

**Dansk Ornitologisk Forening**

BirdLife Denmark

**Gender**

**in**

**DOF's Development Cooperation**

Policy Paper

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## **Abbreviations:**

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DOF	Dansk Ornitologisk Forening/BirdLife Denmark
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development
UN	United Nations

## 1. Background


Gender has long played a significant role in Denmark's development cooperation, both as a cross cutting issue and as a specific target for advancing gender equality. Gender has been further strengthened in Danida's draft revised gender strategy (2013) that embeds gender equality in the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) as it is formulated in Denmark's most recent strategy for development cooperation<sup>1</sup>. Gender and equality also informs DOF's work within development cooperation. Our emphasis is on the different roles women and men play in natural resource management and household economy, and their often different knowledge, priorities and access to resources, and on women's equal access to improved livelihoods and decision making processes, capacity development and advocacy.

Gender is about the socially constructed roles and responsibilities ascribed to women and men and the relationship between them. Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. It was designed to make women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of development policies and programs. As such gender is an important concern that must be explicitly designed and budgeted for, implemented, monitored and evaluated. Gender mainstreaming is a process that demands thorough knowledge and understanding of gender and the respective roles of women and men, and concrete steps towards integrating gender concerns in activities, policies, monitoring and training. In its revised draft strategy Danida questions the efficiency of gender mainstreaming due to the lack of specific objectives and indicators in most projects and programs and introduces a strategic approach focusing on impacts. DOF recognizes that these have also not been sufficiently addressed in our previous and current projects though the involvement of women has long been an important goal. DOF will ensure that in all future development interventions gender concerns are an integral part of formulation, budgeting, and monitoring. This will be reflected in concrete goals, indicators of success and activities. Recognizing that gender equality and empowerment of women are important prerequisites for environmental conservation and sustainable development, gender and natural resource management are among DOF's strategic priorities in development cooperation. Indigenous women receive special attention due to their dual disadvantageous role as both indigenous and women.

Gender equality is a contentious issue in the countries where DOF works and our partners face a number of difficulties in including women on an equal scale. Partner staff and stakeholders often lack capacity to work with gender mainstreaming and empowerment and the women themselves do not have the knowledge and resources to claim their rights or to benefit fully from an intervention. It is not uncommon to encounter resistance and the argument that 'this is our culture'. According to the

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<sup>1</sup> The Right to a Better Life. Strategy for Denmark's Development Cooperation. May 2012



UNDP Gender Inequality Index (2013)<sup>2</sup> that reflects women's disadvantages in reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market the partner countries fare rather poorly. Kenya ranks as 145, Uganda as 161, Indonesia as 121 and Nepal as 157<sup>3</sup>. Violence against women is also rampant. Current statistics indicate that, for example, one in five Kenyan women has experienced one form of the many forms of violence representing a significant increase since 2003<sup>4</sup>. Likewise, according to Amnesty International, violence against women is pervasive in most parts of Uganda and is widely accepted as justified by 'traditional values'. Much of the inequality is due to structural courses that DOF and our partners cannot efficiently address. DOF concentrates on those aspects of gender equality where we believe that we can have an impact: knowledge, capacity, empowerment, involvement and advocacy.

## **2. Gender and rights**

Almost all UN member states, including the countries in which DOF works, have committed themselves to promoting gender equality and women's rights. The commitments are enshrined in international treaties and declarations, particularly in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20), the Millenium Declaration, conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and in the Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These international documents are to a varying extent referred and adhered to in national laws and policy papers and in some cases followed up upon by concrete activities at the national level to advance women's rights.

## **3. Gender in its context**

One of the first questions to address in a gender equality process is to ask what we want to achieve and what we need to know to achieve our objectives and to contextualize gender. Women and men are not only influenced by their gender but also by society, community, culture, environment, age and social status. Looking at gender in a context can for example mean that we assess how women and men are traditionally involved in a specific livelihood activity or in decision making processes at community level, how that fits into the objectives of a specific intervention and how national policies influence and have the potential to change these roles. DOF emphasizes that development interventions are about change, meaning that they challenge traditions, allow for discussions about potential changes in gender roles with women and men and for activities that may be new in a specific context.

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<sup>2</sup> Gender Inequality Index: A composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market

<sup>3</sup> As comparison Denmark ranks as number 15

<sup>4</sup> Minister of Gender, Children and Social Development Kenya: 57 Mission of the Commission on the Status of Women, UN 2013

#### 4. Gender and natural resource management

Arguments for mainstreaming gender are most frequently based on a rights-based approach under which gender equality concerns ought to be mainstreamed because gender equality rights are human rights. Another argument is that mainstreaming gender into natural resource management can help improve efficiency, efficacy and long-term sustainability. Last but not least women are the primary caretakers of children and can have a considerable influence on their education towards sustainable thinking and behavior.

The UN-REDD Program ‘The Business Case for Mainstreaming Gender in REDD+’ (2011), among other studies, confirms that women and men have differentiated knowledge, uses and access to forests, and that women are often the primary users of forests. Women’s and men’s specific roles, rights and responsibilities, as well as their particular use patterns and knowledge of forests, shape their experiences differently. Their rights to forests and land resources therefore need to be recognized as well as the roles they play as leaders, participants and beneficiaries. The unique role of women in protecting and managing forest - and ensuring their equal access to and control over resources - is an important component for a more equitable, effective and efficient implementation of ecosystem restoration and conservation. Shifts in the use of, for example, forest resources as a result of eco-system restoration policies may take significant time. This means that the use or non-use of different natural resources, as well as community needs and knowledge bases, will shift over time. Therefore, identifying viable alternative land use, livelihoods and natural resource management will require processes that support innovation and are inclusive. There are experiences that show that participatory interventions that effectively engage both women and men in decision making result in greater likelihood of sustained change in the way natural resources are used, thereby contributing to sustainability.

#### 5. Focus Areas for Gender Mainstreaming and Empowerment

As an NGO working with natural resource management in rural communities in Asia and Africa DOF can only to a minor degree address structural courses of gender inequality and discrimination. We therefore primarily focus our attention on five aspects that can contribute to change.

- Knowledge about the role that women and men play in natural resource management, household livelihoods, decision making processes and civil society;
- Capacity of partners and stakeholders, including local women to address and work for enhanced gender equality;
- Empowerment of women, individually and in groups to participate in decision making processes at all levels;
- Involvement of both women and men in all program activities;
- Advocacy

## Knowledge

An important factor for successful gender mainstreaming is reliable information and knowledge, and analysis here off. Gender analysis is a key part of gender mainstreaming. It has as its goal to provide quantitative and qualitative information and data that can enable informed decision-making for the benefit of both women and men.

Gender analysis is the starting point for addressing the gender dimensions of any given issue or intervention to mainstream gender. At its most basic level, it interprets data and information about a given or potential situation from a gender perspective. Gender analysis pays specific attention to differences in gender roles, activities, needs, and available opportunities of men and women. It goes beyond simply describing a situation with data. It consists of three necessary components: sex-disaggregated data, analysis and a gender perspective. Sex-disaggregated data refer to data that clearly distinguishes between data applicable to women and men, respectively. Analysis refers to the interpretation of that data by asking, "What does this information mean?" Adding a gender perspective to analysis means that the interpretation of the data will occur under the perspective of gender mainstreaming and balance, for example equal access to program benefits. Defining gender analysis in this comprehensive manner will ensure that it meets its goal to provide information and an analytical basis for more effective, efficient, and targeted activities and policies.

The analysis can have various levels of depth but at its basics it means that the data and information from the field study are scrutinized under the questions of why, how does it relate to the intervention context and implementation, and how does it relate to the broader picture of gender nationally and internationally, e.g. in terms of rights and regulations. The study must be focused and operational, meaning that it addresses those gender concerns that have implications for a specific intervention. The first question to ask is: what and how much do we need to know?

*Activity: Carry out baseline gender study and analysis at program localities during the initial phase of the intervention*

## Capacity

Training in carrying out a gender analysis and study, gender mainstreaming strategies and activities to promote gender equality within an intervention and as part of its advocacy strategy is essential to ensure that all staff of partner organisations, facilitators and stakeholders have capacity and resources to work with gender mainstreaming and empowerment and share a common approach and willingness to carry out gender mainstreaming at all levels. The training provides knowledge on and discussion of best practices within gender mainstreaming, Danida policies, international and national rights and regulations for women, methodologies for analytical studies, gender roles in natural resource management and livelihood activities, and civil society, empowerment of women and concrete steps towards achieving specific goals.

*Activity: Carry out gender training work-shops and in the field training with partners and representatives of stakeholders*

### Empowerment

Empowerment of women is crucial for enhanced gender equality in the areas where DOF works. The women need basic education, knowledge about their rights, access to resources and income and courage to slowly step out of traditional roles. They need support to build women's groups and networks and to participate in activities, for advocacy and others, outside their communities that help build their strength and connect them with others. They need encouragement to participate in decision making processes and to be heard at consultations, community meetings etc.

*Activity: Train local women to know their rights, build and strengthen women groups and support their participation in networks, and capacity building.*

### Involvement

Women and men have equal rights to participate in development interventions and in the changes they want to achieve for their communities. However, due to traditions women often do not realise these rights and their rights are not recognized by the communities. DOF supports a process of involvement that includes both women and men through specific activities and education. When all community members understand and value the respective roles of women and men in household livelihoods and natural resource management and the contribution that they provide to the sustainable management of these resources and improved livelihoods it is easier to persuade them to let go of very strict gender roles and to fully include both women and men in, for example, civil society groups, and income generating activities.

*Activity: Build awareness and knowledge of both women and men about their respective roles and contribution to program objectives*

### Advocacy

Danida defines advocacy 'to be understood as targeted activities which – by influencing decision makers and citizens locally, regionally and internationally – seek to shape and influence political, economic, cultural and social processes and decisions in order to improve the conditions of life for a considerable amount of people'.

Advocacy is thus central to any of DOF's interventions. Gender equality and women's rights are addressed specifically in the advocacy strategy of an intervention. The aim is to help local actors to advocate for women's involvement and access to resources in the communities, among all stakeholders, and at the national level.

*Activity: Build capacity of especially local women to address gender in advocacy and facilitate their access to channels of advocacy, such as media*



## **6. Strategic steps towards gender mainstreaming**

DOF envisages a number of strategic steps for mainstreaming gender:

1. Address gender specifically in the program development process and to reflect activities for gender mainstreaming and empowerment in the budget, outputs and indicators;
2. Analytical baseline gender studies in program localities that provide contextualised knowledge and data is a necessary next step in order to develop and implement the program on an informed basis;
3. Staff and stakeholders are trained in gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women;
4. A context specific and operational gender mainstreaming manual is produced;
5. Specific activities for equal participation and empowerment of women are formulated;
6. Gender is systematically addressed in monitoring and evaluation

These steps are expected to produce at least four major results:

- X number of activities target women;
- Gender is a cross cutting issue in any intervention;
- Partners and stakeholders have capacity to work for gender equality;
- Women know their rights and have capacity and resources to realise them.

## **7. Conclusions**

DOF commits itself to share with partners and implement this policy. It will be reviewed and possibly revised based on new lessons learned and experiences from the program.

*The policy paper was prepared by Charlotte Mathiassen, DOF*

