Evaluation of DFID Development Assistance: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

DFID's Experience of Gender Mainstreaming: 1995 to 2004

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAP	Country Assistance Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
GAD	Gender and Development
GEM	Gender Equality Mainstreaming
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PfA	Platform for Action
PIMS	Policy Information Marker System
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	Public Service Agreement
SDA	Social Development Adviser
SDD	Social Development Department
SWAps	Sector Wide Approaches
TSP	Target Strategy Paper
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WID	Women in Development

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Executive Summary

This working paper is an interim output from the Department for International Development's (DFID's) evaluation of gender equality policy and programming, produced as part of the preparation for a systematic evaluation to be conducted in 2005. The methods used for this work were a desk inquiry, a field visit to DFID Bangladesh, and consultations with key DFID staff working on gender through a Reference Panel. These preliminary conclusions will be the subject of further inquiry in the main gender evaluation.

Key Findings

- The growing importance since 2000 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in DFID's work has narrowed the focus of gender equality policy to social sectors, such as girls' education and maternal health, with relatively little attention being given to gender in areas such as economic opportunities and decision-making.

- DFID has used a variety of successful approaches to mainstream gender, many of which have been widely admired outside the organisation. However there has been a lack of consistency in application that has undermined effective use of these resources.

- There has been limited progress in learning from the wealth of country experience and feeding this experience into policy development or guidance for the organisation.

- Overall commitments to gender equality objectives appear to have declined since a peak in 2000, but with considerable variations between country programmes. The reduction in commitments may be linked to decentralisation in DFID or to changes in aid modalities.

- Evidence on 'policy evaporation' is inconclusive. The availability and quality of evidence declines from programme planning, through commitments and expenditures to the implementation and organisational levels.

- Recent gender evaluations carried out by a range of donors have not been good at linking institutional changes and policy to results in the real world. However available evidence from other evaluations suggests the benefits of gender mainstreaming and impacts on gender equality are at best embryonic and at worst still to become visible.

Recommendations for Further Work

In the main evaluation it will be necessary to:

- Develop a better picture of how consistently gender equality objectives have been taken forward across DFID's programmes;

- Explore links between approaches and strategies used in different contexts, the effects these have had on country planning processes, and the contribution of these strategies to wider strategic processes;

- use emerging impact assessment methodologies to develop plausible hypotheses linking interventions, outcomes and impacts which can then be tested using evidence from implementation.

1 Introduction

1. The aims of this paper are to summarise the information that already exists about the Department for International Development's DFID's policy on gender equality and the progress that has been made in implementing it; to highlight areas where currently available information is inadequate and where further work is required; and to identify key questions to be addressed in the main gender evaluation to be conducted in 2005[1]. The paper is divided into three sections:

- A brief introduction to the links between the development of international policy on gender equality and DFID's own policy and an analysis of how issues that are focused on have become narrower over time;

- A main section looking at the development of DFID's gender mainstreaming strategies through the 1990s to the present and at the resource commitments for implementation of these strategies; and,

- A final section looking briefly at the limited available evidence on the impact of gender policy and mainstreaming strategies, and making recommendations for short studies and the main evaluation.

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[1] The paper summarises the findings from a number of background papers prepared by Francis Watkins between May and October 2004

2 The Development of Global Policy on Gender

2. The development of international institutions, conventions and policy on gender equality has provided an important framework for countries and international donors to work within. This section looks at:

- The development and elaboration of international policy through world conferences and the linked development of DFID's own policy; and,

- The increasing importance and effects of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since 2000.

2.1 Adoption of Gender Equality Policy

3. The development of DFID's policy on gender equality[2] is closely linked to the development of international policy. International policy on gender equality was first set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 and culminated in the Fourth World Conference on Women of 1995 and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA), which remains the most important international statement on gender equality. In DFID an intense period of policy development took place in the years following the Beijing Conference, from 1996 to 2000, leading to the most thorough statement of DFID's policy on gender equality in the Target Strategy Paper (TSP), "Poverty Eradication and the Empowerment of Women". Since that time the pace of policy development has declined, and concerns have been raised inside and outside DFID about a loss of momentum and a narrowing of focus in DFID with regard to gender equality objectives.

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[2] Until 1997 DFID was the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). For the sake of clarity, DFID has been used throughout.

Table 1 – Development of International and DFID Policy

Year	International Policy	DFID Policy	Notes
1946	Commission on the Status of Women		First gender perspective on International Bill of Human Rights
1967	Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women		Statement of moral and political intent, without contractual force of a treaty
1979	Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women		Adopted in time for presentation to the World Conference of the UN Decade for Women, Copenhagen 1980
1983	Development Assistance Committee – Women in Development (DAC-WID) Guiding Principles on Women in Development		
1985	Third World Conference on Women, Nairobi		Shift from WID to Gender and Development (GAD) approach
1988		DFID Strategy for the implementation of the policy on Women in Development	Monitored annually and reported on to DAC-WID working group
1995	Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing		Adoption of the "PfA" and establishment of Gender Mainstreaming
1996		DFID publishes One Year on from Beijing	Shift in DFID from WID to GAD approach. Sets out twin-track approach[1] for first time.
1997		DFID publishes first White Paper	Restatement of policy on gender
1998		DFID publishes issues paper, Breaking the Barriers	Details work on gender in sectors and with a range of international partners
2000	Beijing +5 Review	DFID publishes Gender EqualityTSP, Poverty Elimination and the Empowerment of Women	Reaffirmation of commitment to the PfA DFID TSP based around the PfA
2000	Millennium Declaration	DFID adopts Millennium Development Goals and country-led approach to development through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)	PRSPs weak in incorporating gender equality
2003		DFID meeting to discuss progress on gender equality and appointment of Senior Gender and Rights Adviser	Concerns raised that DFID is losing momentum
2004		Development of DFID Gender Equality Strategy	Update of DFID's policy set out in TSP

[1] The "twin track" approach is based on mainstreaming of gender issues in all areas and sectors, while maintaining a focus on the empowerment of women as a disadvantaged group.

4.   By the end of the 1990s attention had shifted towards the MDGs and associated country-level processes through PRSPs. Those committed to the areas highlighted in the Beijing PfA raised concerns about the focus on gender equality in the declaration, which leaves out important issues such as gender-based violence and reproductive rights[3]. Table 2 compares the objectives in the Beijing PfA and DFID's objectives set out in the gender equality TSP, with the MDGs and DFID's policy commitments since 2000 in the Public Service Agreement (PSA) and recent policy papers. The comparison highlights how the MDGs and DFID's gender policy commitments since 2000 have narrowed to the social sectors of health and education. In key areas where progress against the MDGs has been limited, including girls education, maternal health, and HIV/AIDS, DFID has developed research and policy with a strong gender focus. However, it seems clear that in other important areas of policy, such as in economic growth policies, access to resources and inequalities in decision-making, DFID has been much less active in recent years. While there has been work at a country level in areas such as gender budgeting and poverty and social impact assessment, this has not been consistent across DFID's programme and has not been drawn together in DFID policy.

2.2   Gender Equality and the MDGs

5.   One view that has been put forward to counter these concerns is that the Platform for Action underpins and complements the MDGs. In recent years, guidance developed by the World Bank and work on gender equality in the Millennium Project have reinforced this view and identified the linkages between gender equality objectives and the MDGs[4]. A number of the Task Forces of the Millennium Project, have also drawn attention to the need to focus on broader issues of gender equality in order to achieve the narrower goals and targets[5]. One focus of Beijing +10 will be to strengthen the links between the PfA and the MDGs, building on a wide range of critical and theoretical work carried out in the last five years.

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[3] Genevieve Painter (October 2004) Gender, the Millennium Development Goals, and Human Rights in the context of the 2005 review processes
[4] World Bank (April 2003) Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals – www.worldbank.org/gender/gendermdg.pdf, and Nancy Birdsall, Amina J. Ibrahim and Geeta Rao Gupta (February 2004) Task Force 3 Interim Report on Gender Equality, From Promises to Action: Recommendations for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
[5] Nancy Birdsall, Amina J. Ibrahim and Geeta Rao Gupta (February 2004) Task Force 3 Interim Report on gender Equality: Recommendations for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; Lyn Freedman, Meg Wirth, Ronald Waldman, Mushtaque Chowdhury and Allan Rosenfield (April 2004) Interim Report of Task Force 4 on Child Health and Maternal Health, and Anne-Mari Smith, Maria Beatriz Orlando and Ruth Levine (February 2004) Interim Report of Task Force 3 on Achieving the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education

2.3   Key Points

- The development of international policy and DFID's policy on gender equality were closely linked, particularly in the period following the Beijing conference from 1995 to 2000.

- The shift of focus in DFID's work to the MDGs has led to a narrower focus on social sectors, such as girls' education and maternal health, with relatively little attention being given to gender in areas such as economic opportunities and decision-making.

- In the preparations for the events of 2005 there is an increased emphasis on the importance of a broader agenda of achieving gender equality in order to be able to achieve the MDGs as a whole.

Table 2 – Comparison of Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Goals and Targets, and DFID Policies and Targets

Beijing Platform for Action (PfA in bold) DFID Gender Equality TSP	MDGs and Indicators (MDGs in bold) DFID PSA and Policy statements
The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women	**Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
Unequal access to education and training To further close gender gaps in human development, particularly education and health	**Achieve universal primary education** Increase in the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school from 89% to 96% (Africa); Increase in ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school from 87% to 94% (Asia) Accelerating Action: DFID's Strategy for Girls' Education
Unequal access to health care and related services To further close gender gaps in human development, particularly education and health	**Improve maternal health** **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases** Reduction in the proportion of 15-24 year old pregnant women with HIV from 16% Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights position paper Reducing Maternal Deaths: Evidence and Action. A Strategy for DFID Taking Action, The UK's Strategy for tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world
Violence against women To increase women's personal security and reduce gender-based violence	
The effects of armed and other kinds of conflict on women	
Inequalities in economic opportunities and access to resources To secure greater livelihood security, access to productive assets, and economic opportunities for women as well as men	**Promote gender equality and empower women: Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector**
Inequalities in the sharing of power and decision making To promote the more equal participation of women in decision making and leadership roles at all levels	**Promote gender equality and empower women: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament**
Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to the advancement of women To strengthen institutional mechanisms and national machineries for the advancement of women in governments and civil society	
Lack of respect for the human rights of women To promote equality in rights for women and men through international and national policy reform and under the law and non-discrimination in access to justice	
Stereotyping of women and inequality in access to the media To help reduce gender stereotyping, and bring about changes in social attitudes in favour of women	
Gender inequalities in the management of the environment To help develop gender aware approaches to the management of the environment and the safeguarding of natural resources	
Discrimination against and violation of the rights of girls To ensure that progress is made in upholding the rights of both girls and boys within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child	

3 Development and Progress in Implementation of DFID Strategies

6. This section makes a preliminary assessment of:

- The effectiveness of DFID's strategies to take forward the gender equality policy; and,

- The commitments made to implement these strategies, drawing particular attention to gaps and limitations of the information available to make such an assessment.

3.1 DFID Gender Equality Strategies

7. DFID's main strategies have been:

- Social Development Advisers (SDAs) and mechanisms to support their work in country programmes including specialised gender consultants, Policy Information Marker System (PIMS) markers (see paragraph 10) and portfolio review structures within DFID, gender training, and information and resources;

- In-country approaches to mainstreaming gender; and,

- Working with others internationally and in the UK.

8. Over the period under discussion, from 1995 to the present, DFID has made considerable changes in the way it plans its programmes in response to the changing development environment the organisation works in. Since the White Paper of 2000 the MDGS have assumed much greater importance as the main framework for operations, with the PSA and Directors' Delivery Plans setting out specific regional objectives and targets. At the country level, planning is focused on the PRSPs and Country Assistance Plans (CAPs) are based on these country led plans rather than centrally set objectives.

3.1.1 Social Development Advisers and Supporting Mechanisms

9. <u>Social Development Advisers:</u> SDAs had the primary responsibility of implementing DFID's policy in gender equality, an alternative approach to the gender focal points used by many other donor organisations. The first SDAs joined DFID in the mid-1970s and until the late 1980s the numbers remained small. In the 1990s many more SDAs were recruited to DFID and the numbers grew rapidly to 25 in 1996 to around 75 at present. SDAs worked in interdisciplinary teams carrying out general social analysis and providing advice

on a range of social issues, of which gender was a key part. Within DFID this approach to dealing with gender equality as an integral part of a broader social development approach was seen as a particular strength and an important route to mainstreaming[6]. As many of DFID's SDAs have been generalists in social development, specialist gender consultants have played an important role in the development of gender equality initiatives. SDAs have both drawn on the expertise of consultants and institutions and have sought to develop local capacity, such as in India[7]. Evidence of the success of SDAs in gender mainstreaming in DFID is mixed: there are numerous examples where individual SDAs have been able to successfully promote gender equality objectives, but there is little evidence on how consistently these approaches have been used across the organisation.

10. <u>PIMS markers and portfolio review mechanisms:</u> A number of mechanisms and structures were used in DFID to provide support to work in country programmes[8]. Social Development Department (SDD)[9] made particular use of information on the PIMS gender equality marker[10], using annual reporting on marked commitments to assess the development of gender focused work in the organisation. In some country programmes, for example in DFID Bangladesh, information on PIMS has been used to assess progress in implementing gender equality objectives. Where it was felt gender issues had not been sufficiently addressed, this could be raised in the Project Evaluation Committee, a committee consisting of the senior management of DFID. Such checking mechanisms have become less powerful as responsibilities have been increasingly devolved to country programmes, and there are concerns that consistency in approaches to gender has been further reduced. The Development Committee has continued to scrutinize the commitment to gender equality objectives and has raised concerns about a loss of momentum.

11. <u>Gender Training:</u> In order to develop an understanding of the key concepts of gender analysis and the capacity to deal with them across the organisation gender training was introduced in the early 1990s. As SDD encouraged a wider range of DFID staff to take gender training, the initial course was developed to become more accessible and less theoretical, focusing on the application of concepts in the work of the organisation[11]. Gender training was ended in 1997, at

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[6] Rosalind Eyben (April 1996) The ODA Experience: Routinising Social Analysis, paper given at the World Bank Social Scientists' Retreat 1996
[7] Naila Kabeer and Ramya Subrahmanian (eds) (2000) Institutions, Relations and Outcomes: A framework and case studies for gender aware planning
[8] Rosalind Eyben (April 1996) The ODA Experience: Routinising Social Analysis, paper given at the World Bank Social Scientists' Retreat 1996
[9] Social Development Department was restructured into a number of Policy Division teams in DFID in 2003
[10] DFID's Policy Information Marker System is the internal monitoring system for tracking the extent to which projects and programmes are being targeted on key policy areas.
[11] Caroline Moser (1993) Gender Planning and Development: Theory Practice and Training. London: Routledge

a time when the numbers of DFID staff were significantly increasing. A move to mainstreaming gender in all training courses since the end of gender training was not considered to have been successful[12] and as yet no decisions have been made about what approach should take its place.

12.   Information and Resources: A range of information and resources to support gender mainstreaming has been developed in the organisation. Early examples of this development of information include support to BRIDGE at IDS as a resource to bridge the gaps between theory, policy and practice; and the development of the Social Development Handbook in 1993, which covered gender issues throughout. In the late 1990s work was begun to develop a Gender Manual[13] and Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) web-based materials, to provide detailed and practical sector-specific information, case studies and references. While the manual remains available in DFID, there were no resources to maintain GEM, which was passed on to BRIDGE to manage. Some work has continued in sectors, for example the Gender and Education Manual[14] and in policy areas such as sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS.

13.   These approaches have had some success and have been widely admired outside the organisation.   However, a lack of consistency in use of these approaches has meant that they have not been effectively used, for example the ending of gender training as the numbers of SDAs grew rapidly; lack of links between training and the information resources developed; and limited resources made available to maintain and further develop information. Evidence on this is relatively limited and these issues should be considered further in the main evaluation.

3.1.2 Gender Mainstreaming in Country Programmes

14.   Country programmes have adopted various approaches to gender mainstreaming. These can be grouped into five sets of initiatives: gender reviews, the development of gender strategies, gender audits, gender as part of a broader focus on social exclusion and gender in PRSPs.

15.   Gender Reviews were used to enhance mainstreaming in Zimbabwe and Rwanda. In Zimbabwe, guidelines were developed for mainstreaming gender in the key areas of the DFID programme, based on the current and future portfolio of projects, while in Rwanda a similar approach was used in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development.

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[12] Cathy Gaynor and Henrietta Miers (June 2003) Training for Change: Gender Review of DFID's Training Programme
[13] DFID (April 2002) Gender Manual: A Practical Guide for Development Policy Makers and Practitioners
[14] Newbigging and Derbyshire (July 2003) Achieving the Public Service Agreement Gender Equality Targets: Guidance Notes for Education Advisers

16. Gender Strategies were used in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. In DFID Bangladesh this has led over time to the adoption of a "Women and Girls First" focus for the programme. In India the use of a process approach built up project, then sector gender strategies with partners, then brought these together in a DFID India gender strategy. In Pakistan, a long term view based on building up experience before scaling up innovative approaches was supplemented by taking advantage of high risk opportunities to become engaged in important and potentially strategic gender issues.

17. Gender Audits conducted recently in China and Malawi have focused on how gender has been mainstreamed in DFID programmes, while a proposed audit in Rwanda will take a broader view to work with government, other donors and civil society to try to establish improvements in the way progress towards gender equity is measured.

18. Social Exclusion: Work in the Asia region on social exclusion emphasises this as a useful framework for examining gender inequality, while in Brazil work looking at inequality highlighted, among others, the issue of gender inequality and has been followed up with work with The United Nations Development Fund for Woment (UNIFEM) on gender equity.

19. Gender, PRSPs and budgets: DFID has provided support to the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development in Rwanda since 1996, including a programme to help mainstream gender into Rwandan poverty reduction processes. The support has been fed into the PRSP process, other public service changes and has had links with work on gender budgeting. In Uganda support has been given to ensure that cross-cutting issues are reflected in government strategies and to strengthen relationships between key stakeholders working on gender, including: helping to establish a gender team to work on the PRSPs, funding a study on gender and economic growth in Uganda, and support for local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to work on complementary parliamentary processes. DFID's programmes in South Asia have supported the development of gender budgeting initiatives in the health sector in Bangladesh and in the state of Orissa in India.

20. The wealth of approaches and experience in developing gender mainstreaming in DFID have been developed independently in individual country contexts and there have been limited attempts to encourage consistency or to learn lessons across the organisation. While SDD was able to take an interest in these country level approaches, recent changes to mechanisms and structures to assess and develop these approaches and feed this experience into policy development or guidance for the organisation as a whole have changed substantially and are still developing. In addition there is little information on the impact of gender strategies on country planning processes and the contribution of these strategies to wider strategic processes, such as PRSPs.

3.1.3 Working with Others

21.   DFID has placed increasing emphasis on working with a range of other organisations as an important element of making progress on gender equality. Here several of these relationships will be considered, including: links to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) DAC-WID group; links to UK-based NGOs and academics; support to UNIFEM; and cross-Whitehall working.

22.   The OECD DAC has played an important role in advancing gender equality since the 1980s. DFID became an active member of the DAC-WID working group in the early 1990s, and has remained involved in the group and its replacement the GENDERNET up to the present. SDD saw involvement with the DAC-WID primarily as a means to put external pressure on DFID to ensure a focus on gender equality objectives, but it also provided important opportunities for collaboration with like-minded donors, for example in the coordination of preparations for the Beijing conference.

23.   UK-based NGOs and academic institutions: DFID has developed and maintained important relationships with academic institutions and departments, who have played an important role in the development of innovative approaches to gender equality, and mechanisms for translating research into practical actions and guidelines. Relationships with NGOs, in particular the GAD Network, a membership network of practitioners, academics and consultants working on gender and development issues in the UK, have been important in building alliances for external pressure and advocacy[15].

24.   UN – UNIFEM: Significant support was first given to the UN agency UNIFEM in 1998, with the aim of consolidating and building the strategic role of UNIFEM for strengthening capacity in the UN family to promote gender equality[16]. In addition to core support, DFID has funded programmes for the protection of women affected by armed conflict and in support of actions to eliminate violence against women.

3.1.4 Key Points

- DFID has used a variety of successful approaches to mainstream gender, many of which have been widely admired outside the organisation. However there has been a lack of consistency in application which has undermined effective use of these resources.

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[15] Mandy MacDonald (March 2003) Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the policy and practice of the UK Department for International Development
[16] DFID (March 1999) Working in Partnership with UNIFEM

- There has been limited progress in learning from the wealth of country experience and feeding this experience into policy development or guidance for the organisation.

3.2 Implementation of Strategies

25. This section discusses evidence relating to:

- How far DFID policy commitments have been carried through to disbursement; and

- The occurrence of 'policy evaporation' in DFID's work at programme planning, programme commitment and expenditures, implementation and organisational levels.

3.2.1 Evidence on Commitments and Disbursements

26. Using gender equality PIMS data, the evidence of DFID's commitments and expenditure against gender equality objectives is mixed. Both commitments and expenditure for Africa and commitments for Asia have declined considerably since a peak in 2000-2001, although expenditure for Asia has increased. A closer examination of the data for the individual country programmes (Annex 1) shows considerable differences in the way this marker has been used in country programmes. In some cases the gender equality marker is not used at all and there are a number of examples where gender equality is apparently a secondary objective in the programme.

Table 3 – Commitments and expenditure against the gender equality PIMS Marker, as a percentage of total expenditure for Africa and Asia regions, 1995-2004

		Africa		Asia	
		Commitment	**Expenditure**	**Commitment**	**Expenditure**
1995 -1996	**P** [1]	0.29	0.74	3.08	0.08
	S [2]	10.08	2.68	26.53	5.01
	P+S	10.37	3.42	29.62	5.09
2000-2001	**P**	0.95	0.38	4.31	6.99
	S	24.89	22.83	34.46	31.84
	P+S	25.85	23.21	38.77	38.83
2003-2004	**P**	0.75	1.21	2.45	6.07
	S	15.30	10.27	24.36	34.97
	P+S	16.06	11.48	26.81	41.04

[1] Principal – fundamental and explicit, without which the commitment would not exist
[2] Significant – important objectives, but not the principal reason for undertaking the commitment

27. A case could be made that this decline in commitments for gender equality is the result of the shift in aid modalities towards Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps) and Direct Budget Support. This argument is certainly supported by evidence from critical analyses of the PRSPs where the general conclusions are that gender issues are dealt with in a fragmented and often arbitrary way and that gender is not mainstreamed[17]. The limitations of the data used in this analysis have to be recognised and there is a need to look in more detail at the evidence from DFID's country programmes.

28. There is some evidence from Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and CAPs to support the hypothesis that there has been a shift away from a focus on gender equality[18]. While some cases particularly in Asia there is evidence of continuities and even increasing emphasis on gender, such as in DFID's programme in Bangladesh, in the majority of cases, particularly in Africa, gender is given much less importance at the programme planning level. In specific cases, such as Malawi, gender was a key issue in the CSP but is mentioned only in the problem analysis in the current CAP. However, gender issues do feature in the annual reporting of many CAPs, specifically in areas where gender issues are key to the achievement of the MDGs.

3.2.2 Evidence from Implementation

29. There is much less evidence available centrally of DFID's commitment to gender equality objectives at implementation level, although available evidence shows a very mixed record. For example, the first round of Country Programme Evaluations[19] concluded that the Brazil programme had given the most attention to gender issues, whilst gender received little attention in the Romania programme and was not mentioned at all in the Cambodia programme. Work carried out to look specifically at gender issues in country programmes has shown a similarly mixed pattern: a gender review of DFID Bangladesh's rural livelihoods programme[20] makes the case that policy level commitments have still

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[17] Ann Whitehead (May 2003) Failing Women, Sustaining Poverty: Gender in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Report for the UK Gender and Development Network, and Elaine Zuckerman and Ashley Garrett (2003) Do PRSPs Address Gender? A Gender Audit of 2002 PRSPs. A Gender Action Publication

[18] Francis Watkins (January 2003) A Review of Gender Mainstreaming in DFID's Country Assistance Plans, report for Evaluation Department, DFID and Francis Watkins (April 2004) A Stocktake of Gender in DFID 2004, report for Reaching the Very Poorest Team, Policy Division, DFID

[19] Oxford Policy Management (May 2004) DFID Country Programme Evaluation, Draft Synthesis Report

[20] Rachel Waterhouse and Maheen Sultan Huq (May 2004), Participatory Gender Review and Strategic Planning for DFID's Rural Livelihoods Programme: Rural Livelihoods Evaluation Partnership Report

not been translated into practice and results; while the Malawi gender audit[21] suggests good examples of gender mainstreaming in the field are frequently not recorded in written documents and highlights the lack of technical capacity for dealing with gender among staff. All of this suggests that there is a need to look in detail at work in projects and programmes at a country level in order to better understand implementation and organisational issues.

3.2.3 Key Points

- Overall commitments to gender equality objectives appear to have declined since a peak in 2000, but with considerable variations between country programmes;

- The reduction in commitments may be linked to decentralisation in DFID or to changes in aid modalities;

- Evidence on 'policy evaporation' is inconclusive. The availability and quality of evidence declines from programme planning, through commitments and expenditures to the implementation and organisational levels.

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[21] Caroline Moser (September 2004) Malawi Gender Audit: Evaporated, Invisibilized, or Resisted?

4   Impact and Evaluation

30. This section will:

- Examine evidence from gender evaluations and more general evaluations of the impact of interventions; and,

- Suggest approaches to evaluation to address some of the problems in obtaining evidence of impact.

4.1   Evidence of Impact

31.   Recent gender evaluations have suggested evidence of impact is hard to come by. Other more general evaluations and impact assessments have, however, been more successful in finding evidence and establishing linkages.

32.   A recent DAC-commissioned review of gender and evaluation[22] concluded that, in general, gender evaluations have been based on the assumption that mainstreaming leads to gender equality outcomes. As a result they have tended to focus exclusively on institutional mainstreaming practices rather than on results. Two recent gender evaluations by the European Commission (EC)[23] and Sida[24] have attempted to look for evidence of impact. The Sida evaluation in particular looked at the changes in gender equality that could reasonably be expected to result from interventions, using the distinction between practical gender needs, such as improvements in living conditions; and strategic gender needs, such as improvements of women's position in relation to men. Both evaluations found that documentary evidence and project monitoring data was neither reliable nor sufficient to demonstrate impact and had to be supplemented by direct work with project participants and primary stakeholders. The main findings of the evaluations were that the impacts and benefits of gender mainstreaming are at best 'embryonic' and at worst still to become visible: with some evidence that interventions had had impacts on practical gender needs but with little evidence of changes in gender roles or control of resources.

33.   Some more general evaluations of gender-related interventions, such as evaluations of basic education and maternal and child health interventions, have had more success in establishing linkages between the achievements of specific

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[22] Juliet Hunt and Ria Brouwers (May 2003) Review on Gender and Evaluation
[23] Mary Braithwaite et al (March 2003) Thematic Evaluation of the Integration of Gender in EC Development Co-operation with Third Countries, evaluation carried out for EuropeAid Evaluation Department
[24] Ted Freeman et al (January 2003) Reflections on Experience of Evaluating Gender Equality , Swedish Studies in Evaluation

interventions and impacts. A Joint Evaluation of Basic Education[25] found that although progress had been made to achieving expanded enrolment in primary schooling, the goal of gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment had proved more difficult to achieve, in part because it had tended to receive less explicit attention in programme planning and implementation. Work on Maternal and Child Health in Bangladesh[26] has suggested that there is a strong link between service delivery and reductions in infant and child mortality rates.

4.2 Approaches to Evaluation

34. One of the key conclusions of the DAC review[27] is that a good gender-focused evaluation is first of all a good evaluation, with a clear and simple objective, a transparent design, findings based on evidence, clear evaluation criteria and gender-specific indicators. However, while there is a fair degree of consensus on the change strategies that are required in order to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, gender evaluations carried out to date have not been particularly good at assessing the achievements of such strategies.

35. This problem, described as the problem of the "missing middle", establishing links between what donor interventions are intended to achieve and impacts on the main causes of poverty in a particular context. Recent attempts at dealing with this problem, such as AusAid's Rapid Impact Assessment for country programmes[28], or the general impact studies previously discussed, have used similar approaches based on development of plausible hypotheses of the role of aid in general or specific interventions in a development story, and looking for statistical or other evidence to support or disprove these hypotheses.

36. Given general consensus on change strategies and strategic priorities for achieving gender equality, there is potential for further work to better understand how these strategies in areas such as health or education have developed, and how DFID has made a contribution.

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[25] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (September 2003) Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education. Final report of the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries
[26] Howard White (September 2004) Maternal and Child Health Outcomes in Bangladesh: Some Preliminary Findings. Presentation to DFID
[27] Juliet Hunt and Ria Brouwers (May 2003) Review on Gender and Evaluation
[28] See AusAid (June 2003) The Contribution of Australian Aid to Papua New Guinea's Development 1975-2000: Provisional Conclusions from a Rapid Assessment. Evaluation and Review Series –
http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pbuout.cfm?Id=5076_4624_3996_223_553, and Peter Ellis (April 2004) Evaluating the Australian overseas aid program – A third generation in program evaluation? – http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/AusAIDPeterEllisProgramEvaluation2004.doc

4.3   Key Points

- Most gender evaluations have not been good at linking institutional changes and policy to results in the real world; available evidence from other evaluations suggests the benefits of gender mainstreaming and impacts on gender equality are at best embryonic and at worst still to become visible.

- There is general consensus on the change strategies that are required to achieve gender equality, which coupled with emerging practice in evaluation linking outputs, outcomes and impacts could be developed into a working methodology for this evaluation.

5 Recommendations for the Main Gender Evaluation

37.   A number of critical gaps have been identified where evidence available centrally in DFID is inconclusive, and which the main evaluation should explore in more depth. These issues include consistency in taking forward gender equality objectives across DFID's programmes, the apparent decline in commitment to gender equality objectives since 2000, and links to decentralisation and changes in aid modalities. In the main evaluation it will be necessary to:

- Develop a better picture of how consistently gender equality objectives have been taken forward across DFID's programmes;

- Explore links between approaches and strategies used in different contexts, the effects these have had on country planning processes, and the contribution of these strategies to wider strategic processes;

- Examine in more detail the use of gender equality markers and levels of commitment, using evidence from different levels in DFID.

38.   Critical gaps in gender evaluation more generally include evidence of the impact of gender mainstreaming on gender equality goals, and assessments of relationships, alliances and advocacy for gender equality. In the main evaluation it will be necessary to:

- use emerging impact assessment methodologies to develop plausible hypotheses linking interventions, outcomes and impacts which can then be tested using evidence from implementation.

Annex 1 – Commitments against PIMS Markers in Country Programmes

This analysis of commitments within regions draws on current work in the Africa programme on social exclusion in country programmes and comparative data for Asia region which includes all of the countries covered in the PSA targets.

In African country programmes there are significant variations in the use of the Gender Equality marker. Four groups of countries can be identified:
- One group, comprising of Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sudan, all have commitments marked for both the principal and significant markers.
- DRC is the only programme not to have any commitments marked for gender equality. Of countries using the significant but not the principal marker,
- Countries with a considerable level of significant marked commitments are Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, SACU, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
- Another group with a relatively small level of commitments marked comprises of Uganda and Tanzania

Table 4 - Approved Commitments* against Gender Equality PIMS Marker for Africa Country Programmes, 2002/3 - £ millions

Country	Principal	Significant	Country	Principal	Significant
Angola		9.0	Rwanda	2.0	13.6
Burundi			SACU		92.5
DRC			Sierra Leone	1.1	24.0
Ethiopia		20.4	Sudan	2.0	0.5
Ghana	0.15	12.9	Tanzania		16.9
Kenya	7.3	51.2	Uganda		22.4
Malawi	2.5	156.3	Zambia		84.9
Mozambique		39.1	Zimbabwe		11.9
Nigeria		155.8			

*Commitments are funds committed in a particular year, although expenditure may be for 2-5 years in the future.

There are similar variations in the use of the gender equality marker in Asia country programmes. The marker is not used at all in the Cambodia and Vietnam programmes, while programmes in Bangladesh, India and Nepal have

all used both the principal and significant markers. In both the China and Indonesia programmes only the significant Gender Equality marker has been used, but against a considerable proportion of the overall programme. In Afghanistan and Pakistan only the significant marker is used but for a relatively small proportion of the overall programme.

Table 5 - Approved Commitments against relevant PIMS Markers for Asia Country Programmes, 2002/3 - £ millions

Country	Principal	Significant	Country	Principal	Significant
Afghanistan		4.02	Indonesia		1.08
Bangladesh	0.20	127.75	Nepal	0.27	33.90
Cambodia			Pakistan		7.65
China		11.51	Vietnam		
India	0.21	31.15			