

Women's Rights & Gender Equality, the New Aid Environment and Civil Society Organisations



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Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Executive Summary	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
Chapter 3: Perspectives from INGO staff in the UK on the current situation	28
Chapter 4: Research findings on funding	34
Chapter 5: Research findings on influencing activities currently undertaken by CSOs in the new aid contexts	47
Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations	56

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Executive Summary

The report 'Gender Equality, the new aid environment and CSOs' was researched and written by the Gender & Development Network (GADN) because of a growing concern about the fast changing aid structures, such as direct budget support, pooled funding schemes for supporting civil society and other forms of donor alignment and their possible implications for work on gender equality and women's rights issues, in the Global North and South.

In many countries CSOs play a crucial role in working towards gender equality and women's rights through representing, supporting and defending vulnerable groups of women; keeping gender equality and women's rights issues on policymakers' agendas; fighting for women's rights at a legislative level; and holding governments and other stakeholders to account over their implementation of gender-related commitments. Understanding how they are faring under the new aid mechanisms becomes critical in understanding whether current funding is supporting or inhibiting the commitment to gender equality and women's rights present in so many policies.

The report highlights some of the key questions emerging for civil society around the way the new aid systems promote, marginalise or exclude gender equality and women's rights issues, as well as developing themes for future targeted research. The report reflects the voices of organisations working for gender equality and women's rights from around the world. It conveys the diversity and complexity of the issues around the new aid modalities and how these differ across countries and continents; it also shows some of the unintended consequences of new aid modalities. Above all, it reveals that many women's organisations and those focused on challenging gender inequality feel threatened as the focus of funding moves in the direction of larger grants, tighter, short term targets, demonstrable and 'scaled up' results, and intensive administration.

Literature Review

The literature review, presented in Chapter 2, demonstrates that little information is available on the implementation of PRSPs and SWAPs, and literature on the implications of the new aid environment for civil society organisations working for gender equality and women's rights is very limited. The picture that emerges from the limited materials shows that the potential of the new aid environment to significantly advance gender equality has largely not been realised. Whilst there are examples of successful gender advocacy work, gender issues are generally not well addressed in PRSPs, SWAPs or DBS and even when activities are included they are often not backed up with indicators, targets and budgets.

Overall funding for CSOs engaged in gender equality and women's rights activities appears to be going down. This report lists the following reasons for this as: the inadequacies of the overall conceptual framework for the new aid environment; the lack of sex disaggregated data and inadequate gender information; even where women are consulted that does not necessarily ensure that their specific concerns are reflected; even when gender issues are identified during the consultation processes they can easily get lost at a later stage; gender power relations within government and a lack of political will; and national governments' commitment is often ambiguous or weak. National Women's Machineries (NWMs) are often given a leadership role in implementing national gender plans yet they continue to be under-resourced and usually lack the political influence needed to undertake this role effectively; donors who have switched from SWAPs to DBS can find that they lack leverage with sectoral ministries such as health and education

that have usually addressed gender issues, at least to some extent. Donors may now be reluctant to exert undue influence; DBS has increased aid-recipient governments' upward accountability to donors under budget support while downward accountability mechanisms remain weak; powerful and often impenetrable 'inner circle' in many aid-recipient countries made up of government and donor personnel are largely closed to CSOs.

International NGOs in the UK

The report then goes on to look at the perspectives from International NGO staff in the UK on the current aid environment (Chapter 3). It is evident that the impacts and effects of the new aid landscape vary according to the focus of the NGO, its size, where it works and the relationships it is able to build with the donor community. The report highlights the following key findings from research with International NGOs in the UK:

- **The new aid modalities include a growing role for contracting and the private sector.** There is little dialogue now between DFID and International NGOs on gender issues. The private sector lacks the direct contact with women's organisations that is essential to understanding gender issues in each context.
- **The Paris Declaration (PD) is part of a process of the depoliticisation of aid.** In practice the most recent shift to the PD was more about aid administration and less about transformation and change on the ground. The focus on results and measuring results, when not explicitly tied to gender equality concepts and goals around women's rights and empowerment, can mean that attention is focused on short term measurable changes, rather than the long term, difficult changes required to address the issues of power, access and control over resources that are essential if gender inequalities and the growing poverty of women are to be reversed. CSOs are seen more as agencies to support the state in implementing its donor-agreed policies than agents of democracy or change in their own right.
- **Decentralisation is another central plank of the changing aid landscape.** This is resulting in INGOs based in the UK having less of an influencing role on the expenditure of aid and less of an opportunity to support CSOs working on women's rights to access the funds. Not all donors have the capacity to support CSOs in the same way that INGOs can. The funding mechanisms emerging in recent years for direct in-country funding do not have explicit gender commitments, and any gender requirements are dealt with in a superficial way.
- **There is a focus on more aid rather than on the quality of aid.** While some see promoting more aid as essential others are increasingly concerned about the quality of aid and see this as equally if not more important. Concern is expressed that the current poverty focus is taking donor attention and funding away from 'middle-income' countries in Central and South America where gender inequalities, the gap between rich and poor and exploitative power relations are very significant. In addition smaller and smaller pots of funding leads to many International NGOs increasingly being excluded and competing with each others outside the partnership agreements.
- **Donor harmonisation and alignment.** The harmonisation policy is leading to the development of pooled funding for civil society work in several countries. Despite some advantages of harmonisation to civil society organisations, gender is rarely a criterion for accessing pooled funding. There is no ear-marked funding for gender equality work. There are fewer alternative sources of funding to turn to now donors are working together on joint funding mechanisms.

- **No women's rights funds.** Several International NGOs note that there were no specific financial commitment to women's rights and no careful tracking of what funds go to support women's rights or to help women out of poverty.

CSOs in the Global South

Following on from the INGOs, the report looks at the picture emerging from the responses to questionnaires by organisations working on gender equality and women's rights in the Global South. It reveals complexity on a number of levels. There are contradictory trends and a lack of clear analysis and policy positions from donors around the role of CSOs and how they should be funded to enable them to perform their work to the highest level. The research picks up some indicative trends and issues, but perhaps above all highlights the need for much more careful monitoring by donors themselves on the impact of changes they are introducing and how these are affecting the work and performance of CSOs. At the same time questionnaire respondents are very diverse, have different priorities within the spectrum of work on gender equality and women's rights and are also very different in size, structure and ways of working. The diversity amongst the questionnaire respondents match the diversity in the aid environment in which they are working. The rate at which DBS is being adopted and implemented is variable between countries and between different donors within countries.

This diversity makes it difficult for the report to draw any clear conclusions at this stage. It is early days for either donors or CSOs to really understand the implications and impact of these shifts. There are however trends emerging. Chapter 4 and 5 reflect the voices from the questionnaire respondents and focus on two specific areas: funding & influencing.

Funding

The report looks at the responses to the questionnaires and draws comparison between regions and countries.

Looking at the **availability of funding for gender work**, many African respondents say that most donors at present continue with project funding and in some cases this funding has increased for gender work within CSOs.

However, several are also explicit in stating that the new aid mechanisms are reducing or are likely to reduce money for gender related work in the future.

Most of the respondents from Asia in the report are dependent on donor funding for their income and most derive their income from a combination of international NGO and bi-lateral government sources. Some have experienced an overall increase in donor funding for gender work.

Those who feel that funding was getting more difficult to obtain generally attribute this to a shift in donor interest away from the kind of work their organisation is involved in. A small number of respondents pick up a few aspects of the new aid environment, but this has, to date, been less embedded in Asia than in Africa.

In Latin America, while both Bolivia and Nicaragua have PRSPs and Nicaragua is in receipt of DBS for poverty reduction work, the overwhelming feature of the donor context is the reality that a number of major donors are pulling out of these countries as the spotlight shifts increasingly to Africa.

In relation to the **type of activities being funded**, the report shows that several respondents in all continents say there has been a move away from service delivery and community development approaches towards good governance – including transparency and accountability - democracy, and HIV and AIDs.

Several are concerned at the increasingly limited funding for organisational costs and organisational development. One exception of that is a funding stream in Ghana – G-RAP. In contrast with the Ghana experience, several respondents say they do continue to get project funding but it is increasingly very short term and comes with many conditions.

They comment on the work-load implications of short term project funding, and highlight the obvious contradiction between a multiplicity of separate small short term funding sources for CSOs, each with separate reporting requirements, and the move towards the harmonisation of systems and reporting requirements for donor support to governments.

No respondents in Africa yet get **funding from their governments** and all have concerns about the implications of accessing funding this way. In countries where the political environment is quite restrictive and civil society space is minimal, funding from government is not an option that CSOs will find viable.

In Asia, some have received funding from the government for their gender work. All feel that, if they were to receive funding from the government, this would compromise their ability to challenge the government's policies.

Some of the key emerging issues that the report highlights are the lack of understanding many NGOs have about the wider aid context and the changing donor funding structures; the lack of attention donors are apparently paying to monitoring and understanding the impact their changes in approach are having on the NGO sector in each country; the fear or the reality of being marginalised by new funding mechanisms; and the clear lack of attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in many of the current aid mechanisms. While donors talk about gender, and as demonstrated in Chapter 5 do enable some good gender work at the level of policy and lobbying work in some countries, the key aid modalities do not currently prioritise or really address the needs of those organisations and social movements working to address gender inequalities. Indeed, the report highlights many worrying signs that aspects of the new aid modalities are further marginalising and excluding organisations committed to women's empowerment and rights from reliable, long term funding.

Influencing

The report shows that answers vary between continents but broadly CSOs feel much more positive about these issues than they do about the new funding contexts. They feel overall that donor policies have enabled them to continue and sometimes increase their policy and lobbying work with governments, although not with the donors themselves.

The major concern for some is that influencing work is being prioritised and promoted over and above the many other areas of work essential to promoting women's confidence, skills and rights.

Asked to analyse why these opportunities have increased in Africa in recent years, respondents highlight the increasing recognition of the role civil society can play in planning processes, which is a key aspect of the new aid environment, the increased emphasis on gender equality by some donors and the growing strength of CSOs.

Several note the frustrations of the policy influencing process itself particularly in countries where there is not yet a clear framework or forum for dialogue for CSO-government partnership and cooperation.

The report highlights a real lack of political will and/or lack of capacity in government to implement gender policies in every country context.

It is striking that in Asia, in contrast to the African responses, no respondents mention participation in the development of the PRSP.

The factors affecting their opportunities to influence government at either national or local level are, according to the majority of respondents, the gender policies of donor organisations and, to some extent, the gender policies of their own governments. Importantly, what emerges through the research is the reality that the macro economic framework remains completely non-negotiable.

In Latin America, the overall sense is that opportunities to influence government have gone down because 'gender is not a priority in the current context' and there is a 'lack of political will to change'.

The responses to the question about influencing donors are very mixed across all respondents, and some respondents clearly have no experience of work in this area. Experience is tied to a range of factors including the confidence and ability of the CSO itself to engage with donors; the receptiveness and openness of donors to dialogue and listening to CSO perspectives and concerns; recognised channels for this dialogue; and how far some aspects of the new aid approaches are embedded. On the negative side respondents feel that the multi-donor or common pot of money idea has come to squash off any opportunities that might be available for directly influencing and or engaging with policies of foreign donors in relation to gender.

In relation to the effect of donors' policies and funding strategies over the past 5 years on women's lives and gender relations, CSOs feel much more positive about the donor role in promoting gender equality. While they have mixed experiences and some considerable disappointments around current donor funding approaches, some highlight noticeable positive impacts from some key donor gender strategies, for example in Africa related to the MDGs. Two respondents from Bangladesh highlight the benefits of provision in the PRSP for the gender aspects of health, education and local governance and two more note an increase in support for girls' education and female teachers. One respondent from Nepal highlights national gender related legislation, such as enactment of the Gender Equality Bill, which they see as encouraged and supported by donors.

However several feel it is too early to make a judgement about the impact of new aid modalities on women's lives in their country.

Overall, the issues emerging from the research in relation to CSO/INGO ability to undertake advocacy/lobbying work with governments and with donors and the impact of this work reveal that though answers are still varied, CSOs overall feel much more positive about these issues than they do about the funding contexts. Reading the answers carefully, however, ongoing challenges are being noted, as are questions about political will to change and implement policies in favour of gender equality and women's rights.

Analysing the responses also made the GADN pay close attention to who the organisations were that were answering these questions. Most of the organisations responding

positively to the change in the environment and commenting on their ability to influence government are larger organisations with the capacity to engage at that level. Those who are less experienced in this work and lack the resources are far more critical and observe that the changes in emphasis towards a focus on advocacy have meant that their opportunities to engage with donors and or governments have reduced.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The report concludes in Chapter 6 by noting that the GADN initiated this research because it was aware that organisations were observing changes in the aid environment and perceiving the impact this was having on their work for gender equality and women's rights both in the global North and South. This research clearly shows that the impact is not fully understood, uneven and varied depending on the context, the country / region and the size and type of organisation. By focusing on Network members and their partner organisations and going with written questionnaires, which is a challenging methodology for such a complex subject, the report presents a very diverse range of answers. However, some very clear issues emerge, as evident in Chapter 4 and 5 and the quotations. The direct voices from organisations working in the global North and South are a strong testimony of the urgency for the recommendations that the GADN has identified.

Overall the GADN believe it is vital that the international community renews its commitment to key agreements and international documents such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals and uses a joint approach to implementing them rather than looking at development goals and targets in isolation from international women's rights commitments. We have also identified 2 key areas for future action and research. The first one is the need to monitor the new aid environment, its tools and the impact they are having on actors involved and affected and ultimately on achieving gender equality and women's rights. The second one is in relation to the actual nature of the aid environment and calls for a diversification of the current approach to aid, both in terms of the activities/areas that are being funded as well as the type of organisations that are being funded.

Overall

1. Governments and Donors should include CSOs meaningfully in the debates and disbursement of aid.
2. Governments and donors should honour international commitments to key agreements on women's rights and development such as the BPFA, CEDAW and the MDGs.
3. Governments and donors should commit adequate financial resources to implementing the above mentioned agreements. Governments also need to commit financial resources to gender commitments in documents such as PRSPs.

Monitor

1. Donors, governments and CSOs need to track carefully what funds go to support women's rights or to help women out of poverty.
2. Donors need to systematically monitor the impact of changed funding streams, conditions and mechanisms on organisations working for gender equality and women's rights.
3. In particular, governments and donors need to monitor the funding available to CSOs by governments and the impact such funding has on the organisations and the work.

4. Donors and governments need to monitor the *implementation* of PRSPs and SWAPs in relation to their impact on gender equality and women's rights.
5. PAFs (Performance Assessment Frameworks) need to mainstream gender and need to be monitored.
6. The effect of the Paris Declaration and DBS on social development issues and rights, including how civil society is faring need to be evaluated. It is an area where growing concern is evident but as yet data on what is actually happening is almost non-existent.

Diversify Aid

1. Donors and governments need to ensure special funds are available for gender equality work in each country to ensure it is addressed and that smaller, activist women's organisations are enabled to continue their work. See gender basket funding in Kenya.
2. Donors and governments should make available long term funding for women's rights organisations.
3. Pooled funds need to integrate gender with clear adherence and monitoring criteria.
4. Diversify funding to ensure that the current focus on NGOs as instruments of advocacy does not exclude other work that is critical for women's rights and gender equality such as legal services, capacity building for women to participate in development, confidence building, and direct service delivery that addresses the barriers for access for women.
5. Donors need to establish funding mechanisms that are accessible to a wide range of CSOs, not only the strongest and largest.
6. National Women's Machineries (NWMs) need to be adequately resourced to enable them to undertake their vital role of leading on national gender equality plans.

The report demonstrates the GAD Network's commitment to working in partnership and sharing and reflecting on its own work as well as on other actors' work in the sector. It ends by committing to addressing the report's recommendations and encouraging other organisations, including governments and donors to play their role in addressing them.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to research

This report presents the findings of research commissioned by the UK Gender and Development Network (GAD Network) to explore the impact of the changing aid environment on the work of Civil Society Organisations around the world who seek to improve the lives of women through addressing gender inequalities, women's empowerment and women's rights (GEWEWR¹). The major reasons for undertaking this research were the growing concern of UK-based Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) about the fast changing aid structures, such as direct budget support, pooled funding schemes for supporting civil society and other forms of donor alignment and their possible implications for work on gender issues, in UK and with partners globally. Feedback from some partners indicated that they were starting to experience difficulties in accessing funding.

The report is based on evidence gathered through an initial, small-scale research process, investigating the experiences and concerns of a small number of civil society members of the GAD Network and several of their partners in the south. The majority of the evidence was gathered by means of a questionnaire developed by GADN network members and an external consultant about the nature and impact of the 'new aid modalities'. Respondents included partners from Asia, Latin America and Africa, all working in different ways on issues of women's rights and gender equality and leveraging international funding through their international NGO (INGO) partners, as well as through other donors. The responses indicate that changes in the international funding regimes and requirements have significantly affected all the respondents' work in different ways.

The findings are indicative and need further research, but they are largely corroborated by existing research. The issues the research has raised are of sufficient concern to warrant further in-depth analysis, which demonstrates the impacts of new aid modalities on GEWEWR goals and activities. The importance of the issue has recently been recognised by DFID, which was, at the time of publication of this report, funding the collection of case studies from around the world about the effect one aspect of the new aid modalities – donor harmonisation and pooled funding under the Paris Declaration – is having on rights based work, especially focusing on gender rights².

1.2 Report Structure

In addition to setting out the initial rationale for the research, the introductory chapter presents essential background to the new aid modalities, including the aims, structures and processes involved. A brief history of work on gender and women's empowerment is then presented to show the changing approaches to these issues over time. The final section explores changing perceptions of the role of civil society in the new aid environment and the significant impact that shifting donor ideas and requirements inevitably have on organisations accessing international aid funding for their work.

¹ During the research process and in this report, we refer to this range of activities as GEWEWR. The purpose is not to minimise the significant differences between these approaches, but, in this initial phase of the research, to be as inclusive as possible of southern CSOs working in different ways to improve women's lives.

² This work is being led by Oxford Policy Management and will report early in 2008. It is part of the many preparations for Ghana 2008 where the donors plan to assess the progress, achievements and challenges of the Paris Agreement.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review and looks at what is being said about the potential of the new aid environment for promoting gender equality and women's rights. It also looks at donor and CSO work on the impact of new aid modalities on gender equality and women's rights and ends with an analysis of the key findings from the literature review.

Chapter 3 presents the current aid context largely from a UK donor and INGO perspective. The chapter was written after data was collected from partners around the world to avoid imposing a 'northern view' on the research, but it precedes the key data analysis chapter in order to place those findings within a wider donor context.

Chapter 4 presents broad findings from the research around the new funding mechanisms undertaken in a number of countries in the south.

Chapter 5 looks at how the new aid modalities are affecting Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs') ability to work at the level of influencing policies and legislation, an area promoted by donors. This chapter argues that donor support to this area seems to be enabling CSOs to increase their policy-influencing work, although the gap between policies and practice remains wide and difficult to bridge. Concerns from chapter 3 that funding is pushing NGOs into this work to the detriment of other work on gender equality are also relevant in this chapter.

Chapter 6 presents the key recommendations arising from the research.

1.3 The new aid environment

The current global aid system is characterised by constant change and the last decade has seen fundamental shifts with the introduction of many "new aid modalities". These include the refocusing on poverty reduction as the core development purpose³ and donors refocusing their funding on governments to take responsibility for national development rather than running their own projects or funding civil society to do it. The aid instruments designed to promote state responsibility for planning and ensuring delivery on poverty reduction include:

- Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans (PRSPs), which need to be aligned to the Millennium Development Goals
- Donors are to align their funding to the national poverty plans via sectoral funding (Sector Wide Approaches, SWAPs) or directly into the national budget through Direct Budget Support (DBS)
- Donors are to harmonise and align their aid goals and systems in order to reduce their transaction costs and increase efficiency

The current focus of aid modalities is *aid effectiveness* and *managing for results* and these are monitored annually through the World Bank Comprehensive Development Framework reports. Donors, governments, the private sector and civil society are all to work together to achieve clearly defined and shared development goals.

³ Following the World Bank Development Report, (2000/1) *Attacking poverty 2000/1*; World Bank, Washington. This put poverty eradication at the centre of the global aid agenda: <http://www.worldbank/wdr/2001>

The New Aid mechanisms: a glossary of key terms

Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans (PRSPs) were introduced in the late 1990s to promote national ownership of development and were initially linked to debt relief through the HIPC initiative. Normally governments seeking external aid must now produce a PRS developed by them but including participatory consultation and planning with broad sectors of civil society and the private sector. Monitoring and review should include participatory processes involving civil society, private sector and donor stakeholders as well as the establishment of new improved accountability systems within government.

Direct Budget Support (DBS) channels multi-lateral and bi-lateral donor money directly through the central budget system of the aid-recipient government, and is designed to support the implementation and review of Poverty Reduction Strategies. General Budget Support (GBS) supports the budget as a whole and Sector Budget Support is earmarked for a discrete sector through a SWAP.

Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) involve donor support to the development of a specific sector, usually through the national government budget. SWAPs should be developed by the aid-recipient government in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and donor agencies.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit where the poverty focus was captured by governments and donors into 8 key goals to halve poverty by 2015, and funding was to focus on achieving these goals. Additional funding to meet these goals was agreed in 2002 at the UN Monterrey Financing for Development conference. The poorest countries, especially in Africa, were prioritised for much of this funding.

The overarching principles of this new aid environment were endorsed by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in March 2005:

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005

The Paris Declaration, endorsed by 35 donor countries, 26 multilateral agencies, 56 aid-recipient countries, and 14 civil society organisations, committed to the following:

- To focus on nationally agreed priorities to meet the internationally agreed MDGs for reducing poverty
- To align aid and donor activities with country-led planning processes
- To harmonise and co-operate between donors
- To manage and implement plans through countries' own systems
- To emphasise partnership and mutual accountability between donors and aid-recipient countries
- To promote domestic accountability of aid-recipient governments to their citizens through an increased focus on governments' own accountability channels (e.g. parliaments)

The Paris Declaration marked major changes in the *focus of aid* – away from funding civil society and donor projects back to funding the state and away from funding a wide range of countries to a focus on low income countries—and the *mechanisms of aid*. These changes have major implications:

- for **governments**, who are increasingly expected to deliver on poverty targets, account for aid spending and increase their accountability to their citizens
- for **donors**, who are expected to strengthen governments and relinquish direct control of projects while developing new roles for civil society and ensuring accountability in

- the way aid money is used and monitoring impacts
- for **CSOs**, whom donors are increasingly expecting to hold governments to account for their use of funds and commitment to meeting the needs of the poor
- for **low income countries** receiving more aid and for middle income and other low priority countries experiencing major cuts in aid funding

As noted above, the research presented in this report asked whether these changes support or inhibit the commitment of donors, governments and CSOs to address gender inequalities and promote the empowerment and rights of women.

1.4 Gender equality, women's rights and empowerment

Approaches to addressing women's interests in development have evolved over the past 30 years of development assistance. There has been clear recognition that women were not being reached by development initiatives and that women's inequality is a continued challenge, preventing them accessing, controlling and benefiting from many of the services and resources needed for improving their lives and addressing their poverty. From the late 1980s, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach, highlighting the different roles and power positions of women and men in the family and society, increasingly replaced the Women in Development (WID) approach, which focused largely on women as a category to be addressed by separate innovations rather than a focus on gender relations in all development work. GAD prompted a shift from separate interventions for women to the inclusion of a gender equality perspective into all policies, programmes and strategies.

The Fourth UN International Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, consolidated this approach and was endorsed by the majority of donor and aid-recipient countries. It highlighted women's empowerment and women's rights as important ends in themselves. It also made links between poverty and gender inequality and highlighted the greater incidence of poverty amongst women and girls. By the late 1990s, most bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors had policies in place for including gender equality across all their work in place. Many instituted a "twin track" approach: supporting projects to tackle specific aspects of gender inequality as an important and necessary complement to what became labelled as 'mainstreaming gender equality' (i.e. including a gender analysis and ways to address inequalities) in all projects and sectors.

Donor policies since the mid 1990s have consistently acknowledged gender equality as a key component of poverty strategies. At the 2000 UN Millennium Summit, gender equality was recognised as part of the overall strategy to reduce poverty and MDG 3 commits signatories to 'promoting gender equality and empowering women', with the concrete target of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. However, some commentators⁴ have expressed concern that the MDGs have undermined the more holistic approach to gender equality taken by Beijing and CEDAW because the MDGs focus on only a few aspects of gender equality – girls' access to education, reproductive health and their representation in parliament.

Despite the intention of donors to incorporate a gender analyses into all aspects of development, evaluations have repeatedly and consistently shown that these policy commitments are not effectively translated into development practice. This problem of "policy evaporation" has largely prevented real changes taking place, for various reasons:

⁴ See, for example, Alami, N. and Goetz, A.-M., (2006), Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships, UNIFEM Discussion Paper, United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), New York

- Lack of understanding and knowledge amongst staff of what “gender” and “gender mainstreaming” means and how it should be applied
- Lack of commitment to tackling gender inequalities in different cultural contexts and reluctance/lack of skills for working through the complex issues involved
- Poor leadership from the top around addressing gender inequalities
- Lack of sex-disaggregated data and gendered information (i.e. about women's and men's needs, the impact of interventions on them, the gender issues inherent in the work) to inform planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Lack of resources and power for those responsible for spearheading and sustaining work on gender
- Lack of understanding and application of the “twin track approach”, resulting in lack of support to women-specific programmes

In spite of many years of policy and rhetoric around gender equality the track record is patchy and work on gender issues has been marginalised in recent years in many donor and civil society agencies. There is only recently resurgence in interest in gender equality, women's empowerment and in some circles women's rights⁵.

1.5 Civil Society Organisations in the changing aid environment

In the 1980s-90s Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)⁶ benefited from multi- and bi-lateral donors' by-passing state channels. CSOs were often perceived as a viable alternative to the state because they were viewed as more efficient in service delivery and able to reach poor and marginalised people. Because of this, significant donor support encouraged them to scale up their operations. The 1995 Beijing Women's conference encouraged donors to increase their support for CSOs' work on gender. In addition Gender Units or Gender Focal Points were active in many of the larger organisations and gender issues were supported by internal funding as well as donor funds.

In the late 1990s, donors' growing frustration with the poor progress made in reducing poverty led to a feeling that projects run by donors and CSOs lacked the coverage, capacity and coordination to make any significant difference. In the context of the new aid environment CSOs appear to have become a cog in a much larger machine, expected to complement and support national-led strategies. Local CSOs are increasingly expected to get funding via their own governments or to access donor funding that is largely available for their new roles as advocates and policy watchdogs. International CSOs are finding that funding for their own initiatives is being cut, while much funding is now tied to enabling donors to fulfil their aid agendas⁷. DFID and other like-minded donors now particularly emphasise and fund the role of local CSOs in policy lobbying on behalf of the poor and of holding governments to account against their poverty reduction plans.

The significant changes in the ways multi- and bi-lateral donor funding is delivered to CSOs include the decentralisation of funding and fund management to donor country offices, the creation of new CSO funds, programmes funding CSOs working in partnership, and pooled CSO funds supported by a number of donors. The management of CSO Funds is

5 For example gender equality has been reprioritised as a key development issue by DFID, Norad, Unicef and others and Oxfam and ActionAid have recently put women's rights and leadership at the heart of their work

6 The term “Civil Society Organisations” encompasses a wide range of organisations including women's groups, community-based groups, trades unions, religious groups, employers' associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

7 The complexities and implications of the new funding for CSOs, internationally and in-country, are explored in Tina Wallace et al, (2006). The aid chain: coercion and commitment in development NGOs. ITDG.

often contracted out to consultant companies, International NGOs, large local NGOs or umbrella organisations⁸.

In some countries, CSO Funds are specifically designed to enhance CSOs' capacity to hold the government to account over its implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and its use of DBS funds⁹.

Payne and Neville¹⁰ have argued that a perceived reduction in the focus on gender equality by donors and governments in recent years (well documented for example in the recent DFID evaluation on gender work¹¹) may have increased the importance and role of CSOs in keeping gender equality and women's rights on the political and development agenda. In many countries CSOs play a crucial role in these areas through representing, supporting and defending vulnerable groups of women; keeping gender equality and women's rights issues on policymakers' agendas; fighting for women's rights at a legislative level; and holding governments and other stakeholders to account over their implementation of gender-related commitments. Understanding how they are faring under the new aid mechanisms becomes critical in understanding whether current funding is supporting or inhibiting the commitment to gender equality and women's rights present in so many policies.

8 Beall, J., (2005), Funding Local Governance: Small Grants for Democracy and Development, ITDG Publishing/DFID; Wiseman, K., (2004), Letting the Baby Grow: Lessons in Establishing a National Local Fund for Civil Society: the Foundation for Civil Society, Tanzania, CARE International; Collinson, H. (2006), Where to Now? Implications for Changing Relations between DFID, Recipient Governments and NGOs in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda, ActionAid International/CARE International

9 Wiseman, op.cit

10 Payne, L. and Neville, S., (2006), Aid Instruments, Exclusion and Gender: Background Paper for DFID's Internal Guidance on Aid Instruments, Social Development Direct

11 DFID, (2006). Evaluation of DFID's policy and practice in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. DFID, London.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 The potential of the new aid environment for promoting gender equality and women's rights: summary

The few evaluation studies examining the impacts of the new aid modalities on gender equality and women's rights (see below for details) have focused on the extent to which gender is integrated into the text of poverty reduction strategy plans or sector wide plans and the involvement of women in PRSP and SWAP research and consultation processes¹². Most argue – with some exceptions – that *in theory the new aid environment offers new opportunities for the promotion of gender equality* through integrating it fully into national plans and strategies. The reasons for this include:

- Once gender equality is an integral part of the national policy framework – through the PRSP for example – this should stimulate government and local level activity around women's rights, empowerment and gender equality issues.
- Gender equality in the PRSP and monitoring frameworks means that governments (rather than donors¹³) should take ownership of the issue. Donor support to gender mainstreaming has at times been seen as an imposed agenda, provoking active and passive resistance. An alternative is to ensure that this strategy is closely tied to national development agendas and is championed by local allies. National Women's Machineries and women's civil society organisations can play a critical role¹⁴.
- Improvements in public sector budgeting and results based planning mean that national gender policy commitments, in common with all PRSP and SWAP commitments, should be backed by monitoring indicators, targets, and budgeted action plans.
- Direct Budget Support should create more predictable aid flows, allowing for financial certainty and longer term investment in gender-related change and social protection, such as welfare benefits to poor women, which were rarely possible in the context of short term projects.
- The new emphasis on collective policy dialogue involving civil society, donors and government is a real opportunity to build a shared understanding of gender equality across multiple actors and sectors.

Others are more cautious about the opportunities for strong gender equality work under the new aid mechanisms. The AWID¹⁵ report is sceptical and Payne and Neville¹⁶ argue that projects, including CSO projects, should continue alongside Budget Support because only projects can keep gender issues on the agenda in countries where there is no real backing from the government:

12 OECD DAC Working Party on Gender Equality, (2002), *Gender Equality in Sector Wide Approaches: A Reference Guide*, document DCD/DAC/GEN; Rae, S. (ed), (2003), *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratizing the State? Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women*, Manchester University Press; Whitehead, A., (2003), *Failing Women, Sustaining Poverty: Gender in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers*, Gender and Development Network (GADN), UK; World Bank, (2002), *Gender in the PRSPs: A Stocktaking*, World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, Washington DC; Zuckerman, E., (2002), *Engendering Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: the Issues and the Challenges*, Gender and Development, Vol.10, No.3, Oxfam, UK

13 Khan, Z., (2003), *Closing the Gap: Putting EU and UK Gender Policy into Practice – South Africa, Nicaragua, Bangladesh*, One World Action, UK; IANGWE, op.cit.; Waterhouse and Sever, op.cit

14 Waterhouse and Sever, op.cit

15 Clark, C., Sprenger, E. and VeneKlasen, L., (2006), *Where is the Money for Women's Rights? Assessing resources and the role of donors in the promotion of women's rights and the support of women's organisations*, The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

16 Payne and Neville, op cit.

Projects could have a particular role in the short term, as gender and social exclusion get sidelined in the drive to get the nuts and bolts of [General Budget Support] in place.¹⁷

2.2 Overview of donor and CSO work on the impacts of new aid modalities on gender equality and women's rights

More recently, gender advocates within the donor community have given increasing attention to the implications of the new aid environment for gender equality, women's empowerment and rights. In January 2006, the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality held a joint meeting in Nairobi to discuss the new aid modalities and their relationship to the promotion of gender equality¹⁸. This was followed by a meeting of the DAC Network on Gender Equality and the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness in July 2006 on the same issue¹⁹. In March 2006, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) published a discussion paper on gender equality and new aid modalities, following an international consultation with the European Commission in Brussels in November 2005²⁰.

Subsequently, UNIFEM and the Government of Burundi hosted an African consultation in Bujumbura in July 2006 where donors and government officials shared experiences of promoting gender equality in the new aid environment and discussed gender-specific recommendations for the 2008 OECD DAC High Level Forum on the impact of the Paris Declaration in Ghana²¹. The fiftieth Session (2006) of the Commission on the Status of Women adopted 'Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women' as its priority theme for 2008.

Bi-lateral donors are also investigating this issue. In 2005 DFID commissioned a paper on 'Aid Instruments, Exclusion and Gender'²² to feed into a new manual on Aid Instruments and commissioned a desk study on Gender and Budget Support²³ as part of their 2006 Gender Evaluation²⁴. In 2007 they commissioned a scoping and follow-up study on the Paris Declaration and its impact on working with rights, with a focus on gender rights²⁵. In 2005, Development Cooperation Ireland analysed gender equality issues in a study on gender mainstreaming in the Country Strategy Papers²⁶.

Four recent studies have been published by civil society networks around direct budget support and the new aid modalities impact on CSO work, though two of these did not specifically focus on gender issues as central²⁷. The 2005 Eurostep and Social Watch

17 Payne and Neville, op.cit., p.11

18 Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality, (2006), *Aid Modalities and the Promotion of Gender Equality*, Joint Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya

19 Gaynor, C., (2006), *Paris Declaration Commitments and Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, DAC Network on Gender Equality

20 Alami, N. and Goetz, A.-M., (2006), *Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships*, UNIFEM Discussion Paper, United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), New York

21 UNIFEM, (2006), *Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships: Experiences from Africa: Burundi Consultation Outcome Report*

22 UNIFEM, (2006), *Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships: Experiences from Africa: Burundi Consultation Outcome Report*

23 Dahl-Ostergaard, T. and Taylor, W., (2006), *Gender and Budget Support Thematic Study*, DFID Evaluation Report EV669

24 Jensen, R. et al, COWI Evaluation Team, (2006), *Evaluation of DFID's Policy and Practice in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, Synthesis Report, Department for International Development (DFID) EV669

25 Intrac, Oxford undertook a scoping study for DFID on the impact of the Paris declaration on human rights, especially gender rights in 2007 and this led to DFID commissioning OPM to lead a study on these issues for DFID in preparation for Ghana 2008.

26 Waterhouse, R. and Sever, C., (2005), *Gender Mainstreaming in Development Cooperation Ireland Country Strategy Papers*, Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI)

27 Collinson, H. (2006), *Where to Now? Implications for Changing Relations between DFID, Recipient Governments and NGOs in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda*, ActionAid International/CARE International. Helen Collinson, Unpublished report for CARE International on experiences in Latin America, 2007.

report did focus on gender equality and poverty eradication in their report on the new aid environment²⁸. In 2006 the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) published a study on the funding of women's organisations and the role of donors; this is the only report to have addressed the implications of the new aid environment for CSO activities on gender equality and women's rights in any detail²⁹.

Yet there are significant gaps in this literature. Little information is available on the *implementation* of PRSPs and SWAPs, and literature on the implications of the new aid environment for women's rights civil society organisations is very limited. This report aims to address some of these gaps, while also drawing on existing documentation.

2.3 Critical findings drawn from experience: reviews and evaluations

2.3.1 Integration of Gender issues into SWAPs and PRSPs

The first major evaluation on the new aid environment was the OECD-DAC study of the promotion of gender equality in the context of SWAPs, 2000 - 2002³⁰. The study used country case studies of education SWAPs in Ghana, India and Uganda; health SWAPs in Bangladesh and Ghana; and agriculture SWAPs in Kenya, Zambia, and Mozambique. It found that in most instances, SWAPs focused on narrowly defined investments in women and girls rather than addressing the wider underlying social and power relations that created their unequal access to these services.

Most of the education SWAPs included measures to increase girls' enrolment in basic schooling, but ignored the wider conditions that contribute to low female attendance and high dropout rates, including preference for educating boys, women's low status and security issues for girls. Health SWAPs considered only some aspects of women's reproductive health and ignored the health needs of women beyond reproduction, and why they had problems accessing and using services. Agriculture SWAPs frequently recognized that women are critical in agricultural production and food security, but rarely addressed the factors that reduce women's productivity such as unequal access to land, capital and additional labour. Gender information was rarely included and an analysis of the opportunities and barriers for women in the sector and how to understand the impact of policies on them was missing. Gender-related interventions were frequently limited to small-scale programmes assisting women as a vulnerable group, and even these were not necessarily backed up with budgets³¹.

Van Reisen concludes that the move towards sectoral approaches has led to the overall deprioritisation of gender equality as a clear objective. Instead gender has been 'mainstreamed' into each sector and has in effect largely disappeared³².

Alami and Goetz suggest that SWAPs (as well as the MDGs) have encouraged an over-emphasis on the health and education sectors, despite evidence over many years from gender analyses that women are profoundly affected by spending patterns in other sectors – such as justice and law enforcement, public safety, rural and urban infrastructure, and transport³³.

28 Van Reisen, M., (2005), *Accountability Upside Down: Gender Equality in a Partnership for Poverty Eradication*, Eurostep/Social Watch

29 Clark et al, AWID, op cit.

30 OECD DAC, op.cit.

31 Fong, M.S. (2002), *Gender in Sector Wide Development Policies and Programs*, Presentation at the III World Congress of Rural Women, Madrid, Spain

32 Van Reisen, op.cit

33 Alami and Goetz, op cit.

There are similar indications that gender has been poorly incorporated into PRSPs. Whitehead's 2003 study for the GAD Network examined 13 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and found that only three were gender sensitive, eight dealt with gender in a limited way through a focus on reproductive health and education, and two did not address gender at all³⁴. A World Bank stocktaking exercise on gender in PRSPs in 2002 also found that some hardly mentioned gender at all and that in those that did, the range and quality of the gender analysis and policy commitment was generally poor³⁵. The 2006 DFID Gender Evaluation concluded that 'gender as a cross-cutting issue does not feature prominently either in the PRSPs or in the [General Budget Support] Agreements³⁶.

2.3.2 Some successes have been recorded

There are a few examples where gender equality/women's rights objectives are included in the PRSPs. In all cases this came out of sustained action on the part of gender equality advocates and 'concerted investment in women's analytical capacity, policymakers' gender analysis skills and donors' support'³⁷. For example, comparatively gender blind first generation PRSPs were superseded by more gender sensitive second generation PRSPs, as gender advocates learned from their experience. Some are presented here to show what is possible:

PRSP, Uganda

Uganda's first PRSP, the 1997 Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), gave scant attention to gender equality or women's priorities. In response, a number of INGOs and Ugandan CSOs set up an extensive gender-aware Participatory Poverty Assessment Programme (UPPAP) as part of the national PEAP review process. Despite this, a subsequent national 'synthesis workshop' diminished gender issues and previously disaggregated data were aggregated, obscuring gender differences and inequalities. 'This obscuring process was eventually reflected in the [second] Uganda PRSP, which takes a WID approach, scattering a few references relating to gender-based inequality here and there'³⁸.

In the second revision of the PEAP in 2003-04, a Gender Team comprising officials from the Ministries of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Gender, Labour and Social Development as well as civil society and donor representatives worked systematically to integrate gender concerns. With DFID support, the team analysed the impact of gender inequalities on economic growth, and included gender benchmarks in dialogue between the government, the World Bank and other donors engaged in direct budget support. Key activities included:

- development of gender mainstreaming guidelines
- engagement with various Sector Working Groups to ensure they addressed gender issues
- commissioning research and analytical work
- gender analysis on the first draft of the PEAP

The revised PEAP does address key gender inequalities, including those around land ownership³⁹.

34 Whitehead, op.cit.

35 World Bank, op.cit

36 Jenson, op.cit.

37 Alami and Goetz, op.cit

38 Zuckerman, op.cit

39 Alami and Goetz, op.cit; Mpagi, S.J., (2005), The National Development Policy Process –

Opportunities for Engagement: A Case of Uganda, paper prepared for 2006 UNIFEM-EC consultation; Van Diesen, A. and Yates, J. (2005), Gender Mainstreaming in the Context of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Budget Support – the Case of Uganda, unpublished report; Jensen, op.cit.

PRSP, Tanzania

The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) and the Feminist Activism Coalition (FemAct) encouraged the Ministry of Finance to undertake gender budgeting even before the drawing up of the first PRSP in 1999-2000. However, TGNP realised that if economic transformation and gender equity goals were to be reached, TGNP and FemAct had to look for ways to influence the larger macroeconomic policy and planning reforms shaping public revenue and expenditure.

The first point of entry was the Poverty Reduction Strategy process. In 2000, TGNP joined an NGO coalition advocating for better integration of civil society voices in formulating the PRSP. TGNP was also a key member of the Gender Macro Policy Working Group, which brought together gender advocates from across all agencies to promote gender issues in macroeconomic processes. The gender working group commented on the PRSP drafts and met with representatives of the Government and the World Bank. These interventions did not result in significant attention to gender in the first PRSP, but they raised the profile of the gender aspects of poverty. TGNP has continued to engage in annual PRSP reviews and, in 2001, its lobbying activities led to the inclusion of important gender indicators in the monitoring framework for education, health, law and agriculture⁴⁰.

PRSP, Senegal

In Senegal, gender gaps in the PRSP have been significantly addressed by the innovative linking of a donor-funded gender-responsive budget programme with Senegal's PRSP Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, located in the Ministry of Finance. There is now a working group on gender within the PRSP M&E Unit that played a key role in developing a more gender-sensitive PRSP aligned with the national plan of action for women's advancement. The PRSP M&E Unit will monitor implementation and identify gender indicators that can be used⁴¹.

Agriculture Sector Investment Programme, Kenya

A study of gender relations in agriculture in three different regions (1996-8) found that gender imbalances resulted in distorted decision-making, unequal access to and control over resources and major work burdens for women. In many communities, land ownership and decision-making were in men's hands, while the cultivation and management were done by women. This gender analysis led to:

- Agreement with the Ministry that changes in gender relations are imperative to attaining the Sector's objectives
- Agreement on the need for a separate objective for gender equality in the sector programme and a separate budget line for women's economic security
- Improving the status of women became one of four major objectives of the sector programme
- New structures for the implementation of gender equality activities were established at national, district and community level
- More capacity was created for gender equality issues for the people directly involved in the sector's programming and implementation⁴².

40 Hofbauer Balmori, H., (2003), Gender and Budgets: a Practical Tool to Advance towards Gender Equity' Gender and Development In Brief 12, BRIDGE, IDS, University of Sussex, UK

41 UNIFEM, op.cit.

42 OECD-DAC, op.cit.

2.3.3 *Integration of Gender Issues into Direct Budget Support*

Given the gender blindness of many PRSPs, most Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAFs) – the main mechanism used by donors and recipient governments to monitor the use and allocation of Direct Budget Support – are also gender blind. A desk review undertaken by Ostergaard and Taylor of PAFs in Uganda, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Tanzania concluded that overall, it is evident that the PAF in its present format does not provide an adequate nor appropriate tool for assessing progress on gender equality policy objectives in the context of PRBS [i.e. Direct Budget Support]⁴³.

Gender equality objectives need resources if they are to be implemented. Whilst DBS can only be as gender sensitive as the PRSP it supports, there is evidence that even when gender-specific objectives are in PRSP they are frequently not linked to any specific budget⁴⁴. This is particularly marked when gender is a crosscutting theme rather than a specific or priority area of work⁴⁵.

Gender equality goals and objectives have been incorporated into Direct Budget Support and the Performance Assessment Frameworks in only five countries (see below):

43 Ostergaard and Taylor, op.cit
44 Payne and Neville, op.cit, p.10
45 UNIFEM, op.cit.

Zambia

The Zambia Fifth National Development Plan (which will soon replace the PRSP) approaches gender equality both as a cross-cutting issue and as a specific sector. There is a gender budget line. Whilst the level of resources dedicated to gender equality is very low – recently dropping from US\$1,000,000 to only US\$650,000 – the decision to have gender as a national development priority offers opportunities for gender advocates to monitor government spending and actions. Gender has been integrated into the Performance Assessment Framework and into donors' Joint Assistance Strategy for their harmonised engagement in Zambia. A gender audit will take place every two years in priority sectors, supported by gender-disaggregated data from the Central Statistical Office⁴⁶.

Mozambique

In Mozambique, a policy matrix setting out a limited number of clear and costed targets against which further PRBS disbursements will be made has provided scope for DFID advisors to negotiate gender and social exclusion based targets⁴⁷.

Malawi

In Malawi, gender-specific health and education indicators have been included in the Common Approach to Budget Support (CABS) Performance Assessment Framework and 6 out of 23 indicators in the draft 2005 PAF had a gender dimension⁴⁸.

Tanzania

In Tanzania, the TGNP has succeeded in participating in annual Public Expenditure Review (PER) meetings, which can significantly influence what resources are available to women, young people and poor men. Whilst TGNP experienced some difficulty at first in finding its way into the PER process, in 1999 it finally received an official invitation from the Ministry of Finance and Planning to attend. TGNP has a small staff and they needed to find someone to attend the twice-weekly meetings; however, the effort was worthwhile. One achievement was agreement that the planned study on revenue will include an explicit gender component. Key to TGNP getting admitted to the PER process was its track record in gender budgeting and the time it had devoted over many years to contacting key governmental actors who could be used as future entry points⁴⁹.

2.3.4 CSOs working on the new aid environment

The country-specific examples above show that women's organisations and gender-focused CSOs have played a pivotal role in getting some governments and policymakers to address gender inequalities in the new aid environment. Gender equality/women's rights CSOs have involved women in consultation processes and mounted sustained advocacy to get gender equality objectives included in PRSPs; they have persuaded government ministries to engage in gender budgeting initiatives⁵⁰.

46 Thakur, S., (2006), Putting Development First: Mainstreaming Gender for Aid Effectiveness, Commonwealth Secretariat journal for The Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting

47 Payne and Neville, op.cit., p.8

48 IDD, op.cit

49 BRIDGE, op.cit

50 Gender budget initiatives are not strictly part of the new aid environment of donors, but they are an interesting initiative and some examples of this work are presented in Appendix 1

Nevertheless, there is very limited research explicitly analysing their role in the new aid environment or the implications of this environment for their activities.

The limited available information suggests that the new aid environment has reduced resources for CSOs engaged in gender equality activities.

There is evidence that the new approaches have resulted in a decrease of funding available to civil society and women's organisations. The increased use of programmatic approaches [ie. Budget Support], coupled with the move away from discrete projects, can inadvertently cut out projects, which have been designed to empower women and increase the participation of poor women and men in the decision-making⁵¹.

These concerns are explored by Clark et al in the 2006 AWID report. Based on evidence provided through an online survey, the AWID study found that bilateral and multilateral donors were the number one source of funding for CSO activities on women's rights in 1995, number two in 2000 and number three in 2004. The study concludes that the new aid environment is reducing the ability of women's rights CSOs to access funding. They suggest that the concept of 'ownership' has promoted government ownership specifically, and most aid-recipient governments are unlikely to support women's organisations, 'as a result, as more money is going to partner countries in the form of SWAPs and General Budget Support, women's organisations lose access to development funding⁵². They suggest that the problem is likely to be particularly pronounced for CSOs that are critical of their governments, and they predict that the impact on women's rights work could be devastating.

A recent study conducted by ActionAid International and CARE International on changing relations between DFID, recipient governments and NGOs in Africa found no strong evidence of DFID cutting direct funding to CSOs because of the introduction of Budget Support⁵³, and DFID emphasised that its provision of Budget Support will continue to be complemented by 'support to civil society to work on voice and accountability'⁵⁴. There is a very real risk that the focus on NGOs as instruments of advocacy will exclude other work that is critical for women's rights and gender equality such as legal services, capacity building for women to participate in development, confidence building, and direct service delivery that addresses the barriers for access for women.

As noted above, the lack of funding for the full range of essential gender equality and women's rights work is likely to be exacerbated where donors pool their funding and all support only work that is focused on advocacy and government accountability issues. This can be avoided where donors set up a gender basket fund, as in Kenya (see below), but such approaches have so far rarely been taken up:

51 IANGWE, op.cit

52 Clark et al, op.cit,p.31

53 H. Collinson, op cit.

54 Department for International Development (DFID), (2006) Civil Society and Development: how DFID Works in Partnership with Civil Society to Deliver the Millennium Development Goals, DFID Information and Civil Society Department, www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/civil-society-dev.pdf

Kenya

In Kenya, a key mode of harmonised donor aid delivery is through basket funding where several donors jointly support either a programme or sector. Kenya has a Gender and Governance Programme basket fund with an overall budget for 2006-07 of US\$5.9 million. The GGP basket fund was established specifically in response to the third pillar of Kenya's PRSP (ERSWEC) on good governance and in support of MDG 3. The GGP provides dedicated resources to a range of women's organisations to strengthen women's representation on local boards and expand district women's assemblies in networking and leadership. While the basket is smaller than most others, it represents a model from which lessons can be drawn for scaling up gender and development priorities at a national level.⁵⁵

Donors' increased emphasis on Direct Budget Support to governments sometimes requires CSOs – in theory - to access donor money for service delivery and other activities via their national governments, as well as ensuring their work is aligned to national objectives. This raises real concerns about the ability of CSOs that are funded by their governments to challenge or hold their governments to account. The ActionAid/CARE study found little evidence of CSOs accessing funds from their own governments, however it is really not clear what is happening to funding in this area across the board and whether governments are willing to fund CSOs and under what conditions, and/or whether CSOs are willing to apply for such funding.

2.4 Analysis of the key findings from available literature

As noted above, the picture that emerges from the limited research and evaluation material currently available is that *the potential of the new aid environment to significantly advance gender equality has largely not been realised*. Whilst there are examples of successful gender advocacy work, gender issues are generally not well addressed in PRSPs, SWAPS or DBS and even when activities are included they are often not backed up with indicators, targets and budgets. Overall funding for CSOs engaged in gender activities appears to be going down.

Commentators have offered a number of explanations for what is agreed to be a largely disappointing performance.

1. Several highlight **the inadequacies of the overall conceptual framework for the new aid environment**. Poverty elimination is the fundamental rationale for the MDGs but gender equality is incorporated in only a weak and partial way. The limitations of the MDGs are compounded by the 2005 Paris Declaration. Although the Paris Declaration envisages a substantial scaling up of aid, the opportunity to influence how this expanded budget will be spent and ensuring that women benefit equitably from it will be lost unless gender equity is clearly mainstreamed in the Paris Declaration machinery and processes for allocating aid⁵⁶.
2. The weak attention to gender in both SWAPs and PRSPs is caused by **the lack of sex disaggregated data and inadequate gender information** to inform planning. There is a failure to undertake adequate gender analysis in poverty diagnosis as well as a failure to involve women's/gender-focused organisations in consultation and planning processes. In all the countries in Whitehead's study of PRSPs⁵⁷, Governments' efforts

55 UNIFEM, op.cit.

56 Gaynor, op.cit, p.7

57 Whitehead, A. (May 2003) Failing Women, Sustaining Poverty: Gender in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Report for UK gender and Development Network
<http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/pdfs/failing%20women%2003.pdf>

to listen to and consult women at all levels were unsatisfactory. The choice of who to consult and the way these consultations were carried out usually meant that few or no women's voices were sought.

3. **Even where women are consulted that does not necessarily ensure that their specific concerns are reflected** in policies and programmes⁵⁸.
4. **Even when gender issues are identified during the consultation processes they can easily get lost** at a later stage. UNIFEM cite the case of Burundi, where community women leaders' views were shared in Interim PRSP consultations and a gender focal point from the Ministry of Gender also participated in the technical committee. This led to the inclusion of gender as strategic in initial drafts of the PRSP, but in the final version the gender aspects were lost.⁵⁹ Whitehead found similar issues in relation to the Bolivian PRSP.
5. Both UNIFEM and Whitehead cite **gender power relations within government and a lack of political will** to promote gender equality as the main reasons for the failure of the inclusion of gender in critical documents.
6. Another reason is linked to **increasing national government control** around gender issues. When governments are genuinely committed to gender equality and women's rights, the issues are given serious attention and CSO voices heard. However, national governments' commitment is often ambiguous or weak. National Women's Machineries (NWMs) are often given a leadership role in implementing national gender plans yet they continue to be under-resourced and usually lack the political influence needed to undertake this role effectively.
7. **Donors who have switched from SWAPs to DBS can find that they lack leverage** with sectoral ministries such as health and education that have usually addressed gender issues, at least to some extent. Donors may now be reluctant to exert undue influence on national policy processes, and in reality much donor-government dialogue around Budget Support is about fiduciary risk, budgeting and financial management.
8. Evaluations of Direct Budget Support⁶⁰ indicate that rather than increasing government accountability to its citizens, **DBS has increased aid-recipient governments' upward accountability** to donors under Budget Support while downward accountability mechanisms remain weak.
9. The Actionaid/CARE study found that there is a **powerful and often impenetrable 'inner circle'** in many aid-recipient countries made up of government and donor personnel which is largely closed to CSOs:

A plethora of 'voices' at the table can mean that softer voices are 'drowned out' and that CSOs, including some specifically representing women's voices, are being 'squeezed out' from access to decision-making⁶¹.

58 Waterhouse and Sever cite the revision of Mozambique's agricultural sector SWAP, PROAGRI, which did involve national consultation with small-scale farmers, most of whom were women. Although research showed that women farmers in Mozambique faced problems such as relative lack of access to land, credit and markets, no specific gender issues were identified through the consultations. It is not enough to ask women to consultations, they need support and capacity building to enable them and the CSOs supporting them to amass evidence, analyse and clearly present the case for addressing the gender inequalities they face.

59 UNIFEM, op.cit

60 IDD, op.cit.; Lawson, A. et al, (2000), General Budget Support Evaluation Study: Phase I, Final Synthesis Report, Oxford Policy Management and Overseas Development Institution (ODI), UK

61 Waterhouse and Sever, op.cit, pp.6-7

Chapter 3: Perspectives from INGO staff in the UK on the current situation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to present the experiences and thinking of a number of INGOs in the UK in relation to the changing aid goals, structures and ways of working. These provide one perspective on how changing aid modalities are impacting on civil society work around gender.

Interviews were conducted with a small number of INGOs that are members of the GADN. In addition to these interviews some recent INGO meetings and initiatives are referred to in this chapter, because they also help to highlight where INGO concerns and attention lie around the new aid agenda. Discussions held around gender issues more widely have also been drawn on to cover the range of concerns currently being discussed within INGOs around the new aid agendas.

The issues discussed by the sample of INGOs interviewed for this research, and issues gleaned from a wider knowledge of the sector, endorsed many of the same concerns as those raised in the literature, while new issues also emerged. Many of the concerns relate to the extent to which a wide range of social issues and rights, including gender, are addressed in the new aid mechanisms. Some were felt more keenly by small and medium NGOs; larger NGOs often felt they had ways of by-passing or managing some of the negative effects of the changing aid landscape which those more reliant on direct donor funding could not avoid. The impacts and effects of the new aid landscape, vary according to the focus of the NGO, its size, where it works and the relationships it is able to build with the donor community.

3.2 The new aid modalities include a growing role for contracting and the private sector

One issue of concern to all INGOs was the growing use of contracts and the private sector in development aid. Donors, especially DFID now increasingly contract out aid administration work – often to private sector companies – and use contracts for implementing critical areas of development work. This practise is tied to the cutbacks in staff at DFID and in other bi-laterals, a key part of the new ‘aid efficiency’ strategy, and to the encouragement of private sector actors into development.

This had a range of implications for INGOs:

- Small INGOs often lack the staff/time to bid for contracts, and many organisations focused on gender equality are relatively small
- Gender equality issues are often not central to tenders
- People assessing the bids are often not experienced DFID staff and lack the knowledge and skills to properly assess gender equality issues
- INGOs fear that DFID is losing the knowledge and capacity on gender equality work that used to be present five years ago, and contracting out means there is no build up of institutional memory on gender
- There is little dialogue now between DFID and INGOs on gender issues; the work is all at “arms’ length”
- The private sector does not have the same track record of working on, or commitment to, gender issues as some INGOs. It also lacks the direct contact with women’s organisations that is essential to understanding gender issues in each context and how best to work with them at local and national levels

- The focus now is far more on control, tight timelines and budgets in contracts, often allowing little room or time for the long term processes needed to genuinely include and address the needs of the most marginalised people, especially women, in development

3.3 The Paris Declaration (PD) is part of a process of the depoliticisation of aid.

Several INGOs expressed concern that the Paris Agreement is a technical tool, with the main aim of reducing bureaucratic activity and achieving results. It is not a way of working or an approach that can capture the complex relationships and processes of development and change processes, although the concept of local ownership could be a good tool for promoting the interests of women in development. Some, but not all, saw that there could be potential in some of the new aid mechanisms, but felt that in practice the most recent shift to the PD was more about aid administration and less about transformation and change on the ground.

There is real concern that social development, human rights and gender equality are not explicitly supported in the PD and they, along with DFID, are increasingly asking questions about whether the PD actually excludes these issues as central. The relationship between the MDGs and the PD remains unclear to some people in INGOs, and while some think the PD is a tool to ensure the MDGs are delivered, others see it as recognition that these have failed and a new focus for aid is needed.

The focus of the PD and current donor approaches on “results” is seen by some as limiting. Change indicators are usually very narrow, focusing on what can easily be measured and observed. For staff working on gender issues this is problematic, because changing attitudes and behaviour, challenging power relations, addressing cultural norms that reinforce inequality, as well as religious, legal, media and other institutions supporting the subordination and lack of rights for women, is long-term and difficult work. Yet without this transformative work many of the MDGs and other donor and government aspirations can never be achieved.

The Paris Declaration is seen by some as a public administration tool and not a theory of development, so they argue it inevitably pays little or no attention to the very difficult issues at the heart of poverty: issues of unequal power within families, communities and countries as well as between countries.

It is a tool primarily focused on the roles of governments and donors; CSOs are barely mentioned in the original document and even the watchdog role they have been expected to play in recent years is not explicitly included. The overwhelming concerns are with spending an increased volume of aid in a way that achieves clear measurable results, and accountability for the use of aid is paramount. CSOs are seen more as agencies to support the state in implementing its donor-agreed policies than agents of democracy or change in their own right. Given the findings from the literature and past history that CSOs have been central to promoting and keeping women’s rights and gender equality on aid agendas, this feels threatening to some INGOs.

3.4 Decentralisation is another central plank of the changing aid landscape and means there is less money for INGOs in UK

More money is now spent on CSOs through donor’s local field offices. For some INGOs, especially those with relatively small, activist women’s organisations as partners, they feel their partners will not be large or sophisticated enough to access this funding, especially pooled funding, which often have very high entry requirements, including minimum financial size, excellent English language skills, writing skills and so on.

Others have made the most of the situation and, while they prefer not to compete with their partners, they often prepare joint funding bids. In some cases INGOs have become the new aid disbursement agencies, acting on behalf of multiple donors in the disbursement of CSO funds; however, many of these funds are limited to work related to advocacy and policy-influencing work.

There was no single view on the issue of decentralisation, although many concerns were expressed about how this money is being disbursed and the use of the private sector in aid administration, as well as the complexity of the requirements and procedures. Several respondents noted, from their own experience, that funding for smaller, activist, rights and gender organisations could easily suffer under these new funding regimes. Women's organisations are often too small, too stretched and not skilled enough in the kind of proposal work that is now required.

The funding mechanisms emerging in recent years for direct in-country funding do not have explicit gender commitments, and some INGOs feel that any gender requirements are dealt with in a superficial way. Not attending to gender issues seriously does not appear to be a 'killer' element and many agencies that are not working on gender equality or the empowerment of women are receiving funding, with no requirement to address these issues in their work.

There is a perceived cut in funding across the board for CSOs, whether founded or not, and this is increasing the competition between them: one research agency said a critical issue now is the intense competition for funds arising between CSOs in the north and those in the south, leading to poor relationships between them. The allocation of fewer larger grants is leading to increased 'branding' and competition; donors are not really promoting coalitions and the promotion/advancement of individual NGOs is a problem that affects co-operation between agencies working on gender equality issues at times.

The limited access to donors and their more 'hands-off' and increasingly limited engagement in the development process is experienced by many INGOs as a loss – both in terms of sharing and deepening ideas, and also in terms of 'influencing' and policy dialogue around gender (and indeed other) issues.

3.5 More aid rather than the quality of aid

There were mixed views on this central issue of increasing the aid volume, something many INGOs have campaigned hard for. Yet while some see promoting more aid as essential others worry increasingly about the quality of aid and see this as equally if not more important. Their concerns include the skewing of aid to certain regions only; the cutting back of donor staff and the removal of much of the expertise from the delivery of aid; the increasingly technocratic approach to aid and the focus on short-term, quantifiable results that can be quantified. Concern was expressed about the rather rigid approach to results, which 'results' were prioritised (rarely gender equality results), the tick box mentality shaping much development dialogue at the moment, and the lack of 'elbow room' and creativity possible within the current tight grant structures.

Some women's rights organisations expressed concern that the current poverty focus is taking donor attention and funding away from 'middle-income' countries in central and South America where gender inequalities, the gap between rich and poor and exploitative power relations are very significant. Many poor women – and indeed all women in areas of sexual and reproductive health - are prevented from accessing their rights and key resources because of cultural hierarchies, religious edict and government

attitudes. The gender equality indicators are poor in many countries in the region and yet aid is being withdrawn at a rapid rate because of the rather crude ways countries are categorised as low or middle income and the lack of attention now being paid to divides of wealth within countries.

The loss of funding to some countries in Latin America is a concern now especially because in some of these countries women's rights around labour rights, sexual and reproductive health rights are declining and few women are represented in the institutions of power, from the local to the national levels

The cuts in donor transaction costs, which are central to the Paris Declaration, have led in some cases to a reduction in gender and other specialists, such as in water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, education, markets. Much of the learning work within DFID is now contracted out to consultants, so the organisation is increasingly a conduit for spending aid money rather than actively working with learning about development issues. There is a sense that much experience and expertise around gender has been lost, something that was confirmed in the DFID gender evaluation (*ibid*). The loss of hands-on experience and people with specialist knowledge on gender is not easily replaced⁶².

Staff cuts and a realignment of DFID's role as an aid administrator with a strong emphasis on spending more through large allocations to governments, contracts and some INGOs (through partnership agreements) means that there is now little active dialogue between most INGOs and DFID, and donor relationships with the civil society sector feel weak for most. The larger INGOs continue to have access to senior donor staff and policy discussions, but many INGOs feel increasingly excluded, especially as they have to compete for smaller and smaller pots of funding outside the partnership agreements⁶³. Many INGOs have expressed their concern that the quantity of aid is overwhelming issues of quality, and the volume is seen as more important than where and how aid is spent⁶⁴.

3.6 Donor harmonisation and alignment

Most INGOs interviewed appreciated the concepts of harmonisation and alignment. However, some of those interviewed said that the donors are moving together very fast, not giving sufficient time for INGOs and CSOs to work through the implications of this process. Some INGOs feel largely excluded from the current processes, which in their view are leading to some unproductive relationships between donor agencies and the exclusion of civil society voices critical to the development dialogue.

Some observers said that the neo-liberal agenda underlying the growth model of the PD is not being addressed by any of the donors, who are ignoring the external drivers of poverty and gender inequalities (including where and how countries are incorporated into the global trade and security systems, an issue raised forcefully at a recent Policy

62 This was an issue raised with Hilary Benn by academics and INGOs at a DSA meeting at Open University in 2005. The focus was more widely on all DFID's social development work and the point was strongly made that staff cuts and contracting out were seriously compromising DFID's expertise to allocate funding intelligently and learn from past experience. This is exacerbated by high staff turnover, a current characteristic of DFID.

63 Only one INGO (out of 16 currently) with an explicit gender focus has a PPA and many PPAs carry some general references (lip-service) to gender within them. Addressing gender equality seriously and comprehensively is not essential for accessing these funds and women's organisations, particularly being smaller, have found it difficult to get partnership funding from DFID.

64 BOND has recently established a group looking at the quality issues of aid, especially partnership, learning and working 'bottom up', and over 300 INGOs belong to that email group. People interviewed also expressed concern at the technocratic view of aid currently prevailing, which prioritises aid management and administration over the need to build strong working relationships with those being funded, ensuring gender equality is funded both through good gender aware programme design and also direct funding to women's organisations and agencies, and establishing good feedback and learning loops for guiding future work.

Forum on Aid run by DSA, ODI and IDS, June 2007). The critiques around this narrow view of the causes and solutions to poverty were first expressed by many INGOs around PRSPs and this continues to be a problem in the new PD agenda.

The donor focus on harmonisation and handing over to governments, while actively working to "influence them" around a whole range of issues - from accountability and corruption to sectoral policies - means that civil society is increasingly excluded from many key forums and dialogues. The risk of developing cartels in each country that largely exclude civil society was clearly highlighted in the AAI/CARE report and echoed in some of the interviews held for this research.

The harmonisation policy is leading to the development of pooled funding for civil society work in several countries, and this is something that was a cause of concern to INGOs working on gender. They said that gender was rarely a criterion for accessing pooled funding, there was no ear-marked funding for gender equality work, and women's organisations were often too small or ill-equipped to meet the many conditions required for accessing this pooled funding. The trend here, as elsewhere, is for a smaller number of large grants, largely around advocacy and policy work which many women's organisations and those committed to working on gender equality and women's rights were not finding easy to access. They had fewer alternative sources of funding to turn to now donors were working together on joint funding mechanisms- often implemented by a contracted group of consultancy and INGO agencies.

This meant that relationships that had been built with key funders were fractured and the new 'more objective' approach to funding through written applications and detailed paperwork actively risked favouring larger agencies with good international ties and discriminating against those less able to capture their work on paper in English. This is a concern that civil society has been voicing for some time (see Wallace et al) and yet the trend towards 'impartial' check list approaches to grant allocations, administered by consortia on contracts, relying entirely on paperwork has been increased by the PD and its underlying approach to 'stream-lining aid'.

Although Oxfam reports that only a small percentage of funds goes through DBS (4% without the HIPC money), in some countries DFID spends up to 50% of its funds, and even 70% in one or two countries, through DBS and it is increasingly employing pooled funding contracted out to others for funding civil society. In theory, NGOs should also be able to access funding for relevant national work within the PRSP framework from the DBS funds allocated to governments, but in reality most INGOs suspect this is not happening to any extent and they fear that progressive women's organisations and other rights organisations will find that kind of money especially difficult to access.

This is an area where little research has been undertaken so far, although CARE initiated the research already referred to in Latin America and Oxfam plans a series of case studies to explore donor influence on CSOs under DBS and the new funding mechanisms. DFID is also commissioning a series of 6 major and 18 quick studies to look at the effect of PD and DBS on social development issues and rights, including how civil society is faring. It is an area where growing concern is evident but as yet data on what is actually happening is almost non-existent.

3.7 No women's rights funds

Several people noted that under the present regime of aid there is no specific financial commitment to women's rights and no careful tracking of what funds go to support women's rights or to help women out of poverty. Many of the mid-term reviews and joint monitoring reports on the MDGs are very weak on gender analysis and sex disaggregated data remains sparse. There is no clear donor vision for addressing gender equality or how best to help women out of poverty into positions where they can access resources and realise their rights, and in the context of PD and 'local ownership', donors seem hesitant about the best ways to encourage/influence governments on gender issues.

This is especially the case because gender is always seen as a culturally specific and sensitive issue and an issue where the boundaries between the role of donors and the role of governments is especially problematic and challenging.

Chapter 4: Research findings on funding

This chapter looks at the data gathered for this research. Given the time and budget available for this work, the data is inevitably limited. The survey was ambitious and tried to capture key findings from every continent, yet each continent has a different relationship both to the donor community (especially in relation to the range of donors, the degree of dependence on their funding and the purpose of the funding) and to the new aid architecture. The chapter will therefore start by setting the global scene and contextualising the research findings, it then presents the changing aid environment in respondents' countries and ends with findings on funding by governments.

4.1 Setting the global scene

In order to set the responses in a sharper context it is useful to draw briefly on three current reports around the relationship of CSOs to donors, especially DFID, that are rooted in wider fieldwork than was possible for this report. The first is DFID's report to the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts⁶⁵; the second is CAREI UK research on the implications of changing donor policies in Latin America for CSOs⁶⁶; and the third is the CARE/AAI research, *Where to now? On changing relations between DFID and CSOs in four countries of Africa*⁶⁷.

The critical points raised by these documents and relevant to this study are:

1. DFID now spends £328 million, including humanitarian aid (8.5% of the ODA budget.) through CSOs, and almost 50% of this is now spent in and by country programmes. This represents a huge shift towards decentralising funding over the past few years (HC 54, p8).
2. Money is spent through both project funds and contributions to joint funds pooled with donor partners (ibid, p8). The CARE/AAI study found that even in the countries where DBS is well advanced DFID 'appears to still favour a mix of instruments for supporting civil society' (p6). This means that assessing the impact of the new aid modalities is challenging because several funding streams are currently operating simultaneously in most countries.
3. The trend towards contracting out was identified as a problem by CARE/AAI because it was adversely affecting INGO-local CSO relations when INGOs were managing funding programmes for donors, sometimes in co-operation with private sector agencies.
4. CSOs are also negatively affected by the emphasis on direct budget support to government, because DFID may not fully work with CSOs, even though they have often performed better than developing country governments in providing benefits to the poor (HC64, p5).
5. 'Donors, developing country governments and CSOs have all said that they do not have a clear view of DFID's policy on engaging with CSOs' (HC64, p5). This would probably also apply to many other OECD donors because the Paris Declaration is almost silent on the role of CSOs in achieving their long term development goals.
6. Donors are less well co-ordinated in assessing and supporting CSOs than in their joint work with governments (HC64 p5), leaving a complex situation in most countries of partially co-ordinated and largely uncoordinated work with CSOs.

65 DFID: working with non-governmental and other civil society organisations to promote development, Eighteenth report of session 2006-7, HC 64, The Stationery Office, London, March 2007.

66 CAREI UK research on the implications of changing donor policies in Latin America for CSOs, Overview, July 2007. Helen Collinson, Unpublished and in progress, 2007.

67 H. Collinson, op cit.

7. According to the CARE/UK study in Latin America there has been a reduction of funding for CSOs in Bolivia and the funding that exists is around rights based approaches not service delivery, although CSOs were not prepared for changing their roles. In Nicaragua there is pooled funding managed by Oxfam UK; in Peru INGOs with partnership agreements operate and this is almost the only DFID CSO funding going into Peru, apart from some projects funded from the Civil Society fund in UK.

The picture is one of complexity, contradictory trends and a lack of clear analysis and policy positions from donors around the role of CSOs and how they should be funded to enable them to perform their work to the highest level. It is therefore unsurprising that the questionnaires showed a wide range of CSO views and responses to current donor funding patterns, to how accessible they found donors to talk to and what roles they could/could not play in policy dialogue around key instruments of aid distribution.

The research did pick up some indicative trends and issues, but perhaps above all highlighted the need for much more careful monitoring **by donors themselves** on the impact of changes they are introducing and how these are affecting the work and performance of CSOs. More systematic country level research is needed on what is happening to aid flows to CSOs under the changing aid architecture and how this is supporting or hindering their work around all aspects of poverty reduction. The lack of any attention to gender equality in the PD, and indeed in the initial Public Service Agreement for DFID (now rectified), means that a conscious effort is needed to study and understand the impact of current donor changes on gender equality work and women's rights; this is a matter of urgency.

4.2 Questionnaire respondents

The informal feedback to UK INGOs from southern partners was a critical force in initiating this research and the questionnaires were developed and sent to them prior to undertaking the interviews in UK. 32 southern partners of GAD Network members responded to the research questionnaire: 13 from Africa (three each from Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and Zambia and one from Uganda), 12 from Asia (seven from Bangladesh, two from India and three from Nepal), and 5 from Latin America (three from Bolivia and two from Nicaragua). They were all partners of WOMANKIND Worldwide, One World Action, CARE International, ActionAid International and Intrac.

All of the respondents were working wholly or largely on issues relating to women's empowerment, women's rights and gender equality. However, they focused on a wide range of different issues from violence against women to women's representation, women's economic empowerment to women's participation, research and advocacy to community level services. They had different priorities within the spectrum of work on gender equality and women's rights; they were also very different in size, structure and ways of working. Annual budgets, where stated, ranged from \$25,000 a year to \$11 million (although this latter figure did not represent the level of gender spend in the country, rather the overall country budget for an INGO country field office).

The sample included national networks and membership organisations with a large staff and country-wide outreach, as well as smaller organisations working at community level in particular parts of a country. Some organisations focused entirely on community level service delivery and awareness raising, others entirely on national level advocacy and research; some combine both. Some CSOs worked on one particular issue; others addressed many aspects of women's lives. Several organisations adopted an explicitly feminist, rights based, politicised approach to their work while others focused on women as a vulnerable group. Some were women's organisations while others were more generic development organisations that try to take a gender approach through all their programmes (i.e. they promote 'gender mainstreaming').

4.3 The changing aid environment in respondents' countries

The diversity amongst the questionnaire respondents matched the diversity in the aid environment in which they are working. The new aid architecture is more embedded in the African countries in this sample – and indeed it is notable that in the literature almost all of the examples of activities to promote gender equality and women's rights in the context of the new aid environment come from Africa. Zambia, Uganda, Mozambique, and Ghana all have PRSPs in place and a number of donors (different combinations of donors in each country) have either established or are in the process of establishing Joint Assistance Strategies to collectively support national policies, plans and budgets⁶⁸. In these countries donors have also established or are establishing joint funding mechanisms for working with civil society, with a particular emphasis on work around government accountability through advocacy work and bringing civil society voices into policy dialogues.

The introduction of DBS is moving at different speeds for different donors and each donor spends a different % of overseas development assistance (ODA) through DBS. In fact, money spent through SWAPs or projects continues to be significant in each country, making it hard to untangle funding streams and discover how CSOs can and do access them in a single questionnaire. The rate at which DBS is being adopted and implemented is variable between countries and between different donors within countries.

This diversity makes drawing any clear conclusions at this stage problematic. Indeed new funding mechanisms associated with DBS and pooled funding for CSOs are only now getting established in countries that have DBS, in Africa and e.g. Nicaragua. It is early days for either donors or CSOs to really understand the implications and impact of these shifts.

It is clear, however, that donors like DFID have not set up any monitoring systems to establish how new funding mechanisms are changing the nature of their CSO recipients and whether or not those engaged in issues such as rights, gender rights and gender equality are benefiting or losing out under the new funding regimes. While CSOs are trying to understand this themselves they clearly lack comparative data over time about how funding was allocated in the past; they can only use their own experience and that of their peers to assess the impact of these shifts. Inevitably this means the available data is quite narrowly focused and preliminary.

The data collected through the questionnaires and in some cases supplementary face to face discussions showed that all the respondents from Africa are dependent on donor funding for almost all their income, all have multiple donors, and most derive their income from a combination of international NGO, bi-lateral and multi-lateral (e.g. UN, World Bank) donor sources⁶⁹. None get any funding as yet from their own governments:

Typically in Uganda there is little to no funding from the government for these programmes. We do not know of any funding programme for this work by the Uganda government. (Uganda)

There is no such policy in Ethiopia. No funds are accessible for CSOs from the government. Rather the government seeks funds from local NGOs. (Ethiopia)

This contrasts with Asia where 50% of respondents said they receive government funding. Although DBS and decentralised funding offer African governments opportunities to

⁶⁸ DFID provides Direct Budget Support to all four countries

⁶⁹ With some also receiving funding from UN and multi-lateral organisations

fund national and local level CSO work, especially if they work within national planning guidelines (i.e. the PRSP), currently none of them are doing this in the four countries contacted.

Many African respondents said that most donors at present continue with project funding and in some cases this funding has increased for gender work within CSOs. For example, funding for violence against women (VAW) and HIV/AIDS initiatives is strong in some countries:

Donors give emphasis for the participation of civil society as an essential element of poverty reduction efforts. Accordingly they are aimed at empowering and capacitating the poor and promoting accountability. This assists gender equality work. (Ethiopia)

Donors of late tend to indicate their preference to fund activities both generally and specifically in relation to gender equality and women's rights. (Ghana)

More donors are talking about gender and HIV issues and there seems to be more interest in figuring out gender in Mozambique. (Mozambique)

We can speak to the issue of violence specifically. There is now more funding available for this than when we started in 2000. VAW is on the agenda of donors and governments in a way that it wasn't in 2000... The donors who have been supporting [our] work ... have policies in place which allow us to do VAW prevention work in a community-based and participatory way. We applaud the donors who have supported our efforts – not many were interested in the approach at first. (Uganda)

However, at least half of the respondents from Africa expressed real concern about the implications of changes that are currently taking place in the focus of aid for civil society groups **and** in the way aid is given. Several respondents were explicit in stating *that the new aid mechanisms were reducing or were likely to reduce money for gender related work in future:*

It has been somewhat difficult [getting funding for gender equality activities] as a result of the new aid modalities and the donor's focus on direct budget support. (Zambia)

Since donors are moving towards aligning their funding to the nationally designed development strategies and since the government is the ultimate owner of the PRSPs, there will be a limited probability for any donors to undertake a dialogue with individual CSOs and this has implications for CSOs to access donor funds. (Ethiopia)

Gender mainstreaming is one such reason (for cuts). The new aid modalities see gender equality as a cross cutting theme. Therefore in developing PRSPs, specific women focused activities are lost. (Ghana)

The new aid environment is also changing the kind of gender equality work supported by donors. Several respondents in all continents said there has been a move away from service delivery and community development approaches towards good governance – including transparency and accountability - democracy, and HIV and AIDs. Holding governments to account for their performance against the PRSPs and MDGs, and ensuring that CSOs engage in policy dialogues to shape PRSPs and other key planning and monitoring tools, were rising up the agenda almost everywhere.

A growing donor consensus around prioritising certain types of work is clearly a problem for those organisations focusing on other areas, who can find their funding dwindling. A number of CSOs in Africa said they were losing funding for their grassroots work. When donors decide to all increase funding around one issue this can also have some unintended consequences:

With increased interest in Violence Against Women (VAW) programming more funding is now available, but there is also increased competition for these funds – especially by larger international organisations who are now beginning to work on VAW. Traditionally, this has been the domain of local women's organisations and now large institutions are picking it up as an issue. We have seen this has serious implications because many large agencies are seeing VAW as an economic or health issue and they are not approaching it with a gender-based/rights-based perspective. Thus there is concern within the feminist movement that VAW is being addressed in ways that are actually doing harm to women because these organisations do not necessarily have a women's rights perspective. (Uganda)

This quote explicitly alludes to the increased competition for funding between INGOs and local CSOs that one UK commentator saw as increasingly characterising north-south relations within civil society. As funding is decentralised the risk of increased competition from INGOs working directly in country programmes certainly increases. However, few explicitly discussed it in this survey.

Changes to the ways CSO funding is given attracted a lot of comment from Africa. Several respondents noted a shift towards short term, activity-based funding aimed at obtaining specific results; some noted that this is particularly unsuited to gender equality and women's rights work, which is inherently about long-term, complex processes of social change.

To implement good and effective gender equality programmes is expensive and long term. Donors prefer fast moving projects, gender equality tends to be rather slow. (Ghana)

Several were concerned at the increasingly limited funding for organisational costs and organisational development. This is in direct opposition to the purposes of DBS funding, which are to strengthen organisations and allow them to take ownership of the agenda. Most local CSOs only get project and not basket funding (in contrast to the basket funding DFID, for example, gives to selected UK NGOs through partnership agreements (PPAs)), although there are some exceptions e.g. in Ghana under the new G-RAP funding scheme.

The new funding schemes in Ghana

Two new joint funding schemes have been introduced in Ghana recently. The G-RAP (Ghana research and Advocacy Programme) and RAVI (Rights and Voice Initiative). DFID pools their funding along with the Netherlands, Canada and Denmark to G-RAP, which funds research and advocacy organisations primarily. To qualify for G-RAP funds NGOs have to show a track record in this area of work, competence and good organisational systems. Initially the fund had a ceiling below which it would not fund, but protests from NGOs, especially Netright, a women's coalition network, led to this being rescinded. The fund paid inadequate specific attention to gender equality and women's rights until 2006, when a gender analysis was introduced as part of the application process. A gender policy has yet to be established for this funding.

The funding is expected to support organisational development as well as programme work. The grants are relatively few each year and large in size. Several women's organisations have said that they are excluded from accessing this fund because their organisations are too small or they do not reach the organisational standards (e.g. strategic plans, human resources policies and systems, financial and reporting

G-RAP has been managed by a private sector consultancy. Respondents from Ghana all referred to the fact that while the initial concept document for this fund mainstreamed gender as a cross cutting theme, it did not adequately cover gender equality or rights activities or target women's organisations. It is heartening that in response to concerns raised by women's groups, donors addressed this problem in the second round of funding:

'... the criteria for accessing this grant which included an annual turn over of \$400,000 excluded almost all women's rights focused groups. Only one gender equality NGO .. received a core grant under GRAP. Others ... received one-year projectised funding in 2005. Concerns were raised by women's groups on the implementation of G-RAP. Consequently, a gender audit was conducted that pointed out the gender gaps. In calling for expressions of interest for the second round of the funding cycle of G-RAP in 2006, more women's groups have received grants including core-funding...'

RAVI is a rights and voice initiative, expected to enable grassroots and other CSOs to undertake advocacy with government on behalf of the poor. It gives grants to smaller NGOs than G-RAP but again only a few a year and only for advocacy and policy work, not for direct work of any kind with the poor. There is no money in RAVI for building the organisation itself.

Women's organisations have raised concerns about these pooled funds all going only to research and advocacy work. Many find the application process and the reporting and financial frameworks too time consuming and demanding for the money available. The RAVI fund is run by a consortium of INGOs working in Ghana and all the grants given are listed on their website. However, no funding is to be given out in 2008 through this mechanism and no alternative sources of funding are highlighted on the website.

DFID in Ghana were not monitoring the impact of this new funding on who was/was not accessing donor funding in the NGO community, and there was little attention being paid as to whether women's organisations and those focusing on rights and gender equality were able to get fair access to the money. Indeed, DFID left all the monitoring to the implementing agencies and had no figures available to show how funding to CSOs had shifted over time as funding mechanisms and approaches were changed. DFID tend to expect the women's NGOs themselves to monitor how these changes have affected them and want more than anecdotal evidence about whether they are being excluded. However, these NGOs lack the time, funds and access to crucial donor records that are needed to do this work properly. They rightly asked that DFID put the time into this work and use their database for understanding how funding to CSOs in Ghana has changed over the past 10 years, why and with what effects on the sector; they especially feel funding to gender rights/women's empowerment NGOs need to be closely monitored.

While project funding for direct poverty work continued to be available through other mechanisms in northern Ghana, enabling those involved in services, community development and supporting local government to get continued funding of some kind, overall the shift was clearly towards very specific roles for NGOs around research, advocacy and voice. The project requirements were, according to observers in Ghana, seriously discriminating against smaller organisations, where many gender focused NGOs are found. are required to qualify. The reporting systems are onerous and often too heavy and time consuming for smaller organisations, where many activist and feminist NGOs are located.

In contrast with the Ghana experience, several respondents said they do continue to get project funding but it is increasingly very *short term* and comes with *many conditions*. They commented on the work-load implications of short term project funding, and one highlighted the obvious contradiction between a multiplicity of separate small short term funding sources for CSOs, each with separate reporting requirements, and the move towards the harmonisation of systems and reporting requirements for donor support to governments. Donors want to cut down on core costs and focus all their funding in project grants on activities, making covering the administration costs very difficult for most NGOs:

In the past we used to be funded based on our strategic plan and then annual plan but because now some donors want to fund specific activities we have to write project proposals in order to get funding. This is cumbersome and adds to the work overload of staff. (Zambia)

Now we have to spend more time writing proposals and searching for funding instead of focusing on our activities and the impact of the work we do. It is surprising that there is a discussion on harmonisation but when it relates to CSOs nothing happens that way. We have many donors who are giving small funds with others who are giving considerable and we have to report separately and each of them has its own models and formats. (Mozambique)

In most countries in Africa a move towards pooled funding, and possible basket funding for some NGOs providing them with fewer, larger and more strategic grants, is in the early stages. The experience in Ghana throws up some challenges and issues that need addressing if NGOs working with women are not to be marginalised from funding but most respondents were commenting on changes that they are anticipating rather than processes they have directly experienced. Concern was expressed by some that pooled funding may reduce the overall amount of funding available:

Donors such as Norway, Netherlands and Sweden who used to fund the organisation directly have opted to fund through third parties. When there was direct funding, more money was received. (Ghana)

Donations for individual organisations or projects are widely known in Ethiopia. The pool funding system is not yet operational but it is recently introduced by donor groups like DFID, CIDA and the WB.... As most donors are tending to facilitate their funding by way of coordinated funding through one lead donor, it is obviously problematic for CSOs to easily cope up with new cooperation (partnership) strategies and to access for funding. (Ethiopia)

Interestingly, evidence from Zimbabwe, where there is no direct budget support to the government shows that donors are nevertheless moving towards core funding, but through UN agencies. Some partners to WOMANKIND Worldwide in Zimbabwe have reported that increasingly they need to access funds through UN consortia and to do this they have to meet the requirements of these agencies. They say they have experienced a squeeze in funding because of this swing away from direct donor funding to NGOs by some donors and the preference to fund through large multi-lateral agencies. However, they also said that they have noticed a rise in interest in gender equality and women's empowerment issues among some donors, including DFID, very recently. This would chime in with the renewed focus on gender in DFID as a result of both the Government gender duty and the new Gender Equality Action Plan, 2006.

In Asia, whilst both Bangladesh and Nepal have a PRSP, neither country has donor harmonisation, direct budget support or pooled donor support to civil society organisations fully established yet. In Bangladesh, DFID and three other partners, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and Japan, are preparing a new joint approach in support of the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP), but currently multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid continues to be provided largely in the form of projects. DFID is the second largest donor to Nepal and supports the implementation of the Nepal Government's poverty reduction strategy using sector budget support and support through NGOs and the UN. In contrast most NGOs in India get their funding direct from different government funds; there is a history of government funding to civil society there, where the history of civil society activism is a long and respected one.

Most⁷⁰ of the respondents from Bangladesh, India and Nepal are dependent on donor funding for their income and most derive their income from a combination of international NGO and bi-lateral government sources. Some reported that they have experienced an overall increase in donor funding for gender work:

Funding opportunities for work on improving women's lives or gender equality is easier than any other development sector. (Bangladesh)

I personally have noticed that the donors' community is more interested in funding for small and community based NGOs working closely with grassroots people, particularly grassroots women at local level... Earlier focuses... were primarily day to day problems of women's lives. Donors community has now started focusing on structural problems of women's lives under rights based approach to development. (Bangladesh)

At the beginning of NGO working, it was difficult to find any official donor. Now we have created a working atmosphere with donors, now it is easier to access official donor funds on improving women's lives or gender equality. (Bangladesh)

It has become easier. The donors are more open to mainstream gender and allot funds for gender in institutes, governance and empowerment programmes. (India)

Those who felt that funding was getting more difficult to obtain generally attributed this to a shift in donor interest away from the kind of work their organisation is involved in:

It is difficult to get funding when it is focused only on women beneficiaries. Every donor's priority is poverty reduction. The donors are constantly changing their priority. (Bangladesh)

We have focussed on enhancing the capabilities of the court and legal system to be gender sensitive and gender friendly. Perhaps this may be too specific an area where donor would give less priority. (Nepal)

Increased preference for gender training, micro-credit, work on HIV and AIDS and trafficking rather than work to build women's organisations or conscientise them to struggle for their rights. (India)

One organisation additionally highlighted changes in donor expectations of CSO financing and management systems:

More difficult – donors are demanding a greater financial contribution from us than earlier (30% of total funding). Donors have also picked up the language of results-based

⁷⁰ 2 organisations did not answer this question, and 2 others suggest that they derive respectively 5% and 35.95% from "official" donors. It is possible that the question was not clearly understood

planning and monitoring, but their systems are weak and their own competence in this area is weak. (India)

Asked about recent changes they have observed in the type of gender equality and women's rights activities donors wish to fund, or in the way donors are funding CSOs, many respondents either had no opinion or had not observed changes. A small number of respondents had picked up a few aspects of the new aid environment, but this has, to date, been less embedded in Asia than in Africa:

Donors are more keen to provide support through government and less through CSOs. (Bangladesh)

The bi-laterals are more keen to fund through the government. INGOs are still keen to support the local NGOs. Donors are highly political. They try to pamper the government. Very class based and power based. (Bangladesh)

Previously we feel donors were more interested in reproductive health, education programmes many of which catered to the practical needs of women. Now the donors are expanding their funding basket from addressing gender needs to address strategic gender needs and are interested in gender in governance, gender based violence. (India)

The unambiguous support of most donors for the neo-liberal economic agenda has been the main reason behind the shift of funds from conscientisation and organisation at the grassroots to service delivery and economic "development" through micro credit. (India)

This situation is markedly different in Afghanistan where donors are working in ways that are more familiar to NGOs in Africa. The bulk of the funding goes through government and NGOs are expected to hold the government to account. While partners in Afghanistan were not formally interviewed a recent mid-term review for a women's rights programme supported by WOMANKIND Worldwide concluded⁷¹:

71 L. Oates, Women's empowerment programme in Afghanistan, for WOMANKIND Worldwide, August 2007. www.womankind.org.uk

Afghanistan and funding for women by DFID

[DFID is the second largest funder and has spent almost £500 million since 2001; it has made a ten year funding commitment.] However, 'DFID does not make gender an explicit aspect of its development assistance programme to Afghanistan. Priority areas include anti-narcotics, security sector reform, reconstruction and pro-poor initiatives. Similar to other large donors...UK has made significant contributions to multi-lateral funds and initiatives where the allocation of funding is determined by the multi-lateral institution (i.e. the World bank or UN) and not by the donor country; it is prioritising direct bilateral assistance to the government (80%).

Development assistance has benefited women through various programmes (classrooms, landmine removal). However, just at a time when many national donors as well as private funders are beginning to reduce funding to programmes for women or scale back operations in favour of direct bi-lateral assistance, there are fewer and fewer sources of funds available for women's rights work specifically. This is untimely.....'

The mid-term review goes on to argue that women's organisations are often new and relatively weak and need support to build themselves and develop their capacity to use their funds really well. Money pours in post-conflict but then often ends abruptly, leaving weak organisations trying to defend and promote women's rights. This is especially difficult in the context of Afghanistan.

In Latin America, while both Bolivia and Nicaragua have PRSPs and Nicaragua is in receipt of DBS for poverty reduction work, the overwhelming feature of the donor context is the reality that a number of major donors are pulling out of these countries as the spotlight shifts increasingly to Africa (and to some extent Asia in the context of the poverty reduction priorities). Three out of the five CSOs in Latin America that replied said their funding had gone down (Bolivia was the exception because of poverty issues) and the loss of overall donor funding was a major concern to them.

Four of the Five Latin American respondents are dependent on donor funding, with the other organisation deriving additional significant income from consultancy. The Bolivian organisations get their income from a combination of bi-lateral and INGO sources; the 2 Nicaraguan organisations from INGOs alone, although a new in-country pooled funding mechanism for CSO work has recently been introduced. 2 of the 3 Bolivian organisations have experienced an *increase* in their funding since 2000, whereas both Nicaraguan organisations have experienced a significant *down-turn*.

The Bolivian organisations who experienced an increase in funding cited the following factors:

Priority to meeting MDGs and reducing poverty...[has] brought gender equality and women's rights to the forefront – strengthening grass roots women's groups and institutional committees. (Bolivia)

Because donors are focused on gender equality. (Bolivia)

The organisation which had experienced a down-turn in funding in Bolivia cited a shift in donor interest away from programmes supporting women's rights to health.

In Nicaragua respondents said their funding for gender equality work has gone down, each for different reasons:

(It is) more difficult, It seems that not everyone values the importance of working with women to achieve change. Women are being attacked physically and sexually, there is extreme poverty and even the constitution says women should have access to justice but there is a lack of institutional justice for women. (Nicaragua)

[INGOs] like advocacy, rights, participation, environment, food security, violence against women, gender – but gender is considered as a cross-cutting theme and that's really limiting because it can't have the desired impact on the position and condition of women. The amount of money to work on strategic issues with women has gone down. (Nicaragua)

(It is) not easy because what we need is medium term commitments not short term – this is very difficult for some donors. (Nicaragua)

Asked about recent changes they have observed in the type of gender equality activities donors wish to fund, or in the way donors are funding CSOs, all respondents were aware of aspects of the new aid environment:

Change is happening because of the need for countries like Bolivia to obey debt relief as part of HIPC, and priority is given to reducing poverty in agreement with civil society. (Bolivia)

Given the Bolivian context, there is real interest and priority on working with social movements and organisations, but also a strong focus on achieving the MDGs. (Bolivia)

I have observed that a lot of people who give money are talking about advocacy and that is important but what is actually needed is credit, better employment, concrete measures when it comes to health and education. (Nicaragua)

The perceived impact of the new aid environment for the Nicaraguan organisations in our sample is that donors are leaving their country for countries targeted for increased support to meet MDG poverty reduction targets. This removes most bi-lateral funding, but also reduces funding available to the UK INGOs in this sample, thereby limiting their capacity to support partners in Nicaragua:

I am aware that strategies for international aid have changed and funds have been redirected to other countries which are now flavour of the month. (Nicaragua)

The poverty that some countries are suffering has forced some donor governments to prioritise particular countries, plus they are providing support to wars/conflict and natural disasters. (Nicaragua)

4.4 Funding from governments

No respondents in Africa yet get funding from their governments and all had concerns about the implications of accessing funding this way. There were concerns that it would compromise their independence, something that was picked up in the House of Commons Review of DFID's approaches to working with CSOs:

This is a very difficult issue especially with the current political situation in Uganda. CSO independence is increasingly being challenged by the government. It would be difficult for an organisation to receive funding from government sources and still be able to be strongly politicized in advocating for change within government policy. (Uganda)

It is theoretically possible for CSOs receiving money from government to challenge the government on issues of gender equality. However the CSOs have to form a formidable group and have one voice. If they do it individually they will not succeed. (Ghana)

Aside from the likely government reaction, respondents saw additional problems. Firstly there is the obvious problem of not wishing to bite the hand that feeds you. When CSOs are wholly dependent on funding for their survival few but the most principled are likely to consciously jeopardise that. Secondly, there is the danger of CSOs being co-opted, or being seen to have been co-opted, for political purposes:

There is such a politicisation of issues in Ghana that CSOs that receive funding from government for gender equality and women's empowerment work stand the risk of being branded as belonging to the ruling party. (Ghana)

These concerns are important because under the new aid mechanisms NGOs will increasingly be expected to access funding from local or national governments, and work to meet national poverty plans.

In Asia, two respondents from Bangladesh, two from Nepal and two from India had received funding from the government for their gender work. Both Indian organisations receive Government of India funding for gender-related capacity building of government staff, and in both cases, funding is increasing. However, in India local level funding has been available to NGOs since independence and the involvement of NGOs in national development was given formal status in the Seventh National Plan. India is the only country in this sample where government funding appears to provide a viable alternative to donor funds for CSOs working on gender equality issues:

We have got project-based funding from the government since the beginning of our work, for instance for gender training of government staff, preparation of gender learning materials and awareness materials (posters, books, films). We continue to have the support of the donors who started us on our way, but since the quantum of funds has decreased, we are broad-basing our funding and trying to access government funds to a greater extent. (India)

One of the Indian respondents noted that in that context:

You can challenge the government to a limited extent – the form of inviting questioning and dissent exists but the content is seldom incorporated in any meaningful way. (India)

This contrasts with the one opinion expressed from Bangladesh 'it is dangerous to challenge the Bangladeshi government'.

No organisations participating in this survey from Latin America had received government funding for gender related activities although there is some government funding available for CSO activities in Bolivia, through bi-lateral agreements. There is no government funding for CSOs working on gender equality activities in Nicaragua, and even the government units working on gender have no budgets. There are some government funds for CSOs but "CSOs who are party politically engaged take advantage of funds to use them for politics".

Asked whether, if they were to receive funding from their own government, this would compromise their ability to challenge their government's policies all felt that it would:

It is not possible to challenge the government if we receive funding from it. (Bolivia)

The government gives nothing to work on gender because they see gender equality and women's empowerment as a threat not as a right. Particularly for us it has never been possible because for many years we have had a critical stance to this rhetoric. (Nicaragua)

4.5 Concluding comments

The data gathered is mixed. This is unsurprising given the diversity of contexts, NGOs and donors involved in this research. Written questionnaires proved a challenging way of getting adequate data and understanding on each specific country and donor context and many answers were given in contexts of multiple types of donors funding. However, some clear issues did emerge and the quotations are illuminating, showing how NGOs working on gender equality interact with current funding streams. They provide a rich source of first hand experience.

Some of the key emerging issues include the lack of understanding many NGOs have about the wider aid context and the changing donor funding structures; the lack of attention donors are apparently paying to monitoring and understanding the impact their changes in approach are having on the NGO sector in each country; the fear or the reality of being marginalised by new funding mechanisms; and the clear lack of attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in many of the current aid mechanisms. While donors talk about gender, and as will be seen in the next chapter do enable some good gender work at the level of policy and lobbying work in some countries, the key aid modalities do not currently prioritise or really address the needs of those organisations and social movements working to address gender inequalities. Indeed, there are many worrying signs that aspects of the new aid modalities are further marginalising and excluding organisations committed to women's empowerment and rights from reliable, long term funding.

Chapter 5: Research findings on influencing activities currently undertaken by CSOs in the new aid contexts

This chapter explores how far CSOs/NGOs felt they were able to undertake and/or increase their advocacy and lobbying work on behalf of gender equality and women's rights. Respondents were asked whether the new funding structures allowed them to undertake more or less advocacy work with their governments and with donors. The answers varied between continents but broadly CSOs felt much more positive about these issues than they did about the new funding contexts. They felt overall that donor policies had enabled them to continue and sometimes increase their policy and lobbying work with governments, although not with the donors themselves. This is something the new aid modalities are specifically designed to promote, expecting NGOs/CSOs to increasingly become the watchdogs of their government and getting involved in planning through PRSPs and monitoring budget spending to ensure government accountability to its citizens.

The major concern for some, from answers to earlier questions, was that this important work was being prioritised and promoted over and above the many other areas of work essential to promoting women's confidence, skills and rights. The policy work should not be promoted to the detriment of funding and skills support for service delivery, community development work and work enabling women to build their own confidence and voice in the home, in the community and in the country.

5.1 Influencing governments

Africa

Eleven out of the 13 African respondents to the questionnaire in Africa are actively involved in national level advocacy to influence government policy on gender issues. Ten of these organisations did feel that opportunities to influence government policy had *increased* since 2000. The one organisation which felt there was no real change expressed frustration at the government's limited will to *implement* change, despite the increase in influencing opportunities.

At least 9 of the 11 organisations involved in national level policy advocacy have been involved in providing gender analysis and gender inputs into the PRSP, a process integral to the new aid environment. All of the 11 organisations are also involved in national campaigns and advocacy on key aspects of legislation and policy in their individual countries, for example making inputs into national gender policies and plans; shadow reporting on CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action; advocacy on girls' access to education and sexual abuse against girls in schools; promoting women in parliament and local government; demanding women have property rights; and participation in national advocacy coalitions on Domestic Violence. It is important to note, however, that when asked about turning policy into practice respondents did talk about the real challenge for both civil society and governments, with evidence in most countries showing that good policies and laws on gender equality are often not easily translated into changes - especially for poor, rural women.

Respondents listed new opportunities for influencing government policy in Africa; these are, in each country, a combination of aspects of the new aid environment and national legislation and policy change. Contributing to the PRSP, drafting national legislation on Domestic Violence, and supporting decentralisation were repeatedly mentioned and a lot of work is clearly being undertaken by these CSOs. These areas of work were provided:

- Revision of the Penal Code (Ethiopia)
- Drafting the Abortion Law (Ethiopia)
- PRSP (Ethiopia)
- Coalition on Domestic Violence Bill (Ghana)
- Decentralisation of local governance (Ghana)
- Women's and Children's Affairs Ministry recognising the importance of CSOs, inviting them to meetings to make contributions to its reports, and sharing information (Ghana)
- The HIPC Initiative and subsequent productions of the PRSP (Ghana)
- The need for government to be accountable to international conventions eg CEDAW (Ghana)
- Participation in the design of PRSP phase 2 – PARPA 11 (Mozambique)
- Decentralisation (Mozambique)
- Study on Violence Against Women led to the drafting of the Domestic Violence Act – first of its kind (Uganda)
- Contributing to the National Gender Policy and Plan of Action (Zambia)
- Contributing to the PRSP and 5th Economic Development Plan (Zambia)
- Constitutional reform (Zambia)
- Formation of Gender Forum (Zambia)

One of the respondents from Ghana described CSO involvement in the gender aspects of government policy making at some length, and whilst these processes appear to be most well-established in Ghana, this approach broadly holds true for the other African countries in this sample:

Submissions are invited from CSOs working on 'gender equality' when the National Development Planning Commission is preparing the country's development plans. The GPRS [PRSP] processes are cases in point. During development of the GPRS II, gender groups were invited to several meetings as well as represented on technical working groups to ensure gender equality was adequately covered. The Commission has this December 2006, also invited memoranda from CSOs as it prepares Ghana's long-term development plan. [We have] submitted a memo. The Ministry of Finance invited memoranda from CSOs in September 2006 when it was preparing the 2007 budget. [We] sent a communiqué from a workshop. Parliament and other state agencies also involve CSOs. The fundamental points are a) how many gender groups take advantage of these opportunities and b) how many of the concerns are taken on board by these state agencies. Obviously, the GPRS II did not capture all we wanted on women's rights (Ghana)

Asked to analyse why these opportunities have increased in Africa in recent years, respondents highlighted the increasing recognition of the role civil society can play in planning processes, which is a key aspect of the new aid environment, the increased emphasis on gender equality by some donors and the growing strength of CSOs:

The government's acknowledgement of CSOs participation as a necessary component in poverty reduction efforts. (Ethiopia)

Due to the pro poor policy of inclusion and participation also because of the greater recognition that it requires all our efforts to meet the government's development objectives in a democracy. (Ghana)

There has been some recognition by Government of the role that civil society is playing. (Zambia)

Demand by donors, demand by women for concerns to be addressed, greater networking by the women's movement, and worsening socio-economic conditions for women. (Ghana)

The emphasis given to women's empowerment and access to basic services by the MDGs. (Ethiopia)

The questionnaire asked respondents to give examples of where CSO's advocacy and campaigning over the past 5-6 years had had an *impact* (however small or great) on government policies, strategies and policy implementation in relation to promoting gender equality. Respondents from all of the African countries in the sample cited tangible examples:

- Revised Family Law on equal rights of men and women in marriage contracts (Ethiopia)
- National Action Plan on Gender Equality incorporated as integral part of PRSP (PASDEP) (Ethiopia)
- Inclusion of FGM, rape and domestic violence as a crime in the revised Penal Code (Ethiopia)
- Domestic Violence Bill (Ghana)
- Attention to gender GPRS 11 (Ghana)
- Family law to protect women's property rights (Mozambique)
- The Law Reform Commission has been very active in drafting new, pro-woman legislation on the issues of VAW in consultation with CSOs (Uganda)
- Approval by government of National Gender Policy (Zambia)
- Small improvement in the appointment of women to cabinet and parliament (Zambia)
- The government has introduced the Victim Support Unit under the Zambia Policy Service for victims of domestic violence (Zambia)
- Policy on girl child education – pregnant girls allowed back in school after giving birth (Zambia)

However, although advocacy opportunities are increasing and there have been some tangible benefits and successes resulting from CSO advocacy, almost all respondents highlighted continuing difficulties and frustrations. Several noted the frustrations of the policy influencing process itself. In Ethiopia, where the new aid environment is least well established, CSOs expressed frustration that there is not yet a clear framework or forum for dialogue for CSO-government partnership and cooperation. Others highlighted the fact that progress is slow or non-existent, with the government dragging its feet and not really engaging with the issues:

While lobbying for the PRSP, we did quite comprehensive work to help the government understand what we needed to integrate gender in the Policy, starting by bringing evidence on the importance of doing gender analysis of poverty. Then we agreed about a new definition for poverty which should be the basis for any further planning and the definition of strategies. In practice, many times we had to go back and re-do the work because the documents were out of context. In my view many technical staff at the Ministry level are not gender aware and they do not make an effort to understand and change things. The lesson is that in Women's Rights issues, something achieved today can be lost tomorrow. There is a need for good monitoring. (Mozambique)

A real lack of political will and/or lack of capacity in government to implement gender policies were mentioned in every country context, with some highlighting the limited capacity of CSOs as well as in the government as real constraints to change:

In cases where the government has committed itself to gender policies, it is the domestication and implementation of such laws and policies that is lacking. (Zambia)

Implementation is still a crucial issue. Monitoring schemes are very important but they don't exist at the moment or they are not effective. (Mozambique)

Although the sector Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) has a comprehensive 3-year strategic programme document, and also has a number of activities outlined in the GPRS, serious GE policy work has not taken off. There is still fragmentation of activities by many gender groups, the Ministry itself faces challenges in terms of finance, human and material support for its work. MOWAC has not been able to put together any effective platform that engages civil society organisations to move its strategic programme forward. The result is that no one gender group in Ghana undertakes to seriously monitor MOWAC's compliance with its international women's rights commitments found in CEDAW, BPfA, MDGs etc. As and when a report is due, an amalgamation of information is quickly collated to meet the reporting requirement. (Ghana)

Individual respondents highlighted other difficulties such as the government perception of a particular CSO as "opposition", thereby wholly constraining any influence they might have. There are many ways in which issues at the national and local level and campaigning or lobbying on them can quickly get tangled up in party politics and corruption.

Asia

Ten of the twelve respondents from Asia are involved in activities to influence government, and nine of these consider that opportunities have increased in the past few years. Six are involved in campaigning and advocacy to influence national legislation and policy.

Their activities and opportunities include:

- Government Gender Policy (Bangladesh)
- Government policy on workplace child care (Bangladesh)
- Policy advocacy on domestic violence, poverty policy as it affects women in the informal sector, and women's safety in public spaces (India)
- Participation in development of the new constitution (Nepal)
- Participation in the formulation of the Reservation Policy for women (Nepal)
- Assistance with drafting the Gender Equality Act; the Citizenship Act and draft bill on Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment (Nepal)

It is striking that, in contrast to the African responses, no respondents mentioned participation in the development of the PRSP, and even respondents from the same country all appear to be involved in very different advocacy activities.

Five are actively involved in activities to influence local level government on gender issues. Two organisations in Bangladesh and one in India are involved in building the capacity of women elected to local government. One organisation in Bangladesh has held a workshop with District level officials to influence them to develop a gender policy and allocate a budget for gender-related activities at ward level, and another is involved in broad local government-related advocacy activities.

The factors influencing their opportunities to influence government at either national or local level are, according to the majority of respondents who expressed an opinion, the gender policies of donor organisations and, to some extent, the gender policies of their own governments:

Because all donor and development organisations as well as the government itself (at central level) are very much concerned about gender issues. (Bangladesh)

Government is more open to the capacity building efforts that can be done by CSOs. (India)

The reason for this is donors' condition to mainstream gender and include women to the government. (Nepal)

The overwhelming consensus on micro credit programmes pushed by donors has constructed the space for dialogue. (India)

Only one Asian respondent mentioned any aspect of the new aid mechanisms in their responses. This respondent felt that opportunities to influence government had reduced due to the non-negotiable macro-economic framework promoted by IFIs, the 'democratic space has become more constricted – economic policy making in particular is hostage to the IFIs'.

A few made the point that although donors and governments are – in theory anyway - encouraging civil society advocacy and participation, the macro economic framework remains **completely** non-negotiable:

I agree that these new policies have addressed some of the issues of gender inequalities in access to health, education and other services however these are largely limited to awareness raising level only. As these funds do not address structural inequalities they are not sufficient to make sustainable changes. For example access to health care can be sustainable only if the health system gets restructured and implemented putting women and marginalised communities in centre but that is not the case ... I see most of the donor money being spent to pay their advisors, foreign experts, national program officers (who receive at least 10 times more than their Government Program officers) in coordination meetings. The amount of money that reaches the community is not enough to change the situation. (Nepal)

We see neo-liberal economic policies, the undermining of the institutions of governance, the militarisation of society and the resurgence of fundamental ideologies linked by their use of women's bodies as areas of contestation and instruments for ideological control. Together these processes have led to a shrinking of democratic spaces and legitimised violence and subordination of women. (India)

The questionnaire asked respondents to give examples of where CSO's advocacy and campaigning over the past 5-6 years actually had an impact (however small or great) on government policies, strategies and policy implementation in relation to gender equality issues. Respondents from all of the countries in the sample cited examples of successes, although, as with the advocacy actions, there was no consensus amongst respondents from the same country, except around the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill in India:

- Passage of Domestic Violence Bill 2005 (India)
- Mandatory presence of women in committees and training (33%) (Nepal)
- Violence against women (Bangladesh)
- Women's involvement in entrepreneurship (Bangladesh)
- Not influenced but voices have been heard about the violation of women's rights (Bangladesh)
- One of the major focuses of the PRSP is on gender equity and gender equity is cross-cutting issues in each sector (Bangladesh)

- Birth registration Act (Bangladesh)
- Provision of stipend for female students (Bangladesh)
- Compulsory child care in export oriented garment factories (Bangladesh)

Asked about barriers and difficulties in influencing government, problems of implementation were again repeatedly raised:

Poor governance and structure of the state is so much that no matter what they say, implementation is almost absent. In the last 14 years of my work I have not seen any government officer taking seriously issues related to gender equality and women's rights as their duty and commitment. (Nepal)

At local level, government doesn't demonstrate commitment according to the policy. (Bangladesh)

Included in government policy but no implementation of it. (Bangladesh)

Latin America

Four of the Five Latin American respondents felt that opportunities to influence their own governments on gender issues have decreased since 2000, although all are involved in some kind of advocacy or capacity building activities at national and/or at local level. The one positive report was from an organisation providing consultancy services to the national strategy on maternal health in Bolivia, seeking to include indigenous women's rights in the process. The key factor influencing this was the recent empowerment of indigenous women in government, due to the election of the first indigenous President in 2005.

The other two Bolivian organisations, whilst agreeing that posts made available for indigenous women in government provide some opportunities as do processes of decentralisation, felt that overall opportunities to influence government have gone down because 'gender is not a priority in the current context' and there is a 'lack of political will to change'. Even the organisation which provided a more positive assessment of opportunities nationally was more negative about opportunities at the local level, there is a 'lot of resistance to change at grass roots and to change power'.

In Nicaragua, opportunities even to attempt to influence government are highly curtailed:

Even though Nicaragua signed agreements at international level on women's rights, there are no specific policies and the equal opportunities law has not been applied. We believe that it is not of interest or priority for the government to look at the interests and needs of women. (Nicaragua)

Even though we have been really active and have done so much they [the government] are completely deaf when it comes to our demands as women. There are no policies on gender equality at any level of government. Just a very few municipalities have managed to pass policies that include gender equality, but they have no resources for implementation... Everyday they [our opportunities] go down – more and more political spaces are being closed by political parties. There are no resources to promote citizen participation in general and even less when it comes to women or work on women's empowerment or gender equality. (Nicaragua)

CSO's advocacy and campaigning over the past 5-6 years actually had an impact on government policies in only one example in Bolivia where the passing of a law establishing a quota for women in parliament was seen as successful. Otherwise, respondents in Bolivia and Nicaragua saw successes only in the organising of women themselves:

The policies of government have not changed but the women's movement has worked really hard questioning the power of Catholic Church particularly around abortion and corruption. (Nicaragua)

Despite this passionate campaigning, at the end of 2006 Nicaragua passed a law banning abortion in all circumstances, even if the health of the woman is in danger.

5.2 Opportunities to influence the policies of foreign donors

The responses to the question about influencing donors were very mixed across all respondents, and some respondents clearly had no experience of work in this area. Experience was probably tied to a range of factors including the confidence and ability of the CSO itself to engage with donors; the receptiveness and openness of donors to dialogue and listening to CSO perspectives and concerns; recognised channels for this dialogue; and how far some aspects of the new aid approaches were embedded. On the negative side respondents felt that the multi-donor or common pot of money idea has come to squash off any opportunities that might have been available for directly influencing and or engaging with policies of foreign donors in relation to gender :

Our experience has been that most donors do not open channels for influencing their own policy and practice. They put out their policy and CSOs either fit within that or don't. (Uganda)

No such forum to raise voices or any kind of dialogue on policies. Lots of dirty politics. Donors have not taken issue seriously to go via CSOs to raise their voices. Donors could have done more. (Bangladesh)

There is little space provided by donors to the CSOs for formulating their policies. (Bangladesh)

There are certain guidelines and policies of donors which we have to follow. (Nepal)

It is very difficult, however it depends how strong the CSO is. In last few years I have seen increasingly that donor agencies do not like to fund those CSOs who challenge their policies. (Bangladesh)

It is possible for CSOs to challenge/object the policy and practice of donors in relation to gender but the point of doubt is whether they would be able to influence any change in that specific policy or not. It is one thing to raise an objection but having the power to change it is quite another. If donors like USAID are having conservative anti abortion policies where they don't support any organisations that are involved in providing abortion services, hardly anything can be done to change that fact. (India)

You can give an opinion if you get funding but you hear nothing back. Eg USAID does not allow CSOs to voice opinion about legal abortion. (Bolivia)

In theory you can comment but in practice it does not happen. (Nicaragua)

Some respondents felt more positive and had had better experiences:

Emphasis given to the mutual accountability for performances of development assistance, and the role that CSOs are expected to play on measuring performance which in turn will enable them to influence donors' policies. (Ethiopia)

In ensuring mutual accountability through our Parliament, CSOs must be able to lobby parliament to hold donors accountable for commitments they make. CSOs can review donor policies on GE and demand that donors commit to them by providing the necessary funds for implementation. (Ghana)

5.3 Have there been improvements in gender power relations/women's lives in recent times related to donor policies?

Respondents were asked to sum up their views about whether donors' policies and funding strategies of the past 5/6 years had had any noticeable effect on women's lives and gender relations. This was an area where overall the CSOs who replied felt much more positive about the donor role in promoting gender equality. While they had mixed experiences and some considerable disappointment around current donor funding approaches several respondents highlighted noticeable positive impacts from some key donor gender strategies, for example in Africa related to the MDGs. Two respondents from Bangladesh highlighted the benefits of provision in the PRSP for the gender aspects of health, education and local governance and two more noted an increase in support for girls' education and female teachers. One respondent from Nepal highlighted national gender related legislation, such as enactment of the Gender Equality Bill, which they saw as encouraged and supported by donors.

The MDGs and PRSPs are only one part of the current aid architecture but they are seen by many in civil society as important frameworks for the allocation of government funds. Positive results arising from their use have been observed:

In the educational sector, there is greater enrolment of girls in schools through introduction of the schools feeding programme and capitation grant by the Ministry of Education. (Ghana)

Women are represented in the politics right from the village councils to national level. There is gender mainstreaming in the national and local budgets because all the development partners that closely work with the government give this as a prerequisite. CSOs are doing a commendable job on keeping gender equality and women's rights issues in the lime light by raising awareness about women's rights, monitoring government's implementation of these commitments and giving feed back, and advocating for the need to have gender sensitive policies passed and operationalised. (Uganda)

Health – HIV and AIDs policy has had an impact especially on the delivery of HIV and AIDS [services]. Education – has a lot of women in leadership and a special programme of integrating girls into all boys technical schools (Zambia)

All five of the Latin American respondents considered that donor policies had had at least some positive impact on women's lives in the last 5/6 years. They focused on the critically important support provided by donor organisations, especially INGOs, to women's rights and women's organising. This is not explicitly part of the new aid architecture, but it nonetheless important feedback on donor funding and its impact:

With donor support we have managed to promote gender equality and women's

rights – [donor funding has] absolutely clearly strengthened women's organisations, strengthened capacity building, and the critical consciousness of women in change processes. (Bolivia)

(Donor funding has encouraged) ... women knowing the extent of their rights, a reduction in maternal mortality, a reduction in illiteracy, women's exercise of their reproductive rights. (Bolivia)

Women are more aware of their rights and are participating more. They are more able to talk. (Nicaragua)

However, several felt it was too early to make a judgement about the impact of new aid modalities on women's lives in their country:

Donor policies/mechanisms are still in their infancy stages and still considering the best way to deal with their policies. (Zambia)

It's tricky to know if budget support really has any impact at the ground level. (Mozambique)

And several respondents, including those who identified positive effects, noted continuing challenges:

Gender mainstreaming is mostly rhetoric, much as this is a donor prerequisite the government has its own priorities e.g. local governments mainstream gender to cover up and look good on paper but when it comes to implementation and actual reflection of these issues there is no direct funding. (Uganda)

The limited, and in some situations the lack of, or the undesired interference of donor support for the planning and implementation of long term strategic mechanisms and programmes tend to perpetuate gender inequalities in access to resources. (Ghana)

5.4 Concluding Comments

The issues emerging from the research in relation to CSO/INGO ability to undertake advocacy/lobbying work with governments and with donors and the impact of this work reveal that though answers are still varied, CSOs overall felt much more positive about these issues than they did about the funding contexts. Reading the answers carefully, however, ongoing challenges such as questions about political will to change and implement policies in favour of gender equality and women's rights were noted. Analysing the responses also made the GADN pay close attention to the identity of the organisations who were answering these questions. Most of the organisations responding positively to the change in the environment and commenting on their ability to influence government were larger organisations with the capacity to engage at that level. Those who were less experienced in this work and lacked the resources were far more critical and observed that the changes in emphasis towards a focus on advocacy have meant that their opportunities to engage with donors and or governments had reduced.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

The GADN initiated this research because we knew that organisations were observing changes in the aid environment and perceiving the impact this was having on their work for gender equality and women's rights both in the global North and South. What our research has shown us is that the impact is not fully understood, uneven and varied depending on the context, the country / region and the size and type of organisation. By focusing on Network members and our partner organisations and going with written questionnaires, which is a challenging methodology for such a complex subject, we ended up with a very diverse range of answers. However, some very clear issues did emerge, as evident in Chapter 4 and 5 and the quotations. The direct voices from organisations working in the global North and South are a strong testimony of the urgency for the recommendations that the GADN has identified.

Overall we believe it is vital that the international community renews its commitment to key agreements and international documents such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals and uses a joint approach to implementing them rather than looking at development goals and targets in isolation from international women's rights commitments. We have also identified 2 key areas for future action and research. The first one is the need to monitor the new aid environment, its tools and the impact they are having on actors involved and affected and ultimately on achieving gender equality and women's rights. The second one is in relation to the actual nature of the aid environment and calls for a diversification of the current approach to aid, both in terms of the activities/areas that are being funded as well as the type of organisation that are being funded.

Overall

1. Governments and Donors should include CSOs meaningfully in the debates and disbursement of aid.
2. Governments and donors should honour international commitments to key agreements on women's rights and development such as the BPFA, CEDAW and the MDGs.
3. Governments and donors should commit adequate financial resources to implementing the above mentioned agreements. Governments also need to commit financial resources to gender commitments in documents such as PRSPs.

Monitor

1. Donors, government and CSOs need to track carefully what funds go to support women's rights or to help women out of poverty.
2. Donors need to systematically monitor the impact of changed funding streams, conditions and mechanisms on organisations working for gender equality and women's rights.
3. In particular, governments and donors need to monitor the funding available to CSOs by governments and the impact such funding has on the organisations and the work.
4. Donors and governments need to monitor the *implementation* of PRSPs and SWAPs in relation to their impact on gender equality and women's rights.
5. PAFs (Performance Assessment Frameworks) need to mainstream gender and need to be monitored.

6. The effect of the Paris Declaration and DBS on social development issues and rights, including how civil society is faring need to be evaluated. It is an area where growing concern is evident but as yet data on what is actually happening are almost non-existent.

Diversify Aid

1. Donors and governments need to ensure special funds are available for gender equality work in each country to ensure it is addressed and that smaller, activist women's organisations are enabled to continue their work. See gender basket funding in Kenya.
2. Donors and governments should make available long term funding for women's rights organisations.
3. Pooled funds need to integrate gender with clear adherence and monitoring criteria.
4. Diversify funding to ensure that the current focus on NGOs as instruments of advocacy does not exclude other work that is critical for women's rights and gender equality such as legal services, capacity building for women to participate in development, confidence building, and direct service delivery that addresses the barriers for access for women.
5. Donors need to establish funding mechanisms that are accessible to a wide range of CSOs, not only the strongest and largest.
6. National Women's Machineries (NWMs) need to be adequately resourced to enable them to undertake their vital role of leading on national gender equality plans.

The GAD Network is committed to working in partnership and sharing and reflecting on our own work as well as on other actors' work in the sector. We are committed to addressing these recommendations and encouraging other organisations, including governments and donors to play their role in addressing them.