

## On track with gender

*Progress report 2008–2009*



## **Colophon**

This document reports on the process titled 'On track with gender' which was carried out within the framework of the Development Policy Review Network (DPRN) and organised by CIDIN, Hivos, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Oxfam Novib. With a view to stimulating informed debate and discussion of issues related to the formulation and implementation of (Dutch) development policies, DPRN creates opportunities to promote an open exchange and dialogue between scientists, policymakers, development practitioners and the business sector in the Netherlands. For more information see [www.DPRN.nl](http://www.DPRN.nl) and [www.global-connections.nl](http://www.global-connections.nl) .

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# Report on 'On track with gender'

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**Period:** July 2008 – June 2009

**Responsible organisations:** CIDIN, Hivos, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oxfam Novib

## Introduction

In July 2008 CIDIN, Hivos, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Oxfam Novib started a three-year process within the framework of the Development Policy Review Network. The objective of this process were:

1. To reinforce linkages between academic and (public and civic) development institutions working on gender and development issues.
2. To strengthen the linkages between Southern and Northern development organisations and academic institutions involved in gender and development research and policy programmes.
3. To provide an inventory of the current policy and academic knowledge base regarding gender analysis and empowerment in key areas of Dutch development cooperation.
4. To develop a framework for enhancing gender analysis, mainstreaming and coherence in development policy preparation, formulation and implementation.

This report documents the results of the process, the theme addressed, the activities realised, the target groups reached, and the output and outcome realised, particularly in relation to the DPRN objectives.

## Background to the theme

Almost fifteen years ago, governments committed themselves to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). This was to be realised through gender mainstreaming, which was then defined as a two-track strategy encompassing, on the one hand, the integration of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue into all development policies and programmes and budgetary decisions, and, on the other hand, the support to stand-alone women's empowerment and gender equality programmes and policies. Over the years, most governments and actors in development cooperation, with Dutch organisations taking a pioneering role, have developed and implemented gender mainstreaming policies. Gender policies, and in particular gender mainstreaming, have been vulnerable to 'evaporation' when they are actually implemented.

However, no overall comprehensive and systematic analysis has been carried out – with multiple stakeholders – into the possible causes and solutions for this limited success.

This *On Track with Gender* Trajectory wants to take gender mainstreaming to a next level. It 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 are working on women's empowerment, gender and development issues. It also seeks to create space for the voices of Southern experts and organisations that have considerable experience/expertise in effective integrated strategic and practical women's empowerment and gender equality programmes. The objective of the Trajectory is to reflect critically on experiences with, and insights into, gender mainstreaming. Rather than contributing to the 'death of gender mainstreaming' by constantly repeating what does not work, we aim to build on the experiences and on the knowledge that is available, in order to rethink and transform the current understanding and practice of gender mainstreaming. While acknowledging what has been achieved, we seek to critically push the level of gender analysis as well as the formulation and implementation of gender (mainstreaming) policies. In this context, dialogues and exchanges between practitioners, policymakers, academics and activists are indispensable.

The *On Track with Gender* Trajectory covers three stages in three years (2008–2010). The first stage is devoted to 'Taking Stock' in the form of a review 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. It seeks to establish what policies and strategies are being pursued and what can be learnt from evaluations that have taken place to date. In addition we aim to sketch the international context of gender mainstreaming by taking a close look at the recent review process of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: what does the Paris agenda imply for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming and, more importantly, how are gender issues addressed in the Declaration and the review process of the implementation of the Paris Declaration?

The outcomes of the reflection of the first year will set the stage for the second and third phase of the Trajectory. In those latter two years, specific policy fields will be subject to further scrutiny. The objective is to strengthen analysis, deepen insight, and strengthen policy formulation as well as strategies for implementation. A dialogue with Southern institutes and experts on women's empowerment, gender equality and gender mainstreaming will take centre stage in the second year. A decision as to the exact policy domains which the Trajectory will focus on will be taken at the end of the first phase on the basis of the 'Taking Stock' exercise. At the end of the third phase, which is entitled 'Back to the Future', we intend to come full circle and relate the policy domain insights back to the 'taking stock' insights, in order to further strategise future collaboration.

## Activities

In order to achieve informed debate, policy review, common agenda setting and inter-sectoral cooperation, the process was targeted at bringing together the various sectors and

identifying opportunities for cooperation. To this end the process included the following activities:

- *Paper writing*

As regards the Taking Stock phase of the *On Track with Gender* trajectory, the Call for Papers, which was published late on in 2008, led to five papers being written and nine proposals being submitted. Five authors were invited to write the papers. Summaries of the papers are available at [www.ontrackwithgender.nl](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl).

The papers were prepared in a participatory process that allowed for the exchange of experiences and insights among gender experts in Dutch organisations and agencies. In January 2009 the author(s) convened a meeting with experts on the possible content, guiding questions and materials to be analyzed in the papers. Three months later (in the second half of March 2009), the author(s) met again with this group of experts to discuss the first draft of the paper. The aims of these two meetings were to: (1) stimulate exchange and dialogue between different stakeholders in gender mainstreaming and (2) create a mechanism for input and feedback on the writing process. During the writing process, authors and their advisors in the reading committees exchanged materials and versions of the papers through intranet facilities of the DPRN *On Track with Gender* Trajectory.

The following papers were written by the authors referred to:

1. *Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action through a gender lens: an international perspective and the case of the Dutch Development Cooperation.*  
Authors: Nathalie Holvoet and Liesbeth Inberg
2. *Energies and (dis)connections: The practice of gender mainstreaming in Dutch development cooperation.*  
Author: Anouka van Eerdewijk
3. *No instant success... Assessing gender mainstreaming evaluations.*  
Author: Conny Roggeband
4. *"You shouldn't be too radical": Mapping gender and development studies in Dutch academia.*  
Author: Linda Mans
5. *Gender mainstreaming: driving on square wheels. Theoretical review and reflections.*  
Authors: Tine Davids, Francien van Driel, Franny Parren

- *Expert meeting: May 28<sup>th</sup> 2009*

At the end of the Taking Stock phase two events were organised with a view to reflection by a broader audience: an expert meeting and an open Seminar. The central discussion theme at both meetings was: in what way does gender mainstreaming work or not, and why?

The Taking Stock expert meeting sought to reflect on the mainstreaming of gender in development cooperation and universities with the aim being to draw lessons on existing practices and identify key lessons for the future. The variety of expertise and knowledge from the policymakers, practitioners and academics that were brought together provided a

rich basis for discussion and strengthened linkages between these different groups. The fact that all participants are used to different kinds of language meant the morning session was devoted to developing a shared language.

In order to stimulate a reflection process which the participants could actively engage in, the expert meeting was designed to be interactive. The five papers prepared in advance were treated as input papers. Two keynote speakers were invited to a) highlight the key insights of the papers, and b) critically reflect on them from their own expertise and experience. The keynote speakers were: **Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay** (Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam) and **Marianne Marchand** (Universidad de las Américas, Mexico). After each lecture there was an opportunity to put questions and make comments to both the speakers and the authors of the papers.

The second part of the expert meeting was devoted to reflection in smaller working groups. This was followed by a plenary closing session. The working group participants came from varying backgrounds. Each working group reported their key points to the plenary group regarding what does and does not work with regard to gender mainstreaming, and why this might be the case. This process was facilitated by **Ellen Sprenger**.

The opening and welcome was provided by **Paul Bekkers** (Direction Health, Gender and Civil Society / Ministry of Foreign Affairs), DPRN coordinator **Mirjam Ros**, and **Anouka van Eerdewijk** (coordinator OTWG trajectory). The full programme is available in Appendix 2.

In order to ensure the presence of highly qualified experts and a variety of participants, participation was possible on an invitation-only basis. A total of 49 people from various backgrounds participated in the expert meeting (see below). All the participants that registered were also in attendance. This indicates the need of many people to reflect on GM in a collective space.

- *Seminar: May 29<sup>th</sup> 2009*

The objective of the seminar, which took place on the afternoon of 29 May 2009 at the Institute for Social Studies (ISS), was to share insights from the expert meeting with a broader audience and engage with them in further debate. The seminar was announced by email, as well as by means of posters in fourteen different institutions (NGOs, DGIS, universities).

After a brief introduction by **Anouka van Eerdewijk**, two keynote speakers **Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay** and **Amy Lind** (Department of Women's Studies, University of Cincinnati) took the floor to present and share the key insights from the papers and the expert meeting. After each lecture there was ample space for questions and discussion. The full programme is available in Appendix 2. In contrast to the expert meeting registration the seminar was open to any interested party and was attended by 57 people (see details below).

A report with the main insights of the expert meeting and Seminar was produced and made available on the website ([www.ontrackwithgender.nl](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl)).

## Results

Originally, gender mainstreaming (GM) carried the promise of a transformative strategy, by which policy formulation and implementation would be reorganised and improved with the ultimate goal being to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Over the past decade, GM has run the risk of turning into an integration strategy. GM was rapidly and readily accepted by many Dutch development institutions, but the GM strategies and policies were often insufficiently focused on context and organisation. This resulted in the evaporation of GM in its actual implementation.

In order to mainstream and find support in development organisations, GM was often framed in instrumentalist arguments. During this process of framing, gender was often narrowed down to numbers, and in many cases also to women. The qualitative aspects of the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women were not captured in GM policies and strategies and, as a consequence, they often remained invisible. This has contributed to the feeling of disappointment among gender experts, as well as to resistance among non-gender staff who felt that quantitative analysis did not seem to be the relevant entry point as regards the promotion of gender equality. In this context, political issues like inequality are vulnerable to evaporation.

The Netherlands has been a pioneer in incorporating a gender perspective in development cooperation. However, the early mobilising efforts and strategic framings were hampered from the mid-1990s onwards, with the demobilisation of networks such as the *Vrouwenberaad*, and the decay of the gender infrastructure within organisations, where gender programmes and units were mainstreamed, or 'away-streamed'. Internationally, budgets for women and gender programmes and organisations started to decrease. All this contributed to the further technocratisation of GM, as the demands and pressure from women's organisations and from gender experts were undermined. There has been a revival in recent years due, for example, to new priorities being formulated for gender and women's rights and new investments in gender training.

GM strategies within Dutch development organisations frequently rely on gender assessment tools, and input and outreach targets. Such targets and assessments are important in order to stimulate action and keep gender on the agenda. However, they are also vulnerable to being treated as merely administrative aspects of the relationships NGO staff have with counterpart organisations. Individual staff members are expected to pursue GM objectives within programmes which often lack an explicit gender analysis. This creates a catch-22 situation in which staff have to meet targets, while the priorities of the programmes in which they operate are not gender-sensitive.

There is room to translate GM more to suit specific policy areas and explore how gender equality relates to areas such as microfinance, agriculture, reproductive health, value chains, HIV/AIDS, arts, democratisation, humanitarian assistance, etcetera. Gender equality objectives need to be broken down into specific policy fields, and connectors could play an important role in a shared analysis and identification of gender issues and priorities within those fields.

Gender efficiency and (other forms of) efficiency are different concepts. While the conceptualisation of gender efficiency is built on the idea that human behaviour should not only be analysed on the basis of agency but also of certain biased structures. The reductionist vision of efficiency (neo-classical idea) is dominant within current development cooperation.

Although new mobilisation efforts by lobby networks tried to bring issues of gender back into new aid modalities, in particular in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, gender was largely excluded. Especially at embassy level (in case of the Netherlands) within development countries gender is absent from the agenda or is 'generalised' within programmes. Moreover, as within the new aid modalities, responsibilities are mostly vested in the institutions of development countries and Dutch/Western agents feel less pressure to 'perform well on gender' or to demand gender equality policies.

Clarity is needed in theoretical debates as regards definitions of 'gender' and 'equality' when talking about GM. Clarity is also needed as regards questions such as 'what is mainstreaming', 'mainstreaming into what' and 'for whom'. In theory as well as in practice there is a clearer vision of inequality than of what gender equality exactly is and entails. Heteronormativity and intersectionality provide openings for nuanced thinking about social change and justice.

Within academic circles, however, there seems to have been a loss of activism due to strategic silences on gender and inequality. Renewed alliances and cooperation between academia and practitioners might be necessary and fruitful. Academics could, for example, play a role in enlarging political recognition of gender and GM. However, the strengthening of such dialogues and synergies is hampered by the different histories and discourses within different sectors.

An important step forward during the past decade is that the gender question has become more legitimate. The key conclusion of the Taking Stock exercise is the need to contextualise and unpack GM. This first of all requires more clarity regarding how and to what extent development organisations are the objects or the subjects of GM. As objects, the organisations are the ones that need to be transformed. As subjects, these organisations contribute to the promotion of both GM and gender equality in other institutions and society at large. This raises two questions: (1) what is needed to transform organisations, and (2) what can organisations do in order to contribute to social change and societal transformation?

Secondly, GM policies have to be adapted to the specific characteristics, objectives and work processes of an organisation. Both the neo-liberal context in which international development cooperation takes shape and the micro-politics within organisations need to be considered and taken into account in the design and implementation of GM strategies.

The ambitious GM agenda needs to be broken down into smaller steps in order to make it comprehensible for organisations and staff. Where are we now, what are the overall objectives of GM, what mid-term goals can be specified within and for particular

organisations and settings, which investments can be made and initiatives taken, and how can we evaluate their success or shortcomings?

A vital point in this respect is to figure out what is needed to bring about change at institutional level. The pioneering experience of Dutch development cooperation in relation to GM has underlined the importance of mobilising networks and gender experts. It is time to see what specific steps need to be taken in this time and place to bring about the transformation of both institutions and societies.

'Creative tensions' need to be generated within and around organisations in order to stimulate and pressure them to change and transform. These creative tensions require 'triangles' of (1) gender experts within and outside organisations, (2) women movement and feminist organisations, and (3) women in decision-making positions and procedures. In the context of international development, 'triangles' also have to bridge North-South divides. By building multiple 'triangles', both dialogues and trialogues can create innovation and energy through feedback loops that develop between different types of actors and different institutions and organisations.

## Contribution to the DPRN objectives

### *Stimulating informed debate*

Several choices were made in order to ensure an *informed* debate:

- In order to guarantee the depth of discussion and reflection at the expert meeting and seminar, it was decided to prepare the input papers. The Call for papers presented five specific questions that the Steering Committee felt it was crucial to investigate and acquire more background information, insight and analysis on.
- A decision was taken to organise two separate events. Participation in the expert meeting was only possible on an invitation basis. In this way, we could ensure that representatives from different sectors were present in a creative mix. The majority of expert meeting participants were gender experts and, as such, their backgrounds in combination with their diversity permitted an in-depth exchange across sectors.
- A seminar was organised to open up the trajectory and Taking Stock exercise to a broader audience, and to involve other people in the dialogue. Participation in the seminar was open to all.
- For both the expert meeting and seminar, it was decided that keynote speakers, rather than the authors of the papers, would present the findings of the papers. As we wanted the papers to be input, rather than final outcomes, two keynote speakers at each event led to a more dynamic process. In their addresses, the speakers presented the main findings of the papers and also included their own experiences and reflections on those issues.
- An excellent, experienced and knowledgeable facilitator played a key role at both the expert meeting and seminar in stimulating debate and keeping track of energies.
- There was ample space in both the expert meeting and the seminar for discussion and reflection. At the seminar, participants had space to ask questions and engage into a

discussion. At the expert meeting, paper authors, keynote lectures and the participants discussed the papers in the morning. In the afternoon, participants worked in smaller groups on a number of core questions.

#### *Involvement of relevant partners*

The objective of the seminar was to bring together academics, policymakers and development practitioners, including the private sector, with a view to initiating discussions and setting the agenda for the years to come. The table below shows the number and type of participants in the two Taking Stock events. In addition to the participants of the two events, stakeholders from different institutions and sectors were also involved through the interviews that were carried out for the five papers. In total, 106 people participated in the two events, and 48 people were interviewed. Considering the overlap between the categories, it is estimated that approximately 130 individuals were involved in the Taking Stock papers and events.

<b>Type participants</b>	<b>Expert meeting</b>	<b>Seminar</b>	<b>Interviews papers</b>
Academics	22	12	15
Activists	5	5	-
Consultants	6	1	7
Ministries	5	30	8
NGOs	11	9	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>49 (5 M / 44 F)</b>	<b>57 (2 M / 55 F)</b>	<b>48</b>

#### *Relevance for policy and practice*

The topic of gender mainstreaming is highly relevant to NGOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the universities. Engaging in the Taking Stock exercise ensured that the debate was grounded in the policies and practice of the different sectors. The different papers mapped the existing gender mainstreaming strategies, policies and practices and as such stayed close to the concerns present in the sectors. Several NGOs as well as the DGIS are currently reviewing existing gender (mainstreaming) policies or developing new ones. The outcomes of the Taking Stock exercise can contribute to this, especially considering the large number of people involved in these policies who participated in the two events.

#### *Enhancing cooperation and synergy*

The trajectory is oriented more towards creating and stimulating a shared learning space than common agenda setting. The central question on which shared learning focused during the first phase is how gender can be institutionalised in different organisations (NGOs, DGIS, universities) and different contexts (Netherlands, international, the global South). Insights from this shared learning exercise can contribute to the policy review and development of different organisations as well as further academic reflection, research and publications. In addition to the trajectory's events, a panel was organised at the CERES Summer School on 2 July, during which the paper authors and some of the practitioners were present. Finally, the trajectory has also provided input and inspiration to the design of the '*kenniskring*' on rights and opportunities for women and girls currently being developed by DGIS.

## Reflection

- When initiating the trajectory it was felt that it would be important to engage in the Taking Stock exercise before a selection of policy areas could be made. In that sense, a deviation from the original proposal occurred. It turned out that this has been a wise decision as the Taking Stock exercise has been very fruitful and has generated important new insights. As such, it provides a solid basis for the future phases of the trajectory.
- In designing the first phase in general, and the different activities (papers and events) in particular, the Steering Committee has taken considerable time to reflect on how to organise the process in order to make it work. As indicated above, conscious decisions were made on posing specific questions for the papers, on the writing process, and on the organisation of the two events. This time-consuming process was necessary in order to explore, balance and link the different backgrounds and interests of the different sectors, and in the end it allowed for genuine dialogue.
- The first phase of the trajectory has proven to be fruitful and dynamic. The standard of the dialogue was high, participants were enthusiastic and their level of participation (in terms of both number of people present and their engagement in the discussions and reflection) was high. This has contributed to strong exchange between sectors and has allowed for new connections and new insights.
- The shortening of the overall time period for the trajectory after approval by DPRN implies that a review of the plans is necessary for the second and third phase. More specifically, the two final phases need to be more integrated.

## The way forward

Plans and activities for the second year concern (a) follow-up to the Taking Stock exercise, and (b) activities of the second phase.

### *Ad (a) Follow-up to Taking Stock:*

- The papers written for the Taking Stock exercise are going to be published in a Special Issue of an international academic journal in development studies. The keynote lecturers are also going to contribute to this special issue with articles.
- The outcomes as reflected in the papers and the report are going to be processed into a Policy Brief.

### *Ad (b) Second phase:*

The outcomes of the first phase provide the basis for choosing policy areas for the second phase. The exact policy areas have not yet been decided, but the principles for the process of the second year are:

- Involvement and dialogue with partner organisations and Southern experts.
- More dialogue with non-gender experts in Dutch organisations.

Decisions concerning the policy areas and exact shape of the second phase will be made in September 2009. In the final phase of the trajectory a closing conference is to be organised in which the outcomes from both the first and second phase will be brought together.

## Appendix 1 – Programmes

### Expert Meeting May 28th 2009

#### Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Multi Purpose Room

- 9.00 Registration and coffee & tea
- 9.30 Welcome by Paul Bekkers  
*Direction Health, Gender and Civil Society ( Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*
- 9.35 Welcome by Dr Mirjam Ros  
*Development Policy Review Network*
- 9.40 Welcome by Dr Anouka van Eerdewijk  
*Coordinator On Track with Gender trajectory*
- 10.00 Introduction to today's programme  
Ellen Sprenger (facilitator)
- 10.20 **Keynote address by Dr Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay**  
*Royal Tropical Institute (Amsterdam)*
- 10.40 Questions and comments on keynote lecture and papers  
With:
- Dr Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay (*Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam*)
  - Dr Conny Roggeband (*Culture, Organisations and Management, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*)
  - Dr Nathalie Holvoet (*Instituut voor Ontwikkeling & Beleid, Antwerp*)
  - Dr Anouka van Eerdewijk (*Centre for International Development Issues, Nijmegen*)
- 11.15 Coffee break
- 11.30 **Keynote address by Prof. Marianne Marchand**  
*Universidad de las Américas (Mexico)*
- 11.50 Questions and comments on keynote lecture and papers  
With:
- Prof. Marianne Marchand (*Universidad de las Américas, Mexico*)
  - Drs. Tine Davids (*Centre for International Development Issues, Nijmegen*)
  - Drs. Linda Mans (*Manskracht*)
  - Dr Nathalie Holvoet (*Instituut voor Ontwikkeling & Beleid, Antwerp*)
- 12.30 LUNCH
- 13.30 **Workshop sessions**
- 15.15 Coffee break
- 15.30 **Plenary discussion**
- 16.30 Closing remarks
- 16.45 Drinks and reception

**Seminar – TAKING STOCK May 29th 2009**  
**Institute of Social Studies – Aula B**

- 13.30      Registration  
              Coffee & tea
- 14.00      **Welcome and introduction to On Track with Gender**  
              Anouka van Eerdewijk  
              *(Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen)*
- 14.20      **Introduction to today's programme**  
              *Ellen Sprenger*
- 14.30      **Keynote address**  
              **Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay**  
              *Royal Tropical Institute (Amsterdam)*
- 14.55      Questions and comments
- 15.35      Coffee/tea break
- 15.50      **Keynote address**  
              **Amy Lind**  
              *Department of Women's Studies, University of Cincinnati*
- 16.15      Questions and comments
- 17.00      **Closing remarks**  
              Steering Committee On Track with Gender
- 17.15      Drinks and reception

## Appendix 2 – Summaries of position papers

### Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action through a gender lens: an international perspective and the case of the Dutch Development Cooperation

*Nathalie Holvoet and Liesbeth Inberg*

Changes to aid policies and instruments have been advocated over the last decade with a view to increasing aid effectiveness and promote development. The Paris Declaration (PD) and Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) set out a reform agenda of ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results orientation and mutual accountability. This article studies the ongoing processes through a gender lens and focuses more specifically on **the following research questions**: What is the underlying rationale for a gender-sensitive Paris Declaration (PD), Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) and ongoing review processes? What are the opportunities and challenges/risks of the different PD/AAA principles for gender equality and empowerment? To what extent are gender concerns effectively taken into account in the PD/AAA? How does Dutch Development Cooperation deal with gender concerns in the context of the ongoing changes in aid policies and instruments.

#### *Methodology*

The study is based on secondary data and primary data collection. Secondary data consists of academic as well as 'grey' literature related to the PD, its review processes and the broader aid effectiveness agenda. In order to acquire more insight into underlying processes, secondary data has been complemented with semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews with key stakeholders engaged in PD/AAA-related processes. In the sample of interviewees, we have deliberately included actors who have a specific 'gender' mandate and others who have not. One of the limitations of the Dutch case study is its focus on actual experiences and insights registered at headquarters which does not necessarily or adequately cover practices, challenges and insights at the level of embassies.

#### *Findings*

The rationale for a gender-sensitive reform agenda is clear-cut. First, gender equality and women's empowerment are among the objectives that most partner and donor governments have endorsed. It is therefore a straightforward matter to scrutinise changes in aid modalities as regards their added value for gender equality and women's empowerment policies and results. Different studies confirm the fact that all five key principles open interesting opportunities to move forward while, at the same time, they entail a number of serious risks or at least pressing challenges. If donors and governments are serious about results orientation and accountability for the equality and empowerment objectives they have endorsed, it necessarily implies serious efforts to grasp opportunities and mitigate risks. Second, there is ample evidence of the fact that gender-blind policies and practices, be it at the micro, meso or macro level, are not effective, let alone efficient. Policies and practices

which flatly ignore the fact that men and women are facing different constraints, opportunities, incentives and rights just do not work. The answer is a gender mainstreaming approach which initiates an integrative and agenda-setting process. In the context of new aid modalities, insights of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) might be particularly useful. Technically, GRB resolves some of the difficulties encountered in gender mainstreaming and, even more fundamentally, puts into perspective the 'exclusiveness' of policymaking and budgetary processes. If controlled by non-state actors, GRB may function as a powerful mechanism of 'downward' accountability.

While the rationale for a gender-sensitive PD may be argued on equality, effectiveness and efficiency grounds, the original PD only made a passing reference to gender equality in the paragraph on harmonisation efforts. Moreover, the initial gender blindness will remain hidden because PD monitoring surveys and evaluations also ignore gender equality and women's empowerment. Given this sorry state of affairs, and in order to avoid further 'gender-retrofitting', different gender and women's mobilising networks have been set up, somewhat late in the day, with advocacy, research and lobbying in the run up to the 2008 Accra III High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Initiatives by the DAC GENDERNET and CSO networks such as WIDE, AWID, FEMNET have been partially successful. Gender equality and women's empowerment figure more prominently in the AAA, and there are now more opportunities for the integration of a gender perspective. However, none of these opportunities will be automatically realised and particularly agenda-setting initiatives risk being curtailed if principles of 'country ownership', 'alignment' and 'results-orientation' are interpreted in a 'reductionist' manner. Moreover, (the lack of) changes to policies and practices of governments and donors risk going unnoticed as the twelve existing indicators remain gender-blind while no new indicators have been added.

The main focus of research into the way gender issues are dealt with on the ground in the context of the PD/AAA reform processes has so far been on partner countries. While this is in line with the advocated shift in responsibilities, it is as important to document and analyse ongoing reform processes within donor agencies through a gender lens. The Netherlands are an interesting case, being one of the donors which are generally applauded for being '*ahead of the crowd*' when it comes to the implementation of PD/AAA reform processes. As regards commitment, there is outspoken support for a gender-sensitive PD/AAA at the highest political level although bureaucratic commitment is more unstable. There are important differences between departments, within departments and over time. This is to a certain extent typical of Dutch policymaking which often involves relatively quick changes in frames and values. Similarly to other cases, 'strategic' framing has proven to be important for getting gender and empowerment issues on the PD/AAA agenda. In this specific context of poverty reduction and aid effectiveness, it is of utmost importance to revive the old distinction among a WID 'poverty reduction/efficiency' approach and a GAD 'gender efficiency' approach and to monitor and evaluate the usefulness of a more instrumentalist framing.

While commitment in terms of general policymaking is relatively high and on the rise, the division of mandates and division of responsibilities is much more ambiguous with different

departments having oversight functions and none really being responsible for the realisation. In a setting of relatively few sticks and carrots, policy evaporation is obviously possible. This may apply in particular within embassies where increasing levels of devolved responsibilities are combined with a reduction of specific gender expertise. In practice, it particularly circumvents a donor's agenda-setting process of specific targeting on objectives of gender equality and women's empowerment. In an effort to reverse this tendency, a specific MDG-3 'Investing in Equality' fund has been set up and cooperation is being sought with Nordic+ donors to ensure donor gender expertise in all Dutch partner countries. This is obviously an area which needs close monitoring and in-depth case studies, particularly in the absence of a clear incentive structure within the ministry to stimulate gender sensitivity. Besides the lack of internal sticks and carrots, there is also little external pressure from Dutch non-state actors such as the Parliament and NGOs. The Dutch parliament has so far shown relatively little interest in the PD and its review processes, let alone to its gender sensitivity. The apparent lack of interest in the topic within Dutch NGOs is mainly related to their generally critical attitude towards the PD and the limited involvement of NGO gender expertise in discussions of PD/AAA. In view of the lack of advocacy and lobbying from the traditional mobilising networks in the Netherlands, international gender accountability mechanisms, such as OECD/DAC peer reviews and the Gender Equality Policy Marker, have become all the more important for a proper understanding of the opportunities offered by PD/AAA for gender equality and empowerment and for a mitigation of the risks of sidelining gender and empowerment issues.

## Energies and (dis)connections: the practice of gender mainstreaming in Dutch development cooperation

*Anouka van Eerdewijk*

This paper investigates how gender mainstreaming is institutionalised within Dutch development organisations. On the one hand, it attempts to identify actual practices of gender mainstreaming policies and, on the other hand, conceptually reflect how successful gender is being mainstreamed.

In determining this success, the paper examines the following key aspects of a definition of gender mainstreaming: the extent to which it touches all areas and levels of policy formulation and implementation, the extent to which gender concerns are an integral dimension, and whether the practice of gender mainstreaming is about contributing to gender equality. The paper draws from the 'practice' aspects of organisational studies because this allows a consideration of the interplay between an organisation's formal policies and the actual daily practice of its staff.

An analytical framework, in which components of gender mainstreaming policies were defined, was developed to structure the analysis of gender mainstreaming practices. Six components were selected and further investigated in the paper: (1) the character of the gender mainstreaming policy, (2) internal responsibility, (3) input and outreach targets, (4) the tools at the level of partner organisations, (5) the level of policy formulation and implementation, and (6) staff competences.

This paper focuses on four Dutch development organisations: Oxfam Novib, Hivos, ICCO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For each organisation, data gathering included the collection of policy documents and the conducting of semi-structured interviews. The policy documents included organisational policy documents, gender policy documents, gender evaluations, tools and documentation relating to the implementation of tools and instruments, as well as other relevant documents. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 20 interviewees. In each organisation, five interviews were held with (a) the head of the gender unit, (b) a top executive or programme director, and (c) programme staff who were implementing the organisational and gender policies.

It was observed that all four organisations have formulated gender objectives at the highest policy level. Moreover, all four organisations pursue a gender mainstreaming agenda and aim to integrate gender into all policy levels and areas. Despite the differences between the organisations in terms of running a stand alone women & gender programme, for all four the presence of a gender unit and gender experts is seen as pivotal in order to ensure that gender is not 'away-streamed'.

All four organisations have in common that the responsibility for the implementation of the mainstreaming process lies with those at the highest executive level, and that the gender unit or experts play a role in stimulating, supporting and advising other departments and programmes on how to integrally take up gender.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ICCO have decided not to pursue gender mainstreaming through input and outreach targets (component 3). By contrast, Oxfam Novib and Hivos do work with input and outreach targets. Input targets can be formulated with

respect to both the budget for the stand alone gender programme and the mainstreaming process for which other programmes have to spend a set percentage on gender. Outreach targets define the percentage of women among the beneficiaries of non-gender specific programmes.

Whereas the input and outreach targets are valued by staff for keeping gender on the agenda, they also create frustration and lead to complaints. The targets are criticised for narrowing gender down to numbers and consequently ignoring the qualitative aspects of the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. In addition, staff point out that it is difficult to realise the targets within the priorities set within the thematic departments and programmes. Finally, the quantitative character and the annual monitoring of the targets create an atmosphere of 'being policed' and as such create negative energies around gender.

Gender assessments are instruments used by the NGOs in the relationships with their counterpart organisations (component 4). They include questions related to both the organisational and programmatic aspects of proposals from counterpart organisations. Staff values these gender assessments for keeping gender 'on the table' when approving and monitoring partner organisations. However, staff also argue that, in practice, they tend to 'miss the point' and do not guarantee an in-depth consideration of gender concerns in relation to programmes carried out by counterparts. The gender assessments are part of the administrative process and are vulnerable to being treated in an instrumental and administrative way. Whereas the work with counterpart organisations involved both administrative and conceptual-strategic work, the gender assessments in practice do not necessarily affect the conceptual and strategic part, as this is largely determined by what staff have 'in their head'.

For an integral analysis of gender in relation to programmes and policies, the level of policy formulation between the overall organisational objectives and the actual implementation is of pivotal importance (component 5). The four organisations differ as regards the extent to which they focus on this level in their attempts to institutionalise gender. Overall, the integration of gender at the in-between policy level is weak.

Finally, with respect to the sixth component of staff competences, training plays a larger role in assuring that staff are capable of integrally addressing gender in their work and of integrating gender competences into recruitment or staff performance reviewing procedures. Whereas gender trainings are regularly proposed to improve gender competences, staff are critical of the training received in the past, and stress their need for knowledge on 'how' (rather than 'why') to address gender in their work.

In the final section, the paper critically looks at how the different and sometimes potentially conflicting organisational objectives in development work come to be played out at the level of individual staff and counterpart organisations which have to deal with targets and gender assessments. There is a need to make connections between these different objectives and bodies of knowledge and experience. It is argued that gender mainstreaming strategies could build more on new knowledge management approaches in which practice-based and tacit knowledge play a prominent role. Finally, there is an analysis of how the weak integration of gender analysis into the level of departmental policies contributes to the above-mentioned catch-22 situation. The transformative potential of gender mainstreaming

could be channelled towards that in-between policy level, where connections between gender and other development objectives can be made and negotiated, gender objectives can be translated into strategic gender issues and the qualitative elements of gender equality and women's empowerment can be addressed more fruitfully. Making these connections would mean gender mainstreaming policies could tap more into the positive energies that exist in their organisations.

No instant success...

## Assessing gender mainstreaming evaluations

*Conny Roggeband*

The Netherlands has been a pioneer in incorporating a gender perspective into field development cooperation. Thanks also to the mobilisation and strategic framing efforts of feminists, a gender perspective has been introduced across a wide range of key issues ranging from poverty reduction, health, safety, conflict, resource redistribution, and other domains. Long before the Beijing gender mainstreaming revolution, Dutch development cooperation agencies had appointed gender experts and created specific equality units. Gender awareness training was also provided to non-expert staff, and specific innovative tools for monitoring and evaluating programmes and policies were developed. Yet, after this early success, feminists were confronted by a significant obstacle. First, mobilising networks started to demobilise and this was followed by a decrease in budgets for women's organisations and projects and a decline in equality infrastructures (decentralisation, smaller or disappearing gender units). Gender mainstreaming, introduced to turn the tide and integrate a gender perspective as an integral dimension of the entire project and policy cycle, has apparently failed to make policies and programmes more gender sensitive and place gender equality firmly on the organisational agenda.

This paper uses a political process approach (Roggeband & Verloo, 2006) to analyse the different available evaluations of mainstreaming efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies in development cooperation. By analysing the success and failures of mainstreaming practices and policies both at the level of structure (in terms of political/organisational opportunities, including discursive opportunities) and at the level of agency (in terms of mobilising networks and strategic framing), the paper examines three stages of the mainstreaming process: 1) construction, 2) implementation, and 3) monitoring of mainstreaming practices. I have used existing national and international evaluations of gender mainstreaming practices and complemented this information with interviews with external gender experts.

### **Framing gender mainstreaming**

Strategic framing was crucial during the phase of constructing and implementing gender mainstreaming policies and practices. However, it has not always resulted in strong practices.

An important observation here is that most organisations have not made adaptations to the general definitions provided by the UN or Council of Europe. This implies that there is often no organisational specific strategy, with clear strategic choices, as to how to implement gender mainstreaming and what it would mean for specific organisational procedures, structures and decision making processes. As a result, a lot of organisations conclude that the mainstreaming strategy is 'too broad and unclear'. Moreover, organisational diagnosis and prognosis are not always culturally and socially sensitive. This implies that more local and specific analyses are needed. In addition, gender analyses of specific domains and problems that have been developed are not always integrated into policies. Gender mainstreaming is mainly left to experts, as internal motors and motivators,

and some ad hoc procedures like monitoring external partners. The introduction of more participative–democratic mainstreaming strategies that engage women’s groups, individual activists brokers and external experts may help to create a more dynamic framing process where diagnosis and prognosis are adapted to new emerging needs and perspectives.

### **Mobilising structures**

Strategic alliances and mobilising structures appear to have been in place in the phase of construction and implementation, but have not been sustained and further developed in later phases of organisational development. Paradoxically, the implementation of gender mainstreaming has been successful in allowing gender experts to adopt an important role in the formation of policies and programmes, and in providing legitimacy to gender expertise as a valid tool to improve policies. However, it has often resulted in a reduction in the scope for wider consultation with outside experts or other actors. Moreover, as most of the evaluations indicate, the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies frequently implied a reduction in funding for specific gender projects or women’s organisations. Current mobilising structures that struggle to keep gender mainstreaming on the organisational agenda are mainly technocratic, meaning that they are expert–based, and less open to, and are used less frequently by, civil society/women’s organisations.

### **Organisational opportunities**

After years of ‘backlash’, some organisations have recently witnessed a revival. Lately there has been an upsurge in efforts to elaborate new, and compile existing, frameworks and tools for gender–sensitive planning, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, as many of the interviewed experts observe, there appears to be a new window of opportunity consisting of political opportunities and an active women’s movement that is not only able to seize, but also create, new opportunities.

“You shouldn’t be too radical”:

## Mapping gender and development studies in Dutch academia

*Linda Mans*

Studies of anthropology, development studies, social and cultural geography and international relations have provided an academic basis for an understanding of, and work in the field of, development cooperation. In that field ‘gender and development’ became a recognised sub-discipline and ‘gender’ gained official status in the mainstream development discourse. Gender and development has become institutionalised, as reflected in Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes at universities. This paper seeks to map out how gender and development are currently represented in the different departments of anthropology, development studies, social and cultural geography and international relations at eight Dutch universities and seven other institutes. The paper’s focus is on the topics covered and their theoretical perspectives. An equally interesting objective is to establish what has so far been achieved as regards gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the related academia and institutes. In this context, it would also be interesting to find out what caused the increase in interest in gender and development issues and whether there has been a subsequent decrease in interest – as well as how this is related to the official definition of gender mainstreaming. A second aim of this paper is, therefore, to find out what factors influence the mainstreaming of gender into academic institutions, in relation to international development.

### *Research questions*

1. How are gender and development studies incorporated into different departments of anthropology, development studies, social and cultural geography and international relations at Dutch universities and institutes/institutions?
2. What topics are taught to students in the different departments and how are these topics represented in study guides?
3. What are the recent institutional trends with regard to teaching and performing research on gender and development?
4. What factors influence the mainstreaming of gender into academic institutions and research and how can these factors be used to integrate gender and development issues successfully into the different studies?

### *Methodology*

This paper is based on data from academic literature, electronically available policy papers from academic centres and study guides, along with interviews with professors and scholars on gender and development issues. A baseline assessment (quick scan) was performed to establish at which Dutch international development related studies/institutes gender (and development) issues are explicitly taught. Interviews were conducted with fifteen individuals: fourteen professors, lecturers and/or scholars and one policymaker. A discourse analysis is used to discuss the interviews.

### *Results*

The screening of electronically available study guides of eight universities and seven institutes revealed the courses of anthropology, development studies, social geography and international relations that explicitly contain gender-related education. At four of the eight universities, the departments of cultural anthropology and development studies provide compulsory courses that contain gender. At three universities, students of anthropology and development studies learn about gender through electives. Studies related to human geography offer one compulsory Master's course at the University of Amsterdam. At other universities, the gender-related courses are electives. The courses at one university were not visible online due to the introduction of a new website.

Major themes that emerged from the transcripts of the interviews are:

(1) theoretical shifts in gender and development – the analytical concept of gender has become complex and multidimensional, but; (2) the concept of gender mainstreaming; (3) influences on teaching and doing research on gender at academia; and (4) strategies for survival.

According to the interviewees theoretical shifts in gender and development include increased complexity and multidimensionality of gender, and a decreased link with activism and social change. Interviewees are very critical towards the concept of gender and development, as the perception is that the development of this concept has gone off course. Gender mainstreaming is perceived as problematic: it has a conceptual problem – it refers only to women and, as a policy, seems to dissolve gender. Teaching and doing research on gender in academia are influenced by several factors: the universities' change of climate towards neo-liberalism; the interviewees' positions at universities and institution, as well as space to manoeuvre; the image and value of gender; and the impact of students in market-oriented academia. Interviewees have developed individual strategies for survival to maintain their positions at academic institutions, such as putting gender on the education and research agenda all the time; supporting, training and encouraging their colleagues in the institutions who work in the field of gender; developing 'strategic behaviour', as in not talking about gender too explicitly and building useful alliances.

### *Conclusions*

A subdivision in compulsory courses on gender and electives indicates that not all students will (automatically) be taught about the concept of gender and/or feminist theories. Many students who become interested in exploring gender issues have little advance knowledge about the concept of gender.

Academic scholars who are struggling to come to terms with the pressure to respond to more market-oriented demands report a shift in the universities' and institutions' climate towards neo-liberalism while retaining a core of feminism and gender with an emphasis on social justice and transformation. Due to the progress of theoretical developments, gender has become a more complex and multidimensional analytical concept. At the same time, it seems to have lost its relationship with social change and activism. Therefore, new thinking is needed as well as the development of new approaches, both to question the consequences of an uncritical discourse on gender mainstreaming, gender equality and women's empowerment and to address the challenges thrown up by the neo-liberal (dis)order.

Professors and lecturers/academic scholars should continue to teach their students a critical and nuanced perspective. Students may become future colleagues who may be able to contribute to this new thinking and development of new approaches.

## Gender mainstreaming: driving with square wheels

### Theoretical review and reflections

*Tine Davids, Francien van Driel, Franny Parren*

Gender mainstreaming came into widespread use after it was internationally adopted at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, China. However promising and attractive the meanings of gender mainstreaming might have been, its objectives and its practices have proven to be problematic. An assessment of the literature on the strengths and weaknesses of gender mainstreaming has revealed that two different frames of reference support this problematic character. One frame is based on gender transformation, addressing structural gender inequalities, and the other frame of reference is based on improving policy praxis, addressing policymaking and practices. In this paper we examine whether these two different frames of reference are mutually compatible and consistent. It is an academic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of gender mainstreaming, both at the level of gender mainstreaming praxis and at the level of gender theories.

The paper is based on a discussion of the implications of gender mainstreaming praxis as expressed in the literature. The adoption of gender mainstreaming as a policy instrument in all kinds of institutions and organisations has raised serious doubts about its transformative potential. Due to the neo-liberal climate in which gender mainstreaming takes place and the need to secure support for gender mainstreaming endeavours by all policy actors, gender mainstreaming as a policy practice often results in a narrowing down of a gender perspective to women and women's issues, technocratisation, standardisation or 'smart economics'. The struggle for gender equality runs the risk of being integrated into schemes of (re-) producing neo-liberal subjectivities, a 'masculine' status quo and hetero-normativity. In those cases where gender equality is not being narrowed down to women and women issues and in which, instead, emphasis is given to mainstreaming differences, there is a very real risk of complicity with policy mechanisms that embrace security goals as human right packages, or of characterising gender primarily as a boundary marker.

The strengths and weaknesses of gender mainstreaming as a concept cannot be assessed without considering it as a frame of reference for transformation. We have to explore what is understood by gender equality and by transformation. This transformative potential is discussed at a theoretical-analytical level in which the articulation of gender mainstreaming as a philosophy or frame of gender equality and their implications for a transformative agenda are analysed. The central question is whether gender mainstreaming is aimed at feminist goals or at governance improvement goals. Defining gender equality as an integration of women, women's issues, needs or rights, implies constraining theorising on societal transformation within the paradigms of a power analysis that does not tie in with the complexity of women's daily lives and the contemporary societies they live in, nor those of men. Besides the risk of ethnocentrism the integrationist approach on gender mainstreaming as well as the diversity approach (that centres on valuing gender difference), run the risk of fixing gender mainstreaming in very dichotomous schemes that do not tackle the discriminatory or subordinating mechanisms at hand. As such these two approaches provide few or problematic points of reference for theorising transformation.

In the concluding section we discuss the need to reconceptualise gender mainstreaming and put forward some ideas on how to approach gender mainstreaming differently and reconsider the change that we can achieve and envision. We conclude that the relationship between gender mainstreaming and societal change is still under-theorised and in need of further exploration. By using insights and recommendations expressed by other authors we can envision possible innovative ways of thinking and future directions. To counter the implications of using gender as a boundary marker and to prevent the misuse of gender, Marianne Marchand (fc 2009), for instance, believes that postcolonial feminist theory offers possibilities for dismantling the mechanisms of 'othering'. The fast-growing literature and theorising on migration and the eventual situations of 'in betweenness' this creates for women and men might also provide a method for countering 'othering'. The tendency of states and institutions to inscribe totalising, homogenous (e.g. national, religious, ethnic) subjectivities can be countered by the conceptualisation of Nomadic subjects and ethics (Braidotti 1994 and 2006).

Related questions that need to be discussed then are whether we can achieve progress by going beyond thinking in categories. Is, as Amy Lind (fc. 2009) suggests, a right-based approach, of gender mainstreaming, such as basic freedom of sexuality for everybody, a sufficient basis for reaching beyond the 'add women and stir' strategy in the struggle against hetero-normativity? A problem might be that fighting for rights does not necessarily tackle the mechanisms that uphold these schemes of hetero-normativity. Maybe we need to think more along the lines of targeting specific power mechanisms of injustice, as Jane Papart (fc. 2009) also seems to suggest when she describes questioning masculinist power schemes as a point of departure for understanding the way power is gendered and limits possibilities for gender transformation.

As regards policy praxis it is necessary to look beyond gender mainstreaming as the latest method for addressing structural gender inequality. Building on thoughts of Subrahmanian and other authors we consider a scaling down of expectations of gender mainstreaming. Taking into consideration the fact that organisations are also gendered, we have to reconsider what we can expect from mainstreaming gender within different institutional frameworks and by individual gender experts within these institutions. Is transformation to be expected from state bureaucracies with their own dynamics, and if so what kind? Under which conditions can female representation be considered a step forward or an achievement without claiming such transformative goals as gender equality? The same questions can be asked with respect to other organisations and NGOS. In order to identify such steps Subrahmanian suggests discarding the term gender mainstreaming and subdividing it into its component parts: policy reform, administrative reform, analytical and conceptual strengthening, and political advocacy, and to recognise the wider political contexts within which these component parts are operating (Subrahmanian 2004:93). The latter, in combination with distinguishing different paths and methods for policy and politics, is particularly important considering unwanted consequences of mainstreaming gender into policy regimes that centre on different and sometimes opposed agendas.

