

GENDER

Guidelines



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Coordination Office
Kathmandu, Nepal
May 15th, 2001

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Preface

Gender balanced development has always been one of the focus areas of SDC development Cooperation. Within the SDC Country Programme 1998-2004, gender balanced development has been chosen as one of the two transversal themes. A transversal theme addresses pertinent aspects of the frame conditions that are manifest throughout the sectors and relate to the principles of SDC. Central to the relationship of men and women is the issue of sexuality, which are closely linked to the danger of the HIV/AIDS within Nepal. This guideline also provides a position paper for HN/AIDS response in SDC Nepal.

This paper has been developed from institutional experiences gained at different levels, over a number of years. This has also been guided by the policies of SDC Headquarters on Gender Balanced Development and the Policy on Advancement of Women. In order to integrate the gender balanced development this guideline will have a binding character for all SDC supported programmes, projects and activities. Within the organisation (i.e. Coofs and projects) an "Equal Opportunity Policy" is applied to ensure the creation of a work environment where organisational culture accommodates the needs and concerns of men and women.

The integration of gender balanced development requires a process orientation, where experiences and actions can regularly be reflected upon and adjusted accordingly. Lives of men and women are intrinsically linked. Therefore, by integrating a transformatory process for a gender balanced development in programmes and projects a dialogue and partnership between men and women is developed and opportunities are created for both to ensure that neither is disadvantaged. To take account of the ongoing learning experiences this guideline paper needs to be dynamic to reflect the process and be flexible to accommodate the changes that may occur in course of time.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Understanding gender issues and integration of gender balanced development to the Nepal programme in the form of concrete activities began in 1993. Nevertheless, gender has always been an important area of SDC development efforts.

Experiences have highlighted that working with gender concerns is complex and has the potential to touch men and women involved in a very personal as well as collective way. This can result in resistance and conflict, therefore interventions need to be approached in a sensitive way, giving respect to the individuals as men and women. However, resistance and conflict can not be avoided and can also provide opportunities for change

Over the years, positive changes have taken place, women are more visible and men and women are sharing and discussing together. Now the challenge is to build on these experiences to ensure equitable opportunities for men and women.

1.2 Situation of women in Nepal

Women constitute 50 percent of the population of Nepal. Religion and tradition play significant role in determining women's status. The women from different religious background and socio-cultural setting might have different status in family and society. However, the general condition of the Nepali women in terms of using equal rights and opportunities in every sphere of life, all women are disadvantaged. Daughters are considered as the temporary members of the family who leave their parents after marriage. The patriarchal social

structure has prevented Nepali women from enjoying status equal to that of men. Mostly men keep control over all resources. This tradition precludes daughters from having their share of resources for health, education and nutrition earlier from the family level. Only 30% women are literate in comparison to 65%¹ for men. Out of total schools enrolment only 38% are girls. Nepal is one of the very few countries in the world where life expectancy of female (98 % to that of male²) is lower than that of men. Similarly, the maternal mortality rate³ for Nepali women is 540. The World Health Organisation and UNICEF, however, estimate that, due to the difficulty in gathering accurate information, this maternal mortality rate may be three times as high as reported. Forty percent of Nepalese women are between the age of 15 and 19 years when they give birth to their first child⁴. As a consequence of all above mentioned, the Nepalese women have one of the poorest health and lowest literacy rate in the world.

Several laws which are discriminatory to women still exist although a civil code amendment bill has already been submitted to the parliament. Human rights of women and violence against women, especially trafficking, dowry related and domestic, are significant problems. More importantly prostitution and trafficking of young girls are fundamental problems in Nepal. Women's participation in the economy is still mostly in traditional and less productive sectors and their true contributions to the national economy are yet to be fully accounted for .

The Local Self -Governance Act 1999 ensures 20 percent women representation among the elected members at the local elected bodies. However, their representation in key decision

1 CEDAW Report, 1999

2 UNICEF report, 2000 "The state of the world's children"

3 The number of women who die during pregnancy and child birth per 100,000 live births

4 CEDAW Report, 1999

making political positions and in the civil service is still very low. Endeavour are being made to change the situation from various side, but a long way is ahead.

1.3 Achievements

The integration of gender balanced development was introduced to the Nepal programme in 1993, following the introduction of the SDC cross-sectoral policy- "managing gender-balanced development" .The new policy was an important catalyst to further develop interest in the participation of women in the development efforts. A variety of activities were implemented through SDC coordination office and its Projects.

In 1995, Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project had carried out a gender analysis. The study took almost one year to complete and was a very first initiative of this type. The study entitled "Women, Men and Forest" has contributed a lot in the process of gender mainstreaming within SDC/N. The recommendations of the study were gradually implemented within SDC, e.g. a minimum of 30% of participants at training/workshops/ study tours be women; recruitment of more women staff at all and also at policy level and compulsory representation of women in the Forest User's Groups. At present the project supports the deserving female students from the project districts for studying ISc and BSc Forestry .

A gender development group was formed to share the experiences on gender and relevant issues among different projects within SDC.

SDC Coordination office was actively involved in a "Gender Internship Programme" (GIP) in 1997, organised by SDC India. Two participants participated in GIP, a 13 months long training

programme which combined the theoretical and practical aspects of learning in the field of gender. As part of the learning requirements for GIP, two separate studies were carried out during April 1997 to May 1998 namely, "Perception of Gender in the Coordination Office" and "Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project and the understanding of Gender " .

Gender sensitisation/orientation workshops have been one of the main activities in mainstreaming gender within SDC and its projects. Most of the employees from the community-based projects and also the majority of the staff from the Coof have participated in such orientation workshops.

Integration of gender in the projects and its activities has now been an integral part of the responsible units and individuals. Gender sensitive interventions within the proposed activities of any individual project is part of overall planning and implementation. Gender is mentioned as a guiding principle in the key papers such as Project Document, Annual Programme, Annual Report.

1.4 Rationale

A policy goal of SDC is women's participation in development. Within Nepal women are generally in a more disadvantaged position than that of men. Therefore special consideration needs to be made to ensure that women have access to and benefit from the development inputs. To integrate a gender sensitive approach it is essential to recognise that the lives of men and women are intrinsically linked. The relationship between men and women is central to the sustainability of gender balanced development

2. SDC'S PERCEPTION OF GENDER AND ITS APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF NEPAL

2.1 Perception of gender

Gender focuses on the relationship between men and women and recognises the social construction and culture specific nature of the relationship. Biological difference between women and men do not change. But the social roles that they are required to play vary from one segment to another and at different time periods.

The term gender refers to the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. In Nepalese society women as a group have less access than men to resources, opportunities and decision making. These inequalities are constraints to development as they limit the ability of women to develop and exercise their full capabilities for their own benefit and for that of society as a whole. SDC in Nepal recognises this context and relationships and acts on the possibilities for change.

2.2 Approach

SDC supports programmes that focus on meeting the Gender needs within the broader context of development programmes and projects. Mainstreaming gender has been SDC's major thrust during last several years. Mainstreaming gender sensitivity into all activities is a process that requires an attentive awareness to ensure that the needs of men and women are addressed in an equitable way.

There is no set toolbox to integrate gender sensitivity into activities. Each situation or activity must be assessed regarding its involvement of men and women as well as to the benefit for each other. The timing of each process intervention requires reflection on the situation and taking account of the dynamic of the relationship of men and women within their socio-cultural environment.

To mainstream gender in a constructive way and to avoid it becoming "organisational rhetoric", it requires a strong visible commitment from management at the different levels together with a support system providing regular guidance and coaching.

Consideration needs to be given to the recruitment of staff. Constant vigilance is required on the percentage of men/women staff vis-a-vis the integration of gender sensitive activities. Within Nepal there are good evidences that women extension workers have easier access to women in the community.

The number of men and women involved in activities is important, but more important is the qualitative nature of their involvement. However, the initiative should always be consistent for gender balanced representation.

In planning the mainstreaming of gender needs to consider the distribution of power, of benefits, of rights and duties and the responsibilities between men and women.

3. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER GUIDELINES

3.1 Goal

The Goal of this guideline is to improve the quality of life of men and women by developing a conducive environment for dialogue and partnership and a gender balanced relationship.

3.2 Objectives

SDC in Nepal has the following objectives with regard to Gender Guidelines.

3.2.1 **Mainstreaming gender** equality between men and women in all SDC projects and programmes.

3.2.2 SDC, its staff, its projects and partners become sensitive on the effects of programmatic activities on the men and women and their livelihood. Through their behaviour and statements they show respect for both women and men, value their views and needs and accept them as equals.

3.2.2 SDC, its programmes and projects consciously target their investments and activities towards the different aspects of gender. They make sure that women are not negatively affected by projects and their activities.

4. GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These are the principles to be compulsorily followed by SDC, its projects and partners while preparing and implementing new sector concepts, programmes, projects and project phases.

Gender related choices are made at various levels. Within the approved Country Programme these levels are: sector concepts and programmes; project identification and preparation; project phase planning and implementation.

The following general guiding principles will guide the Programmes and Projects in SDC Nepal in mainstreaming gender:

4.1 Ensure that programmes and projects do not have a negative impact on women by deeply understanding the group of people being benefited from their activities . Women and in particular disadvantaged ones, benefit at least as much as men.

4.2 Ensure that, where possible, programmes /projects provide more support and

resources to women who are responsible for the family and children.

4.3 Seek partners with shared vision on gender.

4.4 Promote social development activities (e.g. literacy, HIV/AIDS awareness, health and sanitation, group formation, etc.) through linking more technical, long term projects with local organisations, NGOs, or other SDC supported projects in which women are focused as much as men.

4.5 Run Gender related Catalytic Activities. SDC will in principle concentrate its gender-oriented efforts within its three priority sectors. There is however, scope for the support of gender related and catalytic activities. Work against sexual and economic exploitation of women within sphere of influence of programmes and projects. Judiciously use the resources and funds as to allow women and men to benefit equally

5. FIELDS OF ACTION

These Gender Guidelines contain the following Field of Actions:

- 5.1 Gender sensitisation workshops for awareness and orientation should be the gender specific activity planned for the purpose of orientation and initiating the mainstreaming of gender into the ongoing activities. A man and a woman should facilitate such workshops.
- 5.2 Promote recruitment of female staff in the programme and projects and facilitate a gender-balanced set-up. Recruitment is to follow the II Policy on Equal Opportunity " at Coordination office level. If appropriate, fix quota for training and education for women at all level of interventions.
- 5.3 Ensure that men and women are represented in interview panel, planning, evaluation and monitoring missions.
- 5.4 Seek innovative methods of promoting grass-roots participation between men and women in the family and community context of women at all levels of responsibility and decision- making without cutting into the feeling of solidarity.

6. ROLE OF THE CO-ORDINATION OFFICE (COOF) AND RESOURCES:

6.1 Role of co-ordination office (Coof)

The Co-ordination Office has a central role in the implementation of gender guidelines within the Country Programme Nepal 1998-2004. The followings are the Coof's main functions:

- 6.1.1. *Ensure synergy and cooperation between sectors, projects and partners in questions related to gender guidelines. Encourage sharing and capitalisation of gender -related experiences.*
- 6.1.2. *Contribute to gender sensitisation of programmes, projects, pal1ners and their people by providing relevant information and organising events (workshops, lectures, visits, etc).*
- 6.1.3. *Participate in local, national, regional and international networking.*
- 6.1.4. *Provide or facilitate backstopping to programmes, projects and pal1ners for gender -related issues.*
- 6.1.5. *Promote the participation of implementing agency staff in the training courses on gender and sharing related to gender, organised by projects and programmes of SDC.*
- 6.1.6. *Monitor and ensure application of guiding principles of gender related choices (e.g. during project identification, drafting of project documents, evaluation, etc.).*

6.2 Resources

SDC's sectors, programmes, projects and partners are expected to dedicate part of their financial and human resources to gender orientation. This relates for example to the participation in gender -related events, to controlling and experience sharing. The resources used for gender orientation should be in a reasonable proportion to the overall resources available to the project.

The Co-ordination office makes available 20% professional staff time for the gender -related various functions mentioned in Chapter 6.1 - Role of Co-ordination office. The person will act as a first contact person for gender related activities and for networking and linkages. Besides, there are financial resources available (Small Actions Coot) for catalytic activities, experience sharing and networking and -as per need -backstopping support. In the meantime, the task of mainstreaming gender is every ones , responsibility and gradually it becomes 'Courant normal'.

7. MONITORING

The monitoring is equally important to assure that the guidelines are implemented properly. The person responsible for the sector will carry out annual monitoring of gender mainstreaming in the projects. The programmes and projects as per their nature and requirements can use different monitoring tools. However, the following monitoring tools can be used for annual monitoring:

7.1 Base-line survey.

Most of the programmes and projects carry out base-line studies before initiating planned activities of the projects. Gender perspectives should well be incorporated into the base-line studies. It reflects the situation regarding the gender before the projects and programmes are implemented which can be monitored after the activities are introduced/completed.

7.2 Gender sensitive indicators

Fields of observations	Indicators
1. Change in the behaviour of partners and ourselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both qualitative and quantitative participation of women in key meetings such as Steering committee, Planning workshops and percentage of women and men .in boards, committees, evaluation team and taskforces• Career opportunities for male and female .• New gender values introduced
2. Recognition of cultural barriers and address them in policy and programmes to get the better solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stocktaking of cultural barriers• Operational Manual integrates the common concerns of women
3. Impacts of SDC projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant outcomes, and impacts on gender reported• Project staff composition• Project people become change agents on Gender issues
4. Key Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Country Programmes, Project Documents, ToR of External evaluation, Annual Plans and Reports should contain the indicators like 'who are the beneficiaries ' ; 'who are the decision-makers', etc.• Explicit objectives referring women and men

7.3. Participatory monitoring

Women and men who are the beneficiaries of the programmes and projects should participate in establishing indicators and assessment of gender -relevant effects for themselves.

Specific checklists should be developed for the different programmes and projects respectively by the individual projects and programmes to suit their needs.

Clarification of Terms

a. Mainstreaming gender

Integrating gender issues in all activities at all levels of the institution. Gender should become a regular feature of all programmes and activities and not an additional one. Mainstreaming gender has two aspects:

1. *The integration of gender equality concerns into the analyses and formulation of all policies, programmes and projects;*
2. *Initiatives to enable women as well as men to formulate and express their views and participate in decision making across all development issues.*

A mainstreaming strategy does not preclude initiatives specifically directed towards women as long as they promote gender equality.

Language used in informal and formal, verbal and non-verbal communications is important, because it symbolizes and communicates attitudes, meaning, potential behavior, and sincerity of intention as well our own meaning. Gender sensitive language e.g. 'chairperson' rather than 'chairman', 'human resources' rather than 'man-power', should "be used.

A whole range of behavioural pattern within organisation which carry pre-dominantly a male culture, has to be changed to integrate women in the organisation.

b. Gender balanced development corresponds to:

- A necessity for social equity and economic efficiency;
- A requirement for democratic participation and sustainable development;
- *A concept focused on the socio-cultural roles of women and men as*

developed by each culture, and on the relationships of power and the complementarity between men and women;

- *The prospect of an "active society " featuring choice, diversity, solidarity and participation in guiding change, in which men and women are in charge of their own development.*

c. Equity

Fairness, the application of the principles of justice to correct or supplement the existing situation.

d. Equality

It is the legal and social capacity of women and men to mobilise and manage domestic, community, national, and international resources on an equal basis.

e. HIV / AIDS

Human Imuno-Deficiency Virus / Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome.

HIV/AIDS is endemic (which means that it is a world-wide epidemic) and therefore is pandemic. This is also true for Nepal where it is to be considered as a threatening epidemic of paramount danger.

f. Gender -sensitive

Sensitive to the relationship between women and men and to the difference in their needs. In HIV / AIDS, the relationship concerns mainly the question of sexuality .

g. Response

All preventive measures that can be taken against the spread of HIV / AIDS infection. This includes awareness building, which is only a first step of prevention.

POSITION PAPER FOR RESPONSE To HIV / AIDS in NEPAL, SDC, 1999-2004

Introduction:

Support to activities related to HIV / AIDS in Nepal was initiated as a transversal component of the Country Programme (CP) of SDC Nepal since 1992. It promoted awareness about HIV / AIDS as well as precautionary measures (like condom distribution) among the SDC people and projects. Additionally, it monitored and supported HIV / AIDS related activities on an as-need basis in Nepal in general. It's integration in all the sectors for participants at different levels was infused through orientation / sensitisation / awareness building activities into the ongoing programmes and projects. SDC Nepal used the services of consultants -Dr Pushpa Bhatt and Dr Yeshodhara Pradhan. Backstopping support of Dr Raphael Balthes was received from HQ as and when required. SDC Nepal experienced that confronting HIV / AIDS remained a challenging task for a multitude of reasons due to the complexity of the issue (AIDS and sexuality). As such the choice of a consultant has to be done carefully and as far as possible practicably.

The CP 1998 -2004 has placed HIV/AIDS under the transversal theme of gender balanced development. It mentions: Central to the relationship of men and women is the issue of sexuality .Closely linked to it is the danger of HIV/AIDS. Within Nepal a HIV/AIDS pandemic can easily develop further and lead to a crisis threatening the social and economic development in the country. SDC therefore confronts HIV/AIDS through prevention into the ambit of its activities. Consequently, in 1998 a working group was formed to look into the possible areas of HIV / AIDS response within SDC programmes and projects. A smaller group in 1999 worked towards the formulation of the position paper for HIV / AIDS response in Nepal covering a period of 1999-2004.

Position paper:

The purpose of the position paper is:

- *to put forward Cool's overall goal, objective and strategy of HIV/AIDS response in Nepal.*
- *to chart out Coordination Office's (Cool's) position for response to HIV/AIDS in Nepal.*

Goal:

- *Young and adult women and men in the sphere of intervention of SDC programmes / projects have changed their attitude and behavior related to HIV/AIDS.*

Objective:

Programmes / projects have:

- *developed and maintained awareness on the HIV/AIDS threat.*
- *developed empathy towards victims of HIV / AIDS .*
- *spread knowledge of its prevention measures among projects staff, partner organizations and beneficiaries of the programmes and projects (to a certain extent).*

Strategy:

Specific HIV / AIDS related activities will be integrated in the ongoing work of SDC supported programmes / projects. HIV / AIDS activities will be need based so as not to unnecessarily overburden the regular works of the projects and programmes. Activities

could include :

- *Orientation/Sensitisation activities for Focused Groups by gender, profession, etc (Specific groups of women, men, youth, labourers, health workers, user groups, etc) or Mixed Groups*
- *Integration of HIV/AIDS awareness into the ongoing training activities, etc.*
- *Programmes (Talk, Street, Theatre, School competition, etc) on How to take Preventive Measures against AIDS in the social context, etc.*
- *Coordination Office will make the following provisions for HIV/AIDS response in Nepal;*

A **Steering Group** consisting of two persons from Coof and one person from the RHDP is responsible for the overall coordination of the HIV/AIDS programme. Besides, the group is responsible for:

- *Development and transference into action of the position paper for HIV/ AIDS response.*
- *Coordination, steering and follow up of HIV/AIDS activities with the local consultant.*
- *Synergy among programmes and projects.*

The **Team Leaders / Project Managers** will advise and support the local consultant for the preparation and implementation of appropriate actions on HIV/AIDS activities within their programmes and projects.

A **local consultant** will be recruited for specific workdays. A detailed ToR will be drawn for hiring the consultant. The programmes and projects may request for the support of the consultant in the following areas. Her/ his responsibilities include:

- *Overall review and assessment of the impact of SDC Nepal's support to HIV/AIDS.*
- *Development and implementation of an HIV/AIDS action plan in programme/ projects and Coof. Project ideas and initiatives on H/V/ AIDS activities will be responded. Imposed activities or time consuming approaches will be avoided.*
- *Coordination, sharing of information, ideas and experiences among programmes/ projects and other organisations (for linkage and networking) .*
- *Monitor, evaluate and report the result of HIV/AIDS activities by developing and applying a set of verifiable indicators.*

Consultancy services from SDC HQ is made available for backstopping support as per need.

Means:

- *The cost of the H/V/AIDS activities is to be covered by the respective programme/ project budget.*
- *The cost of the local consultant will be financed through Small Actions Coof.*
- *Small activities for Coof staff or jointly with programmes/ projects can be financed through Small Actions Coof*