

Supporting the Monitoring of Aid Effectiveness from a Gender Perspective

Key Findings and Recommendations



Background

The International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002 agreed to increase the funding for development and acknowledged the need to ensure that aid should be used as effectively as possible. This conference paved the way for a series of high level forums on aid effectiveness.

In 2005 in Paris, more than 100 governments of developing countries and donor organizations committed to improve the effectiveness of aid in an effort to advance progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. They agreed to the five principles of the Paris Declaration: Ownership, Alignment, Harmonization, Managing for Results, and Mutual Accountability.

However, the Paris Declaration failed to address gender equality and the empowerment of women, and it also excluded from the process an important development actor, civil society organizations (CSOs). The third and fourth high level forums on aid effectiveness, held in 2008 in Accra and 2011 in Busan, paved the way for the active participation of CSO in the aid effectiveness discussions, and made significant statements regarding the importance of aid effectiveness ensuring the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

With financial support from the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, UN Women has implemented a multi-country study in Cambodia, Vietnam, Guatemala, Peru, Morocco and Mozambique, to document how far these countries have progressed in terms of the inclusion of a gender perspective in their aid effectiveness processes, and to what extent CSOs participate and are able to oversee the implementation and results. The study, Supporting the Monitoring of Aid Effectiveness from a Gender Perspective, was conducted in Cambodia by ActionAid Cambodia from September 2011 to March 2012.

Study Objectives

The Cambodia study had the following objectives:

1. To document the existing structures and mechanisms for aid effectiveness in Cambodia
2. To analyze the extent to which the aid effectiveness processes address gender equality and the empowerment of women
3. To analyze the role of CSOs within the aid effectiveness processes and in terms of their ability to oversee and advocate for gender equality results





Study methodology

An overall study methodology was developed by UN Women to provide a working structure for the country research and to ensure comparability of the study findings between countries. The process was intended to be both participatory and inclusive of a range of stakeholders. The Cambodia study began with an extensive literature review and a stakeholder mapping exercise. A series of workshops and round-table discussions were then held with key stakeholders at both national and sub-national level. Individual interviews with representatives from government, development partners and civil society were also conducted. Initial findings from the research were presented to stakeholders for discussion and feedback.

Key Findings related to the Aid Effectiveness Principles

The key findings are presented here. They focus on the achievements and challenges of the key stakeholders according to each of the five principles of the Paris Declaration, viewed with a gender lens and with the active engagement of civil society as a core concern.

Ownership: Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies and co-ordinate development actions.

Democratic participation and equal rights are an important aspect of ownership, in that political decisions regarding development policies and strategies must take into account the needs and demands of the citizens, and all stakeholders, including civil society, must be involved in the decision-making processes.

Achievements:

- The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has made significant progress to put in place national development policies and mechanisms for dialogue to support aid effectiveness and to ensure gender is integrated throughout. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) has played a key role in ensuring development policies and plans mainstream gender equality.

- The Neary Rattanak III (2009-13), a five year plan of MoWA, serves as the main strategy on gender equality and women's empowerment in Cambodia. It is recognized as a useful framework by all stakeholders.
- The RGC has established mechanisms for dialogue that include all stakeholders. These include the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF), the Government Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC) and the Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The Technical Working Group Gender (TWGG) chaired by MoWA, has the mandate to build country ownership to address gender disparities. Civil society is represented at all these forums.
- The RGC publicly advocates partnership in development that includes civil society, the private sector and development partners.

Challenges

- Despite the well-established mechanisms and strategies, the capacities (institutional, human and financial) to implement the commitments are sometimes lacking at all levels.
- Aid effectiveness structures are not yet well-established at sub-national level.
- CSOs recognize and face challenges in terms of their effective and meaningful participation in the CDCF, the GDCC and the TWGs.
- The cross-cutting nature of gender requires that many stakeholders are involved, which makes it a complex issue to manage and coordinate.

Alignment: Donors base their overall support on partner countries national development strategies, institutions and procedures.

Alignment requires all stakeholders, including civil society, work together towards the key gender principles and goals.

Achievements:

- Aid flows are generally aligned to the national development priorities, including gender and women's empowerment.





- Development Partners and CSOs are also working within the five priority areas for gender and women's empowerment as outlined in the Neary Rattanak III. The plan aims to enhance the lives of Women and girls in the following priority areas: economics, education, legal protection, health, and public decision making and politics.
- The RGC has initiated a Program Based Approach (PBA) for MoWA, which is intended to improve strategic management and ensure resources are effectively managed, leading to better results.

Challenges:

- Project-based support continues to dominate the gender sector, resulting in multiple projects which are difficult to track and may overlap or leave gaps.
- Aid to gender is not clearly reported by development partners and NGOs which makes it difficult to document and analyze how much aid is actually disbursed to gender and women's empowerment.
- A major challenge is how to define and develop the PBA for gender, ensuring that all stakeholders are involved.

Harmonization: Donors actions are harmonized with each other, transparent and collectively effective.

Harmonization refers to coordination, which should apply not only to the actions of donors, but to the actions of all stakeholders working in aid and development in Cambodia.

Achievements:

- Since 2005 MoWA has supported the establishment of Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) within line ministries to support the RGC priority of gender mainstreaming. The GMAGs have a mandate to ensure the implementation of gender responsive measures into sector policies and programs by developing Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs).
- The TWGG serves as a mechanism for stakeholder participation, input and coordination. The TWGG has active CSO participation.

- The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), NGO Forum and MEDiCAM have led the CSO involvement in aid and development effectiveness. Their joint Aid Effectiveness project, which began in 2008, has helped to engage NGOs across all sectors to cooperate on monitoring and advocating on foreign aid issues.

Challenges

- Despite the establishment of GMAGs, MoWA still faces challenges for coordination within and between line ministries for gender mainstreaming, and GMAGs are not always integrated into sectoral strategies.
- The large numbers of participants at the TWGG has meant that it is often challenging to effectively coordinate activities, to provide input in to policy, or to monitor gender results. As yet, there is no systematic inclusion of gender in all the sectoral TWGs.
- The lead CSOs working on aid effectiveness do not systematically take gender into consideration and tend to focus on “hot issues” such as the Law on NGOs and Associations. CSOs working on gender and the empowerment of women are not coordinated to work on aid effectiveness and have not identified clear roles and responsibilities.



Mutual Accountability: Donors and recipients of aid are both accountable for development results and ensure transparency in the use of development resources.

Mutual accountability is an important principle, referring to the visibility of actions and the responsibility between all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, to ensure that commitments are fulfilled and positive development results are achieved.

Achievements:

- The RGC has provided public access to information about Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the online ODA database (<http://cdc.khmer.biz>), the production of regular aid and development effectiveness reports, and the website of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (<http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh>). Development Partners and an increasing number of NGOs are inputting their data onto the ODA database to give a clearer picture of aid flows to Cambodia.



- CSOs, led by CCC, NGO Forum and MEDICAM, have submitted shadow reports, such as the NGO Position Papers, to provide recommendations to the government and development partners for the development of Cambodia as seen from the national and grassroots perspectives.
- The CCC, through its Governance and Professional Practice (GPP) project, has introduced a Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards for the voluntary certification of NGOs to encourage civil society accountability.

Challenges:

- There is no systematic analysis of gender in aid effectiveness processes by government. While the ODA database is an effective tool for monitoring and tracking ODA, it is not yet able to provide a realistic and complete picture of aid flows to gender equality and women's empowerment. The aid/development effectiveness reports contain little gender analysis.
- There is limited coordination, understanding and engagement of CSOs working in gender and women's empowerment at sub-national level in aid effectiveness processes. This limits their ability to advocate for the inclusion of gender in planning processes at sub-national level, and prevents local level gender concerns being transmitted to CSOs attending national level forums.
- The credibility of CSOs in Cambodia is often undermined by their lack of ability to represent a broader constituency than that of their organization and their immediate beneficiaries.

Managing for Results: Aid is managed and implemented in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision-making.

Managing for results requires monitoring mechanisms that allow results to be measured and lessons learned to be obtained and used to improve development effectiveness. Monitoring for gender equality and women's empowerment means that it is important to track how aid flows are designated to these issues and to ensure that aid is having a real and beneficial impact on the lives of women and girls.

Achievements:

- Specific indicators for gender and women's empowerment have been incorporated in to the key government development strategies and plans in Cambodia. Medium-term Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMI) for gender have been established by the TWGG and are reviewed on a regular basis by the TWGG participants, including CSOs.
- The GMAGs in line ministries have a responsibility to collect sector data related to gender that can be provided to MoWA for monitoring and reporting against the gender JMI and the Neary Rattanak III.
- There is an increase in the amount of data that is being disaggregated by sex in key national surveys such as the Socio-Economic Survey and the Demographic Health Survey. Data collectors from the National Institute of Statistics in the Ministry of Planning have been trained by MoWA in how to collect gender sensitive and sex-disaggregated data.

Challenges

- The indicators for gender and women's empowerment are inconsistent between plans and strategies, and are sometimes not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely), which leads to problems in collecting the data and monitoring the progress. Indicators are largely quantitative and so do not provide information to measure outcomes and impact.
- The mechanisms to collect data for monitoring across the sectors with regards to gender equality and women's empowerment are not always well coordinated and MoWA often has difficulty to obtain data on time. The GMAGs sometimes lack the capacity to collect the data. Data between ministries and institutions is sometimes inconsistent and data systems are incompatible.
- Currently the CSOs working in gender and women's empowerment are not actively engaged in providing data for monitoring against the national gender indicators, nor are they actively engaged in analyzing progress towards results.

CSO Priorities

Key priorities that need to be addressed in order to increase the active and effective engagement of CSOs working in gender and women's empowerment in the aid effectiveness processes in Cambodia are as follows:





1. CSOs working in gender and women's empowerment need to identify and agree roles and responsibilities for engagement in the aid effectiveness processes at both national and sub-national level.
2. Once roles are agreed, the CSOs need to ensure that in their annual plans and proposals they plan and budget to enable systematic participation in aid effectiveness processes.
3. CSOs need to identify suitable networks and strengthen the roles of these networks for coordination, dissemination and collection of information regarding the priorities for gender and women's empowerment.
4. CSOs need to ensure downward accountability to ensure they are truly representing the needs and concerns of the women, men, girls and boys they represent.
5. CSOs need to strengthen their capacity to engage in policy dialogue on aid and development effectiveness so they can effectively influence decision-makers on issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were formulated and agreed by representatives from government, development partners and civil society during a workshop in Phnom Penh in February 2012.

- Gender CSOs at national level should meet and decide lead roles for the TWGG, the PBA sub-group and other TWGG sub-groups. Terms of Reference for the lead roles should be developed.
- As part of the allocation of lead roles, a CSO Secretariat should be developed to support the representation and effective advocacy of CSOs within the TWGG.
- The lead CSOs and CSO Secretariat should develop a system for the collection and analysis of data relevant to the JMIs and other national level gender-related indicators.
- Women's networks should identify an active network to lead on aid effectiveness and gender to help disseminate information to sub-national levels, to bring information and priorities to national level, to coordinate data collection and to ensure a shared voice and better cooperation. The mandate of the network should be clearly defined and plans made for resourcing and support to the network.

- The umbrella CSOs leading on CSO involvement in aid effectiveness (CCC, NGO Forum and MEDiCAM) should develop and/or ensure implementation of gender mainstreaming policy to ensure gender is effectively included in their advocacy, coordination and networking activities.
- TWGG Secretariat, donor co-facilitators and members of the TWGG should develop a simple but effective mechanism for ensuring the collection and analysis of data against the JMI indicators and other national gender-related indicators.
- CRDB/CDC should continue to develop a system for integrating gender sensitive indicators for the ODA and NGO on-line databases. The reporting format should also be improved to allow development partners and NGOs to better record assistance to gender within sector projects.
- All donors and NGOs should be encouraged to enter information into the ODA database to enable more effective tracking of efforts to support increased gender equality and women's empowerment.
- A strategy and action plan should be developed to build the capacity and engagement of parliamentarians in aid effectiveness issues from a gender perspective at the national and sub-national level.
- Academic institutions and research institutes should engage more on aid effectiveness and gender, for example, holding seminars or conducting independent policy oriented research on the issues.



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