



# Gender and Development

September 2002

GAD lessons and challenges for the Australian aid program



The Australian Government's  
Overseas Aid Program



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Australian Agency for  
International Development

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# Introduction

Within the broad aims of the Australian aid program the Government released its Gender and Development (GAD) Policy in March 1997. The aim of the policy is to provide equal opportunities for men and women to participate in and benefit from the Australian development assistance program.

The introduction of the GAD policy marks a shift in Australia's approach to development from an exclusive focus on women and their specific needs (set out in the earlier Women in Development (WID) Policy) to a broader approach that considers the gender roles, needs and opportunities available to both men and women. Gender roles vary across cultures, class, ethnicity, income, education and religious beliefs. Gender analysis highlights the different roles and learned behaviour of men and women. It ensures that women are not treated as a homogenous group, or gender attributes seen as immutable when developing or designing aid activities and policies.

The policy requires AusAID to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated throughout the aid program. AusAID staff and managers are responsible for mainstreaming gender when country strategies and programs are being developed, and when activities are being designed, monitored and evaluated.

To assess its progress in implementing the GAD policy and to identify lessons, AusAID commissioned a review with the following specific objectives:

- to assess the degree to which AusAID's GAD policy and principles have been understood by AusAID and its consultants and integrated into the preparation, design and implementation of aid activities, both at the country strategy level as well as at the program and activity level, and
- to assess the quality of the program against AusAID's GAD policy and principles.

The Gender and Development Review was undertaken in 2001 and involved an assessment of GAD guidelines, procedures and tools; a review of a sample of country program strategies; and interviews, consultations and discussions with AusAID staff and contractors. It also included assessments of a sample of 20 bilateral activities, which were followed by field visits to six activities.

This report presents a summary of the lessons and challenges arising from the review.

# GAD lessons and challenges

Since the GAD policy was introduced, AusAID has made progress in mainstreaming gender in aid activities. To further improve policy implementation at both agency and activity levels the review identified lessons and challenges in preparing program strategies, designing and implementing activities, developing the GAD capacity of those delivering the aid program, and monitoring and reporting on aid activities.

## Preparing program strategies

Program strategies need to provide sufficient direction for incorporating GAD principles and procedures in aid activities.

If gender is addressed in program strategies it is likely to be adequately addressed or resourced when activities are being designed and implemented.

As part of poverty analysis, strategies need to include an analysis of gender issues likely to constrain the effectiveness of development assistance in targeted sectors, geographic regions and social groups. The analysis is needed to ensure that development programs and activities incorporate the roles, needs and participation of both women and men.

The review found that the degree to which GAD strategies were integrated into program strategies varied considerably, with most reflecting a mixture of the WID and GAD approaches to development – sometimes focusing on women as a group and sometimes focusing on both women and men.

## Designing activities

Design terms of reference need to include GAD responsibilities, and design teams need GAD expertise.

Integrating the needs and perspectives of both women and men into all activities and at each stage of the activity cycle is critical to implementing the GAD policy.

Activities assessed as meeting the mainstream objective of the policy had been designed with gender issues in mind, particularly when design team leaders were given responsibility in their terms of reference for ensuring gender was integrated. If a gender expert was included in design teams the activity designs provided for GAD technical inputs during implementation.

Activity designs also need to incorporate gender analysis. The activities assessed often included information on the status of women with respect to key economic or social indicators. Some included analysis of the roles of women and men in the sector. However, very few included an analysis of the constraints likely to inhibit

women's or men's participation and access to resources. Those that had specific strategies for overcoming these constraints usually had design teams that consulted both women and men during the design process.

The review found that generally AusAID staff and contractors did not appreciate that all activities have a gender dimension. Designers and managers of activities designed without gender considerations appeared to share a common assumption that the activities were gender neutral or that gender was relevant in only those activities that focus on women's rights.

## Examples of approaches used to overcome constraints to gender equality

Currently in Lao literacy rates for ethnic minority women and school attendance rates for girls are among the lowest in South-East Asia.

The Lao Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities and Girls Project aims to improve primary school enrolment and retention rates for ethnic minorities and girls. The project is tackling the gender constraints underpinning these issues through a series of incentives, activities and institutional changes. For example, it is:

- providing financial support for ethnic minority students receiving teacher training
- providing support for campaigns in rural areas that encourage girls' schooling and recruit ethnic minority women as teacher trainees and advisers
- providing transport and financial incentives for ethnic minority pedagogical advisers, and
- changing the entry requirements to teacher training for ethnic minority women, and providing them with bridging training.

Most women in Papua New Guinea have little or no education and face severe barriers to participation.

The Basic Education Infrastructure and Curriculum Materials Project, which focuses on community participation in education reform, aims to improve access to education and the equity and quality of the PNG education system. The project aims to mainstream gender and include women in a meaningful way by:

- developing membership criteria for school management boards and provincial advisory boards
- developing gender guidelines for the Code of Practice for Provincial Technical Infrastructure Panels
- using women community training facilitators to encourage, support and mentor women in communities, and
- running 'Skilling Women' workshops that provide women with basic communication, participation, networking and workshopping skills.

## Gender at the design stage: an example of good practice

The Indonesia Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Project provides an example of an activity that took a gender approach to improving women's and children's health. In its design the project recognised the different roles that men and women play in supporting women during pregnancy and childbirth. In designing health education and health outreach activities, the project undertook gender-sensitive surveys and used the findings to develop health communication materials and strategies that took

into account the gender differences. The information was used to develop a GAD strategy and health communication activities in a way that recognised the need for different messages and approaches for men and women. The project incorporated gender issues in health worker training and in training for master trainers, to ensure their sensitivity to gender when developing future health worker training. Furthermore, it incorporated gender in the development of the activity monitoring system.

### Implementing activities

The terms of reference for all activity teams need to assign responsibility for achieving gender objectives, strategies and outcomes.

The review provided valuable insights into what factors contribute to effective gender mainstreaming during implementation.

Almost half of the activities assessed were given a rating of satisfactory overall for gender mainstreaming. Those in Papua New Guinea outperformed those in all other countries or regions in their attention to gender issues. When considered on a sectoral basis, GAD quality was highest for activities targeting education and poorest for activities targeting health.

In more than half of the activities reviewed, women's practical gender needs such as greater access to education and health services, were addressed. However, there was insufficient information to demonstrate that the activities were meeting women's strategic needs, such as greater participation in decision making.

The GAD policy and its principles were more likely to be implemented and gender outcomes adequately reported if the terms of reference for implementation teams linked the inputs of a GAD adviser to ongoing activities, to the work of other technical advisers, and to the activity monitoring system.

While AusAID specifies that contractors are responsible for implementing its crosscutting policies, less than half of the design documents specifically referred to GAD responsibilities in the terms of reference for managing contractors. Assigning these responsibilities to the activity team leaders was likely to ensure that gender was mainstreamed, particularly if key staff were given relevant GAD training and mentoring before or during implementation.

### Developing GAD capacity

AusAID staff, contractor teams and counterparts need to understand GAD principles and procedures and have access to GAD advice.

The quality of gender mainstreaming during implementation reflects the GAD capacity of AusAID staff, contractor teams and counterparts.

When all team members understood the GAD policy and its principles or had access to advice on gender issues, the needs and perspectives of both women and men were more likely to be well integrated into activities. When this was not the case, gender issues were less likely to be given due attention.

## Factors contributing to effective gender mainstreaming in activities

### Key factors

- The terms of reference for key activity staff assign responsibility for gender objectives, strategies and outcomes.
- Activities strengthen partner capacity to undertake gender analysis, planning and implementation.
- Activities include measures to remove any constraints to women's participation in activities, including holding activity positions.
- Contractor field teams demonstrate adequate knowledge of GAD policy, planning and practices.

### Other factors

- Activity designs consider partner agency capacity to implement gender initiatives.
- Activity resources are adequate to deliver services and opportunities to both men and women.
- Gender-disaggregated baseline data for activity planning, monitoring and decision-making purposes are collected during design or early in the implementation process.
- Monitoring is sufficiently comprehensive to include checking that the needs and interests of women and men were still valid.
- Monitoring identifies constraints that may restrict women's or men's participation and access to benefits.

While acknowledging the difficulties that local cultural values can present for achieving positive gender outcomes, the review reported on several activities that were successfully dealing with these challenges. In these cases, the important factors determining successes were that team members thoroughly understood the context of their activities, were working with local partners to identify opportunities to support gender equality and were finding ways to overcome the constraints facing women in gaining access to the benefits of the program.

Providing assistance to strengthen partner capacity to undertake gender analysis, planning and implementation was an important factor contributing to a rating of satisfactory overall for an activity.

This support for partners can be provided by:

- mainstreaming gender analysis in technical training and developing training materials that describe gender considerations in sectors covered by the training
- providing gender analysis training for key trainers and partner government planners and managers
- undertaking specific gender studies and using the findings when developing extension and training materials, training content and specific activity strategies
- ensuring that gender is a criterion for selecting staff or training participants, and
- incorporating gender analysis in review and monitoring activities undertaken by partners.

## An example of a project operating in a difficult gender environment

The Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary Project is operating in an environment where prejudices against women are deeply entrenched. Despite this, the project includes a number of specific GAD objectives. Because the project field team and local partners have developed a strong professional relationship they have been able to use gender advice and analysis as the basis for planning measures to address particularly sensitive issues such as violence against women.

One approach is to use gender training, and gender and domestic violence workshops to change the

attitudes of policemen towards violence against women in general, domestic violence in their own homes and women police officers. The project also has men conducting workshops and coordinating activities that aim to raise gender equity and reduce discrimination and domestic violence.

Training sessions to increase awareness of gender inequities and domestic violence have also been incorporated into other training programs of the project, including those dealing with general duties, officer training, community policing and EEO policy.

### Monitoring and reporting on aid activities

Activity designs need to include GAD performance indicators and reporting mechanisms to ensure gender-related information is collected, analysed and reported.

Gender monitoring is effective when AusAID checks that the needs and interests of women and men, identified at design, are still valid. Similarly, constraints to equal participation and access to benefits must also be continually monitored.

More often than not, however, the review found that gender monitoring was interpreted largely as collecting gender-disaggregated data, without any analysis or a clear link to its use for decision making and planning.

This reflected the fact that in many cases, gender was not explicitly referred to in logframes and monitoring and evaluation systems. Where it had been included, qualitative GAD indicators were

being effectively used for monitoring. These indicators had been developed largely as a result of linking inputs from GAD advisers to the monitoring and evaluation systems.

The review found that technical advisory or monitoring teams had been effective in identifying gender issues not covered in the design, and had provided ongoing advice on additional GAD strategies and inputs.

The degree to which AusAID actively monitors gender appears to be influenced by:

- the extent to which gender is specified in the design documents, logframes or gender strategies
- the interest of program staff in gender principles and the extent to which they have a sound understanding of the importance of achieving GAD outcomes, and
- the degree to which gender issues and strategies have been articulated in the program, regional or sector strategy.

## An example of good practice in monitoring and collecting gender data

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Project uses a series of qualitative and quantitative indicators that go beyond counting the number of women being counselled by reporting on the process and progress towards behavioural change.

As an example, the project reports activities related to advocacy for legislative change and monitors and reports on changes to the law and on judicial rulings related to women and violence. In addition, it

provides data on the number of male-dominated organisations that have received training, and reports on the status of organisation's gender action plans as well as changes related to gender needs in these organisations.

The project rates highly for its monitoring and for collecting gender-disaggregated data on the impact of activities on women and men.

# Summary of main conclusions and lessons learned

**To improve the effective implementation of the GAD policy, the review findings point to a number of key areas requiring attention. These are at the level of program strategies, activity design, capacity building, and monitoring and reporting.**

Program strategies need an increased emphasis on gender analysis. As part of an overall poverty analysis, gender strategies that are appropriate to the targeted sectors, geographic regions and social groups are also required.

Attention to gender during **design** is critical. All activities rated satisfactory overall for gender mainstreaming had included gender considerations in the designs.

Inclusion of detailed gender responsibilities in terms of reference for **implementation** teams directly influences the level of GAD knowledge that the contractor field team demonstrates. In those activities where all team members had an understanding of GAD or access to advice on gender issues, GAD was well integrated into activities. Where this was not the case, gender was less likely to be given attention.

GAD mainstreaming in activity designs and implementation is influenced more by the capacity of AusAID staff, the activity team and the partner institution than by regional characteristics. Even where there is a focus on gender equality, the approaches used tend to reflect the previous Women in Development policy rather than a gendered approach to development.

Inclusion of activities to strengthen partner institution capacity to undertake gender analysis, planning and implementation was a major strength of those activities that rated satisfactory overall.

In order to improve the quality of **monitoring and reporting** of gender outcomes, activity designs need to include GAD performance indicators and reporting mechanisms to ensure gender-related information is collected, analysed and reported.

The findings of this review are in keeping with the lessons arising from the GAD experiences of other donors. AusAID has found some good practice examples where gender mainstreaming is successful, and other instances where there is more work to be done.

# Developments since the review

**Since the GAD review AusAID has undertaken a strategic review to position itself more effectively with the changing international environment. The recommendations of the review, Strategic Plan – Improving Effectiveness in a Changing Environment – are currently being implemented.**

The Strategic Plan focuses particularly on those recommendations pertaining to enhancing the quality of country strategies, program designs, knowledge management and skills development, which accord with the recommendations of the gender review. The plan therefore provides a timely opportunity for AusAID to incorporate the findings of the GAD review by integrating a gender dimension within the quality and effectiveness criteria of the Strategic Plan.

# Methodology and the review team

## Methodology

The first phase of the review involved an assessment of GAD guidelines, procedures and tools; a review of a sample of country program strategies; and interviews, consultations and discussions with AusAID staff and contractors.

The second phase involved rapid panel assessments of GAD mainstreaming in 20 AusAID activities and field visits to six of these. The panels consisted of experienced AusAID staff and two consultants. Their objectives were to:

- identify general lessons for improving gender quality in design and implementation
- identify examples of best or good practice for use by program areas, and
- suggest actions to improve gender mainstreaming in activities.

## Sample portfolio

### Sectoral distribution

Governance	6
Health	5
Education	4
Rural development	2
Infrastructure	3

### Geographic distribution

East Asia	9
Papua New Guinea	5
Pacific	3
South Asia	2
Africa	1

The activities assessed were randomly selected from 118 activities that included all bilateral activities commenced after the implementation of the GAD policy on 1 July 1997 and were currently being implemented. These activities were representative of AusAID's portfolio in terms of sectors and geographical locations.

In assessing GAD performance, the panels assessed the activities against AusAID's four quality attributes and 29 GAD-specific standards. An activity meets the quality attributes if it:

- has appropriate objectives and design
- is managed in a professional manner
- achieves its objectives, and
- has sustainable outcomes.

The activities were rated according to the extent to which the GAD policy and its principles had been integrated into their designs and implementation. Panel results were analysed, and satisfactory and unsatisfactory ratings determined.

The review team acknowledges the limitations of the methodology and data used. Nonetheless, the experience of the AusAID staff and consultants involved made it possible to identify key factors influencing gender mainstreaming and where improvements can be applied broadly across all aid programs, as well as to individual activities.

## The review team

The review team consisted of:

**Team leader (consultant)** Peggy McDonald

**Team member (consultant)** Annie Kennedy

The team was assisted by AusAID evaluation staff, panel members and an advisory group.

# Glossary

## Gender analysis

The process of considering the impact that a development program or activity may have on women/girls and men/boys, and on the economic and social relationships between them. Key issues analysed include the gender division of labour; access to and control over resources and the distribution of benefits; social, economic and environmental factors that influence all of the above; and decision-making capacity. Gender analysis is a specific form of social analysis that requires sex-disaggregated data to be collected. Incorporating a gender perspective into aid activities involves applying gender analysis throughout the activity cycle.

## Gender and development (GAD)

An approach to development that focuses on women and men and their roles and needs rather than women as a separate group and their specific situations and needs. GAD focuses on social, economic, political and cultural forces that determine how men and women can participate in, benefit from and control resources and activities.

## Gender-disaggregated data

Data and information reported separately for each sex.

## Gender equality

Equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men. Gender equality involves removing discrimination and structural inequalities in access to resources, opportunities and services, and promoting equal rights. Equality does not

mean that women should be the same as men. Promoting equality – the goal of Australia’s GAD policy – recognises that men and women have different roles and needs, and takes these into account in development planning and programming.

## Gender issues

Specific consequences arising from the lack of gender equality or from the cultural, social, political and organisational situations.

## Gender mainstreaming

Mainstreaming women’s and men’s needs and perspectives into all activities – one of the primary objectives of GAD. Mainstreaming acknowledges that all development activities have a gender dimension that may not treat or benefit men and women equally. An activity that mainstreams gender considers women’s and men’s needs first at the country program level and then at each stage of the activity cycle.

## Logframe

The Logical Framework Matrix (logframe) summarises a hierarchy of project/activity objectives, identifies important assumptions and risks, and specifies monitoring and evaluation instruments.

## Women in development (WID)

An approach to development that focuses on women as a separate group and their specific situations and needs. WID activities frequently involve only women as participants and beneficiaries of development initiatives.

## Gender and development GAD lessons and challenges for the Australian aid program

Since the introduction of the Gender and Development Policy, AusAID has made progress in mainstreaming gender into aid activities. To further improve policy implementation at both agency and activity levels the review identified lessons and challenges in preparing program strategies, designing and implementing activities, developing the GAD capacity of those delivering the aid program, and monitoring and reporting on aid activities.

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