



ICEIDA'S

*Gender Equality
Policy*

ICEIDA's *Gender Equality Policy*

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations	4
Summary	5
1. Introduction	6
Gender Equality as a Prerequisite for Fair and Effective Development	6
Gender Equality Policies in Development Co-operation	7
2. Legal and Political Obligations	10
Icelandic Policies and Legal Environment	10
International Obligations	11
The Policies and Legal Environment of ICEIDA's Partner Countries	14
3. Gender Perspective	16
Social Definition of the Gender Concept	16
Why Focus on Both Genders?	17
4. Gender Equality and the Goals of Development Co-Operation	19
General Objectives of Development Co-operation	19
Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals	21
5. Methods in Development Co-Operation to Promote Gender Equality	24
Mainstreaming: A New Route Toward Gender Equality	24
The Participatory Approach in Development Co-operation	27
6. Gender Equality and ICEIDA's Scope of Activities	31
Education and Social Affairs	31
Health Care	34
Support of Industries: Fisheries	37
7. Review of the Gender Equality Policy	41
Notes	41
Sources and Supplementary Material	43
Annex	46
Annex I: Definitions of Terms:	46
Annex II: International Instruments on Gender Equality to which Iceland is Party:	47

Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GAD	Gender and Development
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WID	Women in Development

Summary

The emphasis on gender equality in Icelandic bilateral development co-operation is based on two principal factors. Firstly, the understanding that gender equality is a human rights issue and, secondly the affirmation that gender equality – i.e. equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities for men and women – is a *prerequisite for effective development*.

The objective of ICEIDA's gender equality policy is to promote gender equality in partner countries by *mainstreaming* gender and gender equality perspectives into the Agency's projects, as well as to promote gender equality within the Agency itself in order to ensure that its human resources are rendered as efficient as possible.

ICEIDA will endeavour to mainstream gender and gender equality perspectives into its institutional activities and into its implementation of development projects within the sectors where it operates; the education, social, health and fisheries sectors; as well as other projects supporting economic development and the utilisation of natural resources. This work will be based on four fundamental actions and activities:

- *Collection of data* on the position of the genders,
- *appointment of a staff member* to lead and provide guidance on the implementation of the Agency's gender equality policy,
- *training* of employees, and
- development of *methods* to achieve gender equality.

Mainstreaming will entail that project plans be based on gender-disaggregated data concerning the economic and cultural status of the genders based on the needs of both men and women. However, in light of the generally lower social and economic status of women the Agency will still continue to allocate funds to the improvement of the status of women in particular but will, at the same time, seek to promote the co-operation and involvement of men in such projects

The gender equality policy stipulates that evaluations of ICEIDA's development projects will include an assessment of how effective the Agency has been in mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives in its projects.



1. Introduction

GENDER EQUALITY AS A PREREQUISITE FOR FAIR AND EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

In recent decades international interest in gender equality issues has increased substantially. There is a general consensus among United Nations member states that gender equality is a prerequisite for fair and effective development. What is more, they agree on the actions necessary to combat gender discrimination.¹

According to World Bank data, the struggle for gender equality on an international level has, among other things, improved the conditions of women as far as education and health care go in

certain parts of the world.² On the whole though, progress has been slow and success rates variable. United Nations reports clearly show that complete gender equality has yet to be attained anywhere in the world.³ Furthermore, the reports reveal instances of serious gender discrimination in most places given the parameters used to measure social development.

In recent decades various steps have been taken within the development sector in order to address gender discrimination and some progress has been made, particularly as far as the organisational structure of the development institutions themselves goes. Nevertheless, there is a long way to go before gender equality issues reach the stage of forming an important component of all parts and stages of development co-operation. There still exists a strong inclination to look upon gender equality as a fringe issue in development co-operation rather than a fundamental issue and a prerequisite for effective development assistance.

The emphasis on gender equality in Icelandic bilateral development co-operation is based on two principal factors. Firstly, the understanding that gender equality is a human rights issue and, secondly the affirmation that gender equality – i.e. equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities for men and women – *is a prerequisite for effective development*. Thus, ICEIDA regards gender equality as a pressing social issue and an important factor in the effort to promote human rights and democracy. The objective of ICEIDA's gender equality policy is to promote gender equality in partner countries by mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives into the Agency's projects, as well as to promote gender equality within the Agency itself in order to ensure that its human resources are rendered as efficient as possible.

GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES IN DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

The perspectives and methods used to enhance gender equality through development co-operation have changed fundamentally since gender equality first became a point of focus on an international level. These changes involve, on the one hand, the attitude change of acknowledging gender equality as being of importance to all, not just women, and, on the other hand, the changes in methodology and approaches aimed at increasing the participation and responsibility of men in the formulation and implementation of a gender equality perspective in developmental co-operation.

The term *Women in Development* (WID) first appeared in the 1970s, when a group of women working in international development assistance brought attention to the fact that development projects had a different impact on the lives and circumstances of women than on men. The WID perspective focused on analysing the status of women, particularly with respect to economic trends and development, but paid little attention to men and the relationship between women and men. The emphasis of the WID approach was on showing that paying special attention to the status of women and their participation in development projects would lead to more effective development. The WID movement led to the publication of a great deal of material on the status of women in the South and the discrimination practised against them in the process of implementation of development co-operation. Methods were developed to extrapolate both the paid and unpaid work contributions of women into economic statistics and the movement had the effect of diverting development funding into projects which were specifically intended to improve the situation of women.

By the 1980s, however, criticism was already being directed at the WID perspective. The lack of comparison between the status of women and men in WID studies was criticised, as was their overriding emphasis on the economic role and contribution of women at the expense of other cultural and social factors which impact power relations and opportunities of both genders. This criticism and the ensuing debate led to the development of a new perspective which takes account of both women and men and focuses on analysing the social trends, institutions and relations that cause and maintain gender discrimination, which usually means a subservient status and fewer opportunities for women. This approach has been referred to as *Gender and Development* (GAD). The approach is based on a *gender perspective*, rather than on a *women's perspective*, as in the case of the WID approach, and is currently the accepted approach to gender and gender equality issues within the development sector. The gender perspective focuses on the way in which social status and relationships between men and women affect their ability to participate in development co-operation and benefit from it. It is assumed that the subservient social status of women is not only an obstacle to women but also impedes general social and economic development and is as such emphatically not just a "women's issue". The gender perspective emphasises that the effort to increase the equality of women and men in, and through, development co-operation not only demands technical measures, but also political action. The solution does not entail merely increasing the participation of women in the



development process but also reforming the process in its entirety so that it reflects the perspectives, interests and needs of both genders and promotes gender equality.

The attitudes and actions concerning gender equality within ICEIDA have largely followed international trends. Over recent decades the Agency's actions to support increased gender equality in partner countries have been directed particularly toward women in the form of separate women's projects. With Iceland's increased contributions to bilateral co-operation and a more consistent ICEIDA policy on gender equality, the Agency will in the coming years align its activities with new international trends and focus increasingly on mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives into its strategies and activities. Such mainstreaming will, among other things, entail that project plans be based on gender-disaggregated data concerning the economic and cultural status of the genders taking into account the needs of both men and women. However, in light of the generally lower social and economic status of women the Agency will still continue to allocate funds to the improvement of the status of women in particular but will, at the same time, seek to promote the co-operation and involvement of men in such projects (see also Chapters 3 and 6).



2. Legal and Political Obligations

ICELANDIC POLICIES AND LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

Icelandic law is based on the general principle that all humans are equal, irrespective of gender. Provisions on the equal rights and equal status of men and women are laid down in the Icelandic Constitution and a separate Equal Rights Act was passed into law in 1973. The current Act on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men was passed by the Althingi on 9 May 2000; the Act obligates Icelandic authorities, institutions and employers to support gender equality in an organised and systematic manner.⁴ The current action plan of the Icelandic Government to achieve gender equality emphasises the mainstreaming of gender and gender equality perspectives into all public activities.⁵

ICEIDA follows Icelandic government policy on international development co-operation and operates on the basis of Act No. 43 of 1981 on bilateral co-operation between Iceland and developing countries. Iceland's contributions to bilateral developmental assistance are expected to increase considerably over the next few years, and the increase will require both clearer strategies and more structured work. Since the Act on ICEIDA was passed in 1981, the primary goal of Icelandic development co-operation has been to combat poverty.⁶ This goal is outlined in greater detail in the Agency's policy paper issued in 2000, which includes a statement concerning support for democratic development, gender equality and human rights and notes the need for particular emphasis on improving the living conditions of the poorest, particularly women and children. In the new ICEIDA policy approved in 2004, gender equality issues are identified as a primary focus area of the Agency's activities in line with the policies of the Icelandic government on gender equality and policies concerning international development co-operation.⁷ The point of emphasis in ICEIDA's activities relating to gender equality is twofold: on the one hand, the Agency will in the coming years seek to develop new ways to systematically promote gender equality within the Agency itself. This will, among other things, involve ways to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to work and advance their careers within the Agency, ways to ensure equal wages for the genders for comparable work, the development of a family policy, and the development of ways to prevent and address sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. On the other hand, ICEIDA will over the coming years place increased emphasis on promoting gender equality in its partner countries through the mainstreaming of gender and gender equality perspectives in planning the Agency's development projects. By these means, ICEIDA will look upon increased gender equality as one of the most important means of achieving the principal aim of the bilateral development assistance provided by Iceland, namely poverty reduction.

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Iceland has participated in various international activities relating to gender equality and has ratified all the principal international instruments relating specifically to the human rights of women (see annex 2).

The foundation for formal international co-operation on gender equality was laid in the 1970s with the first UN World Conference on Women in 1975 and the adoption of the CEDAW Convention in 1979. The CEDAW Convention is a comprehensive international

instrument on the human rights of women, which recognises that the prerequisite for advances in human rights, which includes increased gender equality, is to incorporate them as an aspect of development work. In the wake of the CEDAW Convention, various international organisations and bilateral development agencies incorporated the provisions on human rights and gender equality into their own policies and guidelines for development co-operation. The CEDAW convention was signed by the Icelandic government in 1980 and ratified in 1985. The convention has not been incorporated into the Icelandic legal order, but is binding pursuant to international law.⁸

Another milestone in international co-operation on gender equality was passed at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Iceland participated in the conference, which was extremely well attended and attracted a great deal of attention. The conference approved an action plan highlighting twelve Critical Areas of Concern requiring particular attention in the effort to promote greater gender equality in the world. These areas of concern are: poverty, education and training, health, violence against women, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms and advancement of women, human rights of women, the media, the environment and the girl child. ICEIDA's partner countries prioritise these areas of concern according to the conditions in the respective country, and in their elaboration of the Beijing Platform for Action many countries have focused on the close relationship between gender discrimination and poverty, particularly with regard to the position of girl children, education, health care, reproductive rights and sexual freedom.

The 55th General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2000 approved the United Nations Millennium Declaration which, among other things, imposes on United Nations member states an obligation to use actions designed to increase gender equality as a tool in the struggle against poverty, hunger and diseases and to promote sustainable development.⁹ The Millennium Declaration and the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹⁰ based on the declaration, reassert the objectives of both the CEDAW Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action and currently constitute generally accepted criteria in both bilateral and multilateral development co-operation. The third Millennium Development Goal specifically stipulates increased gender equality and empowerment of women and, in its elaboration, places emphasis on increasing women's education, paid employment and participation in power and decision-making. The MDGs clearly state the belief



that progress in development is directly linked to the improved status of women and children.

Iceland has participated in numerous other international conferences addressing gender equality and human rights, where it has confirmed its obligations pursuant to the CEDAW Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action.¹¹ In 2004, Iceland took a seat, for the first time, on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) established in 1946. The role of the Commission, among other things, is to follow up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in individual countries and to monitor the results of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the activities of UN institutions. In addition to its participation in the activities of the United Nations, Iceland is bound by various treaties and agreements on gender equality and human rights through its membership of European and Nordic institutions. In 2004, Iceland applied for membership of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)¹² and will increasingly operate in accordance with DAC resolutions and guidelines on the implementation of development co-operation. A separate working party, the *DAC Working Party on Gender Equality*, works within DAC and has, among other things, been responsible for the publication of guidelines on means of achieving the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action.¹³

Iceland's participation in international co-operation on gender equality has had an extensive impact on the trends in gender equality matters in Iceland. Areas of impact include the increased emphasis on mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives on an international level, areas which also are prominent features of the current action plan of the Icelandic Government on gender equality. In addition, public discussion of the position of men and their participation in the struggle for gender equality has increased substantially in Iceland in recent years in line with international trends. In addition to being grounded in Icelandic laws and government policies, the enhanced efforts of ICEIDA to promote gender equality in the Agency's development projects in the coming years will be based on the provisions of the CEDAW Convention, the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs, which form the basis of the political obligation undertaken by UN member states to promote equal rights for men and women. The Agency will support the policies of its partner countries in linking actions on gender equality with the struggle against poverty and will also take account of the order of priority decided by them. In this way, the Agency will endeavour to ensure that its points of focus on gender equality are based in equal measure on the priorities of the partner countries and Icelandic viewpoints. ICEIDA's emphasis on education and health care is well in line with the focal points of the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs, and the majority of the Agency's partner countries prioritise gender equality measures in these sectors in their battle against poverty. Furthermore, ICEIDA will support actions aimed at gender equality in its support for the development of the industries and the economy of its partner countries, as indeed the calculations of recognised international organisations have shown that increased gender equality in these sectors has a positive impact on economic growth.¹⁴

THE POLICIES AND LEGAL ENVIRONMENT OF ICEIDA'S PARTNER COUNTRIES.

ICEIDA is responsible, pursuant to law, for the implementation of Icelandic bilateral development assistance based on mutual international agreements between the government of Iceland and the governments of the partner countries. International development activities currently place greater emphasis on increased co-operation between development institutions and the adaptation of development co-operation to the poverty reduction strategies (PRS) of partner countries. The hope is that this will make international development assistance more efficient and effective. Over the next few years ICEIDA will adapt to these changed

circumstances and seek to establish its own role in co-operation of this kind. As the responsibility for gender equality in ICEIDA's partner countries is in the hands of their respective governments, it is vital that the efforts of the Agency to promote increased gender equality should take account of the priorities and policies of these countries. In each partner country ICEIDA will closely examine existing poverty reduction strategies and gender equality policies during the preparation of all new projects in order to ensure that the components or methods designed to promote gender equality in ICEIDA's development projects are consistent with the plans and policies of partner countries. Moreover, the Agency will monitor the points of emphasis and initiatives of entities other than the government in gender equality matters, e.g. NGOs, other development institutions and international organisations operating in ICEIDA's partner countries. Co-ordination with the activities and policies of other entities concerned with gender equality will involve, *inter alia*, increased participation by ICEIDA employees in the work of any joint committees addressing gender equality issues in the partner countries.

Although ICEIDA will in this manner increase its emphasis on adapting development projects to the poverty reduction strategies of the partner countries, the Agency will reserve the right to assess independently the importance of gender and gender equality perspectives in its projects. According to Icelandic law, and through Iceland's membership of all the principal international instruments relating to gender equality and human rights of women, ICEIDA is under the obligation of promoting gender equality in its work, and the Agency will respect this obligation in the preparation and implementation of its projects. In most cases, this obligation is consistent with the international obligations and official policies of ICEIDA's partner countries, which have their own gender equality legislation and have ratified international instruments on gender equality. Where the provisions of these international instruments are for some reason ignored in ICEIDA's partner countries and their gender equality laws violated, the Agency will seek ways to encourage increased attention to gender and gender equality perspectives within the sectors in which the Agency operates. If such efforts prove fruitless and partner states show little or no willingness to increase gender equality, this will in every instance apart from exceptional cases for which extensive plausible reasoning is given, mean that ICEIDA will withdraw from the co-operation and will not extend project contracts.



3. Gender Perspective

SOCIAL DEFINITION OF THE GENDER CONCEPT

It is important to understand the difference between the biological and the social definition of gender. In a biological context, the concept of gender (sex) refers to the biological differences between women and men, which are the same everywhere. An example of this is the ability of women to bear children. In a social context, however, the term gender refers to the socially defined roles of men and women and the consequent position they hold in society. Each community has different views, expectations, rights and obligations linked to being a man or a boy, on the one hand, and to being a woman or a girl, on the other hand. The social role of the genders

varies from one community to the next; thus, a role assigned to men in one community may be assigned to women in another. Gender roles may also differ considerably within a community and this difference is determined by issues such as age, religion and class. The social roles of the genders are subject to continuous change and can undergo fundamental changes from one generation to the next.

WHY FOCUS ON BOTH GENDERS?

Gender affects the lives of all people. Development co-operation which initially may appear to have little to do with gender more often than not has different impacts on the lives of women and men and may have the effect of either increasing or decreasing gender discrimination, irrespective of whether this was intended or foreseen. No society in the world affords to both genders the same access to social services or economic benefits. The division of tasks and the job markets are generally very gender-biased, a division which simultaneously reflects the different traditions and norms of society, the different opportunities for men and women to acquire an education and work experience, and the different areas of interest of the genders. The knowledge and experience amassed in international development co-operation in recent decades has shown the importance of examining the systemic causes of gender discrimination. These include systemic obstacles to equal political participation and decision-making for men and women, and unequal opportunities for the genders as regards economic independence and participation in economic decision-making processes. Cultural and social factors also contribute to gender discrimination and repression, and, in fact, the Beijing Platform for Action points out the importance of eliminating negative and demeaning attitudes towards women and girls. If account is to be taken of the impact of gender in the organisation and implementation of development co-operation, account must be taken of the different behaviour, expectations and needs of both women and men. This applies particularly in the case of power and/or economic benefits. A precise understanding of all forms of gender-related barriers is extremely important in order to ensure that both men and women participate in and benefit from development co-operation.

A gender perspective in development co-operation takes into account the position of both women and men, and their relationships, and therefore requires just as much an examination of the attitudes and behaviour of men as of women. The responsibility and participation of both women and men in promoting gender

equality is a prerequisite for the success of such work. The Beijing Platform for Action points out the importance of mobilising men to participate in gender equality affairs, and in international development work increased attention is being paid to devising methods and approaches to achieve this goal.¹⁵ Even though work toward gender equality requires the participation of both women and men, it must be remembered that gender discrimination usually involves discrimination against women, and therefore a special emphasis on the empowerment of women is fundamental in the effort to promote equitable and effective development. Empowerment of women calls for increased awareness among women of their position, their increased ability to take responsibility for, and control, their lives and their increased power over resources of various kinds. The overall goal of development co-operation is the empowerment of poor people in general, although the gender perspective shows that women are usually more poorly situated in this respect than men, which justifies the special measures used to correct this difference.

ICEIDA will base its work on the understanding that development co-operation affects the lives of women and men differently as a result of their unequal positions and roles in society. In the preparation of projects, emphasis will be placed on analysing the systemic and culture-based causes of the differing situations and participation of the genders in the sectors within which the Agency works and, based on this analysis, attempts will be made to formulate implementation plans for those projects designed in a way that seems likely to ensure the participation of both men and women. In sectors where the participation of either gender is very limited, attempts will be made to find ways to increase the participation of that gender through special actions. The Agency will closely monitor efforts in international development co-operation aimed at developing methods intended to encourage men to actively engage with matters of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and will make use of any innovation compatible with the Agency's policies and project approach. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting initiatives in ICEIDA's partner countries intended to combat political, economical, cultural and social obstacles which stand in the way of equality between women and men.



4. Gender Equality and the Goals of Development Co-Operation

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

The principal goal of Icelandic bilateral development co-operation is to combat poverty. Accordingly, special emphasis is placed on co-operation with countries where living standards are among the world's poorest according to the assessment of internationally recognised organisations. In recent years, ICEIDA has placed increased emphasis on improving the conditions of the people who endure the poorest circumstances in the Agency's partner countries through increasing contributions to primary education and health

care as well as through paying increased attention to gender discrimination and the position of women. This policy is in line with the international instruments to which Iceland is a party, including the MDGs, which currently represent the accepted criteria in international development co-operation. Increased and more effective international co-operation in the struggle against poverty is the foundation of the MDGs, and the mainstreaming of gender and gender equality perspectives into all development co-operation activities is one of the most important ways to achieve those goals. Most international development institutions and international organisations currently emphasise a gender perspective and gender equality goals in their activities, as it has repeatedly been shown that gender discrimination and other social discrimination obstructs progress and the struggle against poverty in the world. It is on the basis of this policy in international development work that ICEIDA has identified gender equality goals as being among the most important points of emphasis in its general strategy, and will in future work toward the target of mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives into all its activities.

In international development co-operation there is always the risk that the foreign employees of development agencies will have pre-fixed ideas, based on experience from their own respective communities, about gender roles and other social relationships in the partner country. Such preconceptions can lead to serious mistakes being made and funds being wasted. Social gender analysis in the preparation of development projects is an important tool to prevent this, and ICEIDA will increasingly utilise such analyses in the preparation of its development projects. Gender analysis examines the roles and resources of both men and women, and experience has shown that the result of such an analysis usually indicates that some action is necessary to improve the position and decision-making power of women. When all is said and done, development often involves empowering the poor and powerless to gain control of their own lives and claim resources which lead to improved quality of life. The methods used to reach these goals, however, often challenge conventional divisions of power in the community and this often leads to disputes. "Gender blindness" in development co-operation, which takes no account of gender and thereby ignores gender bound power differences, is one way of avoiding such disputes. A prerequisite for effective development co-operation, however, is that both genders participate in, and benefit from, development projects. It is therefore vital that the power imbalance between men and women and the dispute that challenging such an imbalance can create be constructively addressed at the very beginning of all

development projects. ICEIDA regards social discrimination, including gender-based discrimination, as an obstacle standing in the way of the Agency's principal goal of reducing poverty. It is the policy of the Agency to analyse and address such discrimination in its development projects and to seek ways to level the opportunities and to empower disadvantaged social groups.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS¹⁶

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) constitute the joint vision of the international community for a better world, where destitution and child mortality have decreased substantially, gender discrimination in educational opportunities has disappeared, women have been empowered to the same level as men, the availability of health-care has increased, and environmental sustainability is a routine aspect of development co-operation. One of the eight goals is to increase gender equality, as increased gender equality is considered a means to achieve the other goals. The plan of action attached to the MDGs places particular emphasis on increased women's literacy, increased participation of women in work other than agriculture, as well as an increasing the number of women in national parliaments.

The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases posing a threat to humans
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Gender Equality and Poverty.

The first MDG calls for actions aimed at substantially reducing the percentage of people suffering from poverty and hunger in the world in the coming years. An important way to achieve that is to ensure the economic growth of poor countries. Increased gender equality has been shown to have a direct impact on the economic growth of nations, *inter alia* because it promotes efficient use of the workforce, increases job opportunities for women and improves

productivity. Gender equality measures which directly promote economic growth include equal access for men and women to education, equalisation of property ownership and access to resources, equalisation of gender workloads (paid *and* unpaid) and the equalisation of access to information and technology.

Gender Equality and Education

The MDGs educational target reaffirms the goals of *Education for All* approved at the World Education Forum organised by the UN in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 and aims at providing all children, both girls and boys with the opportunity to complete primary schooling. According to World Bank figures 90 million of the 150 million children aged 6-11 who currently do not attend school are girls.¹⁷ It is therefore clear that actions which promote gender equality are an important factor in attaining the educational targets of the MDGs. Experience shows that increased education is one of the most important means of reducing poverty in the world. Development co-operation which reduces the cost of schooling for girls, builds up hygiene facilities and safety in schools, supports the training of a larger number of female teachers and increases job opportunities for women when they have completed their education has been shown to be an important way to effectively overcome social and economic obstacles to the education of girls and increase the likelihood of them completing primary schooling.

Gender Equality and Health

Three of the MDGs relate to health care, i.e. reducing infant mortality, improving maternal health and strengthening the battle against diseases, such as AIDS and malaria, which are endemic in poorer countries. Although health care has improved in many places in recent years, UN figures show that there is some way to go before the genders can be said to enjoy equal health care a fact reflected in the reality that in most of poorer countries the health and life expectancy of women is lower than that of men.¹⁸ Experience has shown that better education for women, increased wages and empowerment, which, among other things, increase their control over their own bodies and their ability to obtain health care services for themselves and their children, leads to better health during pregnancy and after childbirth, decreases infant mortality and increases the life expectancy of women. It is therefore vital that development co-operation in the health sector be designed with the differing needs of the genders in mind, and their differing ability to use the services, and that particular efforts should be made to improve the health of women and their access to health care services.

Gender Equality and Environmental Sustainability

The seventh MDG reasserts the resolutions of the international community at the Rio de Janeiro conference in 1992 on sustainable development and environmental protection. The conference marked a turning point in the minds of many people, owing to the stress that was laid in its resolutions on the link between environmental sustainability and gender equality. Since then, the importance of addressing gender equality concurrently with environmental sustainability has been confirmed at numerous international conferences, including the UN Summit in Johannesburg in 2002. In preparing development projects it is important to explore gender-based needs and the division of tasks in the sector where the development project is to be implemented in order to understand how the different roles and interests of the genders can increase, or possibly decrease, the likelihood of achieving the environmental targets of the project. This is particularly true of projects which are directly linked to the environment. It is important to not take for granted that the male leaders of a community will provide accurate information on the actual roles, interests, and opinions of women or disempowered male groups; instead, ways must be sought to enable these groups to provide information themselves in a setting where they can express themselves freely.

Gender equality is not merely one of the MDGs; in fact, measures to increase gender equality are an important part of achieving all the MDGs. There is a risk that efforts to achieve goals, e.g. in education and health care, without regard for the criteria of gender equality will result both in greater costs and reduced chances of success. The MDGs will be the foundation on which ICEIDA's work will be based in the coming years, and the Agency will endeavour to do its part so that the goals may be achieved in its partner countries. ICEIDA's emphasis on education and health care, utilisation of natural resources and the development of industries in partner countries is compatible with the MDGs, and over the next few years the Agency will adapt to an even greater degree to the approved methods employed by the international community to achieve the Goals. This will involve, among other things, increased emphasis on the gender perspective in the preparation and implementation of projects in all the sectors where the Agency is active, with particular emphasis on reducing imbalances in the educational opportunities of the genders and increasing women's access to health care services and knowledge, as well as placing emphasis on preserving the interests of both genders in projects involving the utilisation of natural resources (see also Chapter 6).



5. Methods in Development Co-Operation to Promote Gender Equality

MAINSTREAMING: A NEW ROUTE TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY

Recent trends in gender equality matters in international co-operation are of great significance for the methods and approaches used by development institutions in the implementation of their work. The methods used at the time when the WID perspective was dominant, i.e. setting up separate “women’s projects” or directing a portion of development projects specifically at women, have not been seen to return the anticipated results. The reasons are, on the one hand, that the “women’s portion” was generally an insignificant part of the development projects and, on the other hand, that the overall goals and activities of the women’s projects took little account of the circumstances and needs of women in other respects. The emphasis of the WID perspective on women exclusively has been

seen as leading to the isolation of women's issues and to a lack of coherence with social contexts and overall development goals. Development institutions currently place increased emphasis on the application of a gender perspective which assumes that efforts to correct imbalances in the position of the genders will also necessitate focusing on how the gender-related status, behaviour and self-image of men will affect the position of women and the potential for achieving gender equality goals through development. The method most commonly used at the current time to achieve the gender equality objectives of development co-operation is based on the *mainstreaming* of gender and gender equality perspectives; this is an effective method to ensure that the opportunities and benefits arising from development co-operation will benefit both men and women in as equal a way as possible, and that the needs and interests of both genders are reflected in the policies and actions of development institutions. Through the use of this method, gender becomes a fundamental criterion for all decision-making and strategic planning in development co-operation.

In the coming years, ICEIDA will endeavour to mainstream gender and gender equality perspectives into its institutional activities and into its implementation of development projects. This work will be based on four fundamental actions and activities: *Collection of data* on the position of the genders, *the appointment of a staff member* to lead and provide guidance on the implementation of the Agency's gender equality policy, the *training* of employees, and the development of *methods* to achieve gender equality¹⁹. ICEIDA will endeavour to make gender equality one of its points of reference in policy formulation and strategic planning. Thus, the Agency will strive to ensure that gender is systematically taken into account and prevented from becoming a fringe issue.

Data Collection

In order to mainstream a gender equality perspective into the strategic planning and activities of the Agency in partner countries it is necessary to know how the differing living conditions of the genders manifest themselves in each country. ICEIDA will employ the methods of social gender analysis to obtain this knowledge. Gender analysis involves both gender disaggregated statistics and qualitative data on the respective positions of women and men and gender relations. Social gender analysis carried out in the course of preparing development projects generally differentiates between the practical needs and the strategic interests of the genders. The practical needs are the tangible needs of people relating to their daily toil, e.g. the opportunity to earn an income, access to health

care or access to natural resources. The strategic interests of people are their social needs relating to their control, decision-making power and social status. Women and men generally have different (often very different) practical needs and strategic interests, and a precise analysis of these issues is a fundamental prerequisite for the adaptation of development plans to the needs of both genders, as required by the mainstreaming approach.

Management and Responsibility for Implementation

A prerequisite for the success of ICEIDA's gender equality policy is that employees within the Agency must be well informed about gender issues and they must carry the responsibility for the policy's implementation. There are already project managers working in the field in ICEIDA's partner countries engaged in work where gender issues play an important role or are in charge of projects specifically intended to improve the position of women. Over the next few years, efforts will be made to make the gender aspect of the work of these experts more effective and they, in co-operation with the Agency's Country Directors, will instruct other Agency employees in this field. Moreover, one employee at the ICEIDA Head Office in Reykjavík will be responsible for the gender equality work of the Agency and will work with Agency staff on matters relating to gender rights and issues. This employee will be given opportunities to gain knowledge and training in the field of gender equality, e.g. by attending courses on gender equality issues which the Ministry for Foreign Affairs plans to organise,²⁰ and will be responsible for disseminating such knowledge to other Agency employees. ICEIDA will endeavour to secure the involvement of as equal a number as possible of male and female employees in the implementation of the gender equality policy and thereby seek to ensure that the policy reflects the interests of both women and men.

Staff Training

With the increased emphasis on gender and gender equality perspectives in development co-operation in recent years, a pool of knowledge has been collected on the position of the genders, their relations as well as methods which may be used to make gender equality a reality in different societies. The Agency aims to ensure that its employees acquire a certain degree of ability to understand the different needs of the genders as well as the ways in which development projects in different fields can meet the needs of both genders. ICEIDA believes that training on gender issues, both for those responsible for policy-making (the Managing Director and Board of Directors) and those who implement the strategies (all employees) is a prerequisite for successful mainstreaming.

Development of Methods

The effectiveness of mainstreaming is based on the development of systematic and effective methods to ensure that account is taken of the opinions and interests of both genders in the course of decision-making and in the implementation of development co-operation, and that funds provided by development institutions are divided more or less equally between the genders. Such methods are developed by various means, and ICEIDA plans to prepare checklists on the mainstreaming of gender and gender equality perspectives to be used by Agency staff in the preparation and implementation of project plans (project agreements). The checklists will provide guidance on how the projects will meet the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men in the relevant sectors and how they can lead to increased gender equality in the sectors in question.

Already, a methodology designed to mainstream gender and gender equality perspectives into all development co-operation has been adopted within international organisations such as the OECD (DAC) and the Council of Europe, and the mainstreaming of these perspectives currently constitutes a basic policy of many development agencies, among them the Nordic agencies. In Iceland, the first steps toward mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives into all public activities were taken in projects carried out under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the Government's current action plan to achieve gender equality uses the mainstreaming perspective as a basis. The action plan calls for the formation of a consultative committee composed of representatives from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, who will prepare proposals for a schedule of work and measures to mainstream male and female equality into Icelandic international activities in accordance with the international instruments to which Iceland is party. Furthermore, the action plan calls for courses on gender equality to be held for employees of the foreign service, including those working in the developing countries. A separate plan on gender equality of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which will take account of the gender equality plan of the Icelandic Government Offices is in the pipelines.²¹

Over the next few years, ICEIDA will work systematically toward mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives into the strategic planning and activities of the Agency using the approaches described above. This work will take account of Icelandic gender equality rights legislation and the Icelandic Government's action plan to achieve gender equality, in particular that of the Ministry for

Foreign Affairs, as well as of the points of emphasis in the international co-operation of development institutions, international organisations and NGOs. In addition to these guidelines, ICEIDA will take full account of the priorities and strategies of its partner countries concerning gender rights.

THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

In recent years, international development institutions, NGOs and governments have increasingly adopted the ideology and methodology of *participatory development* in the preparation and implementation of development co-operation. Various methods are currently being employed in participatory development, but the basic idea behind all of these methods is to enable those who enjoy the benefits of development co-operation (generally poor and disempowered people) to participate actively in the decision-making, preparation and implementation of development activities. Participatory development is intended to have a positive impact on the empowerment of the participating individuals and societies; increase their interest in the implementation of development activities and thereby promote effective development. The methods of participatory development are now generally regarded as a self-evident aspect of effective development co-operation.

Although the primary objective of participatory development is to increase the participation and power of poor people in the development process, particularly those in the poorest circumstances, experience has shown that development co-operation or policies which are based on the ideology of participatory development do not automatically lead to increased gender equality.²² Owing to the substantially inferior social and economic power of women as compared to men in most societies, it is necessary to specifically address the participation of women in order to ensure that both genders participate in, and benefit from, development co-operation. Moreover it is important to keep in mind that differences between women and men based, among other things, on age and social position, can also have an impact on the ability of people to make use of the opportunities which development activities may afford them.

In recent years, ICEIDA has begun to utilise the methodology of participatory development in some of its projects. In the coming years, the Agency will monitor new developments in this field and make use of those developments which are in accordance with the Agency's policies and procedures. In the preparation and

implementation of ICEIDA's development projects, partly or wholly based on participatory approaches, the following points will be kept in mind to ensure as uniform a participation of the different social groups as possible in each project:²³

Diversity. All communities, even the smallest villages, are composed of different social groups which have differing opinions and needs. It is therefore not self-evident, and in fact very unlikely, that any general agreement will be in place with respect to what the goals of a development project should be and what means are best suited to attain them. Different social groups are likely to have differing priorities and differing ideas on where the need for development projects is the greatest and how much effort should be spent on addressing power relations, e.g. the disparate empowerment of the genders or other social discrimination, in order to attain the goals of a project. New ICEIDA projects will be based on social analysis, which involves, among other things, analysis of the gender roles, positions and relations. In this way, ICEIDA will seek to build a greater knowledge base of the societies in which the Agency operates and thereby increase the likelihood that its development projects are based on participation and will meet the needs of different social groups, particularly the poor and disempowered. Increased knowledge of the social environment in which ICEIDA operates will also increase the chances of finding ways to constructively engage with obstacles and resistance in the way towards gender equality in the development co-operation carried out by the Agency.

Time and Cost. The advantages of participating in a development project do not always outweigh the disadvantages. Participation demands time and effort from people and, quite often, those who are most seriously economically and socially disadvantaged pay a relatively greater price for participation. Poor people often have little free time to spare and the benefits of participating in development projects are not always immediate or obvious. This applies particularly to women, who in addition to earning an income for the household, are generally responsible for the day-to-day care of the home and children. When preparing ICEIDA participatory projects this point will be kept in mind and attempts will be made to find ways to make it easier for people to participate. Offering childcare is an example of special measures which can make it easier for women to participate in development projects.

Decentralisation. If participatory development is to succeed, a conscious effort must be made to transfer at least a part of the decision-making power within a development project from the development agency funding the project and the official

organisations of the partner countries to the groups of people benefiting from the project. Asking the different stakeholders what they want or what emphasis they wish to see in a particular development project is useless if they are not also given power to impact decision-making during the implementation of the project. For many reasons this has proved to be extremely complicated in practice for many development institutions, partly owing to the inflexibility of the institutions themselves and existing hierarchies in the partner countries. ICEIDA will closely monitor the ongoing debate on this aspect of participatory development in the coming years and will emphasise the utilisation of experience gained by other development institutions and NGOs as regards successful methods.

Training and Flexibility. Participatory development projects are complex, and it is therefore vital that the employees of ICEIDA and/or the partners responsible for the implementation of such projects should receive some training in the methodology of participatory development, e.g. in consensus-building between different stakeholders. There is already considerable experience of the implementation of participatory development projects in ICEIDA's partner countries, and it would therefore be appropriate to ask domestic experts in this field to give short courses on the methodology of participatory development for the employees involved. Such courses could form a part of project preparation. Moreover, a certain amount of flexibility will be needed in project plans (including financial flexibility) in order to meet any unexpected needs which the participatory development process might involve.

It is important to understand the limitations of participatory development. Even though participatory development projects are based on the ideology that the people intended to benefit from a project should also largely determine its preparation and implementation, studies have shown that it is actually the external parties (development institutions, international organisations or governments) who usually take the initiative in participatory development projects, decide what should be financed and where the points of emphasis should be. Participatory development is no magic solution, and on its own the approach promotes neither gender equality nor the participation of the most disadvantaged population of a society. Participatory development, however, is one of the methods which can be experimented with in the effort to increase the success of development co-operation. Participatory development projects need to be properly prepared and it is of fundamental importance that they be based on the gender equality perspective.



6. Gender Equality and ICEIDA's Scope of Activities

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The action plan *Education for All*, approved at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, places great emphasis on the link between increasing education and decreasing global poverty.²⁴ The MDGs support this view and emphasise the strengthening of primary education as an important part of combating poverty.²⁵ These two resolutions prioritise gender equality in education; both as a means for success, and as an end in itself to realise gender equality and moral justice.

The ideal of *Education for All* was first voiced at the United Nations Human Rights Declaration in 1948 and has been confirmed in numerous international instruments since. It has often been demonstrated that general education directly and substantially

promotes both economic and social development and, according to recent UNESCO calculations, gender equality in education triggers increased production and economic growth, decreased population growth and the increased welfare of children.²⁶ Although many countries have found it hard to increase gender equality in education, some progress has been made in recent years in many places. Access to education for girls and women is nevertheless still considerably less than that of boys and men in most developing countries, and in many places girls are less likely to complete primary education than boys are. The situation in this respect is worst in the poorest countries of Africa, where the percentage of girls who do not complete primary and secondary schooling has gone up in recent years. Moreover, the percentage of female students in universities is also considerably lower in African states than in many other parts of the world.²⁷ With the MDGs, the member states of the United Nations committed themselves to work toward ensuring *gender parity* in primary schools before 2015 as well as ensuring *gender equality* in primary and secondary schools before 2005 and at all educational levels before 2015.

ICEIDA is of the opinion that mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives in development projects in the field of education and training is an essential part of reaching the educational targets of the MDGs and the Dakar Forum. In its support of primary education in partner countries, ICEIDA has worked toward increasing the school attendance of both girls and boys through the support of special courses designed to raise awareness among teachers and parents of the importance of educating girls as well as boys. Furthermore, the Agency has facilitated funding of scholarships to girls in secondary schools on behalf of Icelandic NGOs, and in certain Agency projects at the university level, attempts have been made to promote an increased proportion of women through special grants to female students. The Agency's primary emphasis in education and training over the past few years, however, has been on literacy and basic adult education and this emphasis will remain unchanged over the next few years. One of the six goals of the Dakar Action Plan is to reduce illiteracy among adults in the world by 50% by 2015, and although adult literacy is not one of the MDGs it is considered to be an important part of attaining the MDGs, *inter alia* because of the belief that the increased basic education of parents is an important part of ensuring the school attendance of children. The interest of the international community in adult basic education has increased greatly in recent years, and new methods have been developed which link adult literacy training with other economic or social reforms in people's lives. It is clear that

the mainstreaming of gender and gender equality perspectives is a necessary part of attaining goals of increased adult literacy, as recent figures estimate that of the 900 million illiterate adults in the world 600 million are women.²⁸

The development of realistic ways of combating gender discrimination in education and training is based on the knowledge of gender discrimination in other social sectors and on culture-related ideas concerning the position and role of men and women. Thus, it is important, for example, to link development co-operation with the underlying reasons why girls are less likely to attend school than boys, to integrate into the plans of development projects at university level components which specifically encourage women to seek the education and link adult education projects specifically to the needs of women, but at the same time encourage the participation and support of men. In order to achieve these goals ICEIDA will address the following issues in its preparation of development projects within the education sector:

Data Collection. Promotion of surveys and the development of a databank containing gender disaggregated information on education, the differing needs of the genders and their ability to take advantage of educational opportunities. Where such information is available it must be collected and used as a basis for the preparation and implementation of the Agency's development projects.

Relation to Social Reality. It is necessary to understand the interrelationship between gender-related discrimination in a society as a whole and the different positions of the genders within the school system. Development projects in education and training must address the manifestations and consequences of social and economic discrimination and provisions, which take account of the differing needs of the genders and promote equality of access, opportunity and circumstances during study and practical training, should be integrated into project plans.

Training and Opportunities. Attempts will be made to redress imbalances in the ratio of women and men in employment positions within the fields of education or training at which development projects are directed, whether these positions relate to policymaking, management, teaching within a formal school system or informal guidance in adult education courses. People in such positions should be offered training which promotes their participation in reducing gender discrimination in the school system and in educational matters in general. Development projects directed at university levels and other projects which

provide practical or informal training will seek to redress imbalances in the ratio of male and female students. Where either gender is in an obvious minority, special efforts will be made to increase the participation of that gender.

Gender-specific Needs. Account must be taken of gender-specific needs in the development of the school activities and teaching conditions. It is important to meet the needs, and ensure the safety and wellbeing, of both girls and boys as well as female and male teachers.

Participation. In the preparation and implementation of projects an effort will be made to work with groups composed of both women and men. The participation of women in public executive committees will be encouraged and it must also be ensured that male teachers, fathers and village leaders participate in work intended to promote the redressing of imbalances in the ratio of girls and boys in schools, improve conditions and change mentalities so that the genders have equal opportunities to attend school and perform well in their studies.

Balance. Where emphasis is placed on community participation in educational development projects, an effort must be made to ensure, to the extent possible, equality in the work contribution of women and men, equal responsibility and equal participation in decision-making.

Support of education and training is one of the principal points of focus in Icelandic bilateral development assistance. Gender imbalance and gender-specific discrimination is substantial at all levels of the educational system in all ICEIDA's partner countries, and illiteracy is more extensive among women than men. Over the coming years the Agency will seek to make its gender equality work in the field of education and training more organised and more effective by integrating gender and gender equality perspectives into all its projects. An important part of the preparation of ICEIDA's development projects in this field will consist of social analysis where attempts will be made to analyse how gender discrimination in the community as a whole is linked to the differing education of women and men as well as the position, wellbeing and achievements of both genders within the education system. The project plans and their points of emphasis will be based on these analyses and means will be sought to equalise the participation and achievements of the genders, both in the different stages of the formal school system and in general training activities.



Evaluations of ICEIDA's education and training projects will, among other things, assess the degree of success in implementing the Agency's gender equality policy.

HEALTH CARE

In many societies, women are conspicuous as users of health care services and as care workers, both within the home and in health-care institutions. The health-care services available to women, however, are generally linked to their role of giving birth and caring for infants, but not to themselves as individuals. Medical research has often disregarded gender-specific differences relating to the causes and treatment of diseases and has neglected the specific health problems of women.²⁹ Women are generally responsible for unremunerated care work within the home and, in the health-care sector, the majority of women occupy service positions rather than management positions. It is therefore clear that the gender-specific discrimination of society as a whole has as much of an impact on the health sector as it has on other sectors.

The high incidence of maternal mortality in many poor countries around the world, growing incidence in some cases, indicates serious deficiencies in the health-care services available to women, and such conditions are moreover linked to the gender-specific social position of women in the community. The limited power of women to make decisions in their relations with men, various

culture-linked traditions, the greater poverty of women and the priority, in some countries, that men and boys enjoy the food supplies of the home are examples of cultural and social factors that result in women having a greater number of health problems to address than men. Furthermore, gender-specific status also has an effect on access to health care services. The lower social and economic status of women and girls, women's work load and cultural restrictions on their freedom of movement have the effect, in many places, of obstructing their to health-care services. Solutions of health-care problems need to reflect this reality.

ICEIDA intends to integrate gender and gender equality perspectives into its development projects in the health sector. This integration will be based on two principal points of emphasis: understanding the effects that gender-specific discrimination and power imbalances have on the health and behaviour of both genders and their access to health-care services; and targeting the gender-specific needs of women for health-care services which are shaped both by their biological role and their social and economic position. An important goal of ICEIDA's support to the health sector in partner countries is to encourage the adaptation of health-care services to the needs of women as well as men and to address the issues leading to poorer health conditions among women than men. Furthermore, the Agency will in future give further attention to the improved professional position of women in the health sector, both in public health institutions and in society itself, as the equal participation of women and men in strategic planning, management and decision-making within the health sector is likely to result in a more equitable emphasis on the needs and expectations of both genders. In order to promote gender equality in the health sector ICEIDA will, among other things, address the following issues in the preparation and implementation of its development projects in this sector:³⁰

Data Collection. Promotion of surveys and the creation of a databank containing gender disaggregated information on public health, the differing needs of the genders and their utilisation of health care services. Where such information is available it must be collected and used as a basis for the preparation and implementation of the Agency's development projects.

Relation to Social Reality. It is important to realise that gender-specific discrimination results in health problems for women everywhere in the world, particularly in the poorest countries. An efficient health service must address the manifestations and consequences of this social reality and specifically promote the empowerment of women. An effort will be made to take account

of the links between health problems and social realities during the preparatory stages of ICEIDA's projects in order to enable the focus and priorities of the projects to take account of this reality.

Training. It is important for people who work in the health sector, whether in policy-making, strategic planning or health-care work, to understand the gender discrimination present within the health-care system and services in their community. An important component of ICEIDA health-care projects in the future will be to offer training which encourages the participation of health care employees towards reducing such discrimination.

Gender-specific Services. Efforts will be made to design health-care services to address gender-specific health problems and to address gender discrimination in the access to such services. All the health problems of women must be addressed; not just those relating to pregnancy and childbirth.

Men's Participation. It must be ensured that information and activities relating to childbirth, children's health, safe sex and sexually transmitted diseases are directed toward men as well as women. It is important to place equal emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of both genders where these matters are concerned.

Women's Participation. The contribution of women to paid and unpaid care work in society must be recognised through supporting their increased participation in strategic planning and management positions in the field of health care at the different levels of society.

Balance. In ICEIDA's development projects in the health sector focusing on community participation, an effort must be made to ensure, to the extent possible, equality in the work contribution of women and men, equality as regards responsibility and gender equality as regards participation in decision-making.

Three of the UN MDGs relate to health care, and the support to the health sector is one of the principal points of focus of Icelandic bilateral development assistance. Over the coming years, the Agency will seek to make its gender equality work in the health sector more organised and more effective by mainstreaming gender and gender equality perspectives into all its projects. An important part of the preparation of ICEIDA's development projects in this sector will be social analysis, where attempts will be made, *inter alia*, to analyse the ways in which social and cultural factors impact the health of women and men in the community where the project will

be implemented, as well analysing possible gender discrimination in the access to health care services. Project plans and decisions on points of emphasis in projects will be based on these analyses and will seek to level the status of the genders within the health sector, equalise their access to health-care services and promote the empowerment of women where this is lacking and where women have more health problems than men.

Evaluations of ICEIDA's projects in the health sector will, among other things, assess the degree of success in implementing the Agency's gender equality policy.

SUPPORT OF INDUSTRIES: FISHERIES

International organisations and development institutions have generally focused primarily on fishing in their support of the fisheries sector in their partner countries and, as a rule, fisheries are seen as a male-dominated sector. In most communities, however, particularly in non-industrialised societies, women normally participate in, or are responsible for, most of the land-based work in the fisheries sector – the handling of fishing gear and bait, or the unloading, processing and marketing of fish – and the perception that the fisheries sector is a male-dominated sector therefore gives a very misleading picture of the actual circumstances in these communities.

The emphasis on fishing in development co-operation and the limited attention generally paid to the work of women within the fisheries sector has had the effect that women have in some places lost their role within the sector, or have faced greater difficulties in participating. This has primarily occurred when structural changes have been made in the direction of industrialisation, which is usually the goal in development co-operation in this sector. If, on the other hand, increased gender equality is a prerequisite for reducing poverty, and if the battle against poverty is the principal goal of development co-operation, it is quite clear that it is extremely important to attempt to prepare and design development projects within the fisheries sector in such a way that both genders have the opportunity of taking advantage of new opportunities. This must especially be kept in mind when structural changes occur and traditional roles are altered. In the case of assistance to non-industrialised and artisanal fisheries communities it is also important that development projects take account of the well-being of the fisheries communities as a whole, for example by placing equal emphasis on developing fishing and marketing of cheaper species of fish, which are affordable for poor inhabitants, as well as for fish species processed for larger markets or export.

It is the goal of ICEIDA to increasingly mainstream gender and gender equality perspectives into its development projects in the fisheries sector in the coming years and thereby work more systematically toward reducing poverty in partner countries. In order to achieve this goal ICEIDA will address the following issues in its preparation of development projects within the fisheries sector:³¹

Data Collection. It must be ensured that the organisation of projects and their implementation plans are adequately based on information on the gender-specific division of tasks within the fisheries sector. It is important that information on the participation of different social groups in the fisheries industry should be based on actual circumstances and not only on peoples' testimony. Such information can reduce the risk of certain groups or professions within the sector losing their role and source of income, or being left in a position of disadvantage when structural changes occur.

Promotion. When promoting development projects, or opportunities linked to such projects, to the communities where a project is slated for implementation, emphasis must be placed on reaching both men and women. Care must be taken not to misinterpret the difficulty that women face in participating as lack of interest.

Participation. In the preparation and implementation of projects an effort will be made to work with groups composed of both women and men. In many places there are significant obstacles to women's participation in public life, which generally are a result of women's roles within the family and the home. If there is a tradition of public committees largely excluding the participation of women in a community where a development project is being planned, efforts shall be made to encourage their increased participation, if possible, or to undertake work with community units where women are participants, e.g. church associations of women. It is very important to work directly with women as well as men and not to expect the male leaders of a community to give voice to the interests and opinions of women or disempowered men.

Opportunities. Both men and women should be given the opportunity for further training in the field in which they specialise within the fisheries sector. Support of the industrialised part of the fisheries sector should focus on providing women with opportunities for training in the field targeted by the project and thereby promote their increased participation in that field.

Accessibility. It must be ensured that loan capital, if any, is equally available to both women and men.

Results. Care must be taken not to use only the straight average income of households to measure the benefits a community derives from a development project. In many places, women and men have very distinct roles in the operation of the household and studies have shown, for instance, that in many places in Africa cultural reasons explain why the income of women is put to better use for the welfare of the home than the income of men. In such cases the increased income of men does not necessarily mean greater welfare for the household.

Balance. Care must be taken not to increase the responsibilities and workload of people without a corresponding increase in their income and decision-making power. Experience has shown that development projects tend to increase the workload of women without any substantial benefit or increase in income.

Men's Participation. In projects concerned primarily with matters traditionally associated with women, e.g. nutritional matters or other comparable social issues, an effort will be made to ensure the participation of both men and women. Working with women exclusively can lead to the isolation of the project from other community institutions and reduce its validity in the eyes of other social groups.

The overall objective of the MDGs is to reinforce the campaign against poverty. One of the prerequisites for reducing poverty is the development of the economies and industries of the poorest countries in the world. ICEIDA has long emphasised support for fisheries in its partner countries, thereby seeking to strengthen their economies. The Agency's support in this field has principally been directed at the industrialised sector of the fisheries industry, but in the coming years the Agency will also investigate the possibility of supporting groups within the non-industrialised artisanal fisheries communities in partner countries. Emphasis will be placed on social analysis in the preparation of all projects in this sector which, among other things, will involve the analysis of the gender-specific division of tasks within the fisheries sector and gender-specific social, cultural and economic obstacles barring participation in activities within the sector. Project plans and decisions on their points of emphasis will be based on these analyses and efforts will be made to encourage the equal participation of men and women.

Evaluations of ICEIDA's fisheries projects and other projects connected with the support of industries in partner countries, their economies or the utilisation of resources will, among other things, assess the degree of success in implementing the Agency's gender equality policy.

7. Review of the Gender Equality Policy

ICEIDA's gender equality policy will be reviewed regularly pursuant to the decision of the Board of Directors of ICEIDA. The review will take account of assessments of the success of the policy.

Notes

- ¹ UNDP 2004. *Human Development Report 2003*; World Bank. 2003. *Gender Equality & The Millennium Development Goals*.
- ² World Bank. 2001. *Engendering Development – Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resource and Voice*.
- ³ UNDP 1996 *Human Development Report 1995* and UNDP 2004 *Human Development Report 2003*. See also World Bank 2003 *Gender Equality & The Millennium Development Goals*.
- ⁴ The Act on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 96/2000.
- ⁵ *Report of the Minister for Social Affairs on the status of the Government action plan to achieve gender equality*, submitted to the Althing at the 127th legislative session, 2001-2002, and again at the 130th legislative session, 2003-2004.
- ⁶ *Act on the Icelandic International Development Agency* No. 43, 26 May 1981.
- ⁷ ICEIDA's Policy, 2004.
- ⁸ United Nations *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 1998. Consideration of reports submitted by states parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Third and fourth periodic reports of States parties: Iceland* CEDAW/C/ICE/3-4.
- ⁹ United Nations 2000. *United Nations Millennium Declaration*.
- ¹⁰ A year after the approval of the Millennium Declaration the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, submitted the Millennium Development Goals which are based on the obligations of the Millennium Declaration and involve a tangible and measurable plan of action to reduce global poverty.
- ¹¹ These include the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo 1994 and the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.
- ¹² DAC is the principal body through which OECD deals with issues related to development co-operation with developing countries.

- ¹³ OECD 1998. *DAC Sourcebook on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*.
- ¹⁴ World Bank 2003 *Gender Equality & The Millennium Development Goals*.
- ¹⁵ Greig, Kimmel and Lang 2000 *Men, Masculinities & Development*.
- ¹⁶ For further elaboration of the links between the Millennium Development Goals and gender equality see World Bank 2003, *Gender Equality & The Millennium Development Goals*.
- ¹⁷ World Bank 2003 *Gender Equality & The Millennium Development Goals*, page. 11. Sources do not always agree on precise figures, however.
- ¹⁸ UNDP 2004. *Human Development Report 2003*.
- ¹⁹ This is based on guidelines from the Icelandic Centre for Gender Equality, see Centre for Gender Equality 2001 *Mainstreaming – a new path toward gender equality*.
- ²⁰ Report of the Minister for Social Affairs on the status of the Government action plan to achieve gender equality submitted before the Althingi at the 127th legislative session 2001-2002 and again at the 130th legislative session 2003-2004.
- ²¹ *Report of the Minister for Social Affairs on the status of the Government action plan to achieve gender equality* submitted to the Althingi at the 127th legislative session, 2001-2002, and a report on the extension of the same action plan submitted to the Althingi at the 130th legislative session, 2003-2004.
- ²² World Bank 1995. *World Bank Participation Sourcebook*.
- ²³ These points are, *inter alia*, based on: OECD 1998. *DAC Sourcebook of Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*; Mayoux 1995. *Beyond Naivety: Women, Gender Inequality and Participatory Development and Cornwall 1998. Gender, Participation and the Politics of Difference*.
- ²⁴ UNESCO 2000. *Dakar Framework for Action*.
- ²⁵ United Nations 2000 *United Nations Millennium Declaration*.
- ²⁶ UNESCO 2003 *Gender and Education for All*.
- ²⁷ UNESCO 2003 *Gender and Education for All* and UNICEF 2003 *The State of the World's Children*.
- ²⁸ Sources do not agree on exact figures, see UNESCO 2003 *Gender and Education for All* and Abadzi 2003 *Adult Literacy: A Review of Implementation Experience*.
- ²⁹ Emily Martin 2001 *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*.
- ³⁰ Based on Sida 1997. *Handbook for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Health Sector*.
- ³¹ Based on CIDA 1993 *Women and Fisheries Development*.
- ³² Definitions prepared in co-operation with the Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland.
- ³³ Information obtained from the Centre for Gender Equality.

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Annex

ANNEX I: DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Gender blindness: The specialised needs and experience of men and women are often ignored under the banners of gender blindness. Neutral provisions often have worse consequences for one of the genders. For this reason, it is necessary to keep gender and gender equality perspectives in mind in all decision-making.

Gender roles: The roles and tasks that the genders are expected to perform respectively in society and which are often based on stereotypical ideas on the abilities and “nature” of the genders. Thus, it is often presumed that women are by nature better suited to raising children and men are better suited to changing tyres.

Gender equality: The equal status, opportunities and rights of men and women in the community.

Gender parity: An equal proportion of genders in certain positions (e.g. on committees and in councils). An example is the election procedure in Sweden, which uses alternating lists, i.e. if a woman is in the first position then there is a man in the second and so forth.

Mainstreaming of gender and gender equality perspectives (gender mainstreaming): The view that gender equality issues are issues that concern society as a whole. Gender regarded as a fundamental criterion when new policies are being formulated or when public decisions are being made. The goal is to introduce a gender perspective into all strategic planning within the community, to redefine the traditional roles of the genders and to enable both women and men to integrate family life and professional life.

ANNEX II: INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS ON GENDER EQUALITY TO WHICH ICELAND IS PARTY:

1. Iceland ratified the European Convention on Human Rights in 1953.
2. Iceland ratified the ILO Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (1958).
3. In 1963 Iceland ratified the ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation.
4. Iceland became a signatory of the European Social Charter in 1976.
5. The CEDAW convention (1979) on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was signed by the Icelandic authorities in 1980 and ratified in 1985.
6. Iceland participated in the Beijing Conference and the preparation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995.
7. As a member state of the United Nations, Iceland is bound to respect the obligations of the UN MDGs from 2000.