in The Netherlands. The organizations participating vary in size and thematic fields and were chosen on the basis of criteria of supporting projects related to rural development. Organizations participating in the research were:

- Hivos
- Both ENDS
- Mensen met een missie
- ICCO
- Mileukontakt International
- IICD
- Agriterra

Each of the seven organizations selected 1-3 projects which they considered successful in contributing to gender equality. The organizations provided primary data of these projects from the implementing partner organizations in the form of project proposals, progress reports and evaluations.⁴ To complement and confirm findings from the primary data and to get deeper insight in the internal processes and work on gender, interviews were conducted with employees within the relevant organizations both with gender mandate and those without. Secondary data has been literature related to gender mainstreaming, gender equality and organizations. Also gender learning tools and manuals have been used and referred to.

3.2 Gender Assessment tool

The approach for the analysis of the project documents have been adopted from various gender assessment tools. Special attention has been given to assessment tools of project designs and evaluations since the main data for the research was from project documents. The assessment tool was designed to start by briefly analyzing the implementing organizations and their staff, organization and budget for the project. The overall emphasize was on the strategies and activities of the project on how to achieve or contribute to gender equality.

The assessment tool includes the frame work of the MAGEEQ (Institute for Gender Studies) which is the Critical frame analysis. The terms diagnoses and prognosis is used from the frame work and the main question; What is the problem of inequality and how can the problem be solved? The critical frame analysis is methodology that originated in social

⁴ For a specific list of projects see Annex 4.

movement theory and that was refined further with elements of gender and political theory for a MAGEEQ research project. The critical frame analysis was used for the study of the diversity of meanings of gender equality in policy practice. The components of the critical frame analysis was useful because the questions on the problems of inequalities and the root causes are hard to find in other assessment tools. Additionally, a third step the “check up” (evaluation) has been added in the assessment tool to look into the results of the prognosis. Half of the questions in the analysis are taken from the *Gender Assessment Studies – a manual for gender consultants by Annet Linge*, the part of her assessment that is used for analyzing project proposals. This assessment format had a broader focus than several other tools which main focus was on women and the number of women participating. To identify gender approaches in projects the Framework for gender mainstreaming evaluation referred to by Maretha de Waal has been consulted. This is in addition to the rest of the assessment.

To examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the project and organization, a Gender SWOT analysis was done after the main format for assessment. From the SWOT the external and internal activities and conditions that both have been successful and not successful were reflected upon. For the developed Gender Assessment format see Annex 4.

In total 13 projects were analyzed with the Gender Assessment Tool. The analysis is based on the project documents which were provided by the organizations. The quality and availability of the project documents varied a lot. Therefore the information from documents do not always give a entirely fair picture of the project, this is something that should be taken into account.

References for the Gender Assessment Tool:

Gender Assessment Studies – a manual for gender consultants by Annet Linge

Critical Frame Analysis from:

(Verloo, Mieke (ed.) (2007), *Multiple Meanings of Gender Inequality. A Critical Frame Analysis of Gender Policies in Europe*. CEU Press: Budapest (309 p.)

Gender and Evaluation- sheet 12 by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Gender SWOT analysis by IFAD

Framework for gender mainstreaming evaluation from:

(de Waal, Maretha (2006) *Evaluating gender mainstreaming in development projects*, development in Practice, 16:2, 209-214)

3.3 Interviews

The interviews were held with 1-2 interviewees in each organization, except for one organization, IICD, that felt the need and interest of doing more. In that organization 6 interviews were completed with various staff. The interviews were conducted with staff that had been involved, or are planning projects and staff that have gender equality/mainstreaming as their personal task and specialization in the organization. The latter was the case in 6 of the 8 organizations. To be noted is that only one of the

interviewees was a man. In total 14 semi-structured interviews (SSI) were held which took on an average 1-1,5 hours⁵. 3 of the interviews were recorded and for the rest notes were taken. The interviews were analyzed by a qualitative data analysis. That means basically that the data was read and that notice was taken to interesting/remarkable information from the data – similarities and differences. This information was gathered in sets about different topics which answers the research questions. The table shows the organizations and the number of interviewees.

Organization	Number of interviewees
Hivos	1
Both ENDS	1
Mensen met een missie	1
ICCO	2
Mileukontakt International	1
IICD	6
Agriterra	2
Total	14

⁵ See list of SSI in Annex 3.

4 Gender practices in programs and projects

Information for this chapter has derived through the analysis of project proposals, progress report and evaluation reports written by the partner/implementing organizations of the seven development organizations. These projects were selected by the Dutch development organizations on the basis of the criterion that they have been successful in addressing gender issues. In total, thirteen projects have been read and analyzed. The projects analyzed are covering a wide range of topics.⁶ The content of the chapter gives answers to the first research question *'What practices have the member organizations of PSO and their partners used in projects and programs to contribute to achieving gender equality?'* The topics elaborated are; gender inequalities; target groups; objectives of programmes and projects; approaches, strategies and activities; and strengths and weaknesses. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings.

Implementing organizations

In almost all cases the projects and programmes analyzed are implemented by local partner organizations. In some of the projects the activity has been a process of learning about gender and the Dutch development organization has as well as the partners been part of this process. The resources and capacities to address gender issues in the local organizations are on different levels. Before the start of a project a few organizations have already an established gender policy or guidelines and have before and during the project access to internal or external gender expertise. Others have in the evaluation phase of the project started to consider gender aspects and have during the project made some adaptations in the project activities.

4.1 Gender inequalities

The topics of the projects and programmes are as various as the project settings and the organizations implementing them. More or less all of the projects are communicating some category of gender inequality that requires intervention. The depth of the problems (root causes) and the description of who is responsible for the problems is in general vaguely described in the project documents. To identify the problems of gender inequality four projects have been conducting a need assessment or baseline study. Others have been trying out and evaluated pilot projects to draw lessons on how to continue. No project has mentioned using a gender sensitive analysis to identify how men and women are experiencing the inequalities in relation to their different roles and responsibilities. Most of the gender inequalities recognized in the projects are the inequalities that women are confronted with; poor inclusion of female coffee producers, poverty of women, gender based violence towards women, female genital mutilation and health of young mothers. The

⁶ See Annex 2 for a complete list of the projects and Annex 4 for the Gender Assessment tool.

relation men have with these inequalities and what the problems are for them is not - or vaguely presented.

4.2 Target groups

The gender inequalities expressed in the documents are in the majority emphasizing inequalities towards women. Except one project that is specially targeting men with gender studies, women are always targeted. However often whole organizations and communities are seen as the target group. Six of the thirteen projects do not differentiate the target group but portray the group as 'stakeholders', 'farmers', 'families', 'vulnerable groups' and 'members' without mentioning distinction of sex, ethnicity, age and class in these groups. In general poor and rural groups are targeted by the organizations. Around four of the projects do have specifically women as prior target group, especially marginalized and poor women. However the idea of including the whole community and people from different levels and categories of professions seem to be commonly focused upon. Participation of the target group in identifying, planning and implementing projects or part of projects varies from project to project. The target groups are mostly involved in the implementation phase, particularly in sharing, training and promoting activities.

4.3 Objectives of programmes and projects

Gender equality has not been mentioned explicitly as a goal in the majority of projects and programmes. In nine of the projects, the goals have been strengthening and improving the participation, income, health, protection and skills of women. These objectives call for the empowerment of women to implicitly generate equal rights, opportunities and skills for men and women. Three projects have clearly stated the goals with precise gender focus. These projects have the aim to teach men on how to commit to change for gender equality, mainstream gender in the water management sector, and to facilitate organizations to transform themselves and their work to more gender equal approaches.

Examples of project objectives:

'To contribute to improve the protection of health rights and well being of women, children, and family affairs in villages and camps'

'Strengthening skills in local management of rural women leaders by education and training'

4.4 Approaches, strategies and activities

Training, learning and sharing

Trainings in different forms, for and with the target groups are present in the greater part of the projects and programmes. The subjects of the trainings are varying depending on the subjects addressed in the projects. A number of training have the Training-of-Trainers (ToT) approach, which means that the participants receive knowledge, not only on the subject matter but also on how to train others. In this way the knowledge will be transferred to a

second generation of participants by the new local trainers. Workshops, as a highly interactive and intense form of training are carried out within the target groups. The participants are sometimes selected specifically for an activity e.g. only decision makers, young women, men or health workers. Then the training or workshop can concentrate on issues specifically related to this group and people might feel confident enough to speak up. An additional strategy is the training of the organization's staff on gender issues. If the staff is more aware of potential gender issues and how they can tackle it, it is expectantly reflected into the way the project is performed.

Learning about new ways to communicate, finding information and sharing it with others has been stimulated in a few of the projects, especially in relation to women empowerment. It can be called the Learning-to-Learn which aims to help learners learn more effectively and thereafter be able to continue independently. At its heart is the belief that learning is learnable. Additionally, seminars and meetings with other groups and communities are arranged to share information and experiences.

Awareness raising

It is said in the evaluation reports that during trainings and workshops the knowledge on various subjects as well as the awareness of gender aspects has been increased. However projects do not stop there, they continue campaigning for social changes and gender equality. Raising awareness has especially in the projects on Female Genital Mutilation and gender based violence been one of the main strategies. Different awareness activities are exercised both locally and nationally in the countries of the partner organizations. In some communities home visits are seen as a good way of approaching people, especially to be able to reach women that do not leave the household very often. Events in schools have been done to raise the awareness of youth and children. If the aim has been to reach a wide audience the use of media was the most efficient strategy. Projects have been linked to both radio and television programs. Other media that has been more commonly utilized for spread of information and campaigning is mobile services and websites. An important aspect is that information is translated to the local languages and in non-written ways for the illiterates.

Community based

In many of the projects the importance of involving various groups, and people with different functions within the community setting is expressed. In some of the projects women are still the specific target group but in most projects both men, women and children of the targeted area are in one way or another engaged in activities. Approaching the people in leader positions like cultural-, religious leaders, local authorities, police forces and teachers is a way to get the project's strategies towards gender equality anchored, discussed and hopefully adopted in the various levels of groups. If people in power positions are accepting the activities and even participate actively it is assumed to positively influence the whole community.

The inclusion of men in activities is regularly articulated as a strategy to make the relations between men and women more stable after the events. Volunteers from the communities are involved in the execution of the projects. Volunteers with a higher level of responsibility are chosen by the community itself, preferably both men and women.

Gender expertise

Few of the projects state that they have had help of someone with gender expertise in any of the project phases. In the two projects explicitly focused on improving the gender focus in organizations, it is said that a number of gender experts have been engaged, both in a problem analysis phase and in the implementation phase. What gender expertise entails is not described or discussed in the project documents. Moreover, it is not mentioned if the expertise is of local, national or international character.

Gender approaches

The gender approaches identified through the project documents, are specific for a certain intervention. They are identified by using the Framework for gender mainstreaming evaluation by de Waal (2006).⁷ Different approaches are used for different areas, gender inequalities and subject matters. Another point of attention is that more than one approach can be recognized within a number of projects and programmes. The meaning and aim of the approaches are also to some extent overlapping each other. The approaches below are all approaches determined from the projects and programme documents.

Women empowerment

Women empowerment means a 'bottom up' process that aims to transform existing power relations through individuals and groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it (Reeves, Baden, 2000). This is also what several partner organizations try to do through their project interventions. The interventions are mainly by training, awareness raising activities and capacity building of women and women groups. Furthermore empowerment is attained by access to micro finance and information. Even though women empowerment is about challenging power relation, this is rarely discussed or addressed in the project documents.

Equality

Equality means in general terms the equal access, control, opportunities, rewards and benefits for women and men (de Waal, 2006). In the projects analyzed, this approach is related to equal benefits of services and education. Improving access can as well be an empowerment approach, however equal access for men and women to information, credit and more, is also described in relation to gender equality.

⁷ See Annex 2 Gender Assessment of proposals and project reports

Equity

Equity, meaning the ratio of participation, access, opportunities, rewards and benefits according to need/concerns of women and men (de Waal, 2006) is one of the most commonly exercised approach in the projects. Especially the focus on the different needs and how activities can be address for the various groups. Different problems and different needs of information, services and protection have been acknowledged.

Parity

Gender parity means the equal representation and participation of women and men. This approach is described in the projects as mostly on organizational level and in trainings, with a set quota/percentage on women participants and representatives of decision making positions.

Rights based

The right based approach is the recognition that women's rights are human rights and that women experience inequalities and injustices solely because of their gender (Reeves and Baden, 2000). The project stating this approach is tackling the subject of Female Genital Mutilation and Gender-based violence. This approach focuses on the capacity building of legal knowledge and literacy, Gender awareness training for police, authorities and judiciary.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is the approach to bring the gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability (Reeves, Baden 2000). One project specifically focus on gender mainstreaming in the water management sector. In this project a lot of different stakeholders are engaged in collective learning, analysis and developing action points.

Transformation

Transformation is about changing the gender order and existing distribution of resources and responsibilities to create balanced gender relations (de Waal, 2006). This approach is used in a project on organizational change. The organizational change process in the project consists of four elements; selection of committed partner organizations; learning, reflection and planning; implementation of action plan; and interaction between a resource person in the donor organization and the partner. The aim was facilitation of organizations for them to look within the organization and to transform both themselves and their work in the communities towards more gender equal approaches.

Anti-poverty

The anti-poverty approach's main point is that poverty rather than subordination is the source of inequality and that women are the bigger part of the poor population (PSO, 2009). The project with this approach is specially targeting poor women with provision of financial services, access to markets and income generating activities. Intersectionality like caste, ethnicity and age are thought of and approached without discrimination.

Gender approaches	Number of projects
Equity	5
Equality	4
Women empowerment	2
Rights based	2
Transformation	2
Gender mainstreaming	1
Parity	1

For more information on the projects see Annex 4

4.5 Strengths and weaknesses

The strengths have been determined on internal features of a project that have proved in addressing gender issues. These are aspects that have come out from organization's evaluations and from the analysis done for this research. The same goes for the weaknesses which are the internal features that have not proved effective or failed to take gender issues into consideration. The strengths and weaknesses are in short described at the end of paragraph.

Strengths

Empowerment

Evaluations of project interventions are witnessing that especially female participants are feeling more empowered and have more self-confidence. The features of the projects that have contributed to this are:

- Access to information by the use of ICT and networks on e.g. health and markets
- Including women in activities and creating suitable times and space for them
- Access to financial services together with capacity development for women

Leadership positions

Women and youngsters have through some projects gotten more attention within organizations and communities and are gradually being more represented in boards and in leadership positions. With improved competences through trainings their positions in the communities have as well become stronger. Quotas for women in organizations have worked well to increase participation of women. Furthermore, raising awareness of organizations, communities has showed improvements.

Inclusion of the whole community

A strong point of many of the projects is the inclusion and involvement of whole communities, not only women. Various groups and people in decision making positions have been addressed in a way that fit them and their interests.

Sharing and multiplication of knowledge and experience

Sharing of experiences and knowledge by arranging local and national meetings have been the beginning for new collaborations and enhanced opportunities. In this way subject matters get more attention, reach more people, and stimulate discussion and problem solving. Increased internet use has also opened up for new connections. The use of different media channels have been a way to get a greater outreach. The method of training trainers creates opportunities for more people to learn and activities to be multiplied.

Gender activities becoming more normal

Gender training is becoming a more normal part of projects and in organizations. There is acknowledgment that several organizations are aware of gender and have gender equality as a part of their vision and in project activities.

Weaknesses

Not addressing Gender (power) relations

Not much is mentioned in any project about the impact projects and the interventions, have had on power, gender relations and gender roles on the different levels like household, organization, community and society. Since gender is defined as the social roles and relations between men and women this can get more attention. For example what does increased participation of women in an organization mean for gender relations on a household level? The relation of gender and power is another thing that is not taken up in the project documents.

Few Gender analyses

There are only two organizations that mention in their project documents to have conducted a gender analysis before and during the project process. Not taking gender issues and roles into account in the beginning make the project overlook important issues, or fail to see things from different perspectives. E.g. that women grow different crops than men. The root causes of gender inequalities are mostly not described which might lead to interventions that are not targeting the right problems.

One strategy

There are projects presenting more or less one strategy to tackle gender inequalities. It is not clear if this one strategy is enough to contribute to gender equality or if equal participation contributes significantly to gender equality. It is also not clear if awareness raising is enough to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation. There could be additional strategies needed for understanding and changing gender roles and attitudes.

Gender and women as a separate issue

Gender and women are in some organizations seen as a separate group or issue which may not on a general basis give them/it more attention or power. In situations where there is no

possibility for women participating together with men the division may be the best way however, this does not always seem to be the case. In one project women are said to be given *special* attention and *special* training, but why not *equal* attention? In another project trainings for men and women are divided rather stereotypically with sexual reproduction training for men and training on child care for women. This may strengthen traditional gender roles instead of contributing to change.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment of women • Women in leadership positions • Inclusion of the whole community • Sharing and multiplication of knowledge and experience • Gender activities becoming normal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressing gender (power) relations and root causes • Few gender analyses • One strategy to tackle gender inequalities • Women and gender as a separate issue

4.6 Discussion

The studied projects are the ones chosen by the Dutch development organizations as ‘good’ examples of successful projects contributing to gender equality.

Even though the projects and the projects settings are very different for each project studied, they have one major thing in common; The organizations that have gender projects or gender components in the projects address gender inequalities that women are confronted with. One thing about this that stands out is the low attention given to the root causes of these gender inequalities. If the root causes are not known it leads to interventions that are not targeted right. A tool like the gender sensitive analysis could be one way of identifying it, but is not used throughout the projects analyzed. As Dawson (2005) emphasize (see Chapter 2) ,the gender analysis can be developed by the local organization to be incorporated in their own way of thinking and suit the reality that the project is facing.

The ways that the projects analyzed aim to change the inequalities is mainly through knowledge generation and capacity development. Usually these activities are trainings, workshops and awareness raising campaigns. Mukhopadyay and Wong (2007) are questioning why gender training is commonly seen as the main way to increase gender awareness and change practices. They as well question why this issue is not discussed or asked. This issue could be more thoroughly recognized in project planning and evaluations. In general impact of the activities is hard to measure and prove, but evaluation reports and discussions with the target groups have showed several changes in awareness of gender aspects, more openness and collaborations. The evaluations describe that women participants feel empowered and have more self-confidence. It is hard to tell from the documents read if these impacts really have transformed the gender inequality to gender equality even though activities have contributed to, for example improved living conditions.

If the gender inequalities are targeting is especially hard to know since the studied projects and the trainings do not mention much about gender relations, power and politics on different levels. Murphy (1998) describes that to discuss and deal with power relations has is a key factor of an effective gender training. Positive effects were achieved in projects with involvement of various groups of the communities in the project activities. These groups were for example village leaders, religious groups, mothers, teenagers, teachers etc. A few projects are targeting only women or have women as the main target group but there are several projects targeting men, women and children. Although the target groups are not always differentiated but approached as 'farmers', 'stakeholders' etc which shows that a number of projects do not acknowledge diversity. This makes it harder to find the right interventions that suit such a diverse group. Even within a group of men and women there is a lot of diversity to take into account.

Another dilemma can be found in one project. In this project women are said to be given *special* attention and *special* training. But why not equal attention? If this strategy is a small step towards gender equality or if it increases the division and inequality between men and women is an issue that needs more attention.

Within the 13 projects read and analyzed, 8 gender approaches were recognized. This shows that gender issues can be approached with a number of different visions and views yet with comparable learning and capacity building activities. There is not one way of approaching gender inequalities and within organizations different approaches for different areas or subject matters can be practiced.

5 Gender and PSO's member organizations

This chapter presents information from the semi-structured interviews with seven staff members of PSO's member organizations participating in the research project. These organizations are; Agriterra, Hivos, ICCO, Mensen met een missie, IICD, Milieukontakt International and Both ENDS.⁸ The content of the chapter gives answers to the second research question 'What are the competences and motivations of PSO's member organizations on working with gender and gender equality?'. Following topics are looked into; Approaches and strategies, developments and opportunities and challenges and limits. In the final paragraph the findings are discussed. The text is filled with quotes from the interviews without specifically mentioning the names of the interviewees to respect confidentiality.

5.1 Approaches and strategies

Gender policy

A gender policy refers to a policy directed towards women/and gender. The seven organizations differ in how far they are in developing or implementing a gender policy. The responses from the interviews tell that four of the organizations already have an internal and external gender policy, even though some of these policies are still under progress. The gender policy of Hivos dates back to 1988 and has been renewed twice since then. Their gender policy refers to the dual approach (see box).

"Gender mainstreaming means that we want gender to be in cooperated in all parts of the organization, from management to partner organizations, and especially in the thematic groups of Hivos". For the stand alone track of women empowerment Hivos

has developed a special programme focusing on gender, women and development. In addition to this women and feminist organizations are targeted in all thematic programmes of Hivos. Funding for the women organizations is available in every thematic programme, as women organizations are seen as very important for the reason that they are pushing and lobbying for the gender equality agenda.

ICCO has had a gender policy for some time, but is at moment in the process of renewing it along with the decentralization of the whole organization. Before the gender

Dual approach:

'The dual approach aims to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women. This implies, on the one hand, that specific measures must target women's empowerment and gender equality –the stand-alone track and, on the other hand, that gender equality needs to be integrated into all policies, programmes and budgetary decisions – the gender mainstreaming track.'

Source: On track with gender, Policy Brief 2010

⁸ For a specific list of the organizations and interviewees see Annex 1.

policy is reestablished within the organization the person in charge of this development will discuss what the policy should contain with the people in the different programmes and in the regional offices. ICCO's gender strategy is similar to Hivos by supporting the dual approach, yet ICCO does not have a special programme for women empowerment and gender equality. Nevertheless, ICCO is in their three thematic programmes supporting and financing women projects, organizations as well as addressing gender issues.

Agriterra has a very specific gender policy; their strategy is minimum women participation of 30-40% in all projects and in decision making positions of partner organizations. An earmarked budget of 30% for gender/women empowerment activities/projects is another part of the policy. It can be noted that Agriterra put more emphasis on the *stand alone track* than the *gender mainstreaming track*.

Both ENDS has an internal gender policy in place. This policy was assessed before implementation by analyzing positions and salaries of employees in the organization. Gender mainstreaming in all parts of the organization is one of the approaches of Both ENDS. Their external policy is in process which includes the 'niche' of gender, natural resources and sustainable development.

Mensen met een missie (MM) and IICD have the intentions to formulate a gender policy as soon as they have a clearer view on how the organizations want to work with the gender subject. In the main policy of MM, gender is mentioned although the feeling of the MM interviewee is that it is not mentioned specifically enough. The idea is that gender should be mainstreamed in the thematic programmes, which is under progress at the moment.

Mileukontakt International (MK) does not see the need for a specific gender policy in their specific work field of environment and Green Agendas. They see that the eastern environmental movement is mainly run by women and that the goal is not gender equality but environmental sustainability and establishment of Green Agendas.

Assessment of partner organizations

The gender performance of project proposals and partner organizations is measured by a number of organizations by a certain assessment tool. The assessment is mostly conducted when a new potential partner organization is submitting a project proposal. ICCO is using an assessment tool called the Organizational Scan (O-scan). The O-scan is applied by the programme officers before signing a contract with the partner. Besides issues of finance, target group etc, the scan has a special part related to gender aspects that the organization should live up to, for example having a gender policy. The score from the scan show the strong and weak points of the organization and in what field ICCO can be supportive. The gender aspect of the O-scan is not used as a requirement for an organization to get support and funding from ICCO.

Hivos has a similar scan, an organizational assessment where gender performance is measured by ten questions, five on organizational practices and five on project practices. The partner organizations are evaluated through the organizational assessment every two years for Hivos to understand what the developments and weaknesses of the partner organizations are.

Agriterra has two main indicators, the 30-40% participation of women in the projects, in board functions of the partner organizations. 20-40% of the budget is allocated to women. These indicators are assessed in the project proposals submitted but some exceptions occur, which is illustrated by the following quote. *“Sometimes organizations have reasons or cannot live up to the requirements, then they explicitly have to tell the reasons behind it. Then we can see how to go on about it”*.

For partner organizations of MM there is a format to assess gender in projects which includes both quantitative and qualitative questions on gender. To be gender sensitive is not a precondition to receive financial support from MM. If the partner organization scores low, the need for capacity building of this subject is recognized.

IICD does not have a gender assessment tool for proposals and organizations yet, but gender is included in the monitoring and evaluation system and it is further discussed in the focus group discussions with participants of the projects. During these sessions discussions on what level gender has been addressed and what impact it has had on gender relations, power and more are carried out.

Both ENDS and Milieukontakt International (MK) do not have any gender assessment tool of organizational and project practices. They refer to communication and discussion with partners but without a written format.

Factors for a successful (gender) project

Organizations have through years of working with projects and partner organizations distinguished good (and bad) practices of gender. Interviewees from the various organizations have in the interviews expressed their ideas and experiences on what they believe are factors that are important to consider in projects, and that may be crucial for a project to be successful in addressing gender issues.

Success factors in short:	
• Clear objectives for gender	• Involve key persons
• Gender assessment	• Commitment of the organization
• Long term process	• (Local) Ownership of the process
• Gender expertise	• Collective learning
• Include gender from the start	• Not donor driven
• Participation of men, women and children	

To start with, interviewees said that a project should have clear and specific objectives on what it aims to achieve or change in relation to gender. These objectives ought to be based on a gender assessment: *“If you want developments to work, an essential thing to do is a gender assessment before a project, it is a necessity for success”*.

Another essential point for success is the recognition that changing social structures is a long term process which means that it might take several years to witness results. During this process, consultants and gender expertise can be helpful to trigger changes and give practical advices. *“Start with modest objectives and the capacity of staff, further the assistance of gender experts can give a lift to the work on a specific thematic field”*.

Participation of both men and women, and preferably from different generations and backgrounds is an idea mentioned on how to achieve positive change. *“A project is successful if it includes gender from the start with involvement of all; men, women and children and that the topic is openly discussed and gives something in return”*. It is also essential notices one interviewee *“that you involve not just a lot of people, but the right people, the ones that make things happen and have the ability to influence others”*.

One of the organizations has through some specific gender mainstreaming projects distinguished three factors that are important in a project addressing gender issues. These are firstly that the partner organizations are committed to learn and change their current unequal structures and relations. Secondly, that it is a collective learning process, within the organization itself, with the ‘donor’ organization and with other external organizations. Several interviewees expressed the value of sharing experiences and collectively with partner organizations learn about gender and gender issues. The third factor is the (local) ownership of the process of organizational change on becoming gender sensitive and create awareness. It is told by several organizations that the process should not be donor driven but the need for change should come from the partner organization itself. *“There have been some partner organizations that have realized their own inequalities and have together with a consultant worked on internal and external changes, these organizations are good to learn from”*.

5.2 Developments and opportunities

Things are progressing within the organizations on the gender theme. Networks are established and developed, new information is gathered and capacities are improved. Several opportunities to address gender are described below.

Learning

At least five of the seven organizations have in the interviews described ongoing or finished learning processes about gender with partner organization on different themes or areas. The most commonly cited, is a study of cases, which are based on a problem of gender inequality that needs to be solved or further researched.

Components of Action Learning:

“Action Learning is a powerful problem solving tool that has the amazing capacity to simultaneously build successful leaders, teams and organizations. It involves a small group working on real problems, taking action, and learning both as individuals and as teams.”

The six components:

1. A problem defined
2. An Action Learning group or team
3. A process of insightful questioning and reflective listening.
4. An action taken on the problem.
5. A commitment to learning
6. An Action Learning coach

Source: Action learning definition. Retrieved May 2nd, from World Institute for Action Learning, (www.wial.org)

The Economic thematic department of ICCO has a programme on Action learning with 4-5 cases. Action learning means for ICCO that the outcome of the learning process/research result in an action plan with implementation as the final goal. The information gathered during the Action learning will be in a publication about gender and value chains. Some examples of cases from the programme are: Integration of women in producer organizations in Ethiopia; Gender impact in the organic cotton chain, Mali; Sesame and gender in Nicaragua.

Both ENDS has been working on case studies on 'gender and climate change' and 'gender and water management' to get a better view on how partners are tackling the subjects, and which lessons can be learned from it. The cases of Both ENDS will as with ICCO result in a working paper which will be published within the organization. Both ENDS is further a service oriented organization, they give advice to projects on water, climate change and natural resources and does not per se finance projects. It is therefore important for them to have a good communication with partners on the subject matter to know what kind of services/information they need on gender.

During last year two studies have been completed by MM, one about gender and fragile states and one review of successful projects of partners. *"The communication with partner on this subject could be better, we discuss a lot of different issues, but never gender explicitly"*.

In the near future Hivos is planning to do several in-depth documentations of good practices within their different thematic programmes and their partners. The themes they wish to concentrate on are micro finance, gender and value chains.

Since the last two years IICD has had a thematic learning community on gender where information and experiences are exchanged with different countries. An internet based platform by IICD and for development organizations and their partners is in place for updates, resources and discussions.

Networks

The interviewees of ICCO were the ones that underlined the importance of networks and what role they can have or have had for the organization. The Economic thematic department of ICCO is grateful to the Gender and Value Chain Network created by AgriProfocus for their internal developments on gender. The coordinators and members of the Network meet regularly to discuss new findings and issues. The internet platform in the Network is there to establish new contacts and get updated information. Agriterra is also part of the Gender and Value chain network and sees it as a valuable source for getting useful information. ICCO is at the moment in the process of establishing another network, the Gender Expert Network that will consist of committed people from the regional offices together with some external gender experts. The network will be coordinated through the gender focal point in Utrecht and the gender focal points in the regional offices.

Hivos and ICCO are part of the initiative called 'On Track with Gender Trajectory' from the Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN) which seeks to bring policymakers, practitioners, researchers, consultants and women's activists together in dialogue in order to create new synergies between these different actors that work on

women's empowerment, gender and development issues. Hivos has from this trajectory learned some lessons which contributes to improvements in their working strategies. Both ENDS are working together with networks like Gender and Water Alliance to address the issues on gender within their field of work. The network gives access to information and dialogue between different actors of the water management sector.

Commitment and Capacity

The last years all organizations have been committed to work on gender and to contribute to gender equality in one way or another. However not all staff within the organizations have the same feeling of commitment. This will further be illustrated in the paragraph on 'Challenges and limits'. The aim of most of the organizations is to mainstream gender at all times, in all aspects of the organizations. The opportunity and capacity to do so is in most of the organizations depending on a few committed people, the so called gender focal point or gender experts. To enhance the capacity of the whole organization trainings on gender have been conducted in three of the seven organizations. However these trainings were only there in the beginning of the gender mainstreaming process.

ICCO therefore sees the revival of the gender policy as a opportunity to do more *"There is a moment now, a big opportunity at ICCO when things are being discussed with the new policy coming in, to do more on the topic; like train people, to get people engaged from the start and to show that ICCO is strong on gender"*.

There have been developments of thematic gender groups in several organizations. For example in IICD a group with the name Task Force Gender has recently been set up to work on the topic. In other organizations there is a specific Learning group on the gender theme or there is someone in the other theme groups appointed with the capacity to bring the gender issues into the discussions.

In summary, the commitment is there, the capacities vary and is often limited by depending on a few trained persons, but together with the developments done and opportunities there is ability to make advancements.

5.3 Challenges and limits

In general all the interviewed organizations are struggling with how to mainstream or 'do' gender, even the more experienced ones. Hereunder are some of the challenges and restrictions that the struggle represents.

Why gender is complicated

A number of organizations have openly talked about what they think are the underlying difficulties with working on the gender theme and why things are not always as progressive as expected. These difficulties can be seen as limiting factors or as challenges to overcome.

Agriterra explains the difficulty they have with mainstreaming gender and making greater changes is the fact that it is still a sensitive issue. *"Gender equality is seen as the same as feminism which has always been a sensitive term, because it is about changing power relation"*. For many staff at Agriterra gender is therefore not given priority within

their work and is seen as a separate issue that someone of the two internally responsible can deal with.

IICD express the matter with *“Gender is complicated because it is about social change and change of mentalities”*. They emphasize that gender inequality is most of the time not the only issue but interrelated with inequalities linked to ethnicity, religion, age and caste. This makes it even harder to tackle in a proper way.

ICCO reasons around the issue as *“Gender is difficult because it comes close to people, it gets personal. For example working on poverty is further away from reality of the Dutch person working in ICCO, but gender is in people’s everyday life”*. ICCO is aware that gender inequalities are a highly political issue and not very concrete, which makes it less obvious to people in the organization.

The same accounts for Hivos who also sees gender as a political issue which is complicated to address. Hivos is aware of that interventions contest current power structures and therefore create conflicts. *“Conflicts are sometimes needed to create change, but people are of course afraid of what the conflict may bring”*.

MM is supporting more than 400 organizations worldwide and the complication for them is the notion that gender is very context, area and subject specific. It is therefore hard to measure and conceptualize *“What works in India might be totally different in Indonesia for example”*.

Knowledge gap

A statement that comes back repeatedly among the organizations is *“We know what gender is and that it is important, but we do not know **how** to do it”*. The different organizations have general knowledge and awareness on how to address gender inequalities but feel that they lack in-depth and practical knowledge. ICCO also express that there is a lack of specific knowledge for specific working fields, *“Gender concepts should be translated into practical information for the different thematic fields together with some assistance”*.

Both ENDS is of the same opinion, they have noticed a need for more specific knowledge on their thematic fields; water, natural resources and climate. Availability of gender expertise is for them useful, however they have experienced that gender experts are using a language that is hard to follow and present information with a very broad focus. *“It is better to make it specific so people can understand how they can apply it in their organization”*. The idea of keeping the information on gender practices simple and understandable for everyone, not just gender experts seems to be supported by several organizations. They have noticed a difficulty in finding a high quality gender course both practical and academically in The Netherlands.

MM discovered that *“we haven’t shared with each other or any other organizations any success stories nor how we could do things better”*. The knowledge may already be within the organization itself and in the partner organizations although it has not been exchanged.

While interviewees from organizations like Hivos and ICCO believe there are a large number of guidelines and tools for implementing a gender approach in the internal organization, IICD finds it hard to come across a good step to step guide about where and

how to begin. They are searching for that type of specific information which would make their efforts of mainstreaming gender a bit easier.

MK did not have many comments on this subject, they summarize it with “If we don’t know how to do things, we cannot ask others to do it either, can we?”.

Lack of time and resources

One of the most frequently mentioned limitations for organizations to become gender mainstreamed is the lack of time. This also limits them to improve and update their knowledge as well as develop their practices on this subject. *“People are extremely busy and many already have the feeling that gender is something extra they need to do. That makes the development of gender practices very slow”*. An interviewee from ICCO argues against time as a limitation *“Not enough time is never a reason not to work on gender. If you have the knowledge and the will, it is not that time consuming”*.

Another limitation brought up in the interviews is the lack of money, especially in relation to execution of more in-depth evaluations and follow up assessment of projects and gender practices. Specific ‘gender funding’ is mentioned as a resource that could help pay for external or internal gender expertise to better assist in the integration of gender in programmes and in capacity development of staff.

Internal responsibilities

One of the aims of gender mainstreaming is that everyone in the organization is responsible for the integration of gender approaches in their work and documentations. The majority of the interviewees do not think this is the reality within their organizations. In six of the organizations there are one or two persons with a gender mandate appointed, a so called gender focal point or gender expert. Some of the interviewees have the feeling that gender is not prioritized in their organization and that they have the whole responsibility of advocating for more gender sensitivity and practices. They believe that without the people passionate and engaged in the gender subject nothing would have happened in the organizations. None of the organizations consider their organization gender mainstreamed at this moment. *“Gender has the tendency to get lost and only be thought of by the people really dedicated about the subject matter. It is difficult to motivate other staff, sometimes it feels almost impossible”*.

5.4 Discussion

The local organizations that have implemented the analyzed projects from Chapter 4 are organizations with their own agenda and way of approaching problems and inequalities. The member organizations of PSO are mainly funding the projects and the gender aspect has by some organizations been assessed by an Organizational assessment tool. However, there are very few preconditions by the funding organization for the local organizations on addressing gender inequalities. In a number of organizations gender is not even discussed explicitly with partner organizations. There seem to be fear of processes which are donor driven instead of

coming from the partner organizations themselves as well as the fear of challenging gender power relation by identifying the actual root causes.

Moser (2005) describes gender mainstreaming in four stages (see Chapter 2). She concludes that a high number of international development institutions e.g. Oxfam, Hivos, ActionAid have adopted the two first stages; embracing the gender terminology and development of a gender policy. The Dutch development organization participating in the research project have as well embraced the terminology (stage 1), show commitment and four of them have a developed gender policy (stage 2). There is still a struggle among the organizations on how to go further (stage 3 & 4), to 'do' or implement gender practices. Even though a number of interviewees have mentioned a knowledge gap of specific themes there seem to be available knowledge, information and experiences throughout the organizations and within their partners. The problem of how to improve the practices and become gender mainstreamed is rather linked to insecurity, lack of time and priority.

Another issue is that the responsibility of gender tends to be linked with only a few people within every member organizations instead of making it a collective effort. This is also recognized in the literature by MacDonald *et al* (1997) on organizational change (see Chapter 2). Collective learning is described by organizations as being a success factor for contributing to gender equality in projects and to change an organization. However, if the gender issues are assigned to a few staff members there is not enough time to fully get through ideas in the subject matter. This is also linked to the challenge of transforming the organization instead of only integrating gender into existing practices. The Dutch Initiative 'On track with gender' has indentified this as a problem in several organizations as well as Rao and Kelleher (2005). If transformation and change towards gender equality should happen in the member organizations, the collective efforts and the understanding of change processes must be further explored.

Nevertheless there are several activities happening in the organizations that are opportunities to advance gender practices. The two most emphasized opportunities are the gender networks and thematic learning groups with both the development organizations and partners involved.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of the research project has been to identify 'good practices' that PSO can use to further support its 50 members with knowledge generation, learning and capacity building on gender. The research project has investigated what gender practices have been used by partner organizations in the project and programmes to contribute to gender equality. The main focus has been on 'good practices'; approaches and activities that have turned out to be successful and can be shared with other organizations. The research has further described the capacity motivation and challenges on working with gender and gender equality of seven Dutch development organizations, all members of PSO. This chapter concludes the main findings, discussions and gives recommendations for PSO .

Conclusion: Gender practices in programs and projects

"Good examples give a lot of motivation" , this was stated by one of the interviewees of the development organizations and it has also been the reason for studying successful projects. Training, capacity development and awareness raising campaigns are the main activities in the studied projects that have showed a contribution to gender equality. These activities have targeted local organizations, communities and other civil society groups. The trainings have in some cases been explicitly about gender issues but also other topics to increase knowledge and awareness on for example health, ICT, farming and micro finance.

The gender approaches identified in the projects differ per organization as well as project setting and project theme. This means that there is not one way of contributing to gender equality but several. In this research with a sample of 13 projects the gender approach most recognized is the equity approach. However, this does not mean that this approach is better than the other ones mentioned.

Through the SW(OT) analysis which is based on the projects documents several 'good practices' and strengths of the projects are identified. These are:

- inclusion of women in the projects activities as well as creating access for women to information, networks and financial services;
- capacity development of women in decision making positions and quotas for representation of women in leadership positions;
- involvement of various groups (e.g. teachers, mothers, religious groups) within the community in trainings and awareness raising;
- sharing of experiences and knowledge through meetings and media and;
- gender training for local organizations

What should be given more attention in the projects are the root causes of the gender inequalities and gender power relations. Several scholars are expressing the importance of addressing power but also politics and culture within the gender work. Otherwise the risk is

that interventions target the wrong problems and the inequalities are maintained. Since power is a very difficult and discomforting subject for many organizations to address, PSO could create space for open discussions on this topic. It could be useful for organizations to be able to analyze the root causes of inequalities and to develop and compile their own gender analysis tools. PSO can provide trainings and information for programme coordinator and regional officers that have direct contact with partner organizations. The motivation of sharing experiences and good examples that have been visible in several projects is also something that could continue among the members of PSO. Exchange and documentation of practices can by the assistance of PSO be in visual, written or oral form.

Conclusion: Gender and member organizations

Gender mainstreaming is recognized in literature and in organizations to be the better strategy for contributing to gender equality in organizations and practices. However, the member organizations also share the opinion that gender is a very complicated subject and that the gender mainstreaming goals are still far away from the reality in their organization. The member organizations are embracing the terminology of gender and about half of the participating organizations have a gender policy. This is identified as stage one and two by Moser (2005) and there are still more stages to pass before gender concerns are fully integrated in all levels and areas of the organizations.

The struggle organizations have with gender is mostly related to the 'how' and several organizations see a need for specific thematic and practical knowledge that they can apply in their working field. The answers to this however, may already be within the organization itself and in the partner organizations. Interviewees have for example in this research project been able to identify success factors for projects. Additionally several member organizations are as well working on case studies with partners.

The commitment of organizations to develop and work with gender and gender mainstreaming is in general there and positive examples and initiatives as well. Nevertheless, the responsibility is often linked to a few committed staff members (mainly women). The collective efforts are to some extent absent which create the feeling for staff members that gender is a separate issue without enough time and priority to fully develop and advocate for.

The opportunities evident are the gender networks, e.g. Gender and Value Chains network and thematic learning groups on gender which connects the Dutch organizations with each other but also with partner organizations.

Recommendations

Recommendations for PSO to support their member organizations with:

- Specific thematic knowledge (e.g. gender and natural resources, gender and ICT etc). This could be linked to the thematic working groups of PSO or to educational institutes. Courses on gender and the specific fields are said to be hard to find in the Netherlands. PSO can together with e.g. Nijmegen University, Van Hall Larenstein or other promote and develop courses. Even distance courses/online courses.
- A network that links trainers with organizations and people that need training.
- Different levels of knowledge. Some organizations are in the beginning phase of gender mainstreaming and therefore need different kind of support than other organizations that feel the need for more in-depth research and knowledge.
- Support learning and action on organizational change and transformation to generate understanding of change processes and its importance for gender equality.
- Collective learning and sharing of good practices which would involve others than the people responsible for gender in the organizations.
- Space (physical or online) for open discussion on power and power relations.
- Events with debates, discussion on dilemmas/conflicts as:
 - Funding preconditions vs bottom up approach
 - Policy to practice vs practice to policy
 - Women only vs men and women
- Question the impact of training and learning
- Gender analysis, DIY – Do It Yourself event. Develop your own gender analysis by consulting existing tools and expertise.

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Annex

1 List of interviewees

Hivos

Ireen Dubel (head Gender, Women and Development programme)

Both ENDS

Annelieke Douma (Program officer and responsible gender focal point)

Mensen met een missie

Floor Schuiling (Programme officer Asia)

ICCO

Angelica Senders (Specialist Capacity development Sustainable Economic Development programme)

Joni van de Sand (Gender consultant Substitute for Margreet Mook policy officer Gender issues; R&D)

Mileukontakt International

Sofya Lukyanchuk (Responsible Green Agenda project in Kyrgyzstan)

IICD

Bénédicte Marcilly (Officer Knowledge Sharing Ecuador/Mali)

Olaf Erz (Country Manager)

Martine Koopman (Officer Knowledge Sharing Ghana/Zambia)

Anne Marijke Podt (M&E officer)

Hanna Goorden (Country Manager)

Judith Veldhuizen (Officer Knowledge Sharing)

Agriterra

Ninoska González Herrera-Klerkx (project officer)

Marly Boonman (Liaison Officer)

2 Gender assessment of proposals and project reports

Based on the Gender Assessment Study, MAGEEQ critical framework analysis and Gender SWOT Analysis. (additional: framework for gender mainstreaming evaluation)

1. Brief analysis of the implementing organization

a. Which organizations are responsible for the implementation of the proposed project?

What type of organization

Local/National partners

What are their competences, activities, location

Who has done what in the project

b. Does the organization have the capacity to address gender concerns?

Human resources

Financial resources

Policies

Strategies

Are there partnerships or networks in which gender issues are addressed

2. Gender assessment of project, program proposal and reports

a. Diagnosis

Problem definition

- What is represented as the problem of gender inequality?
- Why is it seen as a problem?
- What is seen as the root cause(s)?
- Dimensions of gender (social categories, identity, behavior, norms, symbols, institutions)
- Intersectionality
- Location of the problem?

Target group/roles

- Who is the problem holder?
- Who is responsible for the problem?
- Who is represented as the target group, are women explicitly mentioned?
- Is the target group differentiated according to different male and female interest groups?
- Is the target group involved in identifying problems, planning and implementation?

b. Prognosis

Objectives/goals

- What is the objective/goal(s) of the project?
- Are the objectives specified for both men and women?
- Do the objectives address the relevant problems and priority needs of (different categories of) women/men?

Strategy and activities

- How to achieve the goals – strategies, means, instruments, activities?
- Do the strategy take into account the gender (power) relations at the household, community and society levels?
- Are the choices of technology, time, location etc suitable for both men and women?
- Do planned activities involve men and women?
- Have there been strategies to achieve participation of both men and women?

Staff and organization

- Are there gender experts involved in the project, at which stages?
- Do the qualification of the staff include gender skills?
- Will staff, field workers be trained in gender skills?

Budget

- Do the financial inputs ensure that both men and women will benefit from the planned intervention?
- Has there been a gender budgeting? Familiar with gender budgeting?
- Has the need to provide gender training or to engage short-term gender experts been included in the budget?

c. Check up (Evaluation) of project reports

- Have the intended/unintended impacts for women and men, for groups been examined?
- What impact did the project have on gender relations?
- Has the project been consistent in the strategies and activities to achieve gender equality?
- Is the project in line with gender policies of the organization?
- In what area of gender equality are results being achieved (e.g. decision making, rights, development, resources and benefits)?
- What are factors contributing to success?

Gender SWOT analysis

Strengths: internal features of a project that have proved effective in addressing gender issues (e.g. project components, methods and techniques for implementation, monitoring and evaluation techniques, project staff and management);

Weaknesses: internal features of a project that have not proved effective in addressing gender issues;

Opportunities: external factors that may assist in overcoming the weaknesses and building on the strengths; and

Threats: external constraints that restrict the range of opportunities for change.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Framework for gender mainstreaming evaluation

Project evaluation criteria	Gender parity	Gender equality	Gender Equity	Empowerment	Transformation
Relevance	Analysis				
Efficiency					
Effectiveness					
Sustainability					

Source: de Waal, Maretha (2006) *Evaluating gender mainstreaming in development projects*, development in Practice, 16:2, 209-214

Objectives

Parity: equal representation and participation of women and men

Equality: equal access, control, opportunities, rewards, and benefits for women and men

Equity: the ratio of participation, access, opportunities, rewards and benefits according to need/concerns of women and men

Empowerment: cognitive, behavioural and affective changes to increase levels of equality and empowerment of women in relation to men

Transformation: transforming the gender order, changing existing distribution of resources and responsibilities to create balance gender relations

Evaluation criteria

Relevance: reflects on whether the project objectives with respect to the issue of gender equality issues that have been identified are appropriate to the problems and to the physical and social environment within which the project operated

Effectiveness: includes and assessment of the contribution made by its results to the achievement of the project's purpose, and the way in which assumptions have affected the project's achievements. (are cross-cutting taken into account)

Efficiency: addresses the question of whether project results for women and/or men have been achieved at a reasonable cost, and whether the benefits have costs and/or have been allocated and received in a equitable manner

Impact: related to the broad social environment, and its contribution to wider gender policy or sectoral gender objectives with reference to the project

Sustainability: refers to the likelihood that achievements relevant to gender will be sustained after the funding period , including ownership by beneficiaries, the extent to which their strategic needs have been met through the project, and the extent to which capacity has been built to sustain the impact of the project.

3 Semi Structure Interview

- **Definition gender equality**
- **Importance**
- **Gender policy & responsibility**
- **Developments & approaches**
- **Gender mainstreaming**
- **Resistance & Opportunities**
- **Successful projects, Success factors**
- **Women only**
- **Gender experts, gender training**
- **Capacity building & knowledge**
- **Partner organizations & communication & assessment tools**
- **Resources**

4 List of projects

Country	Project name	Implementation organization	U/R	Target groups	Gender inequality	Gender approach
Peru	Fortalecimiento de la coordinadora nacional de la mujer (CONAMUCC)	National org	Rural	Women Youth	Poor inclusion of female coffee producers in institutional, productive, and organizational processes	Equity approach
Uganda	Improving the management of child illness and health of Young mothers at household level and in communities	Local community based org	Rural	Children Young mothers	Deliveries at early age, high infant mortality, not using health centers	Equity approach
Sudan	Local communities together stop FGM-HTPs and reduce GBV and HIV/Aids	Local org	U/R	Villages (local councils, chiefs, religious groups, teachers, pupils, youth, politicians, midwives, local media) Grass root org	Gender discrimination in form of Female Genital Mutilation and harmful traditional practices	Rights based approach
Global	Effective gender mainstreaming in water management for sustainable livelihoods: from guidelines to practice	International	U/R	NGOs, Community based org Practitioners, Researchers Policy makers, Donor org	Failure of water management initiatives to address gender inequalities	Gender mainstreaming Transformation

Country	Project name	Implementation organization	U/R	Target groups	Gender inequality	Gender approach
Philippines	Gender studies for men trainings	Local	Urban	Men from; NGOs, academic, religious sector	Both men and women are suffering from gender inequalities and that patriarchy harms men and women	Equity approach
Uganda	Community based prevention and response to sexual and gender based violence in Lango sub-region	Local org	Rural	Women Men Children	Sexual and gender based violence and child abuse	Rights based approach
Ecuador	School for strengthening local management skills of Ecuadorian rural women leaders	National	Rural	Women Trainers	Rural women in municipal positions do not have access to education, computer skills and information	Women empowerment
Kenya	Stop female Genital Mutilation	Regional	Rural	Girls, Boys Adults (leaders, policemen, priests, women circumcisers, teachers, Parents)	Girls get both psychological and physical problems which can lead to school drop outs, early marriage, prostitution	Women empowerment Equality
Nepal	Up scaling of financial services to protect the poor	National	U/R	Women	Poverty is seen as the overall problem of inequality, and women are the bigger part of the poor population	Parity Equality

Country	Project name	Implementation organization	U/R	Target groups	Gender inequality	Gender approach
Croatia	Sustainable future for rural areas in Croatia	Local	Rural	Communities NGOs Stakeholders Government	Gender inequalities not mentioned	Equity
Kyrgyzstan	Green agenda in Kyrgyzstan, improvements of local democracy and applying sustainability in practice	Local	Rural	Communities NGOs Stakeholders Government	Gender inequalities not mentioned	Equity
Ghana	Eastern corridor agro-information centre (ECAMIC)	International	Rural	Farmers	Gender inequalities not mentioned	Equality
India	Organizational change for gender equality	International National/local	U/R	Partner organizations	Gender discriminations at organizational level and the superficial approaches used for gender equality work	Transformation Gender Equality