

Strength to Strength

Capacity-building newsletter for MRDF partners



Methodist Relief & Development Fund

Welcome

Welcome to this issue of Strength to Strength from MRDF. **We hope you'll find ideas in here to help you build up and strengthen your work.** This issue of **Strength to Strength** focuses on GENDER.

In recent years, there has been an increasing awareness that the impact of development projects and programmes on men and women has been different. In fact, there is substantial evidence that women have consistently missed out on the benefits. One response of development agencies like MRDF, has been to introduce 'gender mainstreaming', or gender as a 'cross-cutting theme'. But what are these concepts and how can our understanding of them improve our development activities and the lives of the people we work with and for?

Many MRDF partners have already used these pages to share their ideas and strengths and to help and inspire other readers. Thank you. If you have any feedback or suggestions for future issues, please contact S2S@methodistchurch.org.uk. The next issue of **Strength to Strength** (August 2007) is on **MARKETING** and includes the question: "Once you have provided people with technical skills and finance, how do you help them to sell the goods that they produce?" - please send us your ideas and suggestions.

Introduction to gender

What is the difference between 'sex' and 'gender'?

Gender is not the same as a person's 'sex', which is about biological characteristics. People are born female or male, but *learn* to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught what the appropriate behaviour and attitudes, roles and activities are for them, and how they should relate to other people. These can and do change, over time and according to social and cultural factors.

"Everything which is not biologically determined can be changed. Everything which is socially constructed can be changed."
AIVO, Niger



▷ **For example:** In parts of Nepal, it is normal for women to be separated from their families during menstruation. In many countries in Africa, girls are expected to help their mothers in caring for younger children, whilst their brothers are not, or to carry out specific roles like food preparation or pounding grain (A). In Asia, women feed their husbands and sons before they feed their daughters or themselves.

Beyond the simple starting point of a person's biological sex, probably no two cultures would completely agree on what distinguishes one gender from the other.

Isn't gender just a women's issue?

No, gender should reflect the perspectives of men as well as women. Gender is concerned with the social roles and interactions of men and women, boys and girls. In all aspects of social activity, including access to resources, salaries, distribution of income or goods, exercise of authority and power, and participation in cultural and religious activity, gender is important in determining people's behaviour and the outcomes of any social interaction.



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What are 'gender awareness' and 'gender mainstreaming'?

Gender awareness is not a separate or additional issue to be 'stitched on' to development programmes. Rather, it is a way of seeing, a perspective, which helps us to understand people and our society. We begin to look into and question our assumptions about men's and women's behaviours, attitudes and interactions, and how they might be influenced by gender.

Gender mainstreaming refers to the insistence that gender issues be taken into account across the whole range of an organisation's activity, even those areas which seem neutral.

Why should my organisation be interested in gender awareness?

Though the roles that they play in any society are different, women are usually responsible for domestic work; they play a major role in productive activities for the family; and in some societies they also have clear community roles. In each of these areas, women have often been adversely affected by the development process.

There is a wide gap between women's high – yet often unrecognised and informal – economic participation and their low political and social power. Development strategies have usually taken the needs of the most vocal and politically active as their starting point. Yet development is a process that should involve and foster a sense of ownership in all members of a society to the same extent.

How can gender awareness benefit the women that we work with?

There are two main types of intervention that NGOs can practise:

Practical interventions

These relate to activities which enable women to better carry out their socially-accepted roles of wives and mothers. They respond to what women see as their immediate needs, practical in nature, such as water provision, healthcare and income generation. e.g. *micro-credit schemes, providing mosquito nets, well construction.*

Strategic interventions

These relate to women's needs arising out of their subordinate position to men in society. They seek to address issues such as the gender division of labour (whereby women are restricted to certain areas of employment), power and control (legal rights, domestic violence, equal pay). They aim to help women achieve greater equality and bring about changes in existing roles of men and women. e.g. *movement to gain property rights for women or protection under the law from domestic violence (B).*

▷ **Ideally, development programmes should seek to include activities which work at both levels, so improving women's day-to-day, practical well-being, whilst at the same time, improving the general place of women in their society.**



MRDF partner ZEPF in Ghana, campaigning against violence against women

Gender checklist

It is important to address gender equality within our own organisations, so that we have legitimacy and authority when promoting gender perspectives to others.

“We start firstly within our own organisation, so that later we can start to talk outside.”

APDCOMA, Mozambique

Select the response to each question that most accurately describes your organisation (choose only one of the answers – a, b or c)

<p>1. Does your organisation have recruitment policies that address gender?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We do not have a recruitment policy that addresses gender. b. We have an equal opportunities recruitment policy for male and female job applicants, so that nobody is discriminated against because of their gender. c. We have an equal opportunities recruitment policy which we publicise when we advertise job opportunities. 	<p>2. What is the gender balance in your organisation’s staff team?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We do not have any women on our paid staff. b. All of the women in paid employment at our organisation are junior members of staff (i.e. they do not have managerial authority or responsibilities). c. We have a gender balance in our staff team that reflects the gender balance of people we work with on projects, and women hold positions of seniority on the staff.
<p>3. Do men and women at your organisation receive equal salaries for the same job when they have the same experience and training?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We pay men more than women for the same job. b. We do not think about gender when determining salaries for our staff. c. We have a policy to make sure that equal salaries are paid to men and women when they are in the same job and have the same experience and training. 	<p>4. Does your organisation have staff development policies that address gender?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We do not have any staff development policies that address gender. b. We have policies that ensure women staff members are entitled to the same opportunities for promotion and training as men. c. We make provision for women staff members to take maternity leave from their jobs, as well as policies for equal opportunities to men and women for promotion and training.
<p>5. Does your organisation create a woman-friendly working environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We do not make provision for women in our working arrangements. b. We provide at least one of the following working arrangements: (i) private toileting facilities, (ii) flexible working hours to allow for family responsibilities, (iii) female staff/volunteers are no more likely to be asked to take on serving roles at events than male staff/volunteers. c. We provide <i>all</i> of the above working arrangements. 	<p>6. What is the gender balance on the board that governs your organisation? <i>(Note: “the board” refers to the decision-making / governing body for your organisation)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fewer than 10% of our organisation’s board members are women. b. Our organisation’s board has an approximately equal split of male and female members among those who attend board meetings. c. Women have (or have had in the past) positions of seniority on the board (e.g. chairperson or vice-chair) <i>and</i> our organisation’s board has an approximately equal split of male and female members among those who attend board meetings.

▷ Find out your scores – and what they mean for your organisation – on p.10.

Gender action plan

Here are some ideas from MRDF partners to help make your organisation and your activities more gender sensitive.

Recruiting and managing staff

- Seek to achieve a gender balance on your staff team, which reflects the organisation's stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- Set achievable targets for women's inclusion on organisational decision-making bodies.
- Include gender issues in your employment policy: clear statements about equality of opportunity for men and women in respect of recruitment, promotion and training; an anti-discrimination policy (including a disciplinary procedure for dealing with cases of discrimination); and provision for maternity leave.
- Facilitate maternity leave. Consider how best to manage balancing family needs with the needs of your organisation
- Appoint a gender focal person. This is someone who takes a special interest in gender issues, perhaps who has had specific training, and can be a reference point for your staff team to help you to always think about gender issues when planning and implementing your activities.

"We adopt a zero tolerance policy in the event of mental stress, mental or physical harassment, intimidation or any kind of pressure on the female staff."
BISAP, Bangladesh

Training

- Provide training to all staff on gender, including developing clear and commonly understood definitions of terminology such as gender empowerment (see the **Resources & Websites** section on p.10 for sources of information).
- Sensitise local leaders and policy-makers regarding gender issues. For example, you could include local government officials in gender training, or undertake specific lobbying on women's rights.
- Adopt a reflective, learning ethos in your organisation and ask whether your activities or actions discriminate in any way against men or women. Create opportunities for formal and informal discussions within the organisation about gender issues.

"We group men and women so that they can express their problems and the way in which they can be solved. If there is no consensus from both parts, everyone votes on the issue, to solve it in an immediate way."
APDCOMA, Mozambique

Working with communities

- Facilitate the *meaningful* participation of both women and men within your organisation and within your project activities at every stage. This might mean having to build individuals' capacity or put in place extra support to help them participate, e.g. childcare provision, literacy classes, interpretation during meetings.



C

MRDF partner CWSDS in India works specifically with women's groups

- Target projects specifically at women. As women are often marginalised, this might mean that you purposefully ask only women in the community to express their needs and design your project on the basis of these; or that you favour women in the number of beneficiaries of your project (C).
- Identify role models: involve leading women in your organisation or community in inspiring other women to take on more responsibility and to express themselves more freely.
- Think about the words you use, they convey a subtle message – not *manpower* but *staffing*, not *chairman* but *chairperson*.

- When planning projects, recognise and identify the different and particular needs of men and women; take into account the practical conditions that can impact on women's participation and look for ways to overcome any potential obstacles to their participation.
- Plan for male and female staff to work together in communities, reaching out to men and women together.

“Through various interpersonal discussions, men in our organisation have been greatly helped to improve their attitudes towards women. They now understand that women are as capable as men and can manage business, offices and organisations just as well as men if given the opportunity. This has been learnt through the experience they have had with their female counterparts in the organisation.”
HITS, Uganda

- Celebrate International or National Women's Day.
- Use gender-based tools during participatory exercises & activities (see p.6-9 for some ideas).

▷ **With thanks for contributions from:** AIVO (Niger); ADAC (Mali); AMAPEF (Mali); APDCOMA (Mozambique); BISAP (Bangladesh); EDA (Ethiopia); GSP (Malawi); HITS (Uganda); KWDT (Uganda); YDC (Cameroon).

Women-led organisations

Although all NGOs need to take account of gender in their work, organisations led by women may have a special role to play in challenging gender inequality. **Cecilia Mussa**, Director of MRDF partner **Gender Support Programme (GSP)** in Malawi, shares some of her experience here:

How and why was your organisation established?

GSP was established after I went to the Beijing conference [1995 UN Conference focusing on women's empowerment] and saw that women and girls were disadvantaged because of a cultural and political set-up which favoured men.

What benefit does GSP gain from having a female director?

GSP benefits from having a female director because I am able to appreciate the problems women are facing and able to articulate them, for example issues of domestic violence, overcoming poverty and encouraging women to take a stand on issues affecting them.

What obstacles does GSP continue to face as a woman-led organisation?

There is a lack of political will and financial capacity, because we come from a culture where women were treated as second class and activities favoured men. Even though women are 55% of the total population in Malawi, only 15% of them are able to read and write. It is my vision for more women to attend adult literacy, dropout schoolgirls to go to school and those who are going to school to be encouraged to work very hard.

Here in Malawi, there are more men heading NGOs than women, so competing on donor level is not an easy task. One obstacle has been men seeing this as a fight or competition and feeling that women want to overpower them.

How else do gender issues affect your organisation?

We still need more capable women. As gender concepts are new in Malawi and sometimes collide with traditional norms, there needs to be a lot of civic education to the communities, e.g. sometimes you hear comments like 'She talks or works like a man'. With staff there is not much of a problem because when joining the organisation they are aware of gender concepts and are taught what GSP stand for.

Gender awareness-raising activities

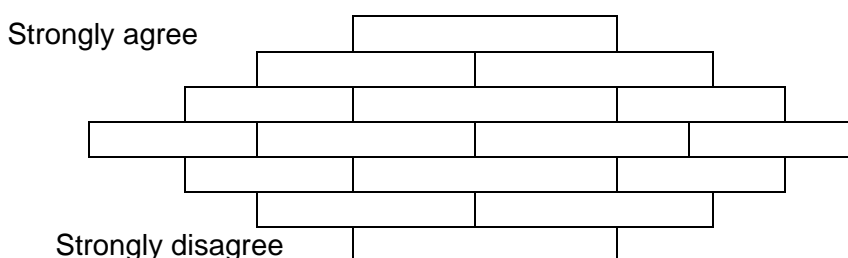
Activities for integrating gender awareness-raising and equality into your organisation and your work

A) Your organisation

To find out which broad approach to gender your organisation uses, try the following activity with relevant staff members.

Part 1: Diamond ranking

1. Copy each of the 16 sentences on p.7 onto separate cards (one sentence per card).
2. Make enough sets for each group.
3. Make sure you clearly label the cards A, B, C etc. so they can be easily identified later.
4. Divide the team into small groups of 3 or 4 and give each group a set of cards.
5. Each group must lay the cards out in a diamond shape according to how much they agree (top) or disagree (bottom) with the statements.



6. When the groups have finished, bring them back together and raise the following questions:
 - a) How did you feel doing that exercise – was it easy? N.B. these are examples of real statements but they are over-generalisations. People may find it difficult to reach agreement, but that is part of the learning experience. Try to move them from disagreements about the words to discussing the ideas.
 - b) Discuss the similarities and differences between the order different groups have ranked the statements.

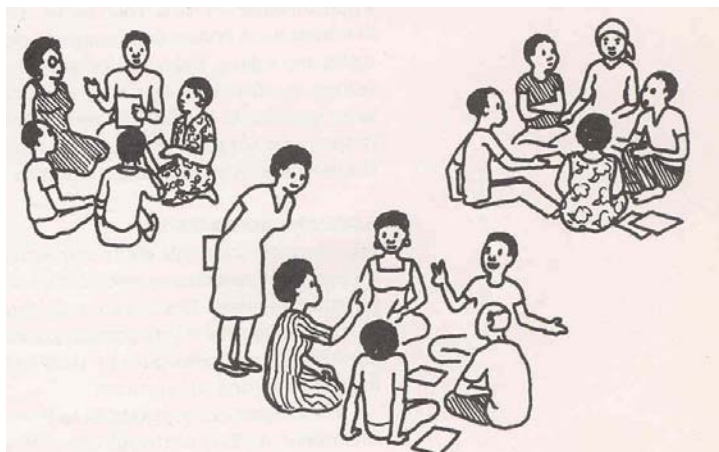
The statements have been taken from published documents or overheard remarks. You can alter some of the sentences to suit your context but the statements listed below, which reflect different policy approaches to gender, must always be included (along with M which is a necessary starting point for putting any of these strategies into practice rather than an approach in itself). The way groups have organised their diamond reflects the approach they most agree with.

The approaches are:

<u>Approach</u>	<u>Which statement goes with which approach?</u>
1. Welfare	K, B
2. Equity	H, N
3. Anti-poverty	F, O
4. Efficiency	E, L
5. Empowerment	G, D

Part 2: Policy approaches (for more experienced organisations)

Contact MRDF for an activity which helps you to explore which of the policy approaches listed your organisation has and how this defines the type of projects you choose to undertake.



Diamond ranking cards (for copying):

<p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>A good development project will benefit the whole community which will automatically include women.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>We aim to help the poorest of the poor. Poor women are particularly disadvantaged, so they should be specially helped.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>I agree that women have a hard time, but it's not up to us to change the culture.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p>Women often find it difficult to speak in the company of men. Therefore it is important to devise ways of enabling their voices to be heard.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p>Women do the main farming work. Therefore women must be involved in any agricultural project if it is to succeed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <p>There should be some aspect of income-generation in all schemes for women. The aim should be that such schemes should be self-financing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>True development for women would enable them to have the power to make meaningful choices and changes in their lives.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>Equal Opportunities policy and practice in Northern NGOs should be directly relevant to, and can provide guidelines for, the projects we run.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>When the situation is serious you can't afford the time to stop and think about gender issues.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">J</p> <p>If a community is involved in a national liberation or class struggle, then this has to be the priority for both men and women. To focus on women's specific needs is divisive and disruptive.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>Women as wives and mothers are responsible for the health and well-being of the whole family. Therefore we should help them to help the whole family.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>All aspects of development will affect women and men differently. Therefore we need to look at everything for its different impact on men and women.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">M</p> <p>Within each culture, women are subordinate to men. The aim should be to eliminate this inequality and subordination.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N</p> <p>If women had more education they could catch up with men to become more economically self-sufficient.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">O</p> <p>The important thing is to help the people most in need, not just the women.</p>

B) Your work

Whether gender equality is the principal objective of your work, or only one of a number of goals, it is vital to analyse the gender dynamics of those affected by the projects which you initiate. Gender analysis does not require the technical expertise of those outside the community, except as facilitators. All requisite knowledge for gender analysis exists among the people whose lives are the subject of the analysis; it cannot be transformative unless the analysis is done by the people themselves.

1. Gender analysis

Several different step-by-step tools exist for carrying out gender analysis. These tools help to raise questions, analyse information, and develop strategies to increase women's and men's participation in and benefits from your programmes.

You can analyse:

- the development context - *What is getting better? What is getting worse?*
- profiling of roles and tasks - *Who does what?*
 - within the household (family)
 - outside the household (work)
 - within the community (social, cultural and political associations)
- access to and control over resources and their benefits - *Who has what? Who needs what?*
- practical needs e.g. water and family food provision, healthcare strategic needs e.g. access to credit, freedom of choice over childbearing - *Are the project design and the planned results based on a real understanding of these needs? How will the project contribute to the empowerment of men and women in the sector it deals with?*
- cultural, religious, legal and structural constraints on and opportunities for gender equality - *Which groups are in the most disadvantaged position? Why? How will the project make things better?*
- actions needed - *What should be done to close the gaps between what women and men need? What can your project deliver?*
- do the planning assumptions (at each level of the planning framework or logical framework, for example) adequately reflect the constraints on women's participation in the programme?
- do the project inputs identify opportunities for female participation in programme management, in the delivery and community management of goods and services, in any planned institutional changes, in training opportunities, and in the monitoring of resources and benefits? Will the project resources be relevant and accessible to poor women in terms of personnel, location, and timing?

▷ Gender issues should be incorporated into every stage of the project cycle (identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and at every level of your work, both in field (project, sectoral or programmatic) and at organisational policy level (HR, Board).

▷ 'Gender Issues in the Project Cycle' has a full checklist (<http://www.networklearning.org/books/gender.html> or by email from MRDF).

2. Identification of key issues and development of appropriate strategy

When you have carried out your gender analysis, you can identify specific obstacles/opportunities women face in their community and identify a strategy to achieve the expected results. Your strategy should identify areas for intervention, making use of opportunities and/or finding ways to overcome constraints.

3. Reporting gender equality results

In monitoring progress, changes and achieved results should be reported against the gender strategy you chose.

▷ To have proper gender results reporting, accurate baseline data must be collected (broken down separately for men and for women, i.e. gender disaggregated data) at the beginning of the project cycle.

Tools for gender analysis

There are a variety of tools, many of them participatory, that you can use at the analysis stage with your staff or with the community. Some examples are listed below.

Sex or Gender game

Level: very basic

For use by: staff

Aim: to explore perception

Instructions: participants have to identify from a list of statements which are related to Sex, which to Gender e.g. 'Women give birth to babies' (statement related to Sex), 'Girls are gentle, boys are tough' (statement related to Gender). A full list of statements is available from MRDF.

24 hour day

Level: basic

For use by: community members

Aim: to look at roles and tasks

Instructions: participants list the tasks performed by men or by women in their community in a day or particular season. You can add interest by asking women to do the men's day and vice versa.

N.B. This activity raises awareness of men's and women's workloads but ignores differences such as age and class.

Gender analysis matrix

Level: more advanced

For use by: staff (and possibly community members)

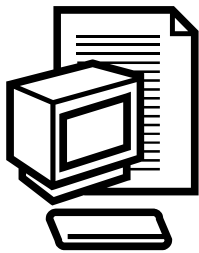
Aim: to facilitate the definition and analysis of the gender impact of a planned project

Instructions:

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Stated Gender Objectives: Does the project include measurable indices for the attainment of its gender objectives, to facilitate monitoring and post-evaluation?

CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS e.g. Labour	Time	Resources	Culture
<i>Identify here changes in tasks, level of skill required (skilled or unskilled, formal education, training) and labour capacity (how many people and how much they can do; do people need to be hired or can members of the household do it?)</i>	<i>Estimate changes in the amount of time (3 hours, 4 days, and so on) it takes to carry out the task associated with the project or activity.</i>	<i>Predict the changes in access to capital (income, land, credit) as a consequence of the project, and the extent of control over changes in resources (more or less) for each level of analysis.</i>	<i>Estimate changes in social aspects of the participants' lives (changes in gender roles or status) as a result of the project.</i>
Stakeholder 1			
Stakeholder 1			
Etc.			



Resources & Websites

Websites

- <http://www.qdrc.org/gender/> - The Global Development Research Centre's focus on Gender (including Gender Analysis Frameworks and various links to Women & Development resources on the Internet).
- <http://www.networklearning.org/books/gender.html> - 'Incorporating Gender into your NGO' – full document can be downloaded (plus a checklist 'Gender Issues in the Project Cycle'). Contact MRDF if you wish receive this by e-mail.
- <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/gender> - Development Gateway facilitates knowledge sharing and collaboration about development issues, including Gender. Users can register for free e-mail updates of new resources on the site.
- <http://www.eldis.org/gender/> - Eldis shares information on development, policy, practice and research. The Gender section of the website offers papers, news, web links and forums. Users can register for free e-mail updates of new resources on the site.

Books

- *A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks*, Candida March, Ines Smyth, Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay (1999), <http://styluspub.com/books/AuthorDetail.aspx?id=6337>
- *The Oxfam Gender Training Manual*, Suzanne Williams (1995), <http://styluspub.com/books/BookDetail.aspx?productID=46148>

Further types of gender analysis tools (all available from MRDF)

- Harvard analytical framework - combines an activity profile with an access and control profile
- Moser framework - examines both the roles and needs of men and of women.

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Scores for Gender Checklist (from p.3):

a = 0, b = 1, c = 2.

What do your scores mean?

If you scored less than 5: Your organisation should urgently prioritise creating gender policies, some of the resources in this newsletter will help you to make a start.

If you scored 6–9: Your organisation is paying attention to gender issues, but could improve in some areas. Look at the questions where you scored less highly and try to address these areas.

If you scored 10 or more: Your organisation is doing well in addressing gender issues. However, do not be complacent, as every NGO should aim for a full score for each question. You should work on those areas in which you score lower than 2.

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