

## On Track with Gender





## Colophon

This document reports on the 'Gender mainstreaming' process which has been 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 the aim being to stimulate 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 the 'Gender mainstreaming' process

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(with input from members of the Steering Committee)
- Period:** July 2009 – February 2011
- Responsible organisations:** CIDIN, Hivos, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Oxfam Novib  
In the second phase, ICCO, Cordaid and KIT also participated in the Steering Committee of the trajectory

### 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 objectives of this *On Track with Gender* (OTwG) 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 programs.
3. To provide an inventory of the current policy and academic knowledge 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 for 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 to be translated into actual implementation. However there has been no overall comprehensive and systematic analysis – with multiple stakeholders – on the possible causes and solutions for this limited success.

This *On Track with Gender* Trajectory wanted to take gender mainstreaming to a next level. It sought to bring policymakers, practitioners, researchers, consultants and women's activists together in dialogue in order to create new synergies between these different actors that work on women's empowerment, gender and development issues. It also sought to create space for the experiences and voices of Southern experts and organisations that have considerable experience and expertise in effective integrated strategic and practical women's empowerment and gender equality programmes. The objective of the Trajectory was 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 aimed to build on available experiences and knowledge in order to rethink and transform the current understanding and practice of gender mainstreaming. While acknowledging what has been achieved, we sought to raise the level of gender analysis as well as the formulation and implementation of gender (mainstreaming) policies. Dialogues and exchanges between practitioners, policymakers, academics and activists were indispensable elements of this initiative.

The *On Track with Gender* Trajectory covered two stages in three years (2008–2010). The first stage was devoted to 'Taking Stock': a review of what has been done on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the Ministry for Development Cooperation, Dutch NGOs and universities so far. It sought to learn what policies and strategies are being pursued, and what can be learnt from evaluations that have been acted on so far. In addition, we aimed 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 to assess what the Paris agenda implies for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming, and more importantly how gender issues are addressed in the Declaration and the review process of its implementation.

The outcomes of the reflection of the first year have set the stage for the second phase of the Trajectory. The key conclusions of the Taking Stock phase were that there is an urgent need to contextualise and unpack gender mainstreaming and that this requires more clarity about how, and to what extent, development organisations are the objects or the subjects of gender mainstreaming. Dutch development agencies have been frontrunners in taking up gender mainstreaming policies, but the gender infrastructures have weakened over time, especially because of a focus on the mainstreaming track (which integrates gender equality as the cross-cutting issue into all policies, programmes and budgetary decisions), at the expense of the stand-alone track (in which specific measures target women's empowerment and gender equality). It was also found that gender mainstreaming policies need to be adapted to the specific characteristics, objectives and work processes of an organisation. The ambitious gender mainstreaming agenda needs to be broken down into smaller steps in



order to make it comprehensible for organisations and staff. Institutional change can thereby be fostered through mobilising networks which include gender experts.

### **Rationale for the 'Moving Forward' stage**

The Moving Forward stage was inspired by the following points of departure:

- To stimulate strategic gender analysis at programme level in order to connect the organisations' GM policies to the choices and practices made within the different programmes.
- To stimulate connections between gender and non-gender experts.
- To bring out the qualitative aspects of gender policies and interventions that seek to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
- To contribute to countering the trend of de-politicisation and instrumentalisation of gender policies in practice.
- To create positive energies around gender mainstreaming (rather than becoming the 'gender-police').
- To explore what role Dutch agencies can play in stimulating genuine social change processes such as the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment (the link between institutional and societal change).

The objective of the second phase was to strengthen analysis, deepen insight, strengthen policy formulation and push the strategies for implementation a step further. Shared learning and strategizing was promoted by enabling further exchanges between policy, practice and academia. In doing so, the Moving Forward stage sought to contribute to the further institutionalisation of gender and future agenda of the GM strategy.

The Moving Forward phase was guided by several principles. Firstly, input from Southern experts and partner organisations working on women's empowerment, gender equality and gender mainstreaming played a crucial role in this second phase. Secondly, in the second stage the dialogue was extended to non-gender experts in Dutch organisations. Thirdly, the trajectory sought to create a space for reflection among gender experts on further strategizing the future agenda of GM. Fourthly, an effort was made to link up with ongoing gender initiatives in Dutch development cooperation, in order to support their work and inspire deeper reflection and commitment to gender mainstreaming. Links were also established with ongoing initiatives on gender mainstreaming in Dutch development cooperation, such as MicroNed, the evaluation on Violence against Women, and the Agri-ProFocus working group on Gender and value chains, and the Gender Knowledge Platform (*'Kenniskring Gender'*) that was set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Fifthly, the second stage not only sought to reflect on GM, but also had to be considered as a GM effort itself. This means that the process of linking up with other initiatives, of involving partners and colleagues in collecting and analysing cases, and involving a broad audience into the further strategizing of GM needed to be realised with care, as this would also enhance the sustainability of the OTwG efforts. The MFS-2 application procedure in 2010 required a great

deal of effort by Dutch development NGOs, and this affected the progress of the Moving Forward trajectory. The activities required more time to be set up, but in the end this additional time paid back in terms of the engagement of a range of agencies, and the sustainability of the OTwG activities after the end of the process. Sixthly, the second stage was a multi-layered process which enabled reflection at the level of specific projects, of policy areas (programmes), and of gender mainstreaming overall. This multi-layered character was realised by (a) collecting cases, (b) the writing of synthesis reports within policy areas, and (c) the reflection on GM across those different policy areas.

The multi-layered character allowed different types of audiences to tap in to the level of their interest. The policy areas highlighted in the Moving Forward stage were: (1) GM in the new aid architecture, (2) violence against women, (3) microfinance, and (4) value chains.

The first policy area – GM in the new aid architecture – was specifically concerned with institutional arrangements and opportunities and risks for gender mainstreaming. The latter three specific policy areas cover different types of gender mainstreaming processes: the economic programmes are a ‘mainstream policy area’ in which gender is being introduced, whereas the violence against women programmes concern an agenda of women and feminist organisations which seek to claim space in mainstream practices.

A final aim of the Moving Forward stage was to feed the outcomes of both stages back to the participating organisations. Several meetings have taken place to support the mainstreaming of gender into the MFS-2 applications of some of the participating NGOs, and strengthening the gender agenda of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Activities realised

The Moving Forward phase encompassed five sub-processes, which led up to two closing events in February 2011.

### **1. The ‘Aid architecture’ sub-process**

This sub-process was a direct follow-up to the paper written in the first stage of OTwG on gender mainstreaming in the new aid architecture. Where the first paper analysed (general) opportunities and challenges of the different Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (PD/AAA) key principles for gender equality and empowerment and was based upon literature review and interviews with key stakeholders in the Netherlands, in the second stage the initiative was taken to complement this general (desk) study and headquarter interviews with evidence from the ground. The objective was to acquire more insight into how challenges to, and opportunities for, GM materialise on the ground. The authors of the first paper, Nathalie Holvoet and Liesbeth Inberg (Institute of Development Policy and Management, IOB Antwerp), were keen to conduct this follow-up study.

A mission was carried out to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) had expressed an interest in further exploring gender mainstreaming in the newly emerging aid architecture. The two researchers worked in Tanzania from 29 May 2010 to 4 June 2010. At the end of the mission, a debriefing meeting took place with RNE staff on the

preliminary outcomes of the interviews and document analysis. In September, a debriefing meeting took place with several representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague, during which the outcomes of the paper were presented and discussed. The idea was to share the final results of the paper with the OECD/DAC GENDERNET.

## 2. The 'Violence against women' sub-process

The point of departure for this sub-process was to examine a number of case studies and evaluation or reflection studies on strategies to end violence against women, and put them in the perspective of gender mainstreaming strategies. Considering that the issue of violence against women is one of the outstanding stand-alone topics, the perspective of gender mainstreaming implies looking at what role 'the mainstream' has in ending these types of violence. 'Mainstream' can then mean the role of men, of legislation, of communities, the impact of multi-stakeholder initiatives, campaigns aimed at modifying attitudes, etcetera.

Five cases (captured in four reports) were collected, and provided input for a synthesis paper that looked at the opportunities for gender mainstreaming in strategies that sought to stop violence against women. The four reports<sup>1</sup> are:

- Bettina Shell-Duncan et al. (2010). *Contingency and Change in the Practice of Female Genital Cutting: Dynamics of Decision Making in Senegambia*.<sup>2</sup>
- Anuradha, R. (2010) *Report of Manthan: The Assessment of 'We Can' - A Campaign to end Violence against Women in South Asia*.<sup>3</sup>
- Joni van de Sand (2010). *Involving Men in the Fight Against Violence Against Women: Insights into What is Being Done, What Works, and Why*, A Study Commissioned by ICCO/KiA.<sup>4</sup>
- Nursyahbani Katjasungkana (2010). *Policy Study on Women and Violence in Indonesia: Possibilities for NGO Interventions (2010)*, a study commissioned by Cordaid.

Chiseche Mibenge, who has a PhD in Law, wrote a synthesis paper on the four cases, in which she engages in a critical dialogue with the findings and observations from the different cases.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The first two studies were part of the DPRN process while the latter two have been commissioned by the respective Dutch agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Available at:  
[http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/WHO%20\(2010\)%20Contingency%20and%20Change%20in%20the%20Practice%20of%20Female%20Genital%20Cutting.pdf](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/WHO%20(2010)%20Contingency%20and%20Change%20in%20the%20Practice%20of%20Female%20Genital%20Cutting.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Available at:  
[http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/We%20Can%20\(Ma%20n%20than\\_final\)%20.pdf](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/We%20Can%20(Ma%20n%20than_final)%20.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Available at:  
[http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/JvdS%20-%20Involving%20Men%20in%20Ending%20VAW%20\(March%202010\)%20%20ICCO-KiA.pdf](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/JvdS%20-%20Involving%20Men%20in%20Ending%20VAW%20(March%202010)%20%20ICCO-KiA.pdf).

On 20 August 2010, a workshop was organised, during which a first analysis of the papers was discussed with a small audience (see programme in Appendix 1). A group of 20 participants (see participant list in Appendix 2) working in NGOs, DGIS or universities joined the discussion. The workshop focused on grasping the analytical questions that were to guide the synthesis paper: which strategies are being used to implement the mainstreaming of combating violence against women? And what is the potential for mainstreaming of strategies to stop violence against women? On the basis of the workshop, Chiseche Mibenge wrote the second and final version of the paper, which became available on the OTwG website by mid February 2011. The different reports of the cases have also been made available, either as a PDF document, or through links that connect to the original websites on which the studies can be found.

Originally, one of the reasons to select violence against women as a thematic area for this OTwG trajectory was the upcoming Partos evaluation on violence against women programmes and projects. We hoped that OTwG could contribute to strengthening the analytical depth of that evaluation. The start-up of the Partos evaluation was delayed, however, and after the first phase was finished the plans for the second stage were changed. The synergy between OTwG and this evaluation eventually were less strong than anticipated.

### **3. The 'Microfinance' sub-process**

Microfinance, together with value chains (see below), was identified as a 'mainstream' policy area of development interventions. The aim of this sub-process was to contribute to strategic gender analysis in economic development, i.e. to show how to view gender relations in value chain analysis and micro finance interventions. In addition, the sub-process sought to identify gender mainstreaming intervention strategies alongside the provision of (micro-finance) services that have the potential to contribute to women's (economic) empowerment. These questions on gender and microfinance were gaining momentum in the context of MicroNed, as a result of which there seemed to be an opportunity to feed into that process by collecting a number of cases, and by producing a synthesis report.

Hivos, Oxfam Novib, ICCO and Cordaid all selected one or more partner organisations working on gender and microfinance. Consultants were approached to conduct a case study, all using the same Terms of Reference focused on unpacking gender mainstreaming practices and opportunities in the interventions carried out by these partner organisations. The case studies were financed by the respective Dutch agencies. The following case studies have been undertaken<sup>6</sup>:

- Micro-finance Investment and Technical Assistance Facility (MITAF) in Sierra Leone (CORDAID partner);
- BRAC Tanzania (Hivos partner);

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<sup>5</sup> Available at:

[http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/110214%20VAW%20report%20\(first%20version\)%20.pdf](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/110214%20VAW%20report%20(first%20version)%20.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Available at <http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/content/publications>.

- Small Enterprise Foundation (SEF) in South Africa (Hivos partner);
- Friends of People's Bank in the Philippines (ICCO partner);
- Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in India (Hivos partner);
- Pro Mujer Bolivia (Hivos partner);
- Cooperativa Maquita Cushunchic de Ahorro y Crédito in Ecuador (Hivos partner).

A number of case studies were finished in late January 2011 and provided the basis for the synthesis paper (which was financed from the OTwG budget). The final report which became available in early March 2011 included the case studies. The synthesis report was written by Linda Mayoux (consultant).<sup>7</sup> Issues addressed in the paper are:

- the potential and limitations for combined micro-finance services and women's (economic) empowerment interventions;
- the enabling and obstructing factors for combining micro-finance services with women's (economic) empowerment interventions;
- the potential sustainability of combined interventions;
- the necessity and relevance of combined micro-finance and additional interventions (e.g. reinforcing, mutually supportive, conflicting/contradicting);
- the distinction between female outreach (number of female beneficiaries) and outcomes in terms of women's (economic) empowerment;
- the framing of women and gender issues;
- the institutional and organisational embedding of the responsibility for gender issues;
- the potential for replication of particular strategies and models;
- the recommendations for follow-up to advance gender mainstreaming in the field of micro-finance, e.g. participation in particular events, lobby, linking and learning among organisations, etc.

#### 4. The 'Value chains' sub-process

Gender and value chains figured as one of the potential areas of interest for OTwG, on the one hand because it was a 'mainstream' area of development policy in which gender could – and needed – to be mainstreamed, and on the other hand because the 'Gender in Value Chains working group' from Agri-ProFocus was an important initiative that OTwG potentially could feed into or link up with. For the closing events in February 2011, Noortje Verhart and Anna Laven (who both work at the Royal Tropical Institute, KIT) prepared a conceptual paper based on a writeshop that had taken place late 2010. In this writeshop a number of cases on a variety of subjects related to gender and value chain development had been gathered. The analysis of those cases, the writing-up of a book, and the development of a conceptual framework that can grasp the dynamics between gender and value chains, is currently taking place. For the OTwG closing event, the two authors drew on the emerging conceptual framework from the writeshop. The emerging insights were shared in the format of a short paper in working group presentation at the closure event on 21 February. Angelica Senders

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<sup>7</sup> Available at:

[http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/GM%20in%20Microfinance%20\(Synthesis%20paper%20Mayoux\)%20March%202011%20-%20OTwG.pdf](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/drupal6/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/files/GM%20in%20Microfinance%20(Synthesis%20paper%20Mayoux)%20March%202011%20-%20OTwG.pdf).

(Fair and Sustainable Advisory Services) held a second presentation in the working group on value chains, on the basis of the same writeshop project in which she is working on a tool to assist organisations in designing strategies to address gender in value chain development interventions.

## **5. The 'Back to the organisations' sub-process**

In the first half of 2010, the insights from the Taking Stock phase were shared with Dutch development organisations at different junctures. Together with both Oxfam Novib and Hivos, a meeting was organised with respectively 15 and 9 programme managers and senior staff involved in the preparation of the new MFS-2 proposal (programmes in Appendix 2). The aim was to provide them with key insights and inspiration to integrate gender concerns in this critical moment of policy formulation. In addition, a meeting was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with 8 staff members from the Gender department to share and reflect on the OTwG outcomes. In all three cases, Tine Davids and Anouka van Eerdewijk (CIDIN, RU Nijmegen) were invited to present the OTwG conclusions of the Taking Stock phase.<sup>8</sup> The programme for each meeting was compiled in close consultation with the representative of that organisation in the OTwG Steering Group. All the sessions focused on stimulating reflection on elements of new gender mainstreaming policies.

In addition to these sessions with specific organisations the outcomes were used as input for various open meetings and workshops of Dutch development agencies. The two most important events in which members of the OTwG Steering Committee played a role were:

- The PSO gender workshop on 8 December 2009 – participation in a panel and morning lecture;
- Genderjustice.nu on 23 February 2010 – participation in panels and facilitation of workshop.

## **6. Closing events on 21–22 February 2011**

The different sub-processes of the OTwG trajectory came together in two closing events in February 2011. The events brought together gender and non-gender experts from NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as consultants and academic researchers. The key questions were:

- What gender mainstreaming strategies have proven successful and can take gender mainstreaming to the next level?
- What are the key areas of attention which will make gender mainstreaming a success in the coming years?

The rationale for both days was to create synergy between different positions and inputs. The synthesis papers were used as input for the discussion. The programmes (Appendix 1) were designed to facilitate active participation and engagement of the participants. The

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<sup>8</sup> Due to time constraints and planning problems, such feedback meetings have not (yet) taken place with Cordaid, ICCO and KIT. They are planned to take place in the first half of 2011, after the February 2011 closing events.

seven paper authors (Nathalie Holvoet, Liesbeth Inberg, Linda Mayoux, Chiseche Mibenge, Noortje Verhart, Anna Laven and Angelica Senders) presented the highlights of their work and engaged in discussions in working groups. Two keynote speakers (Jane Parpart and Aruna Rao) were invited in order to stimulate further reflection and open up the discussion. By offering a variety of perspectives and insights, the participants in the closing events were not offered 'the answer', but were stimulated into becoming involved in a process of shared learning, reflection and strategising.

The first event, on 21 February 2011, was an open event for which participants could register at the OTwG website. On 9 February the registration period closed due to the high number of registrations (over 80). The first event was meant to reach an audience of both gender and non-gender experts, and sought to stimulate dialogue between these two groups.

The second event, on 22 February 2011, was a closed event with invited participation by 21 gender experts who included the paper authors, keynote speakers, OTwG Steering Committee members, and colleagues from the respective organisations. This selected community of gender experts engaged in an in-depth reflection on future strategies for gender mainstreaming.

## Results

### Policy briefs

OTwG published two Policy Briefs, one for each phase. The Taking Stock Policy Brief became available in April 2010. Four hundred hard copies were distributed among the participating organisations (the process' organisers, and also KIT, ICCO and Cordaid). The policy brief is also available on the website.<sup>9</sup>

The second Policy Brief is currently being finalised. The outline is as follows: (1) one page introduction on OTwG, (2) one page on key insights into each sub-process and (3) two pages on overall insights and conclusions.

### Published articles/chapters

Davids, Tine & Anouka van Eerdewijk (2010). On Track with Gender: Revitalizing the Agenda for Gender Mainstreaming. In: Paul Hoebink (ed.), *The Netherlands Yearbook on International Cooperation 2009–2010* (pp. 103–118). Assen: Van Gorcum.

Eerdewijk, A. van (2010). GM2.0. *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, 13(1), 76–84.

Mans, Linda (2009). You shouldn't be too radical. Mapping gender and development studies in Dutch academia. *LOVA Tijdschrift*, 30(2), pp. 56–60.

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<sup>9</sup> Available at:

[http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/file/Policy%20Brief%201%20\(2010\)%20TAKING\\_STOCK\\_Gender\\_Mainstreaming-2.pdf](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/file/Policy%20Brief%201%20(2010)%20TAKING_STOCK_Gender_Mainstreaming-2.pdf).



Eerdewijk, A. van, A. Evers & L. Smits (2009). Een stap in de verkeerde richting: MDG3 en empowerment van vrouwen. *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, 12(4), p. 30–44.

### **Presentations at meetings and conferences (spin-off; not organised as part of the OTwG process itself)**

*'Connections and transformations: next steps in mainstreaming gender in Dutch development cooperation'* (Anouka van Eerdewijk & Tine Davids). Paper presented at the '2nd Equal is not enough conference', Antwerp, 1–2 December 2010.

*'Gender mainstreaming: the way forward'* (Anouka van Eerdewijk). Presentation at Event Genderjustice.nu, WO–MEN Dutch Gender Platform, Utrecht, February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010.

*'Gender mainstreaming in een notendop'* (Anouka van Eerdewijk). Presentation at workshop 'Aan de slag met gender: van "goede wil" naar actie', PSO Capaciteitsopbouw in ontwikkelingslanden, The Hague, 7 December 2009.

*'Gender mainstreaming: Driving on Square Wheels?'* (Tine Davids & Francien van Driel). Paper presented at the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference, 10 September 2009, Potsdam (Germany).

*'The practice of gender mainstreaming in Dutch development cooperation'* (Anouka van Eerdewijk). Paper presented at the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference, 10 September 2009, Potsdam (Germany).

### **Special Issue and edited volume (in progress)**

The papers of the Taking Stock phase have been supplemented by four other papers, and this collection has been submitted to an A–journal for publication as a Special Issue. A preliminary offer has also been made by an A–publisher to publish the collection as an edited volume. The contributions which have already been prepared are listed below. In addition, the author of the Moving Forward synthesis papers will be invited to contribute to the edited volume.

*Anouka van Eerdewijk & Tine Davids* (Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands)  
'Escaping the Mythical Beast: Gender Mainstreaming Revisited'

*Conny Roggeband* (FLACSO Ecuador & VU Amsterdam)  
'No instant success ... : Assessing gender mainstreaming evaluations'

*Anouka van Eerdewijk* (Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands)  
'The Micropolitics of Evaporation: the Practice of Gender Mainstreaming in Dutch Development NGOs'



*Nathalie Holvoet & Liesbeth Inberg* (University of Antwerp, Belgium)

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

*José C.M. van Santen* (Leiden University, The Netherlands)

“Educating a girl, means educating a whole nation”: Gender mainstreaming, development and Islamic resurgence in North Cameroon'

*Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay* (KIT, Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam)

'Mainstreaming gender or reconstituting the mainstream? Gender knowledge in development'

*Jane Parpart* (University of the West Indies, St. Augustine)

'Exploring the Transformative Potential of Gender Mainstreaming: Limits and Possibilities'

*Tine Davids, Francien van Driel, Franny Parren* (Radboud University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands)

'Unpacking Gender Mainstreaming: a slow revolution?'

## Conclusions

The collected case studies, synthesis papers and two closing events can be summarised in five key insights. They showed, first, that opportunities for gender mainstreaming lie in strengthening linkages between the stand-alone and mainstreaming track. Original ideas of gender mainstreaming pointed to the dual approach: a stand-alone track in which specific measures target women's empowerment and gender equality, and a gender mainstreaming track that integrates gender equality as the cross-cutting issue into all policies, programmes and budgetary decisions. There are opportunities for strengthening the empowerment impact of gender mainstreaming by strengthening the complementarity of the two tracks.

Second, the experience of collecting case studies and writing synthesis reports on those cases, as was done for microfinance, value chains, and violence against women, provided a powerful practice for actually mainstreaming gender in these policy fields. As a consequence, the 'On track with gender' trajectory not only examined gender mainstreaming, but actually practised it.

Third, such a linking between a stand-alone and gender mainstreaming track will enable a further dialogue between business case arguments of effectiveness and efficiency and rights-based arguments for gender mainstreaming. Successful implementation of gender mainstreaming requires a combination of business case arguments and social justice arguments. It was found that the potential tensions between these discourses can provide a fertile ground for the validation of gender concepts. This validation and (re)definition of gender concepts allows for the contextualisation both to geographical contexts and policy areas. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Validation also opens up much-needed room for assessing how interventions translate or fail to translate into empowerment results.

Fourth, notions of ownership and alignment can provide powerful points of departure as they address who should be involved in such validation processes. The second phase reaffirmed the importance identified in the 'Taking stock' phase of mobilising structures (such as women's rights organisations and gender expertise) and building 'creative tensions' within and around organisations in order to stimulate and pressure them to change and transform. For such creative tensions, 'triangles' are needed between (1) gender experts within and outside organisations, (2) women movements and feminist organisations, and (3) women in decision-making positions and procedures.

Fifth, in the neoliberal and depoliticising context in which development cooperation currently takes shape, there is a need for safe spaces where gender activists, experts and academics enter into dialogue and reflect in order to realise in-depth analysis and learning as well as further strategizing. In addition to that, change agents also need to engage in dialogue with 'mainstream' actors. In the context of international development, 'triangles' also have to bridge North-South divides. Building multiple 'triangles' – that is not only dialogues but trialogues as well – creates innovation and energy through feedback loops that come into being between different types of actors and different institutions and organisations. Such an exchange is especially valuable when translated to specific policy areas and geographical contexts. These outcomes of the Moving forward phase were summarised in a policy brief that was widely distributed.<sup>10</sup>

## Contribution to the DPRN objectives

### Stimulating informed debate

- By collecting case studies from the development organisations' practices, the process was able to document practitioners' knowledge and make it available. An explicit aim of the process was to locate informed debate not only in academic knowledge, but also in practitioners' knowledge.
- By having synthesis papers written by academically trained authors, linkages were built between the practitioners' knowledge and scientific writing and analysis.
- Informed debate was further enhanced by the input of the keynote speakers at both closing events.
- The process results are being translated into both policy briefs and academic publications and, as such, contribute to additional informed debate.

### Involvement of relevant partners

A total of 76 people attended the Gender Mainstreaming 2.0 Dialogue, 15% of whom were researchers, 58% practitioners, 9% policymakers and 18% came from the private sector (almost exclusively consultants). The highest participation was by practitioners, while participation from the other sectors was not that high. The participation of consultants in

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<sup>10</sup> Available at:

[http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/file/Policy%20Brief%201%20\(2010\)%20TAKING\\_STOCK\\_Gender\\_Mainstreaming-2.pdf](http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl/sites/ontrackwithgender.nl/files/file/Policy%20Brief%201%20(2010)%20TAKING_STOCK_Gender_Mainstreaming-2.pdf).

absolute terms was, however, not so low, and this sector was adequately represented in the meetings. The consultants also appreciated the set-up of the process. The high participation of NGO practitioners can partly be related to the fact that especially the NGOs contributed to the collected case studies. It can also be explained by the high NGO participation in ongoing initiatives in the development sector on gender mainstreaming to which the different sub-processes on microfinance, value chains and violence against women were linking. It proved more difficult to involve policymakers. Despite many of them registering for both closing events, their actual participation was relatively low. With respect to academics, the focus on practice might have discouraged their participation. Moreover, the number of researchers explicitly working on gender and development has been reduced strongly over the past ten years. In other words, the number of academics actively working on the process' topic is limited. One explicit aim of the GM2.0 Dialogue was to enhance dialogue and reflection between gender and non-gender experts: during the warm-up exercise of the meeting, it became clear that about half of the participants identified themselves as a gender expert, while the other half did not. In that sense, the process was successful in bringing gender and non-gender experts together.

### **Relevance for policy and practice**

- By building the analysis and exchange explicitly on the actual practice of NGOs and the Ministry, these gained in relevance to the practitioners and policymakers.
- Translation of the insights of the process into Policy Briefs added to the relevance of the process to practitioners and policymakers.
- Participants in both events expressed an appreciation of the debate with academics on their gender mainstreaming practices.

### **Enhancing cooperation and synergy**

Cooperation and synergy between different sectors was enhanced by:

- Selecting policy topics on which different sectors were working;
- Inviting the different sectors to make specific contributions to the process (e.g. collect case studies, produce synthesis papers, deliver keynote addresses, write policy briefs, and/or write academic publications);
- Careful design of the meetings, in which different kinds of inputs were asked from different kinds of actors;
- Creating space for reflection and exchange, rather than focusing on outcomes and results. Dialogue between the different sectors is time consuming, cannot be taken for granted and has to be facilitated carefully. The set-up and rationale of the process took these considerations into account, and resulted in a multi-layered process in terms of both types of inputs and outcomes.

### **Reactions and evaluation**

76 people participated in the GM2.0 Dialogue. Their reactions were overall positive and appreciative.

### **Aspects appreciated by the participants ('tops'):**

- The set-up of collecting case studies and preparing synthesis papers.
- Links of gender mainstreaming to specific policy areas.
- The exposure of participants to different policy areas.
- Exchange between gender and non-gender experts.
- The keynote addresses by Aruna Rao and Jane Parpart were greatly appreciated for their insights into academic knowledge, and the extent to which this enhanced understanding of practice.
- The 'light' atmosphere of both closing events, which offered energy as well as food for thought.
- Strong facilitation skills, and management of time during the programme.
- Opportunity to meet people and engage in networking.

### **Suggestions for improvement ('tips'):**

- The most common suggestion for improvement concerned the late availability of the papers and cases, which made it harder for participants to prepare themselves prior to the meetings.
- Despite the programme set-up there was limited time for elaborate discussions and one participant indicated that this was more of an indication that one day was not enough.
- Some of the participants had not received the final invitation and information, even though they had been registered through the website. This may have been due to a technical problem.

## **Reflection**

Overall, the process has been regarded as being positive. The multi-layered nature of the process has been one of its strengths, making its outcomes digestible to different kinds of audiences. Simultaneously, this character also enabled in-depth debate and reflection between these different audiences. The process was multi-layered in the sense that the inputs that were generated for the closing events included (1) cases at the level of actual practice, (2) synthesis papers which focused on a specific thematic policy area, but addressed similar questions related to gender mainstreaming, and (3) the overarching, or underlying, cross-cutting discussion on the future of gender mainstreaming. The process sought to create synergy between these different levels, and participants in the process could tap into each of these levels, which allowed for triple-loop learning. In addition, the this multi-layered character, the process and the closing events were focused in their subject matter and aims, but at the same time had an open character which allowed for multiple lessons to be drawn.

A second strength of the process was the commitment of the Steering group members to collect cases from their practice, and to make these available for analysis in the synthesis papers.

Thirdly, the facilitation of the process, and especially the skilled facilitation at both closing events, contributed to the enjoyable experience of being engaged in this process, the 'light' atmosphere, and the constructive discussions. The facilitator at the closing events

contributed strongly to the actual set-up of the programmes, and to brokering between the life worlds (expectations, jargon, speed) of the different groups of participants.

Fourthly, the process was successful in generating informed debate between the different sectors (practitioners, policymakers and academics), and this experience was appreciated by the participants. A challenge in this respect was the relatively lower participation by policymakers from DGIS and academics. With respect to the DGIS staff, it is hard to draw a specific lesson, except that it seems that many of the people who registered eventually could not make themselves available on the day of the actual meetings.

As far as the academics are concerned, the process was successful in engaging academic researchers for specific tasks in the process, such as the synthesis papers and the keynote lectures, and these contributions were considered valuable and useful by the mixed audience. Moreover, the relatively small studies they undertook provide a sufficient basis for future publications. Yet, apart from the academics who had been assigned a specific role in the process, the participation of researchers was relatively low in the second phase (Moving Forward). In the first phase (Taking Stock), their participation was higher.

The overall lessons seems to be that it is perfectly possible to stimulate and facilitate informed debate between policymakers, practitioners and academics, but also that it cannot be taken for granted that the programme of one meeting is equally inviting to the different sectors. In other words, while taking account of the different needs and interests of the different sectors, the actual programme might be more appealing to some than to others. In itself this is not a bad thing, as the relatively limited participation of one sector does not take away the fact that synergy and informed debate is taking place.

In terms of planning and keeping to time schedules, one of the major challenges in this process was unmistakably the time-consuming MFS-2 procedure in which the participating NGOs were caught up. Even though it provided an opportunity for providing feedback to the organisations on the OTwG outcomes at a strategic moment in policy formulation, the energy taken up by the MFS-2 procedure implied delays, especially in the microfinance sub-process. This eventually resulted in a postponement of the closing events to early 2011, rather than the original dates at the end of November 2010.

## Plan for follow up

Participants at both meetings expressed the need for further follow-up. This will take the form of follow-up to the case studies and synthesis papers, which will be discussed further in the respective organisations. Moreover, the Steering Group will continue to meet until at least the end of 2011 for further reflection on gender mainstreaming policies in the different organisations, and will explore to what extent and in what ways the learning agendas of the NGOs in MFS-2 and of DGIS can be connected for future knowledge building and learning. Initiatives have been taken for further cooperation, e.g. between the Hivos knowledge programme and CIDIN, and for participation by some of the organisations in the PSO Thematic Learning Trajectory on Gender. In addition, some of the organisers are already

participating in the 'Kenniskring' (knowledge platform) on rights and opportunities for women and girls that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has set up.

Finally, follow-up will take place through further publication of the outcomes of 'On track with gender' in e.g. the Netherlands Yearbook on International Cooperation, as well as several journal articles and an edited volume.

## Appendix 1– Programmes

### Gender meeting at Hivos – 16 January 2010

Ireen Dubel, Anouka van Eerdewijk, Tine Davids

10.00	A	Welcome Presentation of GPM 3 results	Ireen
10.15	B1	Presentation <i>Track with Gender</i> outcomes a) paper Anouka (micropolitics) b) conclusions OTwG (framing + mobilising structures)	a) Anouka b) Tine
10.45	B2	Questions and discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do the findings imply for Hivos?</i></li> <li>• <i>What are the key points regarding future GM policy?</i></li> </ul>	Led by Anouka en Tine
11.30	C	Joint analysis of framing of gender and women in the newest MFS proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What (different) assumptions regarding gender, women, empowerment and promoting gender equity are reflected in the MFS proposal?</i></li> </ul> <p>→ Taking the proposal as a starting point, the objective is to gain insight into the various ways gender and women can be thought about.</p>	Led by Anouka en Tine
12.00	D	Translation into the programmes. Objective: on the basis of the guiding questions below thinking about shaping gender policy in the three programmes (Expression & Engagement; Rights & Citizenship; and Green Entrepreneurship). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Which gender aspects and objectives (empowerment) can and would you like to take up and elaborate?</i></li> </ul>	Led by Anouka en Tine
13.00	E	Closure	Ireen

Central question: *Which gender aspects and objectives (empowerment) can be integrated into, and addressed in, this programme?*

1. In what way can the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women take shape within this programme?
2. Which niches can be identified with respect to the position of women in this programme?
3. What are the gender aspects of the mainstream agenda of this programme?
4. In what way can the representation of women be addressed in this programme? Which role do or can women's organisations play in this programme?

## Structure of gender meeting at Oxfam Novib – 1 February 2010

Jeanette Kloosterman, Carmen Reinoso, Anouka van Eerdewijk, Tine Davids

10.00	A	Welcome	Jeanette
10.15	B	Presentation of <i>On Track with Gender</i> outcomes c) paper Anouka (micropolitics) d) conclusions OTwG (framing + mobilising structures) e) questions and discussion: <i>What are the implications of the findings for Oxfam Novib?</i>	a) Anouka b) Tine
11.15	C	Translation to MFS2: <i>How can gender be embedded in MFS2 programmes?</i> (see guiding questions below)	Led by Anouka/Tine
12.10		Short break	
12.15	D	What is needed to embed gender in MFS2? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What preconditions and structures are needed?</i></li> </ul>	Led by Anouka en Tine
13.00	E	Closure	Jeanette

## Programme workshop ‘Mainstreaming strategies to end violence against women.’

Friday 20 August 2010

Location: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Moderator: Fulco van Deventer

9.00	Welcome and introduction
9.20	Presentation of the draft report by Chiseche Mibenge
9.50	Questions for clarification to Chiseche Mibenge
11.00	Group work – In small groups we will reflect on the report, exchange ideas and experiences in relation to the findings of the report, and share conclusions and recommendations.
12.30	Presentation of conclusions per working group – information of follow-up to the workshop – closure
13.00	Lunch



## Programme Gender Mainstreaming 2.0 Dialogue

21 February 2011

Location: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Multi-Purpose Room)

Facilitator: Ellen Sprenger

9.45 Registration

10.00 Welcome DGIS

10.05 Welcome DPRN

10.10 Welcome Anouka van Eerdewijk

10.30 Introduction to the programme (Ellen Sprenger)

10.45 **Highlights from the sub-processes**

1. Aid architecture

2. VAW

3. Value Chains

4. Microfinance

→ 3–5 minutes per sub-process

11.00 *Break*

11.15 **Keynote lecture by Aruna Rao** (Gender at Work)

11.45 Discussion of Highlights and Keynote lecture

12.30 *Lunch*

13.30 **Parallel workshops**

1. Aid architecture

2. VAW

3. Value chains

4. Microfinance

→ presentations of paper for 10 minutes

→ discussion of paper and cases according to key questions and format

15.15 *Break*

15.30 **Plenary presentation Key insights of workshops**

→ max. 5 minutes per sub-process

15.50 **Reaction and reflection from Jane Parpart** (University of West Indies)

16.15 Discussion and reactions (plenary)

16.50 Closing remarks

17.00 Reception

## Programme Gender Mainstreaming 2.0 Expert Meeting

22 February 2011

Location: Mercure Hotel (The Hague)

Facilitator: Ellen Sprenger

- 10.00 Welcome Anouka van Eerdewijk
- 10.15 Introduction to the programme (Ellen Sprenger)  
(including who is in the room)
- 10.30 **Strategizing a future agenda for GM  
Session 'Deep Diving'**  
Ellen Sprenger will guide the participants through two 'deep diving' sessions  
concluded with a plenary discussion of insights.
- 12.30 *Lunch*
- 13.30 **Keynote lectures:** Lessons for an agenda for the future  
**1. Aruna Rao**  
**2. Jane Parpart**
- 14.15
  - Shared reflections on lessons from OTwG and yesterday
  - Agenda for the future OTwG
- 15.00 Closing remarks

## Appendix 2 – List of participants

### ‘Violence against women’ meeting, The Hague, 20 August 2010

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Sector</b>
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(SC means member of OTwG steering committee)

## List of registered participants GM2.0 Dialogue (21 February 2011)

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