



TAKING GENDER EQUALITY SERIOUSLY

MAKING PROGRESS, MEETING NEW CHALLENGES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. **The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.**” – United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997



Husbands and wives start family businesses as equal partners, thanks to microcredit loans provided by UNDP to the villagers of Kishoreganj District in Bangladesh.

WHY EQUALITY MATTERS

DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM

UNDP believes that development goes beyond improving living standards to embrace the expansion of people's opportunities, choices and capabilities to live in freedom and dignity. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen famously describes development as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. In Sen's paradigm, the concept of freedom is central to development for two reasons. First, Sen argues that development progress should be measured by the degree to which various human freedoms have been enhanced. These fundamental liberties include, for instance, the freedom to satisfy basic needs for food and shelter, the freedom to live safe from fear and violence, and the freedom to participate in the social, economic and political life of one's community. Second, Sen makes a compelling case that the free agency of people is the major engine of development; he sees individual freedom and overall social development as inextricably linked. In short, *freedom is both the end goal of development and the chief means for achieving it.*

If development progress is best measured by how well the freedoms of people have been enhanced, then gender-disaggregated statistics show how very far we have to go.

- Of the world's one billion poorest people, three-fifths are women and girls.
- Of the 960 million adults in the world who cannot read, two-thirds are women.
- Seventy percent of the 130 million children who are out of school are girls.
- With notable exceptions, such as Rwanda and the Nordic countries, women are conspicuously absent from parliaments, making up, on average, only 16 percent of parliamentarians worldwide.
- Women everywhere typically earn less than men, both because they are concentrated in low-paying jobs and because they earn less for the same work.
- Although women spend about 70 percent of their unpaid time caring for family members, that contribution to the global economy remains invisible.
- Up to half of all adult women have experienced violence at the hands of their intimate partners.
- Systematic sexual violence against women has characterized almost all recent armed conflicts and is used as a tool of terror and 'ethnic cleansing'.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 57 percent of those living with HIV are women, and young women aged 15-24 are at least three times more likely to be infected than men of the same age.
- Each year, half a million women die and 18 million more suffer chronic disability from preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

GENDER AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, are an integrated set of eight goals and 18 time-bound targets for extending the benefits of globalization to the world's poorest citizens. UNDP helps countries formulate national development plans focused on the MDGs and chart national progress in meeting them through the MDG reporting process.

Millennium Development Goal 3 is 'to promote gender equality and empower women'. The goal has one target: 'to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015'. The existence of a separate goal on gender equality demonstrates that the global community has accepted the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the development paradigm – at least at the rhetorical level. But although access to education is a necessary step towards women's equality, it is hardly sufficient to ensure the full participation of women in the political and economic lives of their countries.

To realize the MDGs, governments and their partners must seriously and systematically 'engender' efforts to achieve all the goals. Thus ensuring that national MDG plans and strategies mainstream gender and supporting the use of gender-disaggregated data in the MDG reporting process are critical areas for UNDP. The organization is supporting such efforts in Albania, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Yemen.

In African countries, UNDP brings together men and women to bolster the effective use of public resources for development.



WHAT ABOUT MEN?

'Gender' is often used as shorthand for 'women'. Most development practitioners direct the bulk of their 'gender mainstreaming' efforts toward activities that aim to empower women economically and politically, protect their rights, and increase their representation in all manner of decision-making bodies. But gender isn't just about women. Gender refers to socially constructed roles of both women *and men* as well as the relationships between them in a given society at a specific time and place. Yet where are men in the development discourse on gender?

The issue of men in development is critical. Relationships between men and women and the way in which masculinity is defined are at the heart of many development challenges, with the HIV/AIDS epidemic providing a particularly stark example. Ending women's subordination is more than simply reallocating economic resources; it involves redistributing power. Equality proponents argue that transformed gender relations will benefit men as well as women – in terms of overall family income, for instance, or men's emancipation from imprisoning expectations and stereotypes around masculinity. Nonetheless, it is clear that men will have to relinquish some of their economic, political and social power if women are to have their fair share of it. And giving up power and privilege is something that few do gladly.

Applying the 'development as freedom' concept to the state of the world's women reveals a development process that has left half of humankind behind; and shows how even today we continue to hamper our efforts to build a better future by leaving women and girls – along with their talents, strengths, and potential contributions – out of the equation.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING MEANS

- **identifying gaps** in gender equality through the use of gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data;
- **raising awareness** about the gaps;
- **building support for change** through **advocacy** and **coalition-building**;
- **developing strategies** to close those gaps, such as targeted **training** and **capacity-building** programmes;
- putting adequate **resources** and the necessary **expertise** into place;
- **monitoring** implementation; and
- holding individuals and institutions **accountable for results**.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1 There have been noteworthy attempts by men at the UN and in other development organizations to understand what gender mainstreaming means from a male perspective so that they can engage in the issue. UNDP was a pioneer in this work.¹

2 The organization is working to raise awareness and build capacity in the development community to address the gender issues of men and boys. For instance, UNDP, in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, has held a training institute on gender and the role of men and boys at the Commission on the Status of Women since 2003. Expert trainers from all over the world offer courses that explore the role of men and boys in areas such as HIV, violence prevention and reproductive rights. Over 800 delegates, predominantly from the South, have taken part.

3 UNDP is supporting national efforts in many countries, including **Thailand** and **South Africa**, to engage men in efforts to prevent HIV infection and to design responses to the epidemic that address the ways in which prevailing gender relations impact men's sexual health as well as the health of their partners and children.

1. See "Gender Mainstreaming: A Men's Perspective," a paper prepared by the UN Working Group on Men and Gender Equality, an informal group of UN staff formed in early 1999; or, *Men, Masculinities and Development*, by Alan Greig, Michael Kimmel and James Lang, UNDP/GIDP Monograph #10 May 2000.

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Ending poverty means ending feminized poverty. Promoting good governance means engaging women voters, putting women in office, getting anti-discrimination laws on the books, and ensuring that law enforcement and the judiciary uphold women's rights. Stemming the HIV/AIDS pandemic means tackling head-on the question of male sexual dominance and power, both in intimate relationships and in the public sphere. Meeting the MDGs requires that the health, opportunities, and capacities of women as well as men drastically improve. In fact, *progress in each of UNDP's focus areas requires the dramatic expansion of women's freedom and equality.*

UNDP, along with many other UN organizations, bilateral development agencies, and non-governmental organizations, has adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy as a way of ensuring that women as well as men benefit from programme and policy support. Gender mainstreaming is intended to be transformative, altering the process of development such that equality becomes both a means and an end – much the way the concept of freedom figures in Sen's definition of development.

UNDP and its partners have had mixed success with mainstreaming. For UNDP, as for others, too often mainstreaming has meant that everyone – and thus no one in particular – has responsibility for promoting women's empowerment, and talk about gender and women has too often taken the place of real action. Nonetheless, there are many success stories throughout the organization, cases where, thanks to the innovative efforts of dedicated and creative staff and the support of visionary managers, mainstreaming has yielded positive results. The examples in this booklet show that mainstreaming achieves results when resources, capacity, commitment and management support all converge in a strategic area.

Enhancing women's freedom and equality must be a deliberate and consistent part of all that we do. Expanded freedoms for all, women and men, girls and boys, must be our goal – both because it is necessary for development effectiveness and because equality is a core value of the UN Charter, a value we have all pledged to protect as representatives of the UN system.



Peruvian women working on MDGs: supported by the Gender and MDG Project, executed by UNIFEM.

UNDP

WORKING WITH UNIFEM

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses its activities on four strategic areas: reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace and war.

UNDP and UNIFEM enjoy a close and complementary relationship. Within the UN system, UNIFEM is a source of innovative programming and policy approaches to achieving gender equality. UNDP is able to promote the 'scaling-up' of these innovative approaches through its presence on the ground in 166 countries, its close partnership with governments, and its management of the UN Resident Coordinator system.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1 UNIFEM's work to promote the inclusion of women as decision-makers both supports and is supported by UNDP's broader work in the area of democratic governance, as demonstrated by successful efforts in **Burundi**. A project that UNIFEM executed on behalf of UNDP and the Ministry of Social Affairs resulted in the adoption of a national gender equality policy.

2 The UNDP-UNIFEM Joint Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Women's Inheritance and Property Rights in **Ethiopia** addresses the increasingly dangerous nexus of HIV/AIDS and women's unequal rights to own and inherit land and property.

3 The UNDP Gender and MDG project being executed by UNIFEM has strengthened gender-sensitive monitoring and reporting on progress toward the Millennium Development Goals in **Cambodia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Peru**.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1 In **Bahrain**, timely, targeted UNDP support to women's political empowerment just prior to the election helped bring six women into the present parliament.

2 In **Cambodia**, informal community justice systems and mediation are now being used successfully to address domestic violence in villages; a UNDP study on the links between formal justice and community-based justice systems, presented to the National Forum on Access to Justice, spurred the new approach.

3 In **Honduras**, UNDP policy advocacy encouraged the adoption of a National Policy on Equal Opportunities, which in turn paved the way for two important bills, a law on equal opportunity and a new electoral law that reserves 30 percent of seats for women.

4 In **Pakistan**, 27,000 elected women councilors at the local level have participated in rights-based training programmes and other capacity-building efforts to improve their effectiveness, thanks to the UNDP-supported Women's Political Participation Project.

5 In **Yemen**, UNDP has supported voter education efforts that are linked to religious instruction in order to counter claims that religion bans women from politics.



Men and women count voting ballots in Afghanistan.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

More countries than ever before are working to build democratic governance. Their challenge is to develop institutions and processes that are more responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens – including women. Governance is among the most strategic areas for women’s empowerment and gender mainstreaming, and UNDP helps countries strengthen women’s participation in their electoral and legislative systems, improve women’s access to justice and public administration, and develop greater capacity to deliver basic services to women.

Women have long been under-represented at all levels of governance – as voters, candidates, party leaders, and elected officials. Campaigns and party platforms that fail to address women’s concerns often fail to motivate women as voters, and illiteracy, twice

as common among women than men, has impeded women’s participation in the political process. Cultural norms and strictures can also make it difficult to register women to vote. Women still hold only 16 per cent of parliamentary seats worldwide.

Gains in the number of women in office have rarely been achieved without pressure and support from women’s organizations, advocacy, lobbying, training of women candidates, alliance-building, external financial assistance and, increasingly, the use of quotas. At the global level, more than half the countries that held elections in 2003 used some form of affirmative action to increase women’s representation, and the experience of the 14 countries that have crossed the 30 percent threshold of women parliamentarians set by the Beijing Platform for Action shows that gender quotas and reservations are the most effective policy tools for increasing the number of women in office.



Anders Gunnartz/UNDP



A woman in Mozambique gets ready to cast her vote.

P. Sudahkaran/UN

ACHIEVEMENTS

1 UNDP supported **gender-sensitive budget analysis in 35 countries** in 2004. The organization also sponsored training of development practitioners, economists, representatives from ministries of finance, professors and others from more than 50 countries in gender budgeting in a series of workshops run by the world's leading authority in the subject. Analyzing national budgets from the perspective of their impact on women and men, boys and girls, promotes equity across the development spectrum by identifying who is allocated what in different development fields, including education, health, and employment – areas that are crucial to building people's capabilities and reducing poverty.

2 In **India**, the UNDP India Partnership Forum (IPF) has developed an innovative Social Code for Business to protect working women. More than 300 companies have formally adopted the Code, which promotes equal employment access and opportunities for women, and negotiations are underway with some 200 other companies.

3 Advocacy efforts on the gender implications of the MDGs and the use of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis in the preparation of the MDG Reports are on-going in many parts of the world. In **Kenya**, for example, investment requirements to achieve the MDGs looked not only at the requirements for meeting the specific gender equality goal, but also investments that empower women in support of the other goals.

4 In **Uzbekistan**, UNDP supported a comprehensive analysis of the impact of trade policies on women. The analysis formed the basis for training and roundtable discussions on 'engendering' macroeconomics for representatives from key line



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