

Negotiating gender in planning

The integration of gender in programmes/projects supposes some pre-conditions:

- Gender in analysis, objectives/monitoring in the Country Programme
- Tools and methodologies to address gender issues
- Access to gender aware/competent partners, management and «field» teams

Then, SDC and its partners have to define the goal of the programme/project and the specific objectives/effects it wishes to contribute to in terms of gender equality.

Dialogue with women and men in target groups

A dialogue is needed to allow women and men to reflect on their respective priorities for change (self-awareness/consciousness-raising process) and formulate them. This must lead to the identification of how women, and men, would like the programme/project to be implemented and what they expect it to achieve (impact hypothesis).

The process must be as transparent and as inclusive as possible of different groups of women and men in order to create their adhesion to and ownership of the intervention. It must be participatory, using public meetings, focus group discussions, interviews,



In Mozambique, a project supported by a European bilateral cooperation to renovate a market paid little attention to the wishes of women and men traders and mainly focused on the needs of the Municipality to rationalise and control the informal market and increase its tax-base. Organisations working with women traders were not consulted. This lack of dialogue angered beneficiaries who opposed the project. Subsequently, a gender analysis was carried out. It confirmed the need to improve communication, to work with local gender/women organisations and to support women (80% of traders) to be part of market committees in order to have a voice in the project.

visioning exercises, deeper studies, (sheet 3 on gender analysis). It is essential to facilitate the expression of women's **and** men's needs (e.g. by organising separate focus group discussions) and to disaggregate the data collected in terms of women's and men's different reactions, wishes, future contributions, expectations etc.

Dialogue with women and men among implementing partners

The role of women and men working for SDC and its partners is to support and facilitate change, including gender change. Their visions or beliefs should not «overrule» what women and men in target groups wish to do and achieve. When formulating the programme/project, they must consider external as well as internal constraints and opportunities for gender:

- External: What may be opportunities and problems to women's and men's equitable participation, access to decision-making and benefit from the programme/project?
- Internal: A dialogue *within* and between institutional stakeholders must assess to what extent SDC and its key development partners are willing, able, equipped etc. to work with gender (see sheet 9 on gender and organisations and sheet 10 on partnerships).



Gender in implementation

Working with women and/or men?

Women's participation is not equal to gender

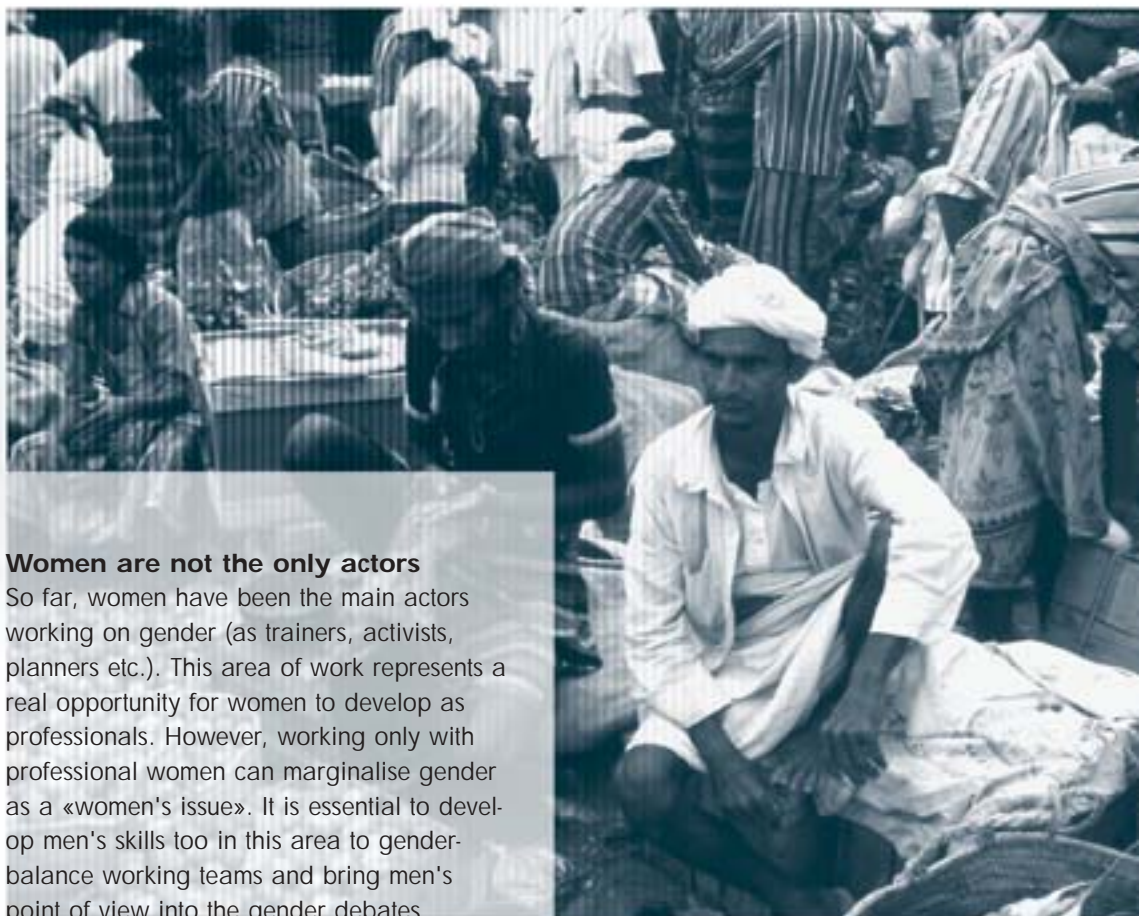
To «include» women in a programme is not enough to claim that an intervention is gender aware. A women-only programme is gender-blind if it keeps women in traditional areas and does not offer scope for change towards gender equality. A mixed women/men programme is also gender-blind if it does not offer equal opportunities to women and men to participate and benefit according to their needs. A men-only programme (e.g. educating men on family planning) is gender-aware if it aims to change gender relations between women and men.

Of course, strategies promoting equal numbers of women and men in programmes/projects, including quotas, can really boost women's participation (e.g. % of women on electoral lists). But they are limited if women's participation is «silent» (i.e. no decision-making power). Quotas are often interpreted as a maximum and efforts are not made to reach a real gender balance. To be effective, these strategies need to be supported with capacity building and empowerment measures.

Women's organisations are not the only partners

Women's organisations, governmental or NGO, are key partners for gender. But they are not the only partners. They are not necessarily gender competent, they may lack the capacity, or the will, to work with men and they may resist addressing strategic gender needs which are too politically or culturally challenging. Alliances must be created broadly across sectors and interests to generate new synergies and bring new competences to the gender debates.

In a rural development project supported by the Swiss NGO EPER in the RDC, only literate members of the community can be part of development committees. This is seen as a strategy to encourage women to join the literacy programme. In fact, women's multiple roles prevent them from participating in classes. Therefore very few are members of the committees and benefit from capacity building activities within the project. Yet, they are recognised as the engines of the community!



Women are not the only actors

So far, women have been the main actors working on gender (as trainers, activists, planners etc.). This area of work represents a real opportunity for women to develop as professionals. However, working only with professional women can marginalise gender as a «women's issue». It is essential to develop men's skills too in this area to gender-balance working teams and bring men's point of view into the gender debates.

Implementation through gender lenses

During implementation, the participation of women and men and their respective access to decision-making and benefits must be questioned. The point is not to create gender problems where they are none. It is to ensure that SDC and its partners keep a conscious eye on gender. It is also to avoid some «beneficiaries», women in particular, finding themselves paradoxically worse off as a result of «project» or feeling excluded from it (as is the case increasingly with some men feeling that «all projects go to women»).

Steering gender in annual planning

Annual planning is a key moment to reflect on how programmes/projects affect women and men and how they may be improved to support gender equality further. It asks: «Are we doing the right thing and are we doing it right?»¹. Answering this supposes an assessment of gender changes in three main «spheres», or fields of observation (see sheet 12).

¹ See SDC monitoring tools (controlling section, Berne)

Focus on the context

Annual planning requires a quick review of main socio-economic, political and environmental changes over the year and their immediate effects on women/men in the target groups. New policies, laws, political or economical events, programmes and actors that may affect gender in the sector or area of the programme are identified (see sheets 3, 11).

Focus on the programme

Annual planning must take stock of new gender related issues/demands that may have emerged during implementation (e.g. linked to unequal participation, decision-making, and/or benefits). Monitoring and budgets reviews are done through gender lenses.


Focus on the institution/partners

Annual planning must look at staff and partners: Do they effectively support the integration of gender in the programmes/projects? If the answer is no, there are two reinforcing solutions:

- Partnerships cannot be altered overnight, if only for contractual reasons, but new alliances and synergies can be created to enhance the work on gender. Gender competent staff can also be hired to train and support existing staff.
- Internally, actions can be planned to build the capacity of existing SDC/partners' staff on gender, to integrate it as a transversal in procedures (training modules, tools, indicators) and to promote equal opportunities (recruitment, HRD etc.)

For more on gender in organisations, see sheets 9, on gender and monitoring, see sheet 11.

In SDC-Peru, a gender planning workshop for programme officers led to specific activities in each project. The inclusion of a local consultant from the start provided an important impetus to implement the policy. A number of areas where a gender perspective could be integrated were identified in projects, and support to the process was provided from the core budget.



Dialogue is crucial in the formulation of gender aware programmes and projects. Women and men in target groups as well as partner organisations at all levels of decision-making must be part of this process. Working on gender is an investment. The *implications of integrating and of not integrating gender* in programmes and projects must be assessed. Lessons must be learned from the past and for the future.

CHECKLIST FOR INTEGRATING GENDER IN PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS²

- ▶ **Background and Justification:** Is gender part of the context analysis for the intervention? Are there arguments for gender mainstreaming and gender equality?
- ▶ **Goals:** Does the goal of the proposed intervention reflect the needs of both men and women? Does it seek to address gender issues and gaps through addressing practical or needs of men and women? Does it seek to address strategic gender needs by transforming the institutions (social and other) that perpetuate gender inequality?
- ▶ **Target groups:** Except where interventions specifically target men or women as part of a gender specific programme, do women as well as men benefit from the programme?
- ▶ **Objectives:** Do the intervention objectives address needs of both women and men?
- ▶ **Activities:** Do planned activities involve men and women? Are any additional activities needed to ensure that gender perspective is explicit (e.g. gender training, additional research, etc.)?
- ▶ **Indicators key question:** Have key questions been developed to measure progress towards the fulfilment of each objective? Do these indicators measure the gender aspects of each objective? Are indicators gender disaggregated? Are targets set to guarantee a sufficient level of gender balance in activities (e.g. quotas for male and female participation)? **(Sheet 11)**
- ▶ **Implementation:** Who will implement the planned intervention? Are these partners gender competent? Do they have tools and methodologies to implement in a gender-aware way? Will both women and men (professionals and target groups) participate in implementation? **(Sheets 9a, 10)**
- ▶ **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Does the monitoring and evaluation strategy include a gender perspective? Will it examine both content and process of the intervention? **(Sheets 11, 12)**
- ▶ **Risks:** Have stereotypes or structural barriers preventing full participation of women or men been considered? Has the potential negative impact of the intervention been considered (e.g. potential increased burden on women or social isolation of men)? **(8b)**
- ▶ **Budget:** Have financial inputs been «checked» to ensure that both men and women will benefit from the planned intervention? Has the need to provide gender training or to engage short-term gender experts been included in the budget?
- ▶ **Partners:** Have plans been made to ensure the capacity of partners to work with gender? **(Sheet 10)**
- ▶ **Annexes:** Are any relevant research papers (or excerpts) on gender included as annexes?
- ▶ **Best practice:** Has a communication strategy been developed for informing various publics about the existence, progress and results of the project from a gender perspective?

² Adapted from a handbook produced by the Regional Gender Programme of the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (UNDP RBEC), by Astrida Neimanis, 2002