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Tools for Gender Mainstreaming in Development Planning

Using Gender-Sensitive Indicators

Access to relevant sex-disaggregated data has been identified as an important element in mainstreaming gender into development planning. The GMS series of publications includes a detailed guide to the use of gender-sensitive indicators, which may be of use to Commonwealth governments in this regard (for details of this publication, see Beck, 1999).

“An indicator is an item of data that summarises a large amount of information in a single figure, in such a way as to give an indication of change over time, and in comparison to a norm. Indicators differ from statistics in that, rather than merely presenting facts, indicators involve comparison to a norm in their interpretation. A gender-sensitive indicator can be defined as an indicator that captures gender-related changes in society over time.”

Beck, 1999

Thus an example of a *gender statistic* would be: “60% of women in country X are literate”. An example of a *gender-sensitive indicator* would be: “60% of women in country X are literate, as compared to 82% of men, and compared to 30% and 52% five years ago” (Beck, 1999).

Gender-sensitive indicators are potentially of great usefulness in integrating gender considerations into development planning. However, it should be recognised that there are limitations on the amount and type of information they can provide, and that care needs to be taken in their interpretation.

“The greatest limitation of gender-sensitive indicators is that they do not provide information on wider social patterns: they will usually tell the analyst little about why gender relations have been shaped in a particular way and how these relations can be changed. They point to key questions rather than providing answers. Indicator systems should therefore be complemented by gender analysis, which involves examining, often at a micro-level, the social relations between women and men, and the structural features of society which reinforce gender inequality.”

Beck, 1999

The indicators examined in the publication fall into ten main categories:

- 1 Population composition and change
- 2 Human settlements and geographical distribution
- 3 Households and families, marital status, fertility
- 4 Learning within and outside the formal education system
- 5 Health, health services, disability, nutrition
- 6 Economic activity and labour force participation
- 7 Access to land, equipment and credit

- 8 Legal rights and political power
- 9 Violence against women
- 10 Gender and macroeconomics

Table 4 shows some basic macroeconomic indicators, along with pertinent gender-related questions, which could be useful in providing a gender perspective on macroeconomic policies and plans.

Table 4 **Gender and Macroeconomics**

Indicator	Indicator Questions
1 Private consumption expenditure of households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How much of the household's expenditure is directed towards the purchase of food, education and health related matters? ◆ Who controls the household budget, and what say do women have in expenditure? ◆ How far is government expenditure directed towards promoting gender equality and equity? ◆ Do women and men have an equal role in national level budgetary planning? ◆ What percentage of total government expenditure is allocated to health and education? ◆ Have health and education suffered budget cuts under structural adjustment programmes? How have such cuts affected efforts to advance gender equality and equity? ◆ Are women and men equally covered by social security and other schemes? Are such schemes sufficiently gender-sensitive? Is sufficient attention being paid during national level budgetary planning to groups at risk, such as poor single mothers and female heads of households?
2 Total government expenditure and as percentage of GDP	
3 Breakdown of government expenditure by sector	
4 Proportion of persons and households at risk covered by social security and similar schemes	
5 Proportion of potentially eligible persons and households receiving social insurance, social assistance and similar benefits	

Source: Beck (1999)

Tools for Gender Integration into Macroeconomic Policy

The policy options developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat for integrating gender into national budgetary policies in the context of economic reform¹ centre on six possible tools:

- ◆ **sex-disaggregated beneficiary assessments** – a research technique whereby groups of women are asked how, if they were the Finance Minister, they would slice the national budgetary pie; the results are compared with the existing budget to see how closely it reflects women's priorities;
- ◆ **sex-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis** – this involves analysing public expenditures in such areas as health, education and agriculture to see how such expenditures benefit women and men, girls and boys to differing degrees;
- ◆ **gender-aware policy evaluation of public expenditure** – evaluating the policy assumptions that underlie budgetary appropriations, to identify their likely impact on current patterns and degrees of gender differences;
- ◆ **gender-aware budget statement** – a modification of the Women's Budget; this is a statement from each sectoral ministry or line department on the gender implications of the budget within that sector;
- ◆ **sex-disaggregated analysis of the impact of the budget on time use** – this looks at the relationship between the national budget and the way time is used in households, so as to reveal the macroeconomic implications of unpaid work such

as caring for the family, the sick and community members, collecting fuel and water, cooking, cleaning, teaching children and so on; and

- ◆ **gender-aware medium-term economic policy framework** – medium-term macroeconomic policy frameworks are currently formulated using a variety of economy-wide models which are gender-blind. Approaches for integrating gender could include: disaggregating variables by gender where applicable; introducing new variables incorporating a gender perspective; constructing new models that incorporate both national income accounts and household income accounts reflecting unpaid work; and changing underlying assumptions about the social and institutional set-up for economic planning.

Notes

- 1 The policy options are described in greater detail in the GMS publication *Gender Mainstreaming in Finance: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders* (Sen, 1999).