



UNDP/BRIDGE CSW Side Event

51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Expert Panel Discussion:

GENDER SENSITIVE INDICATORS AND MEASUREMENTS OF CHANGE

Tuesday, 6th March, 2007

Conference Room A, UN Secretariat

1.15p.m. to 2:30 pm

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) Gender Team and **BRIDGE** at the Institute of Development Studies, (IDS), UK, undertook an **Expert Panel Discussion on Gender Sensitive Indicators and Measurements of Change** at the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2007. This document provides an overview of the presentations and discussion points.

BRIDGE is currently producing the forthcoming **Cutting Edge Pack on Gender and Indicators**, (July, 2007) – supported by UNDP/BDP. The Pack contains an **Overview Report**, providing an overview of existing conceptual and methodological approaches to gender and measuring change, and a **Supporting Resources Collection**, which includes material on international level commitments made to gender equality in development, current measures of gender equality and summaries of case studies, and tools and training materials relating to measuring change from a gender perspective. The Pack also contains **Gender and Development In Brief** bulletin, a lively and 'quick read' collection of articles on gender and measurements of change. For a paper copy of the final *Cutting Edge Pack* please email bridge@ids.ac.uk. Please see www.bridge.ids.ac.uk from July 2007 for a Word or PDF version in English. *Gender and Development In Brief* will also be available online and in paper copy from BRIDGE in French and Spanish. The entire *Cutting Edge Pack* on Gender and Indicators will also be available online in French.

Notes from the Chair

Rachel Mayanja (Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women)

Achieving gender equality requires inspiring and mobilising social change. This raises many questions. How does change happen? Who or what are agents of change? Where are we starting from? What does 'success' look like? And how do we know if we are on track? To answer these questions we need to use gender-sensitive indicators and measurements of change.

We need to measure gender equality because what gets measured tends to get done – and ‘gender’ has often been marginalised within mainstream development. And yes - there is clearly a need for more, focused critical reflection on indicators from a gender perspective – including of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and of the gender-focused indicators such as the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are currently reviewing – and for exploration of the further need for global standards and context-specific indicators.

We need to move beyond the easy to measure – and to also harness qualitative and participatory techniques in order to explore and measure the difficult to define, such as “empowerment”, and the difficult to measure, such as gender-based violence.

The Panelists

Annalise Moser is a gender and development specialist, and the author of the BRIDGE/UNDP Overview Report on gender and indicators. She has worked for UN agencies and NGOs in Latin America, the Pacific and Africa, including managing UNIFEM’s gender-sensitive conflict early warning indicator project in the Solomon Islands. She is currently working for UNIFEM on a new programme to support women’s post-conflict peace-building and sexual violence prevention at the community level.

Caren A. Grown is a Senior Scholar at the Levy Economics Institute of Bard College. She has edited and authored several books and numerous articles on gender equality, development, and macroeconomics. Caren is an Associate Editor of *Feminist Economics*, a member of the External Gender Forum of the Asian Development Bank, and a founding member of the International Working Group on Gender and Macroeconomics. Previously, Caren, directed the Poverty Reduction and Economic Governance team at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). During that period, she also served as Senior Associate of Task Force 3 of the UN Millennium Project on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Hanny Cueva is a socio-economist currently working on issues related to women’s political participation, women’s rights and gender-sensitive indicators. Her recent research includes: cross-national analyses of women’s political agency and reproductive rights; of women’s socio- cultural rights and good governance; and a review and compilation on gender-sensitive indicators. She has been a researcher and teacher at Universidad del Pacífico (Lima, Perú) until 2003 and is currently working as a Programme Specialist (Data Analyst) in the *Governance, Peace and Security* team at UNIFEM (New York).

Cecilia Alemany is the Global Networker for Social Watch and part of their International Secretariat. She is a PhD candidate at the Université Sorbonne La Nouvelle (Paris III), she has published several articles and papers and coordinated several regional research on civil society participation, governance, regional integration, free trade agreements and social impact, international cooperation, etc. She is a teacher at different Master degrees of the Latin American Center on Human Economics (Claeh) since 2001.

Presentation 1: Dr. Annalise Moser (Consultant)

Annalise presented a summary of the Overview Report, drawing out the key points and conclusions:

Why do we need gender-sensitive measurements?

- To take gender equality seriously
- To enable better planning and actions
- To hold institutions accountable to their commitments on gender equality.

A gender mainstreaming approach has been widely adopted, yet tools and procedures for monitoring are often lacking.

- *Internal* institutional tools: audits and gender self-assessments
- Programming *implementation*: checklists and scorecards
- *Impacts* on beneficiaries

How can we measure the difficult to measure, including:

- Issues that are difficult to conceptualise, such as women's empowerment or the gender dimensions of poverty?
- Sensitive issues, such as gender-based violence? and
- Sensitive contexts, such as the gender dimensions of armed conflict?

International Measurements: uses and limitations

International measurements are useful because they allow for cross-national comparisons of gender equality and enable complex data to be condensed into concise data about achievements and gaps. Limitations of international measurements include: unreliable national level census data; challenges about which elements to measure; and challenges about how to capture those elements within a limited set of indicators.

The current reviews of composite indices – Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3), the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), the Gender Equity Index (GEI) and the Gender Gap Index (GGI) – offer scope for improving the effectiveness of international measurements. Other challenges include:

- Adapting indicators to regional contexts
- Tracking commitments to gender equality in the context of the new aid architecture
- Developing harmonised sets of indicators.

Cross-cutting recommendations:

- Combine qualitative & quantitative methodologies

- Obligatory development and use of gender-sensitive indicators
- Establish accountability systems to track compliance on gender equality.
- Support the capacity of national statistical offices to produce gender-sensitive data

Annalise's parting comment was that gender-sensitive data alone does not improve gender equality: it needs to be used!

Presentation 2: Dr. Caren Grown (Senior Scholar at The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, New York)

Caren started by highlighting some of the limitations of indicators used to measure gender equality - a tendency to reduce this down to being solely about education; a focus on the type of work rather than whether it is 'decent' work; and use of participation in parliament as a proxy for empowerment regardless of whether they are able to make decisions, including decisions on budget allocations. In fact, women have actually gained more ground at the local and municipal levels rather than at the national level.

Caren then spoke on the "three domains of transformation for gender equality" identified by the UN Millennium Project (MP) Task Force 3 and the need for re-visiting measurements of progress including the need for global standards and context-specific indicators. The two other members of the Task Force were present – Diane Elson and Magaly Pineda.

Gender Equality and Empowerment: The Task Force Framework

- **Capabilities:** basic human abilities as reflected in education, health and nutrition.
- **Access to resources** and **opportunities:** economic assets (land, property or infrastructure), resources (income and employment) and political opportunity.
- **Security:** reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict.

Seven Strategic Priorities identified by the Task Force for Achieving Equality and Empowerment

- Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education.
- Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Invest in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens.
- Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights.
- Eliminate gender inequality in employment.
- Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local government bodies.
- Combat violence against girls and women.

The TF conclusions were that four indicators were inadequate, and therefore recommended new indicators for each of the seven strategic priorities.

New indicators for each strategic priority

- Several criteria for indicators: comprehensible/ transparent, analytically rigorous, comparable across countries/broad country coverage, timely, reflect changes in short-term, policy relevant. Caren concluded that these criteria were not insurmountable.
- Caveat – the process and quality of change not captured. Parity is important but it is not the same as equality.

Task Force Recommended Indicators

Education

- The ratio of female to male gross enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.
- The ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

- Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied.
- Adolescent (15-19 years) fertility rate.

Infrastructure

- Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel. (Note that there is often not enough data, and that these indicators need to be country-specific to ensure relevance.)

Property Rights

- Land ownership by female, male, or jointly held.
- Housing title, by female, male, or jointly held.

Employment

- Share of women in wage- and self-employment, by type.
- Gender gaps in earnings in wage and self-employment

Participation in elected positions.

- Percent of seats held by women in national parliaments.
- Percent of seats held by women in local government bodies.

Violence against women

- Prevalence of domestic violence

Issues for discussion

- Indicators for international comparisons and indicators for national monitoring
- Individual indicators v. composite indices (composite indicators are good for grabbing the media's attention)

- Measuring processes and quality of change

Moving forward?

- Invest in sex-disaggregated data collection!
 - Resources for pilot work/testing in-country, capacity building of national statistical agencies, guidelines/harmonisation of data across countries by international agencies
- Priority domains:
 - Economic data – poverty, employment type, earnings, assets, time use
 - Violence against women
 - Empowerment – micro and macro

Presentation 3: Hanny Cueva Beteta (UNIFEM, New York)

Hanny spoke on how to measure progress, global standards and context specificities, with a focus on what is missing in current measures of women's empowerment. She presented statistical analyses of the relationship between alternative indicators to show how the results or the picture of inequality/equality significantly changes depending on the indicator used.

Whose empowerment?

The women who hold seats in national parliaments are usually the most educated and elite. The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments is therefore a problematic indicator because it fails to measure empowerment among the majority of women. What about measuring women in local councils? They could also be from the elite but better to draw on the local than national elite.

What empowerment? One's own body

Political and economic empowerment is important, but what about the more intimate domains such as sexuality? It is difficult to obtain data on the extent to which women can exercise control over their bodies and sexualities. This could add a very interesting dimension to an empowerment measure. However, there is very little data except for women's use of contraception.

Perceptions and process

Empowerment is a process as well as an outcome. Sometimes the outcome (i.e. empowerment) only comes about after a long process. How can we measure progress in the absence of concrete outcomes? One answer is that we must be aware of the importance of *perception* as a way of measuring progress in the process of empowerment. For example, do women believe that it is justifiable that they are beaten? Are their perceptions about this changing?

Legal enabling environment

Going beyond perceptions, what about the legal context for women's rights? How can we measure the protection of women's rights by law? One measure of how seriously a country takes the issue of violence against women might be the extent of legislation passed by national governments to legislate against VAW.

Presentation 4: Cecilia Alemany (Social Watch)

Cecilia discussed the two previous presentations, and presented the results of progress between 2004 and 2007 of the Social Watch Gender Equity Index (GEI). The GEI is elaborated by the Social Sciences Research Team of Social Watch coordinated by Karina Batthyány. The GEI classifies 154 countries according to a selection of indicators relevant to gender inequity and based on internationally available and comparable information. The index ranges from 0 to 100, with lower values indicating greater inequity. The GEI is based on the concepts of equiphony, equipotency and equivalence. The three dimensions of the GEI are economic activity, empowerment and education.

The findings of the GEI included:

- During the period 2004-2007 the general gender equity trend seen worldwide was limited progress or no progress at all.
- In no country do women have the same opportunities as men. Throughout the world, women have lower salaries than men for doing the same job with the same qualifications.
- A country's level of wealth does not automatically determine its degree of equity. Rwanda, one of the world's least developed countries, ranks third on the list of GEI scores, after Sweden and Finland. Indeed the United States, a high-income country, is one of the 10 countries that have experienced the greatest regression. The key to gender equity lies not in a country's economic power, but rather in its government's political will.
- Three regions registered progress, with Latin America and the Caribbean achieving the greatest improvement, followed by Europe in second place and the Middle East and North Africa in third. In all three cases, however, progress measured less than 6 percent.

Cecilia circulated the summary report which is available from the Social Watch website:

<http://www.socialwatch.org/en/avancesyRetrocesos/IEG/>

Questions from the floor

Shouldn't measurement itself be an empowering process for those involved, not simply a means to provide data?

- Measurement is necessary for empowerment, but the process of measuring should be empowering in itself.

There is good work by CARE on this.

- Producing gender-sensitive indicators is not a statistical exercise; it is necessarily an empowerment process.

How do we move forward and develop new measures?

- Asset data needs to be collected in all countries. Ownership of assets is central to increasing wealth and productivity and thus to women's empowerment. There is more data available in countries than that which gets into the hands of national statistics offices. It was stated that there is a lot of untapped data available at the local level. It is important that we pull together this kind of information. The audience was also reminded of the 2004 Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, which called for enhanced statistical capacity – and that we need to engage with those domains.

Final remarks

The Chair closed the session by thanking everyone for such an interactive session on such an important and urgent issue – especially given the fact that time-wise we are halfway towards our goal of achieving the MDGs by 2015. Already we have missed the goal on MDG3 of attaining universal education by 2005. As we move together, for delivering as one UN, together with the governments and the civil society, we will need to redouble our efforts in measuring not only quantitative results that are important in themselves for obtaining a critical mass of change agents, but also the often subtle and unseen and difficult to measure qualitative results. It is this change that will have profound effects on changing attitudes, processes and structures that act as impediments to overall human development.

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