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## Engendering M&E

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*Despite significant progress, gender inequalities persist in all countries. These inequalities both negate fundamental human rights and present serious barriers to the achievement of national development objectives. Notwithstanding widespread commitment to gender equality by governments and development agencies, and despite the compelling evidence on persistent gender inequalities, conventional M&E systems fail to address gender differences. This note discusses the limitations of M&E systems in understanding gender inequalities and presents guidelines for developing a gender-responsive M&E system (GMES). It draws on international experience of governments, donor agencies, and NGOs to outline the main steps in the design and implementation of such a GMES. The approach will vary depending on whether the GMES is part of a national gender policy or is intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of M&E systems at the agency or program level.*

### Why Is It important to Incorporate Gender into M&E?

In every society, there are rules governing appropriate behavior for men and women and girls and boys in the home, their community, the labor market, their schools, and in politics. Some of these rules are regulated by social customs, others by laws or the operation of the labor market. Sometimes the forms of control are subtle, while others may be enforced by legal sanctions or the threat of violence. While some sectors of society may believe these rules to be based on “natural” differences between men and women, the rules are, in fact, socially constructed and vary from one society to another and over time. However, despite differences across societies, in every country that has been studied, these rules place women at a disadvantage with respect to key dimensions of development.

The persistence of significant gender inequalities in all regions negates fundamental human rights and the expansion of human freedoms. In addition, gender inequalities are serious barriers to the achievement of development objectives (box 1).

*Gender Equality and Development* (World Bank 2012) argues that promoting gender equity

can make a major contribution to development: first, by fully utilizing the capacities of both women and men; second, through improved development outcomes for the next generation; and third, by making institutions more representative. Gender equity will open the doors to more policy choices and institutions will become more representative.

In the light of this compelling evidence, many governments and international development agencies have prioritized gender equality as one of their top development objectives. Achieving gender equality requires integrating gender into all aspects of programming, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Many organizations have operationalized their gender equality strategies through gender action plans (GAP) that stress the critical role of appropriate gender tools for data collection and analysis for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). While a GAP provides a useful framework for an integrated approach to gender equality, it is not essential and many agencies begin by building gender into their existing M&E systems. They may then develop a broader gender framework after gaining experience with gender M&E.

### **Box 1. Estimated Economic Costs of Gender Inequality: Some Examples from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia**

- In the Middle East and North Africa, if women's labor force participation had increased in the 1990s at the same rate as women's education, the average household income would have been 25 percent higher.
- Tanzania could increase growth by 1 percent by removing barriers to women entrepreneurs.
- If India increased its ratio of female to male workers by 10 percent, gross domestic product would increase by 8 percent.
- Total agricultural output in sub-Saharan Africa could increase by 6–20 percent if women's access to agricultural inputs were equal to men's.
- Asia is losing US\$42 to US\$47 billion per year due to women's limited access to employment opportunities.
- Asia is losing US\$16 to US\$30 billion as a result of girls' limited access to education.

Source: DFID (2008); UN ESCAP (2007).

## **Limitations of Conventional M&E for Understanding Gender Inequalities**

Despite the fact that gender equality is widely recognized as a development objective, many M&E systems do not adequately measure differences in development outcomes for women and men and girls and boys. Some of the important issues often not captured include:

- how a woman's multiple productive, reproductive, and community maintenance roles limit her ability to participate in and enjoy the full benefits of development initiatives;
- women's access to and control of productive resources;
- constraints on women's access to and enjoyment of program benefits;
- gender-based violence; and
- women's participation in decision making at the household, community, and national levels.

There are many reasons why M&E systems fail to capture gender differences. Managers and staff in some sectors may believe their programs are "gender neutral," that men and women will benefit equally from well-designed programs and therefore gender analysis is not required. Also, some gender issues are considered to be culturally sensitive and agencies may be reluctant to address these issues. There are also a number of methodological issues that may be particularly challenging for gender analysis:

- Gender roles, processes, and outcomes are affected by a wide range of economic, social, political, legal, and psychological factors—all of which must be taken into consideration in the M&E system.
- Gender processes and outcomes are often difficult to measure. Many processes concern sensitive issues such as domestic violence; sexual harassment in public spaces; power relationships and ownership and control of household or community resources; sexual behavior; and mechanisms for the spread of HIV/AIDS. These are difficult to study with conventional quantitative surveys because many people are reluctant to discuss or to report honestly on these issues. Furthermore, many of these behaviors take place in locations, such as the household, where it is difficult for the researcher to be present.
- A blind spot for many M&E systems is that they are only designed to assess the extent to which the intended outcomes of government programs are achieved, but do not look for unintended outcomes. This is a serious problem for gender analysis, because many interventions can have serious negative consequences for some groups of women or men. For example, when women obtain credit to start a business, some husbands resent their spouses' greater economic independence and this may lead to increased domestic violence.

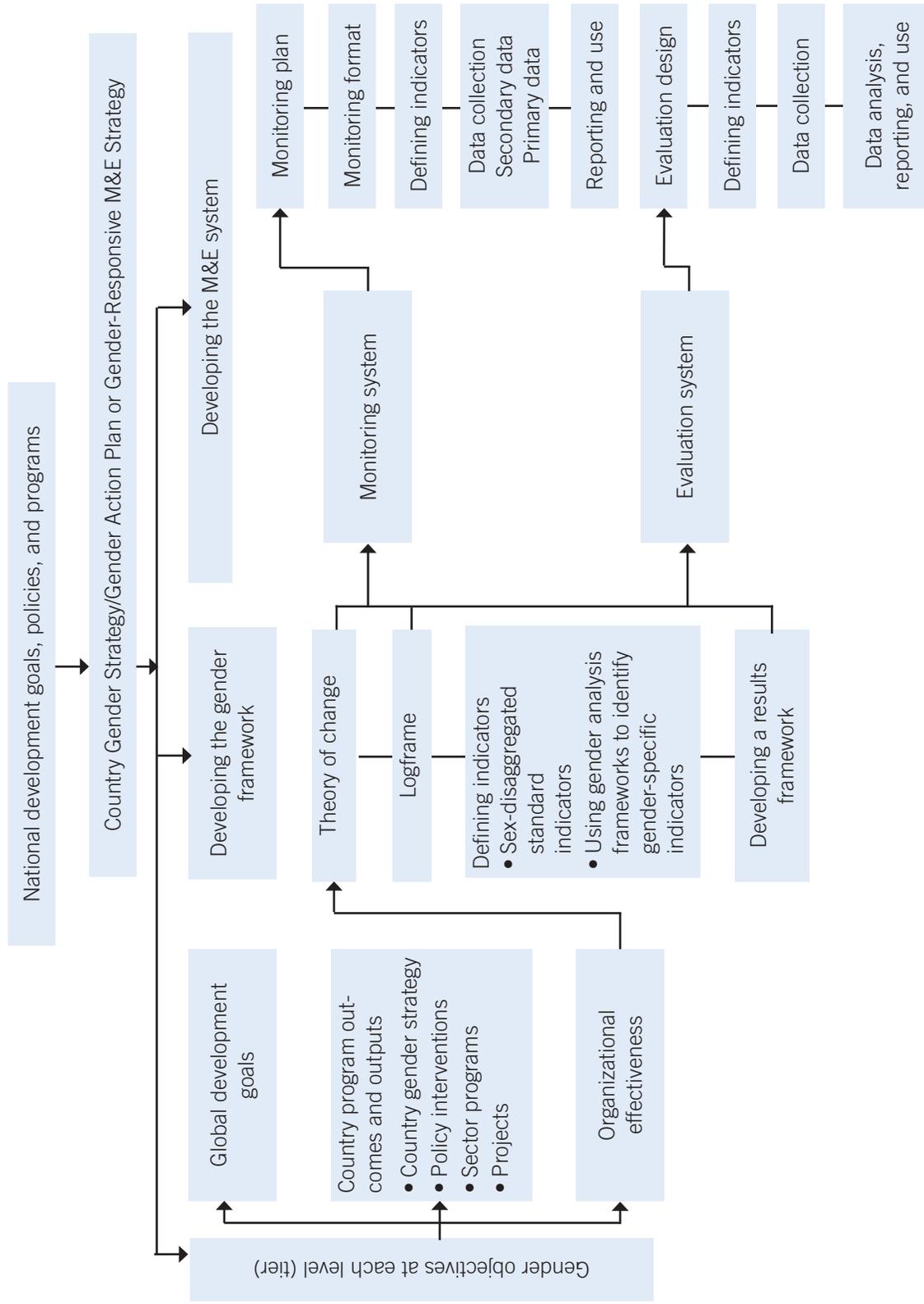
## **Designing Gender-Responsive M&E Systems**

Figure 1 describes the main steps in setting up a gender-responsive M&E system (GMES). In countries where a national gender equality policy has been established, the design of the GMES often begins by developing a GAP that defines a set of gender objectives and programs consistent with the national gender equality objectives. However, many countries begin by introducing GMES only into certain sectors or programs. With either approach, gender objectives are then identified and these objectives are operationalized through a theory of change (TOC), which is translated into a gender logical framework (logframe) for which a set of gender indicators are developed and incorporated into the organization's results framework. GMESs are then developed to collect the sex-disaggregated and gender-specific data required for the results framework.

### **Country GAP or gender analysis framework**

A country's GAP defines the government's national and sectoral development objectives and the gender dimensions of each objective. It also provides background on the country's gender context, prioritizes intended gender outcomes, and

**Figure 1 Stages in the Development of a Gender-Responsive M&E Framework**



assigns responsibilities, budgets, timelines, and indicators for specific activities. The GAP also defines:

- key gender outcomes to be achieved;
- gender-related analytical work;
- key gender issues for policy dialogue;
- targets for gender mainstreaming in specific sectors and operations; and
- areas where government agencies or their partners require additional gender training and capacity building.

For each intended output, the GAP should include an implementation plan that identifies the gender output indicators, baseline reference points, targets, budgets and timelines, as well as assigning responsibilities for data collection. The GAP also outlines the proposed gender M&E strategy, and the key impacts, outcomes, and output indicators to be tracked.

In cases where a GAP is not appropriate, a gender-responsive M&E strategy may be developed defining the gender analysis framework for the sectors or programs being covered (discussed later in this section).

### **Defining gender objectives at different levels**

Gender objectives are identified for different levels, typical levels include:

- contribution to global development goals (such as the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]);
- contributions to the country's national plan objectives or budget priorities, including donor strategies, policy dialogue, sector programs and projects, and institution building/capacity development; and
- organizational effectiveness (how well gender interventions are planned and monitored, adequacy of budget allocations, staff awareness, and capacity development).

### **Building the gender analysis framework**

The following steps are used to develop the gender analysis framework that provides the information required to design the GMES.

#### *Articulating the gender theory of change*

A gender TOC identifies problems constraining the achievement of gender equality and describes processes and mechanisms through which interventions are expected to achieve their intended gender outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The TOC also identifies the key assumptions that should be tested at each level. Many TOCs also identify key economic, political, social, environmental, and psychological factors that can affect outcomes (positively and negatively). Recent writings have emphasized the importance of spelling out the mechanisms through which change is expected to be produced. For example, how are training programs for

women on money management expected to help create women-owned businesses? Some TOCs use a three-step process that includes a problem tree, a solutions tree, and then the fully articulated TOC.

Ideally, a gender TOC should begin with a diagnostic study to provide a better understanding of the nature of gender relations and gender constraints in the target areas. It should also include participatory consultations with both female and male stakeholders, including the most vulnerable groups, on their concerns and priorities. Three Department for International Development (DFID) Guidance Notes on the design of programs to tackle violence against women illustrate how the TOC can be used to inform program design as well as to design a gender-responsive M&E system (DFID 2012).

#### *Gender logframe*

It is often useful to simplify the TOC into a logframe that graphically represents the program's activities, outputs, outcomes (sometimes called program objectives), and goals or final outcomes. The logframe provides a useful link to the development of the program results framework (discussed in later section).

#### *Defining the indicators*

Indicators define what needs to be measured in a way that is economical and technically sound and that adequately describes the constructs being studied. The main indicator types for M&E include:

- inputs (money, equipment, staff, medical supplies, and so forth);
- processes (for example, how training programs, agricultural extension, and project work days are organized);
- outputs (number of students enrolled, small loans given, nutritional supplements distributed, or incidences of malaria or diarrhea);
- outcomes (reduced teen pregnancies, levels of undernutrition, and so forth); and
- contextual factors affecting outcomes (whether the local economy is growing or declining, levels of conflict or violence in the community, or whether local authorities and political groups are supportive of the program).

The GMES includes gender-sensitive indicators that capture differences between women and men for each kind of indicator and for other relevant categories such as youth, the elderly, religious and ethnic minorities, and so forth. Most of the gender indicators will be obtained by disaggregating standard indicators by sex (for example, the number of girls and boys enrolled in school, or female and male farmers visited by extension workers). However, additional indicators are usually re-

quired to address gender dimensions, such as time use and control of productive resources, which are not included in conventional M&E.

The selection of gender-responsive indicators should follow the standard indicator development guidelines (Castro 2011; box 2). For example, CREAM (Morra Imas and Rist 2009, 117) is a checklist to ensure that indicators are:

- **C**lear: precise and unambiguous;
- **R**elevant: appropriate to the subject at hand;
- **E**conomical: available at a reasonable cost;
- **A**dequate: able to provide sufficient basis to assess performance; and
- **M**onitorable: amenable to independent validation.

Assessing the quality of services is particularly important for gender analysis because the design and delivery of program services often are not adapted to the special needs of women. For example, many programs do not make provision for child care for women attending meetings or for project workdays, or select locales that women can easily reach or where they feel comfortable.

#### *Identifying gender indicators that go beyond sex disaggregation*

While sex disaggregation of standard indicators is an important and economical way to begin examining gender differences in program implementation and outcomes, there are many important gender dimensions that dig deeper to examine how gender relations affect development outcomes. Gender analysis provides tools to help understand the underlying causes of gender inequalities

and examines how gender rules determine the economic and social roles and opportunities of different groups of women and men, and how these affect their ability to participate in and contribute to development. For the purposes of monitoring, a gender analysis framework (GAF) helps define the indicators and measures to be included in the GMES. There are many different GAFs, each focusing on different aspects of women's (and sometimes men's) socially defined roles and how these affect and constrain their participation in household and economic and political activities, including development programs.

*The Harvard Gender Framework* is one of the most widely used GAFs (Williams 1994; Rao, Anderson, and Overholt 1995). It argues that women's participation in and enjoyment of the benefits of development projects are constrained by their heavy time burdens, resulting from multiple roles in *production* (of goods and services), *reproduction and maintenance of human resources* (reproduction and care for the family members) and *responsibilities for maintenance of community resources*, and by unequal access to and control of productive resources. These are measured through two instruments: an *Activity Profile* and an *Access and Control Profile*, which quantify the number of hours per week that different household members spend on different activities and rate the level of access and control that different members have over different resources (land, equipment, labor, capital, animals, and so forth). The framework can be used for GMES to measure changes in women's time use and control of resources at the start and end of the project.

#### **Box 2. Relevant Notes in PREM's Special Series on the Nuts & Bolts of Government M&E Systems**

- # 5 Hatry, H. 2010. "Key Steps in Designing and Implementing a Monitoring and Evaluation Process for Individual Country Service Agencies."
- # 7 Sharma, R. 2011. "Use of Social Accountability Tools and Information Technologies in Monitoring and Evaluation."
- # 9 Adato, M. 2011. "Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods for Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Why Are Mixed Method Designs Best?"
- # 12 Castro, M. F. 2011. "Defining and Using Performance Indicators and Targets in Government M&E Systems."

Source: Author's compilation.

Note: The series can be downloaded at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/0,,contentMDK:22632898~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:336992,00.html>.

#### **Incorporating gender into a results-based M&E framework**

Most development agencies now use results-based M&E systems to monitor implementation and outputs and to evaluate program effectiveness. According to Kusek and Rist (2004), the key elements of a results-based M&E system include:

- baseline data to describe the problem or situation before the intervention;
- indicators for outcomes;
- data collection on outputs and how and whether they contribute to achievement of outcomes;
- more focus on perceptions of change among stakeholders;
- systematic reporting with more quantitative and qualitative information on progress toward outcomes;
- collaboration with strategic partners; and
- capture of information on success or failure of partnership strategy in achieving desired outcomes.

For a GMES, all appropriate indicators must be sex disaggregated, and additional gender-specific indicators need to be included with information on how gender data will be collected.

### Gender-Responsive Monitoring: What Does It Look Like?

For most development programs, a gender monitoring system looks very much like a conventional monitoring system (Hatry 2010; Castro 2011), with some additional questions to measure differences in how women and men participate in and are affected by the program. Much of the additional information is obtained by ensuring that standard information on program participation or outputs is disaggregated by sex. However, it will often be necessary to collect additional information not included in conventional monitoring. For example, there may be questions on the special needs or constraints of women and men for a particular program, and the services or resources provided to address these differences. Some of this information, for example on family resistance to the participation of women or girls, women’s lack of control over economic resources, or threats of violence against women who attend meetings, may require special data collection methods (such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, key informants, or observation).

In cases where the primary objective of the program is to achieve changes in gender relations or to address a problem that specifically affects women, such as gender-based violence, the monitoring system may rely more on qualitative methods such as case studies, in-depth interviews, participant observations, or focus groups.

#### Defining the gender-sensitive monitoring format

Table 1 outlines a format that can be used to design a gender monitoring system. For each of five levels, (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts) the format defines:

B. what is measured;

- C. gender indicators for each measurement—these may either be simple sex disaggregation or may involve additional gender-specific indicators;
- D. data collection methods—whether primary or secondary data are used, and also, where appropriate, who collects/provides the information;
- E. whether baseline data are needed;
- F. frequency with which data are collected; and
- G. how the information will be used—this may include: providing information to management on areas where women or men (or particular age, ethnic, or other groups) are underrepresented, identifying special services required by particular groups, and providing information to stakeholders or the general public on progress toward meeting gender equity objectives.

#### Defining gender-monitoring indicators

Gender indicators are required for each of the levels in table 1. The InterAgency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (UN Statistics Division undated) has developed a core list of 51 gender indicators divided into five areas:

- i. economic structures, participation in productive activities, and access to resources;
- ii. education;
- iii. health and related services;
- iv. public life and decision making; and
- v. human rights of women and girl children.

Each indicator can provide comparative information on women and men. For example, indicator 1, “average number of hours per week spent on unpaid domestic work and child-care” (UN Statistics Division undated), can be disaggregated to provide the comparison between hours spent on unpaid housework and unpaid child care for women and men. For each project, the appropriate indicators can be selected and an assessment made of which data are currently available and what additional data could be generated if necessary.

**Table 1. Format for Gender Monitoring System**

A. Levels	B. What is measured	C. Gender-sensitive indicator	D. Data collection methods	E. Are baseline data needed	F. Frequency of data collection	G. How gender-sensitive information is used
Impacts						
Outcomes						
Outputs						
Activities						
Inputs						

Source: Author’s compilation, adapted from World Bank, FAO, IFAD (2009, module 16, tables 16.1 and 16.2).

Other indicators can rate the performance of an agency on the design and implementation of gender policies and programs, for example:

- Were analysis and/or consultations conducted on gender-related issues?
- Were specific actions taken to address the distinct needs of women and girls and men and boys?
- Were M&E of gender impacts conducted?

A later section on gender checklists (see also box 5) includes more discussion on performance indicators.

### Data collection methods

Gender monitoring can use all of the conventional data collection methods after they are adapted to address specific gender issues. These methods usually will combine primary data from surveys, interviews, reports on meetings and use of services and others, with secondary data such as information from the management information system, project records, minutes of meetings, and so forth.

Many monitoring systems rely mainly on quantitative data recording: *how many* (for example, people attending meetings), *how much* (for example, conditional cash payments or amount of food for work), or *how long* (duration of training programs or community road maintenance activities). While these kinds of data are essential, quantitative indicators can fail to capture the *quality* of participation or services provided. For example, women may attend meetings, but may have limited participation in decision making, receive less support from agricultural extension workers, or receive less courteous service from financial institutions than do men. Consequently, it is often necessary to complement quantitative data with qualitative data that assess the quality of services. Examples include observation of women's participation in meetings or focus groups with women to obtain feedback on services received (see box 3 for more details).

#### Secondary data sources

There are a wide variety of secondary data sources that can be used to construct/reconstruct baseline data or as a comparison group. Some of these data sources provide cross-country comparative data, others provide national-level data, while others can be used at the regional or local level. Box 4 provides examples of some of these databases.

### Gender checklists

Many agencies use checklists to assess whether the design or implementation of a project, program, or policy is addressing key gender issues. For example, The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has developed a seven-question checklist for this purpose (box 5). The

United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) uses a set of gender equality markers that are rated on a four-point scale to assess the implementation of all of its programs.

### Box 3. Some Qualitative Gender-Responsive Data Collection Methods

- Focus groups
- In-depth interviews
- Key informants
- Observation
- Participant observation
- Social mapping and other participatory group consultation techniques
- Using mobile phones for interviews and feedback
- Photos sent through mobile phones and comparison with GPS location
- Story-telling

Sources: Williams 1994; Kumar 2002; Bamberger, Rugh, and Mabry 2012, chapters 13 and 14; Patton 2002; Sharma 2011; Adato 2011.

### Box 4. Examples of Secondary Databases for Gender Analysis

- UNDP Human Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index: These indices, which are available for over 180 countries, provide information on gender differences in life expectancy, access to health, education and labor markets, and political participation.
- The UNDP Multiple Dimension Poverty Index: This can be disaggregated to provide comparative data for male- and female-headed households.
- MDG databases: Can provide cross-country comparative, sex-disaggregated data on topics such as access to health, education, water supply, and sanitation.
- Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), and the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS): These are examples of comparative cross-country databases that provide sex-disaggregated socioeconomic data at the national, regional, and often community level.

Source: Author's compilation.

### Box 5. USAID Checklist for Assessing Achievement of Gender Objectives

1. Number of laws, policies, and procedures promoting gender equality that are proposed/adopted.
2. Proportion of female participants.
3. Proportion of females who report increased self-efficacy (a feeling of increased control over their lives).
4. Proportion of participants who agree that women/men should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities.
5. Number of laws drafted with U.S. government support.
6. Number of people reached by projects who received gender-based violence support.
7. Proportion of the project population reached who think gender-based violence is less acceptable.

Source: USAID 2012.

## Engendering the Evaluation System

### Gender impact evaluation designs

Gender outcomes and impacts can be evaluated in several ways:

- by including gender indicators in a standard impact evaluation design;
- by adding a gender-specific module or data collection method to an impact evaluation design (for example, administering a special module to women in a subsample of households when only the “household head,” in most cases a male, is interviewed); and
- implementing a special gender impact evaluation—this option may be appropriate when gender outcomes are the primary program goal.

The whole range of conventional impact evaluation designs can be used for the first two options. However, until recently, many gender impact evaluations used predominantly qualitative or mixed-methods design, partly because many of these projects were relatively small scale. Now, as gender is becoming a central policy objective of many international donors and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the scale of gender-related interventions has increased, there has been an increasing use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs for evaluating gender outcomes. Box 6 illustrates some of the kinds of randomized control trials that have started to be used over the past few years.

### Box 6. Examples of Randomized Control Trial Evaluations for Assessing Gender-Related Outcomes

- Job networks and gender in Malawi
- The effect of gender equity programs on maternal and child care in Uganda
- The impact of women policy makers on public goods in India
- Evaluating school-based awareness and mobilization campaign to address sex-selective elimination in Haryana, India

Source: Poverty Action Lab, <http://www.povertyactionlab.org>.

### Special gender-focused evaluation methods

Many gender evaluations use mixed methods and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Some of the widely used qualitative methods include:

- outcome mapping (Earle, Carden, and Smytlo 2001);
- most significant change (Davis and Dart 2005);
- focus groups (Krueger and Casey 2000);
- safety audits (Women in Cities International 2010);
- participatory group consultation methods such as social mapping, wealth ranking, and historical time lines (Kumar 2002); and
- longitudinal and cross-sectional case studies.

Mixed-methods (Bamberger, Rugh, and Mabry 2012, chapter 14; Adato 2011) gender evaluation designs combine qualitative data collection methods (such as those mentioned above) that provide in-depth understanding of lived experience and the quality of services and documentation of real-world processes through which programs are implemented on the ground with statistical analysis and sampling techniques that make it possible to generalize findings from the in-depth qualitative methods. This is important, because in the past, many gender evaluations provided valuable insights into individual lives and groups, but tended to pay less attention to how the cases were selected and how representative they were. Some of the mixed-methods techniques that permit generalization from relatively small samples of cases include:

- quota sampling, to ensure that cases are selected to cover all groups of interest and that they are broadly representative;
- concept mapping (Kane and Trochim 2007), to select the sample of case studies using expert judgment;
- for international donors, a portfolio analysis to select a representative sample of countries or programs for in-depth analysis; and

- secondary data sets such as the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index to select samples of countries that have high, low, or medium scores on gender equality indices.

## Conclusions

There are significant differences in how women and men are affected by and respond to development interventions. But despite compelling evidence on persistent gender inequalities and their consequences for development programs, conventional M&E systems frequently fail to address gender differences. Consequently, government commitment to achieving gender equality requires development of a GMES. This paper draws on international experience of governments, donor agencies, and NGOs to outline the main steps in the design and implementation of such a GMES. The approach will vary depending on whether the GMES is part of a national gender policy or is intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of M&E systems at the agency or program level.

The first step is identifying the gender objectives of the policy or program to which the GMES will be applied. These can be very broad (such as achieving one or more of the MDGs), or much narrower (such as increasing women's access to microcredit and agricultural marketing services). The second step is to develop a gender framework defining the gender indicators and how they will be measured. This will usually involve a number of substeps such as defining the TOC, operationalizing the TOC through a logframe, and incorporating the indicators into a gender-responsive results-based M&E framework. Once the indicators have been defined, the third step is to develop the GMES. This normally looks similar to a conventional M&E system, but with most indicators disaggregated by sex and the addition of some gender-specific indicators. The final step is to develop the gender-responsive evaluation system. While this can draw on conventional program evaluation tools, the need to focus on processes and capture sensitive information means that greater reliance will usually be placed on mixed methods and qualitative data. It is important to recognize that gender differences and processes are often based on social traditions and customs that may be invisible to many agencies or not reported, particularly when they touch on sensitive areas. While the implementation of a GMES requires gender awareness and gender-focused capacity development, experienced managers and M&E staff will find that most of the tools and techniques of GMES will not be too difficult to incorporate into the existing M&E system.

## About the Author

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