



GENDER and INDICATORS

Overview Report

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ACRONYMS

ACGD	African Centre for Gender and Development
AGDI	African Gender and Development Index
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DFID	Department for International Development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEI	Gender Equity Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GGI	Gender Gap Index
GPI	Gender Poverty Index
GSA	Gender Self-Assessment
GSB	Gender-sensitive Budget
HDI	Human Development Index
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Foundation
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRC	Supporting Resources Collection
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender-sensitive measurements are critical for building the case for taking gender (in)equality seriously, for enabling better planning and actions by gender and non-gender specialists, and for holding institutions accountable to their commitments on gender. Yet measurement techniques and data remain limited and poorly utilised, making it difficult to know if efforts are on track to achieve gender equality goals and commitments. This Overview Report examines conceptual and methodological approaches to gender and measurements of change with a focus on indicators, examining current debates and good practice from the grassroots to the international levels.

The what and how of measurement

While measuring is often considered to be a technical exercise, the decision to measure progress towards gender equality is political, as gender is often seen as a marginalised issue. The process of deciding what aspects of gender equality to measure is also political, usually reflecting the priorities of decision-makers rather than those of the women and men intended to benefit from the policy or programme (the 'beneficiaries'). In deciding what to measure we must first establish key objectives and goals; secondly, identify the changes that are required to achieve these goals; and thirdly decide what kinds of indicators will best enable us to measure progress towards these desired changes. The next consideration is which measurement methods to use and what kind of data to collect. The 'hard figures' produced by quantitative methods are crucial to building the case for addressing gender disparities, while qualitative methods enable a more in-depth examination of gender relations and other issues not easily 'counted'. The ideal methodology is thus a combined approach which incorporates gender-sensitive participatory techniques to help ensure that the topics of investigation are relevant to, and 'owned', by the subjects of the research.

Measuring gender mainstreaming

Many development agencies have adopted a gender mainstreaming approach and yet lack procedures to monitor whether commitments at the policy level are reflected in the internal structure, procedures and culture of an organisation, and whether they are being implemented in programming practice. Internal gender audits and gender self-assessments are now used by many development organisations to assess issues such as gender equity in recruitment, flexible working hours, childcare provision and technical capacity of staff in gender issues. To assess the degree to which gender mainstreaming has been implemented in programming practice, particularly at the field level, development organisations have produced checklists or scorecards to measure adherence to gender-sensitive procedures (gender analysis, planning, resource allocation, monitoring systems).

Less common are measures of the impacts of gender mainstreaming programmes on male and female beneficiaries. These might include qualitative assessments, and checklists such as those developed by Oxfam for use with partner organisations, or sex-disaggregated beneficiary assessments.

Measuring the difficult to measure

Certain aspects of gender (in)equality are particularly difficult to measure. Some are difficult to conceptualise, such as the gender dimensions of poverty or women's empowerment, while others are sensitive issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), or occur in sensitive contexts such as armed conflict.

Measuring poverty from a gendered perspective requires using a range of gender-sensitive indicators which give attention to gender power relations at both the household and societal levels. Useful approaches include 'time poverty' studies which can be used to measure women's unpaid care work, and gender-sensitive participatory poverty assessments. To effectively measure women's empowerment, combinations of multi-level and multi-dimensional indicators are needed. Many organisations are incorporating qualitative data into measurements of women's empowerment in an effort to capture these complexities. In the case of GBV, integrating modules or checklists into non-GBV-focused surveys or services has proved successful. Measurements of GBV and the gender dimensions of armed conflict must incorporate means of reducing risks for women respondents.

International measurements

International and regional gender goals and indices are useful because they allow for cross-national comparisons of gender equality, and they condense complex data into clear messages about achievements and gaps in gender equality. Limitations with international indices include the notoriously unreliable nature of national-level census data, and the ongoing challenge of agreeing which elements of gender equality to measure and how best to capture these elements within a limited set of indicators.

Innovative approaches include efforts to incorporate a broader set of indicators into the Millennium Development Goal 3 on gender equality (MDG3), and review the components of composite indices such as the United Nations' Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). In turn, there is work taking place to develop new indices such as the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI), which is promising in its use of a broad range of dimensions and indicators and its combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Other important developments include the adaptation of international indicators to better represent gender equality in specific regional contexts, efforts to track donor and government commitments to gender equality in the context of the new aid architecture, and initiatives to develop harmonised sets of gender indicators.

Recommendations

Among the recommendations made in this report, cross-cutting and critical issues include the following:

- A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods should be considered by all development organisations, from international agencies through to grassroots organisations, in order to cross check results and to generate a richer understanding of the data.
- The development of specific context-relevant gender-sensitive indicators – and the use of and reporting on those indicators – should be made obligatory within international development agencies, governments and grassroots organisations.
- In the context of the new aid modalities, donors and governments should establish accountability systems which track compliance with commitments to gender equality.
- Governments and gender ministries should support the capacity of national statistical offices to produce gender-sensitive data.

It is important to keep in mind that gender-sensitive measurements alone do not improve gender equality. In order to be useful, data must be collected, analysed, disseminated and used.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Achieving gender equality requires inspiring and mobilising social change. This raises many questions. What does 'success' look like? How does change happen? Where are we starting from and how do we know if we are on track? How can we understand and build on what works in achieving positive change?

'Another world is possible'

In 2000, a group of village women in Andhra Pradesh, India, defined their visions of social change and worked out ways to measure that change. The women drew pictures inside a large circle to depict gender inequality in the world today as they perceived it: the pictures included girls working in cotton fields outside a school full of boys, and a woman begging for work from the landlord. In another big circle, the women showed how the world would look if gender equality became a reality: these pictures depicted girls going to school, a woman yoking bullocks to a plough, and a man doing housework while his wife attends a meeting.

The women used these pictures to develop an action plan, but how could they tell if their desired changes were actually happening? To measure if they were on the right track, they decided to note whether more women were agreeing to sign on to a pledge to send their daughters to school, and whether training in hand-pump repair was organised for women's groups. To tell if they were getting where they wanted to go, the women counted any increase in the number of days of agricultural work for women, and increases in the number of girls enrolled in school. These are all indicators to measure change.

Adapted from Menon-Sen 2006

This report provides an overview of existing conceptual and methodological approaches to gender and measurements of change. It is intended for a broad range of development practitioners – from those in mainstream evaluation units and organisations who want or are required to report on gender, to gender specialists implementing projects or advocating for change. The report focuses on current debates and good practice around gender-sensitive measurements of change from the grassroots to the international level – with particular attention to gender-sensitive indicators. Section 2 discusses how to measure and explores the politics behind this process. Section 3 considers how to measure the impact of gender mainstreaming, both at the level of internal organisational change and at the level of programming practice. In Section 4, current thinking, policy and practice on measuring specific areas of gender inequality are examined and new approaches to measurement are highlighted. Section 5 outlines a range of international measurement instruments, including widely recognised goals and indices as well as innovative new approaches. Finally, Section 6 presents conclusions and recommendations.

This report forms part of the Cutting Edge Pack on 'Gender and Indicators'. In addition to this report, the pack contains the Gender and Development In Brief bulletin and the Supporting Resources Collection (SRC). The SRC provides summaries of practical resources on measuring change from a gender perspective in different thematic areas, as well as further information on how to monitor international goals and commitments to gender equality. International and regional databases of gender statistics are also presented.

1.2 What are measurements of change?

Measuring change means tracking the degree to which, and in what way, changes take place over time. From a gender perspective, measurements of change might address changes in the relations between men and women, changes in the outcomes of a particular policy, programme or activity for women and men, or changes in the status or situation of men and women with regards to a particular issue such as levels of poverty or political participation.

To measure these changes we need to know where we are now – our starting point. We must also decide what we want to measure, what kind of data is needed, and how that data should be collected and analysed. This report focuses on the use of gender-sensitive indicators as a specific way of measuring change. Indicators are criteria or measures against which changes can be assessed (Imp-Act 2005). They may be pointers, facts, numbers, opinions or perceptions – used to signify changes in specific conditions or progress towards particular objectives (CIDA, 1997).

A 'gender-sensitive indicator' measures gender-related changes in society over time. The term 'gender-sensitive indicators' incorporates sex-disaggregated indicators which provide separate measures for men and women on a specific indicator such as literacy: for example, in Pakistan 75.8 per cent of men and 54.7 per cent of women aged 15–24 are literate (United Nations 2006a). Gender-sensitive indicators may also refer to gender-specific indicators where the indicator is specific to women or men: for example, in Nicaragua 52 per cent of women report having been physically abused by a partner (UNICEF 2000).

1.3 Why do we need gender-sensitive measurements of change?

1.3.1 Taking gender equality seriously

'Although no number of targets and indicators can capture the rich diversity and complexity of women's lives, they help us to monitor the fulfilment of commitments to women's progress, as well as mobilise support for stronger efforts in this regard ... Assessing the progress of women against agreed targets reveals how much progress there has been – but also how much still remains to be done.'

Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women
(UNIFEM) 2001

We need to measure and document gender inequality because what gets measured is more likely to get addressed, and 'gender' has often been marginalised within mainstream development. By highlighting differences in how women and men fare, advocates can make the case for the urgent need to work towards reducing gender inequality. For example, Rwandan women parliamentarians joined forces with national and international NGOs, UN agencies and the national gender machinery to use statistics on gender-based violence to lobby for a GBV bill. This led to an abrupt change of heart by the male parliamentarians, resulting in the acceptance of the bill in which domestic rape and other kinds of 'private' family issues are classified as criminal offences. (UNDP Rwanda, UNDP/BRIDGE e-discussion, March 2007).

To take the more economics-focused approach of the World Economic Forum, data showing the gaps between the advancement of women and men can demonstrate that 'countries which do not capitalise on the full potential of one half of their societies are misallocating their human resources and compromising their competitive potential' (Lopez-Claros and Zahidi 2005: 2). For example, a World Bank study used statistical analyses to argue that increased gender equality in education promotes economic growth, lowers fertility rates and lowers child mortality rates (Klasen 1999). Arguments like these can help make the case for action. However, we also need to assert that gender equality and women's rights are important as ends in themselves.

1.3.2 Enabling better planning and actions

Gender-sensitive indicators can be used to evaluate the outcomes of gender-focused and mainstream interventions and policies, assess challenges to success, and adjust programmes and activities to better achieve gender equality goals and reduce adverse impacts on women and men. For example, Community Information for Empowerment and Transparency (CIET) methods of gender-sensitive evidence-based planning have been applied in 49 countries, using qualitative and quantitative methods to better orient services and allocate resources to meet needs of both women and men and challenge gendered patterns of poverty (Andersson and Roche 2006: 151).

Gender-sensitive budget (GSB) initiatives can assist governments to identify how policies can be adjusted to achieve their maximum impact, and where resources can be reallocated to improve overall development and gender equality. The success of this process is demonstrated in the case of Mongolia, below. GSB initiatives involve analysing government expenditure and revenue with regards to women and girls as compared to men and boys.

UNDP's Gender-sensitive Budget Process in Mongolia

In Mongolia, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) GSB project produced data showing that mechanisms surrounding the allocation of resources have deprived women of state-provided assets. The GSB project aimed to address these inequalities through building national capacity to carry out gender budget analysis and formulate gender-responsive macroeconomic policies. Project outcomes to date have included the Ministry of Finance recognising the importance of making a budget gender-sensitive, identifying gender budgeting and equality as priority issues in the 2006 draft 'Guidelines for Socio-Economic Development', and creating a gender specialist position within the Ministry. In addition, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) progress report included a section on gender issues, and the Government is planning to disaggregate the distribution of social welfare assistance data by sex, to highlight gender issues for policymakers.

Dorj 2006; JWIDF/UNDP 2004

1.3.3 Holding institutions accountable

'For aid agencies and governments, gender indicators are a key tool for accountability, telling us whether our programmes are working'

Teresa Gambaro, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Australia 2006

There is much rhetoric around fighting for gender equality and women's rights at the international and national level, yet delivery on this has been disappointing. Even the rather narrowly defined 2015 Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on Gender Equality could be in jeopardy. How can governments in both the North and South be held to account for their international commitments?

Gender-sensitive measurements can make visible the gaps between these commitments and their actual implementation and impact, and can thus be used to hold commitment-makers accountable for their actions, or their lack of action. They can also be used to measure the outcomes of non-gender-specific goals and activities on gender relations and inequalities.

A recent Eurostep and Social Watch assessment of nine donors found that while they make extensive policy commitments to the promotion of gender equality in their development assistance, these commitments are not adequately followed through to the budget, implementation and evaluation stages (van Reisen 2005). Yet there are positive examples. The International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF) uses gender-sensitive data to produce a series of Report Cards on the current situation of HIV prevention strategies and services for girls and young women. Building on global policy commitments, these Report Cards are used as an advocacy tool targeting policymakers and service providers with the aim of improving programmatic, policy and funding actions on HIV prevention (IPPF 2006). There are also examples of national-level advocates in the South conducting research to hold their governments accountable (see the SRC for an example of how women's civil-society organisations in Chile lobbied the government for change).

2. THE WHAT AND HOW OF MEASUREMENT

2.1 The politics of deciding what and how to measure

‘Indicators validate particular world views and prioritise selected areas of knowledge’

MacKay and Bilton 2003: 46

While measuring is often considered to be a technical exercise, the process of choosing what to measure is political – and indicators tend to reflect the priorities of decision-makers rather than those of the beneficiaries themselves (unless a participatory approach is used – see Section 2.4). Deciding what to measure may draw on accepted values within specific societies, organisations or institutions. For example, the calculations in UNDP’s Gender-related Development Index (GDI) give strong weighting to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and hence the GDI is biased in favour of richer countries and privileges economic over social development (UNRISD 2005). The choice of indicators, data collection methodologies and statistical analysis techniques can produce not only different kinds of data, but also different results. By choosing what and how to measure, the policymaker, advocate, researcher or practitioner can thus present the story he or she wants to tell.

Deciding whether or not to measure progress towards gender equality is itself a political exercise, and there is often much resistance – both to setting gender equality goals and to measuring progress. Where it is decided to measure gender equality, more politics are involved in deciding which aspects to privilege. Deciding if and how to use gender-sensitive data is also a political consideration; much of the data which is collected is not adequately disseminated, listened to or acted upon due to a lack of political will, as shown in the case below from Papua New Guinea.

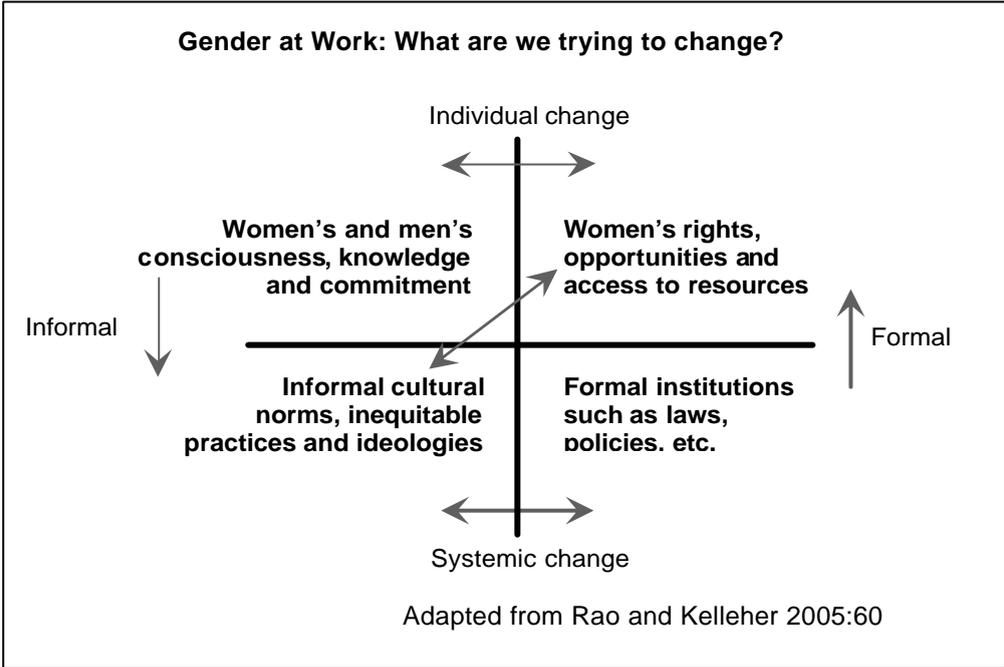
Valuable data does not always lead to useful actions

In Papua New Guinea in the 1980s, a large research project on domestic violence was undertaken under the auspices of the Law Reform Commission. A series of volumes was produced. The data were solid, the analyses compellingly presented, the findings terrible. Prevalence rates in some areas were greater than 70 per cent. The recommendations were impressive. However, subsequent actions taken were limited. There were few attempts to evaluate the effects of interventions, policies and programmes that ensued.

McIntyre 2006

2.2 What change should we measure?

We know that deciding what to measure is a political process, but in practice how should we go about deciding which aspects of change to measure? The choice of what to measure will be different for different actors. Governments might be concerned with monitoring ‘progress’ for women and men, development agencies might focus on evaluating the ‘impact’ of their gender programmes, while gender equality activists may be measuring gender (in)equality or (in)justice. The diagram below shows that changes need to happen along four dimensions: at the level of individual men and women and at the level of society as a whole, as well as in both the formal and informal spheres (Rao and Kelleher 2005: 60).



In deciding what to measure, we must establish key objectives and goals; identify the changes that are required to achieve these goals; then decide what kinds of indicators will best enable us to measure progress towards these desired changes; the ‘Another world is possible’ example at the beginning of this report illustrates this process. In another example, UNDP has developed a framework for mainstreaming pro-poor and gender-sensitive indicators into evaluations of democratic governance (UNDP 2006). A set of key questions are used to formulate the pro-poor and gender-sensitive indicators, with each question being accompanied by a particular indicator (see box below).

Questions to help in selecting pro-poor gender-sensitive indicators in the area of justice

Legal protection

- Are women and the poor effectively protected by the rule of law? Do women enjoy the same property rights (particularly to land) as men?

Legal awareness

- Are women and the poor aware of (i) their right to seek redress through the justice system; (ii) the officials and institutions entrusted to protect their access to justice; and (iii) the steps involved in starting legal procedures?

Adjudication

- How do women and the poor assess the formal systems of justice as victims, complainants, accused persons, witnesses and jury members?
- How effective is the justice system in detecting crimes of domestic violence, convicting the perpetrators and preventing them from re-offending?
- Are men and women treated as equals by informal mechanisms of dispute resolution?

UNDP 2006:10

Once we have determined what changes we want to measure, the next step is to decide how to measure them.

2.3 Which measuring methods should we use?

‘Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts’.

Albert Einstein

2.3.1 Available methods and methodologies

Quantitative and qualitative approaches both have their own advantages and disadvantages. The ‘hard figures’ produced by quantitative methodologies are crucial to building the case for addressing gender differentials, even if these figures are often contested and subject to interpretation. Qualitative methodologies, by contrast, enable a more in-depth examination of social processes, social relations, power dynamics and the ‘quality’ of gender equality, all of which are difficult to measure with quantitative methods. The ideal methodology, therefore, is a combined approach, which incorporates quantitative and qualitative approaches, and uses gender-sensitive participatory techniques to help ensure that the topics of investigation are relevant to, and ‘owned’, by the subjects of the research. Although there is no consensus on definitions of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collections, here are the definitions that we will be working with:

Methodology	Working definition
Quantitative	Quantitative methods of data collection produce quantifiable results, and as such focus on issues which can be counted such as percentages of women and men in parliament, male and female wage rates, school enrolment rates for girls and boys.
Qualitative	Qualitative methodologies capture people's opinions, attitudes and feelings and are generally derived from more qualitative processes of investigation (e.g. focus group discussions).
Participatory	Participatory methodologies are based on the principle that men and women should be the agents of their own development, contributing to decisions about what should be measured and what indicators should be used, and participating in the research themselves.

2.3.2 Quantitative approaches

Traditionally, quantitative methods have been favoured because they are perceived to be more objective and verifiable. They are also relatively straightforward to track. Moreover, because of their more 'concrete' nature it is easier to use quantitative indicators to measure change on an international level and draw comparisons between different studies in different countries. Carefully chosen quantitative data can clearly show changes in gender equality over time, and such evidence can help make explicit the interrelated factors which inhibit or encourage gender equality.

Quantitative data is generally collected through censuses, administrative records and other large-scale surveys (CIDA 1997). The data is usually interpreted using formal methods such as statistical tests to present and analyse gender-sensitive data in different ways; 'descriptive statistics' summarise the data, such as the average life expectancy of men and women, while 'inferential statistics' can identify relationships, for example whether women's education is more influential on children's health than household income.

National and international quantitative gender measures of wellbeing generally use one of two approaches (Klasen 2004):

- One disaggregates measures by gender to see whether males and females fare differently in outcomes (for example, measuring the number of girls enrolled in primary school compared to the number of boys). There is an advantage here for policymakers in that clearly highlighted gender gaps can focus attention to where action is needed.
- The other approach assesses the impact of gender equality on aggregate (overall) wellbeing, whereby a measure is adjusted downward by applying a penalty for gender inequality (for example UNDP's GDI – see Section 5.2). This approach highlights the fact that gender inequality not only impacts negatively on women but also imposes an aggregate wellbeing loss on society.

Another important issue to consider is how different indicators reveal different aspects of gender inequality. Most gender measures of wellbeing use indicators such as school enrolment and per capita

income (the income each citizen would receive if the yearly income generated by a country from its productive activities were divided equally among everyone); corresponding measures could be, for example, adult literacy and wealth per capita. It can sometimes be important to combine both kinds of measures in order to accurately understand any increases or decreases in gender inequality. Take the example of sex differentials in mortality rates. In China, as parents use sex-selective abortions the survival conditions of girls that are born have improved. Focusing solely on measures such as life expectancy would therefore indicate reduced gender bias – despite this coming at the expense of killing female foetuses (Klasen 2004: 15).

Quantitative data is of course open to contested interpretation and is not always as objective as it may seem. One issue relates to ‘adverse inclusion’ whereby women or men may be worse off than they were before despite data suggesting advances in gender equality. For example, increased numbers of women in work may be interpreted as a positive change. But why are there more women working? Are they cheaper to employ than men? Are they employed on informal terms, with lower wages and poor conditions? Is this a response to high levels of unemployment among men? (Thomson 2006). A similar issue has long been identified with regards to gender and participation; while quantitative indicators may measure the success of an intervention in terms of the number of women participating (attending workshops or otherwise participating in a project), this fails to capture the quality of that participation. Are women’s voices actually being heard? Are they involved in decision-making or just ‘participating’ as silent observers? Does women’s participation place increased burdens on their workloads and time use? This point is also made with reference to the measurement of violence against women in Papua New Guinea (McIntyre 2006: 62):

What if we were to depend on police statistics and found that in the period during a project for the empowerment of women the number of reported criminal assaults by intimate partners soared? Numbers are not transparent. Is this because the project has led to women asserting themselves at home and getting beaten up more? Is it because police involved in the project are taking women’s reports more seriously, recording or investigating them more diligently? Is it because women, recognising their rights as citizens to protection against assault, are reporting crime more often?

Finally, while the cornerstones of much national-level data are the censuses and population surveys conducted by national statistical offices, it is here where many gender biases start, due to a lack of understanding of gender issues, a lack of methods and systems, and a lack of women in decision-making positions. The UN reports that over the last three decades there has been little progress in official reporting of sex-disaggregated data across regions and across topics (UN 2006b), and even the most basic statistical data on men and women – such as population, births and deaths – are not routinely collected, especially in the poorest countries (UN 2005). One exception is the Philippines which has a large representation of women in key positions in national statistical agencies, a situation which has contributed to some excellent government work on gender and statistics (Beck 1999).

The statistics divisions of the UN’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and UNIFEM, have identified strategies for strengthening the gender capacity of national statistical offices

(UN 2006b: 92–3; UNIFEM 2002: 56). In order to mainstream a gender perspective into national statistical systems, UNDESA asserts that gender analysis must be implemented throughout the process of producing statistics – from the development of concepts and methods for collecting data to the presentation of results. This requires political will at all levels and in all institutions that provide administrative data. To date, there have not been adequate structures with sufficient authority, gender expertise and commitment to gender driving the process (UNDESA 2006a).

In all of these cases, the quantitative data alone is not sufficient to tell the full story behind gender-related changes. This is where qualitative data and analysis come in.

2.3.3 Qualitative approaches

Qualitative methods of measurement differ from quantitative methods in that they capture people's perceptions and experiences, for example women's experiences of the constraints or advantages of working in the informal sector, or men's and women's views on the causes and consequences of domestic violence – as illustrated in the case of the World Bank's Voices of the Poor project described in the box below.

Qualitative data in the Voices of the Poor project

The World Bank's Voices of the Poor project used qualitative methods to gather the views and experiences of more than 60,000 men and women from 60 countries on a range of issues. Small group discussions about domestic violence revealed the following forms of abuse and violence: verbal abuse, deprivation, physical abuse, drinking and gambling by men, polygamy, promiscuous behaviour and casual sex, property grabbing, dowry and bride price, divorce and desertion, teenage pregnancy, and abusive in-laws.

Narayan et al 2000

The methods used to collect qualitative data include those often associated with participatory methodologies such as focus group discussions and social mapping tools, as well as key informant interviews (see the In Brief article on the Swayamsiddha project for an example of using these qualitative methodologies) and oral testimonies. Qualitative data can also be collected through surveys measuring perceptions and opinions. One example is 'Program H' which was developed in Latin America to promote more gender-equitable attitudes among young men. The programme evaluates attitude changes resulting from project activities using a GEM Scale – or Gender-equitable Men Scale. Indicators have been developed in the form of a scale of questions about attitudes. Attitude questions or statements include affirmations of traditional gender norms, such as 'Men are always ready to have sex' and 'There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten', as well as assertions of more gender-equitable views, such as, 'A man and a woman should decide together what type of contraceptive to use'. For each indicator, three potential answers are provided: I agree; I partially agree; I do not agree. This has proved useful to assess men's current attitudes about gender roles and to measure whether men have changed their attitudes over time (Barker et al 2004).

Qualitative data can be presented in the form of indicators, for example the level of women's satisfaction with credit services. Such qualitative indicators can be quantified, or 'quantized' – where qualitative information is counted, ranked or scaled. Quantification of qualitative data can be important for making convincing arguments. A gender audit of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) Malawi programme found that 'quantitative results were taken far more seriously than is often the case with interview information supported by "anecdotal quotes"' (Moser 2005: 24).

The constraints associated with qualitative data include the fact that it can be considered 'non-concrete' data by decision-makers who require evidence to make policy changes. It is based on subjective opinions and is open to differing interpretations which causes scepticism about the validity of this data among some statisticians and economists – although the manner in which qualitative data is collected can be as rigorous as for other kinds of data. Another constraint is that qualitative methods may be more labour-intensive and they are therefore limited to smaller sample sizes.

2.3.4 Combined approaches

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods enables data to be compared so as to cross-check or 'triangulate' the results. Examples include IPPF's Report Cards on HIV prevention for girls and young women mentioned in Section 1.3.3 (IPPF 2006), as well as the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) (ACGD 2005) and the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (Lopez-Claros and Zahidi 2005), both of which are discussed in Section 5 of this report.

Although qualitative data does not have to be quantified to be useful or to provide insights, and quantified data can make a powerful standalone statement, the quantification of qualitative data can boost impact for advocacy purposes, depending on the target audience, and qualitative interpretation of quantified data can provide for more nuanced analysis which reduces the possibility of distorted findings and conclusions. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has developed a matrix to assist the qualitative interpretation of quantitative data. For example, a statistic on the proportion of women and men in parliament can be interrogated further by asking 'Is there a correlation between proportion of women candidates who stood for parliament and number of women who actually got in? How does this compare with the situation of men?' (SDC 2006: 31).

2.4 Participatory approaches

Participatory approaches and methodologies are founded on the principle that men and women should be the agents of their own development, and are themselves best placed to analyse and evaluate their own situations – provided that they are equipped with tools of data collection and analysis.

Participatory approaches to measuring change comprise a wide range of methods, from focus group discussions through to verbal and visual tools such as scoring, ranking, mapping, calendars, time lines and diagrams. When appropriately planned and executed, gender-sensitive participatory methodologies can help ensure that the topics of investigation are relevant to the community, and can create a sense of community ownership of the measurement process and the data collected. For

example, the Swayamsiddha women's health and empowerment project in India carried out a Community Needs Assessment where women beneficiaries were consulted about their perceived needs and asked to rank these needs in order of priority. This was an empowering process in itself and generated a sense of ownership over the project among stakeholders (Kishore et al 2006) (see the *In Brief* for more detail of the Swayamsiddha initiative).

Organisations working especially at the community level should therefore consider adopting participatory methodologies for: ensuring the indicators chosen are relevant, keeping programmes accountable to the realities of women and men's lives when measuring poverty and other dimensions at the community level, and mobilising real support for change.

3. MEASURING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming is an organisational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy, programme and project processes. Although the majority of development agencies have adopted a gender mainstreaming approach in terms of policy and planning, a recent assessment of gender mainstreaming in 14 international development institutions found that there was a significant lack of indicators to measure gender mainstreaming *outcomes and impacts* (Moser and Moser 2005). The danger is that when gender concerns are left to the 'mainstream' – rather than to specific gender units, staff or programmes – they can become invisible. In the context of the new aid architecture, the need to ensure that commitments to gender mainstreaming at the policy level don't evaporate at the lower levels has become all the more acute (see below).

3.1 Measuring internal organisational change

'Working on gender issues obliges organisations to set their own houses in order'.

Sweetman 1997: 2

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to measuring the extent of gender equality within development organisations themselves, including the gender-sensitivity of policies and programmes, as well as internal organisational structure, procedures, culture and human resources. Internal gender audits or gender self-assessments are now used by many bilateral development agencies, international NGOs and their partners, and to a lesser extent, NGOs in the South. The following issues might be considered in internal gender assessments:

- Analysis of gender issues within organisations in relation to, for example, flexible working hours for both women and men, childcare provision, and policies that encourage more flexible gender roles;
- Mainstreaming of gender equality in all mainstream policies, and creating requirements for gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Human resources, including issues such as gender equity in recruitment;
- Technical capacity of staff in gender issues, and internal capacity building;
- Allocation of financial resources to gender mainstreaming efforts or women-focused initiatives;
- Organisational culture, including a culture of participation and consultation.

While practical methodologies for measuring internal change towards gender equality vary greatly, they frequently comprise a combination of questionnaires gathering quantitative and qualitative data, and participatory methodologies such as focus groups and diagrams – see the example in the box below. Participatory methods allow staff at different levels to be involved in discussions about how their organisation can or should change, meaning that they are less likely to feel alienated by a judgemental process which condemns them as being 'not up to the mark' on gender.

Gender Audit Methodology in DFID Malawi

A recent gender audit of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Malawi comprised an internal organisational assessment in conjunction with an external assessment of development objectives. The internal assessment methodology – based on an abridged version of InterAction's (2003) model – was made up of two components:

1. Self-assessment questionnaires: These were short questionnaires of 18 multiple choice and three open-ended questions, administered to all staff. The questionnaires covered both technical capacity and institutional culture. Examples of questions include:

- Does DFID Malawi offer enough opportunities to strengthen your knowledge of gender issues in your professional or technical area?
- How often do you integrate gender explicitly in your work?
- Does DFID Malawi have an active policy to promote gender equality and respect for diversity in decision-making, behaviour, work ethics, etc? If so, how would you rate its effectiveness?

2. Focus group meetings: As in-depth follow-up to the questionnaires, these were brainstorming sessions on institutional and operational gender mainstreaming issues, including recommendations for improvement. These were held with three groups: combined male and female UK staff, female Malawian staff and male Malawian staff.

The survey data was complemented by anecdotal data from the focus groups to inform the gender audit report. For example: 'Less than one in five people (17 per cent) are completely aware that DFID has a gender strategy, with half insufficiently aware. *"It's just another term. We don't really know what it means."*' (Moser 2005: 24)

Moser 2005; Moser et al 2004

Gender audits or self-assessments should be used to facilitate change through the development of action plans and/or monitoring systems for internal institutional development around gender issues. See the SRC for more detail on this approach. Gender issues should also be integrated into non-gender-focused self-assessments.

3.2 Measuring the implementation of gender mainstreaming in programming practice

It is also important to assess the degree to which gender mainstreaming has been implemented in programming practice; this is especially important at the field level where policy commitments tend to evaporate. There are two key areas to address: firstly, adherence to gender-sensitive procedures in the programming actions of the organisations (gender analysis, planning, resource allocation, monitoring systems). The second area is that of measuring the actual impacts of gender mainstreaming programmes on male and female beneficiaries. In many organisations, tools to measure gender mainstreaming do exist; the challenge often lies with convincing non-gender specialists to use these tools (UNDP Rwanda, UNDP/BRIDGE e-discussion March 2007).

3.2.1 Gender-sensitive programming actions

For development organisations to effectively measure their progress towards gender equality it is necessary to start at the project planning phase. The logical framework – a tool for planning and managing development projects which looks like a table and aims to present information about the key components of a project in a concise and systematic way (BOND 2003: 1) – should identify gender-related goals and objectives and specify gender-sensitive indicators. Gender-sensitive indicators should be developed for every stage of the programme cycle.

UNDP has developed a Gender Mainstreaming Scorecard, a tool which combines the measurement of both institutional and programmatic performance on gender mainstreaming, as illustrated in the box below. Each of the indicators is allocated a score between one and five. The scorecard has been pre-tested and will shortly be rolled out across the organisation.

UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Scorecard

These parameters, indicators and corresponding targets, are for all UNDP Headquarters Bureaux, Regional Centres and Country Offices to report on annually.

1. Corporate Commitments

1.1 Gender action plan: progress on implementation of country office Gender Action Plan (GAP) is regularly monitored by head of office

2. Implementation Mechanisms

2.1 Strategy documents: implementation of country office GAP is included in senior managers' performance targets

2.2 Resources: 100 percent of resources needed for implementation of GAP are available

3. Internal Capacities

3.1 Gender experts (staff): experienced gender team is operating in the bureau, centre or office

3.2 Training for professional staff in gender analysis: all staff are trained

4. Gender Mainstreaming in Project Cycle

4.1 Toolkits (guidelines, checklists, formats): gender toolkit is mandatory, monitored and regularly updated - technical backstopping is available to programme staff when required

4.2 Mainstreaming in project documents: project appraisal committee monitors project documents to ensure integration of gender elements

4.3 Monitoring and evaluation: gender-blind M&E reports are not accepted by the country office, bureau or unit concerned

5. Accountability Mechanisms

5.1 Results competency assessment system: gender targets are included in senior managers' performance targets

5.2 Results based management system: gender indicators are used for reporting in more than 50 percent of programmes

6. Organisational Culture

6.1 Gender sensitisation training for all staff: 100 percent of staff have completed the online gender sensitisation module

6.2 Prevention of sexual harassment (SH): SH committee is functional, all staff are sensitised and aware of complaints procedures, systems for confidentiality and protection of complainants/witnesses are in place.

Adapted from UNDP (n.d.)

3.2.2 Measuring impact

It is equally important to measure the impact of gender mainstreaming activities on gender equality among those intended to benefit. This often relies more heavily on qualitative assessments.

Oxfam has developed a tool for assessing the gender impacts of their own work, as well as work by partner organisations, outlined in the box below. Oxfam uses the results of the assessments to help them determine the extent and type of support which should be offered to partners to improve their gender mainstreaming process (Oxfam 2002). This type of assessment tool can be used for gender-focused organisations and programmes, or to measure the impact of mainstream organisations and programmes on gender equality outcomes.

Oxfam criteria and indicators to assess impact on gender equality

1. Women and men participate in decision-making in private and public more equally

- Do women enjoy greater participation in the political processes of the community in situations where they were previously disenfranchised?
- Has the influence of women on decision-making in the project increased in relation to that of their male counterparts?

2. Women have more equal access to and control over economic and natural resources, and basic social services

- Do women share the workload more equally with men and have more time for themselves?
- Has women's access to and control over natural and economic assets (land, household finances, other assets) increased?

3. Fewer women suffer gender-related violence, and women have increased control over their own bodies

- Has the project led to a decrease in violence against women, or has it caused or exacerbated violence, or the fear of violence?

4. Gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls are challenged and changed

- Do men and women better understand how unequal power relations between them discriminate against women and keep them in poverty?
- Is women's unpaid and caring work better valued? Is greater value attached to girls' education?

5. Women's organisations are established, strengthened or collaborated with

- Have more women's organisations been established or strengthened through the project?

6. Women are empowered to act as agents of change through increased self-confidence, leadership skills, and capacity to organise

- Has women's self-esteem and self-confidence to influence social processes increased?
- Are women able to exercise their capacity for leadership?

Adapted from Oxfam 2002

Another way of measuring impact is through sex-disaggregated beneficiary assessments. These assess the extent to which public service expenditure and programmes address the needs and priorities of male and female beneficiaries, and their levels of satisfaction with the provision of services. Beneficiary assessments are primarily qualitative, and combine opinion surveys with participatory techniques. For example, a gender-sensitive beneficiary assessment of a federal anti-poverty programme in Mexico revealed that women beneficiaries felt that the financial benefits of the programme were not worth the overall effort invested in complying with its requirements, as it relied heavily on women's unpaid work (Red de Promotoras y Asesoras Rurales 2000, quoted in Hofbauer Balmori 2003).

As with the internal self-assessments, the results of operational assessments can be used as a driver for change. In Tanzania, World Vision implemented their Gender Self-Assessment (GSA) tool – consisting of staff questionnaires and group discussions – and immediately afterwards staff developed an engendered action plan designed to bridge the gender mainstreaming gaps that were identified through the GSA. One recommendation was to train women leaders at the national and field levels in leadership skills, self-assertiveness and confidence building. In a remarkable result, women at both levels have since been trained and three women contested and won the local council elections the following year, attributing their success to the gender training (Hashi and Ghamunga 2006).

3.3 The new aid architecture

Recent political commitments such as the 2005 World Summit and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness have brought about a new aid architecture, based on a shift towards channelling development assistance through Sector Wide Approach Programmes (SWAPs) and country-led national development programmes – particularly Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) (van Reisen 2005). This can be seen as a window of opportunity for highlighting – and potentially filling – the gaps between policy commitment and action that are outlined above. Yet other commentators are less optimistic: 'The new aid architecture has few, if any, mechanisms for accountability and even less mechanisms for the implementation of national obligations to gender equality' (van Reisen 2005: 14). How can we harness the aid effectiveness agenda to speed up implementation of gender equality commitments? UNIFEM has proposed some immediate actions to take:

- Improving the production and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data;
- Ensuring the inclusion of aid performance indicators that specifically measure changes in gender equality;
- Refining accountability systems to monitor donor and recipient countries' performance in advancing women's rights;
- Strengthening the capacity of gender equality advocacy groups to voice women's priorities, and the capacity of public institutions to respond to women's needs.

UNIFEM 2006b: 10–11

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has a Creditor Reporting System Aid Activity online database which allows us to see where aid from DAC members goes, what purposes it serves, and what policies it aims to implement. This uses the Gender Equality Marker to track aid targeted towards the objective of gender equality, whereby donors indicate for each aid activity whether gender equality is a principal objective, a significant objective, or is not a targeted objective. While there are many limitations to the marker system, it is a step in the right direction. Key findings of the data from 1999–2003 included the fact that around one half of aid to basic education and basic health targeted gender-specific concerns, while aid for transport, communications and energy infrastructure – which accounted for a third of all bilateral aid – was reported as being little focused on gender equality (OECD 2005).

4. MEASURING THE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE

Some aspects of gender (in)equality are particularly difficult to measure. Some are difficult to conceptualise, such as the gender dimensions of poverty or women's empowerment, while others are sensitive issues (GBV) or occur in sensitive contexts (conflict). This section considers how to measure the difficult to measure, focusing on these four challenging areas.

4.1 Measuring poverty from a gender perspective

Poverty is difficult to measure because it is a multi-dimensional process which is hard to define. However, although there is no consensus on what constitutes 'poverty', any definition must include inadequate income and consumption as well as the broader impoverishment of wellbeing – such as a lack of personal security and poor health. Measuring poverty thus requires using a multidimensional range of gender-sensitive indicators which give attention to the nuances of gender relations and the dynamics of power at both the household and societal levels.

4.1.1 *Limitations of traditional measurements of gender and poverty*

For the last three decades, the measurement of income and consumption – or 'dollar-a-day poverty' – has been the main method of measuring poverty. This approach is based on household survey data where the only gender-sensitive indicator available is female-headed households versus male-headed households. Therefore when 'women's poverty' is talked about, what is actually being talked about is the poverty of female-headed households. This links poverty to women rather than to unequal gender relations and it ignores poverty among women in male-headed households (Chant 2003; Cagatay 1998).

The lack of sex-disaggregated data on spending and consumption within the household also perpetuates an assumption that income is distributed equally among household members. This fails to account for the influence of gendered power relations and bargaining in the intra-household distribution of resources (Chant 2003). Men may also exert their control over income by forbidding women to work outside the home, or by controlling the income which women bring into the household, as has been documented for example in Thailand (Blanc-Szanton 1990) and Brazil (Fonseca 1991).

Furthermore, traditional approaches to measuring poverty assign no economic value to unpaid domestic work (Montano et al 2003). This underestimates the ill-being experienced by some women as a result of the long and physically strenuous hours of care work they carry out in addition to their paid labour. It also overlooks the high opportunity costs associated with unpaid work: girls are withdrawn from school to care for sick relatives or look after children, while women have less time to devote to productive work – confining them to low-paid jobs with few prospects.

4.1.2 Recent approaches to gender-sensitive measurement of poverty

The concept of ‘time poverty’ – whereby some individuals, especially women, do not have enough time for rest and leisure after taking into account the time spent working, whether in the labour market, for domestic work, or for other activities such as fetching water and wood (Blackden and Wodon 2006: 6) – is sometimes used as an alternative methodology to capture the social and economic dimensions of poverty. Time poverty is measured primarily through time-use surveys, which ask men and women to record how they spend their time during a ‘normal’ 24-hour day, including productive activities, as well as various forms of unpaid labour, and leisure and educational activities. Time-use studies are especially important for measuring women’s unpaid care work, or their provision of services within households and communities (UNIFEM 2000), which often limits their ability to participate in paid employment.

For example, in 2000 the Mongolia National Statistics Office and UNDP conducted a time-use survey to collect data on gender (in)equality in paid and unpaid work. Time-use data was collected using a 24-hour diary kept by household members, and household and demographic information was collected through questionnaires. The findings showed that in rural areas the large amount of time women spend on housework and caring for family members (5–6 hours per day) meant that they had little time to spend on employment and personal care. A key recommendation emanating from the study was to ensure that equal access and availability of employment for men and women is high on the policy agenda. (National Statistics Office and UNDP 2000)

Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) also have the potential to capture the multi-dimensional aspects of gender and poverty. A PPA is a process for including poor people’s views in the analysis of poverty and in the design of strategies to reduce it (Balochistan team - Participatory Poverty Assessment 2003). The methodologies are participatory and largely qualitative – the Voices of the Poor project discussed in Section 2.3.3 is a good example. Some results from specific PPAs include the following (Kabeer 2003):

- Forms of disadvantage that especially affect poor women, for example time poverty, was explored in African PPAs, and domestic violence, unequal decision-making power and disproportionate workloads was highlighted in the Vietnam PPA;
- The vulnerability of female-headed households;
- Gender differences in priorities, for example in Zambia women prioritised basic needs while men emphasised ownership of physical assets;
- Policy-related inequalities and unequal treatment; for example in Guinea-Bissau and South Africa women were often bypassed in the distribution of credit and agricultural extension, putting them at an economic disadvantage in terms of earning a livelihood;
- Women’s lack of access to resources such as land, as documented in Kenya and Tanzania.

Despite this type of valuable data many PPAs lack any reference to gender and others use ‘gender’ as a synonym for ‘women’. This could be due to biases among those compiling poverty profiles and translating them into policy (‘PPAs, like any other methodology, are as gender-blind or as gender-aware as those who conduct them’ (Kabeer 2003: 101)), or it could be due to the fact that ‘poor

people's perceptions' reflect the norms and values of society, which may not view gender inequalities as significant (Kabeer 2003).

Another way forward lies with the proposal of a Gender Poverty Index (GPI) based on: time use (labour inputs versus leisure/rest time); the value of labour inputs (in the paid and unpaid sectors) versus earnings; and sex-differentiated expenditure and consumption patterns (Chant 2006: 215). For more detail on the GPI see the SRC.

4.2 Gender and empowerment

Since the mid-1980s, the term 'empowerment' has become popular in the development field, especially in relation to women. Yet empowerment is not easily defined in concrete terms and means different things to different people. For feminist activists, empowerment can be about challenging patriarchy: Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education states that women's empowerment is 'the process, and the outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society' (Batliwala 1995). For others, empowerment is about *choices* – 'the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them' (Kabeer 2001: 19).

These definitions suggest that empowerment comprises not only forms of observable action, such as political decision-making, but also the meaning, motivation and purpose that individuals bring to their actions – their *sense of agency or self-worth* (Kabeer 2005). Women's empowerment, like poverty, cannot therefore be captured by a single indicator. Instead empowerment must be measured along many lines.

Moreover, purely quantitative indicators may not be sensitive enough to capture the nuances of gender power relations inherent in empowerment processes; nor can they measure an individual's *sense of agency or self-worth*. In order to understand the socio-cultural context within which social interaction and gender relationships take place, it may be useful to use in-depth qualitative methods (Pradhan 2003).

There have been many approaches to measuring women's empowerment. Kabeer's approach involves three inter-related dimensions: access to resources (the preconditions for empowerment), agency (the ability to use these resources to bring about new opportunities) and achievements (outcomes) (Kabeer 1999: 436). Her analysis suggests that all three dimensions are indivisible, pointing to the need to use multiple sources and methodologies to cross-check data. For example, it is difficult to judge the validity of an 'achievement' measure without evidence of *whose* agency is involved and the extent to which the achievement has transformed prevailing inequalities in resources and agency, rather than sustaining or reinforcing them (ibid: 452).

A key challenge is how to satisfy the need for both universal standards to measure empowerment and context-sensitive indicators. One approach is to use multi-level indicators, where broader-level

indicators might be applicable across a range of contexts, while indicators at the community and household level might be adapted for specific contexts. A multi-level set of indicators is discussed in the box below.

A multidimensional and multi-level approach to empowerment

A study reviewing international approaches to measuring women's empowerment suggests measuring along six dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, familial-interpersonal, legal, political and psychological. Each of these in turn are measured at different social levels: the household, community and 'broader arenas'. This is designed to accommodate contextual differences between countries. For example, in the economic dimension indicators of empowerment include women's and men's control over household income; their access to employment, credit and markets; and representation of women's and men's interests in macro-economic policies. In the psychological dimension, indicators include self-esteem and psychological wellbeing, collective awareness of injustice, and a systemic acceptance of women's entitlement and inclusion.

Malhotra et al 2003

Approaches to measuring women's empowerment must also take into account the fact that empowerment can be a slow process of change. An example from India is provided in the box below, also stressing that the road to empowerment is not a linear one. The message for researchers and evaluators is to look for small successes, to look in unexpected places (such as in the next generation, in the example below), and to recognise that women's empowerment initiatives require a long time-frame commitment.

The non-linear nature of women's empowerment

The 2001 Indian census data suggested a pronounced increase in female literacy levels since 1991. This came as somewhat of a surprise because many of the women's adult literacy programmes of the 1980s and 1990s had been declared failures because the short-term programmes did not enable women to retain their newly-acquired skills. One hypothesis regarding the 2001 census data, was that while the women who had attended these literacy classes may not have become literate, they did ensure that their daughters and granddaughters went to school. Ten to 20 years later, this was born out in the census and other qualitative data.

Gurumurthy 2006

4.3 Measuring gender-based violence

Why is it important to measure levels of GBV – what purpose will this serve in reducing the problem? GBV can be defined as physical, sexual, or psychological abuse inflicted on the basis of a person's gender. However, definitions of GBV vary across and within countries, making it difficult to measure

GBV as a global phenomenon. A lack of data and general under-reporting also makes GBV appear far less common than it actually is: more reliable data would better highlight the widespread nature of the problem and strengthen the case for action. To help reduce the acceptability of this violence, initiatives are promoting attitude change, the success of which also needs to be measured (see Section 2.3.3).

A better understanding of who experiences GBV, where, and with which associated causal factors (alcohol abuse, cultural practices, armed conflict, etc.), will enable planners and policymakers to better target interventions to reduce GBV or assist survivors. For example, a survey of violence perpetrated against young female vendors trading at bus and truck stops in urban areas was conducted by the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. The data was used to design training and advocacy with police, drivers' unions and judicial officials, resulting in measures ensuring a significant drop in the incidence of violence (UNIFEM 2007).

4.3.1 Mitigating risk in data collection

One of the reasons for the severe lack of accurate data on GBV is the sensitive nature of the issue, which is taboo in many contexts. For this reason women may be concerned that by speaking out they will increase their vulnerability to violence. A critical consideration when measuring GBV is thus to address female respondents' fears for their safety. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed ethical and safety guidelines for researching domestic violence against women, highlighting issues such as guaranteeing privacy and confidentiality of the interview and providing special training for researchers (WHO 2001). Participatory researchers in Pakistan also used special steps to ensure that women felt comfortable answering questions about domestic violence, such as getting mother-in-laws to leave the room during particular questions by politely asking for a glass of water. In another case, they gave women respondents double-sided key chains with helpline numbers on them, and asked them to respond to the question of whether they had experienced abuse in the last year by showing one side or the other of the key chain. This meant that women could respond more honestly because they did not risk being overheard.

4.3.2 Methodologies for measurement of GBV

One approach to measuring GBV is to carry out a dedicated study on the types, circumstances and consequences of violence. However, such studies are costly and difficult to repeat on a regular basis. A more cost-effective option is to incorporate questions about GBV into surveys designed for other purposes, such as demographic surveys. This has the advantage of being able to use the other variables collected to deepen understanding of risk factors and consequences of GBV, for example on reproductive and child health over time. However, the inclusion of only one or two questions about GBV in surveys can result in under-reporting of GBV. WHO has consequently developed a specific GBV module which can be integrated into broader studies (UNDAW 2005).

Alternatively, GBV may be measured as part of a broader assessment of sexual health programmes or legal aid services. In Venezuela, for example, GBV was measured as part of a sexual and reproductive health programme. Key actions taken to facilitate effective and sensitive measurement included: appropriate training for all staff; establishing good rapport with clients; explaining to clients that all women in the programme are screened for GBV as a matter of course; and using a simple,

standardised assessment tool which included emotional, physical and sexual violence, as well as sexual violence in childhood. The prevalence of violence detected rose from 7 per cent to 38 per cent of new clients, which was attributed to the above systematic procedures, the screening of all clients, and increased public awareness of a new domestic violence law (Guedes et al 2002).

4.4 Gender and conflict

Gender equality is hard enough to measure in situations of peace and stability but even more difficult in a conflict-prone context of rapid change. Gender-sensitive indicators can help to warn of, and thus avert, escalating conflict; they can also provide a roadmap for monitoring change towards long-term gender equality in the critical post-conflict period.

4.4.1 Monitoring the escalation of conflict

Appropriate use of gender-sensitive indicators can anticipate the escalation of conflict. Increases in gender inequality, for example manifested through high rates of domestic violence, can be indicators of the escalation of conflict. Attention to gender can therefore strengthen the effectiveness of analytical and preventative models such as risk assessments and conflict early warning systems, as well as highlighting the different capabilities of women and men to engage in conflict prevention (UNIFEM 2006a).

While the majority of conflict monitoring systems to date have been gender-blind, UNIFEM has piloted a number of projects to develop gender-sensitive indicators which can be mainstreamed into conflict risk assessment and early warning systems. A project in the Solomon Islands using gender-sensitive conflict indicators enabled donors, government, NGOs and communities to better adapt their strategic planning and activities to reflect current peace building and gender priorities. This led to a more nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics, and enhanced women's role in the peace building process (Moser 2006). The indicators, examples of which are provided in the box below, were collected using a survey of men's and women's opinions of conflict risk at the community and national levels, followed up by participatory focus group discussions.

Examples of UNIFEM's Gendered Conflict Early Warning Indicators

- Increased domestic abuse
- Increased male youth unemployment
- Increased avoidance of markets / gardens by women due to fear
- Reduced trust between ethnic groups
- Increased 'informal negative discourse' (gossip)
- Reduction in women's involvement in community resolution of land disputes

See the SRC for more gender-sensitive indicators of conflict.

4.4.2 Assessing gender equality in post-conflict settings

Gender-sensitive indicators are important for tracking progress on gender equality in post-conflict settings. The post-conflict context provides a critical window of opportunity for setting the foundation for long-term gender equality; it is the time when new constitutions and legal frameworks are set up, when elections are held, when development and reconstruction activities lead to new employment opportunities, when the desire for transition to 'democracy' can allow for discussion of equal rights for women and men. It is crucial to ensure that women as well as men are able to take advantage of these opportunities.

The box below outlines possible indicators to measure gender equality in post-conflict situations, based on experience in Timor Leste. The indicators incorporate four of the categories for tracking the MDGs proposed by the UN Millennium Taskforce on Gender Equality (these will be discussed in further detail in the next section).

Gender Equality Indicators in Post-Conflict Contexts

Women's participation in political bodies

- Proportion of women/men in provisional/transitional governing bodies;
- Proportion of women in the Constituent Assembly, constitution drafting committees and popular consultations;
- Proportion of women/men in political candidate lists (including winnable positions).

Property rights

- Proportion of women/men among beneficiaries of post-conflict land (re)distribution, including land allocation to ex-combatants;
- Provisions for equal rights to ownership/inheritance of property ensured in new constitution and legislation.

Employment

- Proportion of women/men in emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation work;
- Proportion of women /men in employment/income generating schemes;
- Proportion of women /men employed in UN, NGOs, and civil service at all levels.

Violence against women

- Inclusion of gender sensitisation in training of army and police forces and judges;
- Cases of gender-based violence reported to the police or other bodies, cases investigated and conviction rates.

Ospina 2006

In addition to these four categories, it is proposed that data be collected on the proportion of households that are female-headed (as this can be a volatile indicator during and after conflict, and is important in terms of planning livelihood programmes), as well as the proportion of women among registered ex-combatants (as special measures are needed to ensure that women benefit from reintegration measures for former combatants) (Ospina 2006). The data would then either be

compared to similar data from the pre-conflict situation – if such data exists – or gathered regularly during the post-conflict phase to monitor the effectiveness of development and reconstruction efforts in relation to gender equality.

4.4.3 Mitigating risk in data collection

Women activists, researchers and informants are particularly vulnerable to security threats in conflict situations, because they are subject to sexual attacks, and because they can be seen as stepping outside their traditional gender roles. This is in addition to the security risks associated with collecting data in a context of hostilities. Strategies to address these security risks include:

- Avoiding creating a false sense of security;
- Ensuring participation does not make participants targets for attack;
- Explicitly analysing risk levels and factors with local partners;
- Creating an enabling environment to allow the expression of opinions in safety;
- Accessing communities through locally respected women's organisations.

Anderson and Olsen 2003

5. INTERNATIONAL MEASUREMENTS

International and regional gender goals and indices are valuable because they can unite people around a common understanding of issues at the international level, allow for cross-national comparisons of gender equality, and condense complex data into clear messages about the achievements and gaps in gender equality. However, limitations with international indices include the tendency towards quantitative forms of measurement, combined with the notoriously unreliable nature of national-level census data, inconsistencies over time and across countries making cross-country comparisons difficult, and the ongoing challenge of agreeing which elements of gender (in)equality should be measured, and how best to capture these elements within a limited set of indicators.

This section examines some of the most widely used international goals and indices for measuring gender equality – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and UNDP's gender-related indices. It then considers alternative composite (combined) indices, regional approaches, and innovative efforts to harmonise existing gender indicators.

5.1 Millennium Development Goals

5.1.1 *Background to the goals*

The MDGs are a set of eight goals – with 18 targets to be measured by 48 quantifiable social, economic and environmental indicators – to be achieved by 2015, reflecting the world's main development challenges (see the box below). They were adopted by 189 world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. The MDGs have been viewed by some gender advocates as a distraction, and by others as a strategic entry point for promoting gender equality. The focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in Goal 3 serves as a milestone for the decades of advocacy around the importance of gender equality to human development, as well as being a timely reminder of the policies, actions and resources still needed to achieve equality between and among men and women worldwide.

Many gender practitioners and policymakers now agree that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the achievement of each of the MDGs, and the achievement of Goal 3 in turn depends upon the extent to which the other goals address gender-based constraints. The Millennium Project Task Force on Gender and Education has illustrated this by spelling out some of the reasons why gender equality is important to each of the 8 MDGs, as shown in the box below (Grown et al 2005: 31). The Task Force is part of the UN Millennium Project, an independent advisory body commissioned by the UN Secretary-General to propose the best interventions and policy strategies for meeting the MDGs.

MDGs and the importance of gender equality	
Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality in capabilities and access to opportunities can accelerate economic growth. • Equal access for women to basic transport and energy infrastructure can lead to greater economic activity. • Equal investment in women's health and nutritional status reduces chronic hunger and malnourishment, which increases productivity and wellbeing.
Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated girls and women have greater control over their fertility and participate more in public life. • A mother's education is a strong and consistent determinant of her children's school enrolment and attainment and their health and nutrition outcomes.
Goal 3. Promote gender equality & empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This central goal dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment depends on the achievement of all other goals for its success.
Goal 4. Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mother's education, income, and empowerment have a significant impact on lowering child mortality.
Goal 5. Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mother's education, income, and empowerment have a significant impact on lowering maternal mortality.
Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater economic independence for women, increased ability to negotiate safe sex, greater awareness of the need to alter traditional norms around sexual relations, better access to treatment, and support for the care function that women perform are essential for halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics.
Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-equitable property and resource ownership policies enable women (often as primary users of these resources) to manage them in a more sustainable manner.
Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater gender equality in the political sphere may lead to higher investments in development cooperation. <p style="text-align: right;">Adapted from Grown <i>et al</i> 2005: 31</p>

However, despite the centrality of gender equality to each of the goals, gender is not mainstreamed into the goal statements, the indices chosen, nor the methods used for measuring against these indices. A recent gender review of 78 national MDG reports found that references to women and gender were largely 'ghettoised' under Goals 3 and 5, and that discussions around Goal 7 on environment and Goal 8 on partnerships were almost always gender-blind (Menon-Sen 2005).

5.1.2 Millennium Development Goal 3: gender equality

MDG3 comprises one overarching target and four indicators to track progress:

MDG3 Targets and Indicators

Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators:

- Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Ratio of literate women to men, 15–24 years old
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

There have been critiques of Goal 3, which have questioned the validity of the indicators – how appropriate they are for measuring gender equality – and suggested that they do not capture the full range of issues which are needed to measure gender equality. For example:

- Achieving MDG3 would still not guarantee the existence of gender equality, since gender equality in schooling may not translate into other spheres, such as gender equity in the workforce or in the share of national income (Johnson 2005);
- The indicators chosen to monitor progress towards MDG3 do not mention key issues such as women's rights, women's empowerment, violence against women, or women's poverty. In countries where MDG3 has been 'achieved', women still suffer from violence and may not have access to abortion, for instance (Verdière 2005);
- The chosen indicator of literacy is particularly problematic as literacy data is unreliable in many countries (Grown et al 2003);
- While enrolment rates measure the input side of education, they fail to capture the equally important school completion rates and learning outcomes (ibid);
- The proportion of seats in parliament is a poor proxy for empowerment, as it does not measure whether women actually have decision-making power in parliament, nor does it measure the progress made at the municipal and local levels (Grown et al 2003);
- Increased women in wage employment may lead to a double work burden for women who already engage in unpaid housework and caring for family members, as discussed in Section 4.1 on measuring poverty.

5.1.3 Potential ways forward

Over the past two years, the UN system has discussed new targets and indicators for all the MDGs. The Millennium Project Task Force on Gender and Education identified seven strategic priorities to ensure that Goal 3 is met by 2015, and several indicators that can be used by countries to monitor progress towards meeting these seven strategic priorities (see the box below). The Task Force recommended substituting these indicators for the four that were originally suggested by the UN to

monitor progress towards MDG3 (Grown 2007, personal correspondence). To date, the UN General Assembly has not adopted these recommendations. However, following the 2005 World Summit a number of the Task Force recommendations have been included as targets under other goals (Judd 2007, personal correspondence).

Proposed Millennium Project Task Force indicators for tracking MDGs

Strategic priority 1: Education

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

Strategic priority 2: Sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied.
- Adolescent fertility rate.

Strategic priority 3: Infrastructure

- Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel.

Strategic priority 4: Property rights

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

Strategic priority 5: Employment

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

Strategic priority 6: Participation in national parliaments and local government bodies

- Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament.
- Percentage of seats held by women in local government bodies.

Strategic priority 7: Violence against women

- Prevalence of domestic violence

Grown *et al* 2005: 18

In addition to proposing new indicators, a number of other recommendations have been made for strengthening efforts to track progress towards MDG goals. The UNDP review of national MDG reports suggests increasing the range and scope of reporting, improving linkages across goals, and enhancing ownership and commitment to achieving the shared goals (Menon-Sen 2005: 63). The World March of Women, an international feminist action network of grassroots organisations, has argued that the MDGs do not go far enough, and their Women's Global Charter for Humanity is more radical in its approach, focusing on human rights and freedoms, and denouncing patriarchy, capitalism, poverty and violence against women (Verdière 2005).

5.2 Gender-related Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure

5.2.1 Background to the indices

The Human Development Index (HDI) was introduced by UNDP in 1990 as part of a move away from focusing solely on economic factors in the measurement of poverty and wellbeing (see Section 4.1). While this represented an important alternative to measures of socioeconomic status based on gross domestic product (GDP), the HDI failed to sex-disaggregate its indicators. In 1995, coinciding with the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women, UNDP developed two instruments to complement the HDI: the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). Both of these are composite indices, comprised of several indicators (listed in the box below) which are combined into one overall measure. The GDI and GEM are among the most widely used indicators for measuring gender equality at the national level; they are especially useful because their limited number of easily accessible indicators mean that they can cover a large number of countries, and they provide a 'shorthand' means of tracking gender-related development (Crawford 2006: 9).

Indicators used in the GDI and GEM

The GDI uses the same wellbeing indicators as the Human Development Index (see the SRC for more detail of the HDI), but applies a penalty to aggregate scores for gender disparities. The greater the disparity between women and men, the lower a country's GDI compared with its HDI. The three equally weighted indicators used to measure the GDI are:

- Long and healthy life (measured by male and female life expectancy at birth)
- Knowledge (measured by male and female adult literacy and years of schooling)
- Decent standard of living (measured by women's and men's share of earned income).

The GEM measures the gap between men and women along three equally weighted dimensions of empowerment:

- Political participation and decision-making (measured by women's and men's share of parliamentary seats)
- Economic participation and decision-making (measured by women's and men's share of professional and technical jobs, and share of administrative and managerial jobs)
- Power over economic resources (measured by women's and men's share of earned income).

The methodologies used to calculate the GDI and GEM are described in UNDP 2004.

5.2.2 Potential

Comparing the GEM, GDI, HDI and income per capita provides important information about gender equality. For instance, comparing the HDI with the GDI shows that no country treats its women as well as its men as shown by the fact that for every country the GDI is lower than the HDI. It also demonstrates that achieving gender equality does not depend on national income levels. For example,

while South Korea does well in terms of GDP and human development, it performs very poorly on the GEM – mostly due to its very small number of female members of parliament and female share of administrators and managers (Klasen 2004; Bardhan and Klasen 1999). In addition, some countries have low GEM values compared to their GDI ranking because they achieve more in education and literacy than in employment and political participation (Beck 1999: 35). In a small number of cases, these measures have been successfully used for lobbying purposes. For example, in Korea the GEM was used to persuade the government to take action with regards to the low representation of women in political and economic sectors in the country (UNDP 2005).

5.2.3 Limitations and challenges

However, there are limitations to these indices. Neither measure gender (in)equality as such; the GDI is a measure of human development corrected for gender inequality, and the GEM is ‘an odd combination of relative female and male empowerment ... and absolute levels of income per capita’ (Dijkstra 2006: 276). Both the GDI and GEM are difficult to calculate or interpret, and a lack of understanding of their limitations has sometimes misguided policy debates, discussions and advocacy efforts. The most common mistake is to interpret the GDI as a measure of inequality – a misinterpretation made in various years in the national human development reports of Kenya, Albania and Macedonia, as well as in a host of academic papers (Schüler 2006).

The choice of indicators is also questionable. For example, using income as a proxy for consumption ignores intra-household resource distribution, as discussed in Section 4.1 on measuring poverty. In the case of the GEM, choosing women’s share of parliamentary seats and professional occupations as key indicators means that inequality is measured among the most educated and economically advantaged women (Cueva Beteta 2006). The GEM also fails to take into account the extent to which female parliamentarians are actually involved in, or influence, decision-making.

Limited public participation in the choice of indicators is a further issue. This is reflected in the fact that the GDI has been criticised for not adequately reflecting the concerns of developing countries. In response to this critique, the 2004 Gujarat Human Development Report introduced a locally appropriate Gender Development Measure (GDM-1) which included additional indicators such as incidence of disability, percentage of electorate voting and availability of ‘durable’ housing (Schüler 2006: 168).

Furthermore, the Human Development Report has not provided a consistent time series of the GDI. The way the calculations for the GDI were carried out was adjusted in 1999 and different data sources have been used from year to year. Trends cannot therefore be adequately compared and analysed because changes in the GDI may be a result of improved data sources rather than changes in the underlying data (Klasen 2006).

5.2.4 New initiatives around the GDI and GEM

Several initiatives are being developed to make the GDI and GEM more effective for measuring gender equality. There is a particular emphasis on meeting the demand from the policy and advocacy community to clearly measure gender gaps – the differences between men and women on a particular

indicator. One suggestion is to develop separate human development indexes for males and females (Klasen 2006). Another proposal is the development of a simpler composite indicator of gender disparity using the three MDG3 indicators, to complement the GDI and GEM (Leete 2005). With regards to the GEM, Cueva Beteta (2006: 235–6) recommends the following additional indicators:

- For political participation, include women's presence in local governments;
- For economic participation, include lower levels of the employment hierarchy;
- Include indicators for women's agency within the household and control over their bodies and sexuality.

UNDP is currently undertaking a review of the GDI and GEM, with one of the expected products being an interactive tool on the UNDP Human Development Report Office website to help train people to calculate and interpret the GDI and the GEM (HDRO 2005). As part of this review, a UNDP 'e-discussion' held from July - September 2005 elicited suggestions for the inclusion of other dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment in the GDI and GEM, including: violence against women, trafficking, women's leisure time, their decision-making power within communities and households, and their personal security and dignity (UNDP 2005). UNDP in Mexico is also engaging work around the GDI and GEM, including efforts to use the GDI and GEM at the municipal level, as well as a pilot study combining GDI and GEM indicators with indicators of violence (UNDP Mexico, UNDP/BRIDGE e-discussion, March 2007).

5.3 Other composite indices

A 'next generation' of international composite indices to measure gender equality has been developed, in part to complement and expand on the GDI and GEM. Certain indices redress some of the limitations outlined above. For example, Social Watch's Gender Equity Index (GEI) enables the level of gender equity to be clearly ranked across different countries – unlike the GDI which can be used only in reference to the average (gender-neutral) level of wellbeing through the HDI. The GEI combines indicators from both the GDI and GEM, with a separate gender equity rating estimated for three dimensions (Social Watch 2005b):

- Education (measured by the literacy gap between men and women and by male and female enrolment rates in primary, secondary and tertiary education);
- Participation in the economy (measured by the percentage of women and men in paid jobs, excluding agriculture, and by the income ratio of men to women);
- Empowerment (measured by the percentage of women in professional, technical, managerial and administrative jobs, and by the number of seats women have in parliament, and in decision-making ministerial posts).

The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI) also uses a broad range of dimensions and indicators – a selection of which are illustrated in the box below (Lopez-Claros and Zahidi 2005). Part of the GGI's innovation is in its measurement techniques, which combine quantitative data sets with qualitative measures from the Executive Opinion Survey of the World Economic Forum, a survey of 9,000 business leaders in 104 countries.

Gender Gap Index (GGI)

GGI indicators include the following:

- *Economic participation*: male and female unemployment levels, levels of economic activity, and remuneration for equal work;
- *Economic opportunity*: duration of maternity leave, percentage of wages paid during the covered period, number of women in managerial positions, availability of government-provided childcare, impact of maternity laws on the hiring of women, wage inequalities between men and women in the private sector;
- *Political empowerment*: number of female ministers, share of seats in parliament, women holding senior legislative and managerial positions, number of years a female has been head of state;
- *Educational attainment*: literacy rates, enrolment rates for primary, secondary and tertiary education, average years of schooling;
- *Health and wellbeing*: effectiveness of governments' efforts to reduce poverty and inequality, adolescent fertility rate, percentage of births attended by skilled health staff, and maternal and infant mortality rates.

Lopez-Claros and Zahidi 2005

Essentially, these new indices demonstrate different choices in the trade-off between the use of multiple dimensions and indicators, and the ability to measure and compare across a large number of countries. Because the availability and comparability of national statistical data is limited in many countries, the more indicators being measured, the less likely it is that countries will have available data. For example, while the GGI is a nuanced and comprehensive tool, the data is so complex that it is only available to measure 58 countries; on the other hand, the GEI measures a much smaller range of indicators than the GGI but it can be applied to 130 countries (Social Watch 2005b).

There are a number of shortcomings associated with these composite indices. Neither the GGI nor the GEI include indicators for informal work, unpaid and reproductive work, or time-use. These are critical to understanding women's participation in the economy because much of women's work falls outside the formal sector. Incorporation of these indicators into composite indices is therefore an important area for future work.

5.4 Regional approaches

How useful are international indicators in a specific regional context? As manifestations of gender inequality are context-specific, international indicators based on global standards do not always translate usefully to the local or regional context (UNRISD 2005). For example, the 2004 ECLAC report on the Caribbean's progress towards the MDGs highlighted the limited utility of the broad measurements and assumptions embedded in the MDG indicators (ECLAC 2004). In the Caribbean, while girls have higher participation rates in primary and secondary education than boys, this

educational attainment does not translate into women's better positioning in labour markets or increased involvement in decision-making in the region. Consequently, the ratio of boys to girls in education may not be an appropriate indicator of gender equality (ibid).

There have been programmes in several regions to begin the process of adapting indicators to better represent changing levels of gender equality in specific contexts. For example, since 1997 the Development of a Gender Statistics Programme (GSP) in the Arab Countries has sought to strengthen regional capacity in the identification of statistics and indicators, including through a series of regional workshops. In the third of these workshops in 2003, participants identified a number of high priority gender statistics and indicators needed to measure gender equality in the region, including one section on 'women and public reproductive health' which included 'prevalence of contraception' as one of its indicators (UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia 2001).

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) have developed the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) which was launched at the Fourth African Development Forum in 2004 and has since been piloted in 12 countries. It is designed to provide African policymakers with an appropriate tool for monitoring progress towards gender equality and to help monitor progress made in implementing the conventions which have been ratified by African countries, including the Dakar Platform for Action (Economic Commission for Africa 2004). It differs from the GDI and GEM, with a move away from Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measures. It incorporates a quantitative tool of 42 sex-disaggregated indicators (the Gender Status Index) along with a qualitative assessment of the level of implementation of key women's rights and gender equality documents (the African Women's Progress Scoreboard). The index is geared towards regionally-available data sets, although the data required is not always available in each country (ACGD 2005). (See the Supporting Resources Collection for further detail on the AGDI and its underlying methodology).

5.5 Harmonisation of gender indicators

The proliferation of international gender indicators can lead to confusion, as governments and civil society struggle to comply with overlapping measures and understand different terminology and concepts. A small number of initiatives are responding to this challenge, identifying and using sets of harmonised indicators.

UNIFEM and UNDP – harmonising indicators in Kyrgyzstan

The set of harmonised gender indicators was developed by gender experts, who grouped the gender indicators for the MDGs, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) within three categories: mandatory, recommended and optional indicators. A meeting with representatives from government ministries, the Prime Minister's office, UN agencies, donors and civil society, considered and validated each indicator for applicability, feasibility, cost efficiency and correlation to global indicators. The harmonised gender indicators in Kyrgyzstan have already achieved positive outcomes. The process has contributed to a stronger gender equality perspective in the country's second MDG report and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Partners advocated for engendering the MDG report and PRS, using evidence-based advocacy emanating from a Gender Statistics Book prepared as a joint Memorandum of Understanding between UNIFEM and the National Statistics Committee.

UNIFEM 2005

For information on international and regional databases of gender-sensitive statistics, see the SRC.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Revision and development of international gender indices

While gender goals and indices at the international level provide some of the most important tools for advocacy and accountability around gender equality, their refinement and better utilisation remains necessary.

Recommendations:

- UN agencies should continue review processes such as that of the GDI and GEM, and use these reviews to develop improved methods of calculations and better choices of indicators.
- UN agencies and international research organisations should consider developing alternative measures such as a ‘standalone’ measure of gender equality (rather than a measure of human development penalised for gender inequality), or sex-disaggregating the HDI.
- Research institutes, think tanks, development agencies and civil society groups should experiment with and develop new composite indices for measuring gender (in)equality (along the lines of the GGI and GEI), exploring the use of different combinations of indicators – for example, including indicators on women’s unpaid work – and different types of data. Particular attention should be paid to accessing and incorporating qualitative gender-sensitive data.
- Composite indices for international use should select indicators which are: simple, few in number, relevant to key policy issues, comparable and affordable.
- Beyond efforts to revise and create international indices, it is important that development organisations apply new and existing indices to practical cases and document the types of knowledge and understanding they create.
- It is also important to work on the adaptation of international indices to local contexts. A framework needs to be developed which can be used and adapted by national statistical offices across countries.

6.2 National statistical offices

Mainstreaming gender into national statistical systems must be implemented throughout the process of producing statistics, from the development of concepts and methods of data collection to the presentation of results (UN 2006b).

Recommendations:

- Develop human resources at all levels in national statistics offices through continuous staff training in gender-sensitive statistics and increasing the representation of women.
- Specify the development of gender statistics within the legal framework of official statistics.
- Support and strengthen gender statistics units.
- Support efforts to 'engender' census-taking, such as training census workers on ways to probe for gender-sensitive information and ensure that such information is documented.
- Look for ways to disseminate gender-sensitive statistics in accessible ways, such as via radio programmes or using a CD-ROM.
- Foster dialogue between statistics offices and interested stakeholders, including women's groups, which can enable women's groups and gender advocates to understand, gain access to and use gender statistics more effectively, as well as helping statisticians to understand the perspectives and concerns of gender advocates.

6.3 Choosing measurement methodologies and tools

Development organisations often select indicators and methodologies without thinking about what it is they want to achieve, what they therefore want to measure, and how best to measure it.

Recommendations:

- The first step of any measurement process should be to identify the objectives and goals – the 'vision of change' – that the development organisation wants to achieve. This should be the basis for choosing appropriate gender-sensitive indicators against which to track progress towards agreed objectives.
- All development organisations, from international agencies through to grassroots organisations, should use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to cross-check results and generate a richer understanding of the data. For some this could mean introducing a simple survey into a largely qualitative methodology; for others it could mean supplementing survey data with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.
- Wherever possible, participatory approaches should be used. This could mean involving male and female research 'subjects' in defining appropriate gender-sensitive indicators, or including them in the gathering and analysis of data.

6.4 Gender mainstreaming

A key challenge for development organisations at all levels is to ensure that gender does not become a marginalised issue and that gender mainstreaming efforts are not undermined. One important step involves the formulation and utilisation of explicit mechanisms and procedures to track progress and evaluate mainstreaming outcomes – a process which can also feed into work on the new aid modalities.

Recommendations:

- International development organisations and national NGOs should formulate appropriate gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring gender mainstreaming outcomes and impacts. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators should be considered, as well as participatory methodologies of data collection and analysis.
- Gender evaluations of development organisations and programmes should be mandatory and regularly carried out, and results should be fed back into the programming cycle in order to hold people accountable for results.
- International development organisations and NGOs at all levels should regularly carry out internal gender audits to measure internal organisational change, with particular attention to the development and implementation of action plans to improve gender equality within the organisation.
- Delivery on gender mainstreaming commitments should be included in staff performance reviews.

6.5 Requirements and incentives

One of the long-standing challenges associated with gender mainstreaming is that when gender becomes the responsibility of everyone, no one takes responsibility and accountability is diluted. In addition, despite many organisations and governments agreeing to strong policy commitments on gender equality, these frequently ‘evaporate’ at the sectoral, programmatic or project level. Without explicit mechanisms to enforce policy commitments and hold institutions and individuals accountable, gender concerns – including monitoring and measuring – drop off the radar.

Recommendations:

- Producing official national statistics on gender should be a required component of international reporting mechanisms for reports such as the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action.
- Development organisations should explore possibilities for making the measurement of performance on gender equality a requirement for the payment of contractors. Gender equality should also be made central to personal performance objectives (Dawson 2005).
- The development of context-relevant gender-sensitive indicators and the tracking and reporting on those indicators should be obligatory within programmatic development cooperation; the same should be true for the work of grassroots organisations.
- Development organisations could create an ‘industry award’ to demonstrate and promote incentives for good practice in the use of gender indicators and measurements of change, a suggestion made at the International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA) Symposium 2006.

6.6 Measuring other dimensions

As more attention is given to gender-sensitive indicators and to the collection of sex-disaggregated data, it is important to devise ways of measuring the gender aspects of multidimensional issues – such as poverty and empowerment, as we have seen – as well as disaggregating other dimensions beyond gender. This applies to statistical bodies at the national level, to international researchers looking at new ways of measuring, and to users of gender indicators at the programme and project levels.

Recommendations:

- National statistical bodies and international researchers should give continued attention to measurement methodologies for gender and poverty – including time use, the informal sector and unpaid work – as well as other ‘difficult to measure’ multidimensional issues such as advocacy and sexuality.
- At all levels, there is a need to move beyond sex disaggregation to examine the gender dimensions of ethnicity, caste, disability status, place of residence, religion, age – including the girl-child and the elderly – and sexual preference.
- International agencies should provide capacity building and funding support to national governments in developing a consolidated and gender-responsive database across sectors, to prevent doubling up and ‘tunnel-vision’ on data-gathering approaches and encourage greater collaboration and information sharing.

6.7 Documentation and recording

A knowledge gap which has been highlighted in the preparation of this report is the fact that even where gender-sensitive indicators and methods for measuring change are being used, the process is rarely documented.

Recommendations:

- Institutions working on the measurement of gender (in)equality should explicitly examine, track and document the process of using indicators or otherwise measuring change. Grassroots organisations in particular should document their experiences in this area, as less information is published (whether formally or via the internet) at this level than at the international level.
- This process of documentation should include case studies, description and analysis of what the process was, how it was undertaken, what the challenges and limitations were, what was successful and why.
- Documentation and experiences should be shared internally and made available to all staff, whether gender specialists or not. They should also be disseminated for external audiences, especially via the internet so as to be available to as wide an audience as possible. Documents can be submitted to online resource collections specialising in gender issues, such as www.siyanda.org.

6.8 New aid architecture

If commitments to gender equality are to be realised, it is imperative that ways are found to support gender equality within the new aid architecture.

Recommendations:

- Donors and governments should establish concrete accountability systems which track compliance with commitments to gender equality.
- Such accountability systems should include the formulation of appropriate gender-sensitive aid performance indicators (such as the OECD Gender Equality Marker) to be assessed through a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Capacity building in gender-sensitive budget initiatives for civil society organisations and governments is necessary so that governments can reallocate resources to improve development and gender equality.
- Governments should strengthen the capacity of gender equality advocacy groups to voice women's priorities, and build the capacity of public institutions to respond to women's needs.
- At the national and international levels, increased attention should be given to the development of harmonised sets of gender indicators. This should include harmonised indicators appropriate to the country level, feeding up to regional sets and even an international set of agreed harmonised gender indicators.

6.9 Better use of existing gender indicators

Indicators alone do not produce gender equality; in order to be effective they must be used. How data is used is also critical, as data can distort and mislead. These points are easily lost amidst efforts to count, measure and highlight gender inequality or progress towards equality. As has been demonstrated in this report, a proliferation of gender-sensitive indicators already exists. While there is a need to continue to refine international composite indices, and to develop better ways of measuring specific dimensions such as the gendered aspects of poverty, empowerment, etc., the priority is to better utilise the indicators we already have.

Recommendations:

- Governments and development agencies should make sure that gender-sensitive data is collected – governments through national surveys; development agencies through monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- All actors should ensure that the data produced is adequately analysed.
- All actors should look for further ways to harmonise the use of the broad range of indicators in use.
- All actors should carefully analyse and appropriately disseminate gender-sensitive data, so that the information can be used to inform policy and shape programme design and support advocacy for gender quality – to generate action from findings.

It is important to keep in mind that gender-sensitive measurements alone do not improve gender equality. In order to be useful, data must be collected, analysed, disseminated and used.

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