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# Gender equality in and through education

Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation  
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GENDER EQUALITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION

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## Preface

Gender equality has long been a focus area in Swedish international development cooperation: in the 1990s as a development goal, in the 2000s as a central component element and recently as a thematic priority. Against this background the Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV) has conducted a series of evaluations of gender equality in development cooperation. The present evaluation aims at strengthening gender equality in Swedish support to the education sector.

Education is a prerequisite for promoting women's economic empowerment, health and well-being. Education is crucial in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and in promoting women's sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, education is important for women's political and civic participation, and in preventing gender-based violence and insecurity.

The design of the evaluation, and collection of information via desk studies and interviews, were conducted by Pia Karlsson, Martin Sjöstedt and Carolina Johansson Wennerholm. This report has also benefited from contributions by many people, whose help is greatly appreciated. Special thanks also go to Sida and Ministry for Foreign Affairs staff in Stockholm and staff in the Swedish Embassies in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kosovo and Tanzania, as well as government officials, international and local Civil Society Organisations and donor representatives in Cambodia, mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

Karlstad, December 2010

*Gunilla Törnqvist*  
Director General

## Summary

This evaluation illustrates how gender equality can be and is promoted through Swedish bilateral support to education.

The report addresses the following main questions:

- What factors are important in the promotion of gender equality in the education sector?
- How does Sida use the *dialogue* with actors involved in the education cooperation for promotion of gender equality in education? What issues are raised and why?
- To what extent does Sida promote gender equality in education through *capacity development*?

Swedish policies, international research and experience in promoting gender equality in and through education provides a framework for the evaluation which assesses how gender equality in education is formulated in some partner countries' policies and strategies and in Sida documents. The evaluation gives examples from Bolivia, Kosovo, Ethiopia, Tanzania (incl. Zanzibar), Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Cambodia.

Challenges and good practices in promoting gender equality in education were identified through a *desk study* of Swedish and international policy documents and a brief summary of research and experiences in the area. *Telephone interviews* were conducted with Education Programme Officers at the Swedish Embassies in all seven countries. In addition a *case study* with a qualitative approach, involving Cambodia, mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, was carried out. The case study relies mainly on interviews with Sida officers at the headquarters and the Swedish Embassies, staff of various positions at the Ministries of Education and Ministries of Women's Affairs, donor representatives, staff of national and international non-governmental organisations and United Nations agencies, as well as staff and students of education institutions in the chosen countries.

The findings refer mainly to interviews conducted from December 2009 to February 2010. Most of the policies, strategies and other documents that are discussed were valid in 2010.

The challenges facing gender equality in education reported by the respondents correspond with international research findings. The issues are among other things access to education, low enrolment and retention rate, teacher attitudes and poor school facilities.

The evaluation finds that some of the examples of good practices for promoting gender equality in the education sector are reflected in the studied development cooperation. Yet the support is not at the forefront of international experience. In the

studied cases Sida's focus is on gender parity although girls enrol and remain in education to the same or a higher extent than boys. Sida's focus is furthermore on primary education although experience shows that primary education is far from enough to advance women's empowerment.

In the studied cases Sida has been active in the dialogue, yet there are few examples of Sweden having explicitly and consciously addressed gender equality through development cooperation in the education sector. This is not to say that Sida has been inactive; at a policy and programme level Sida has contributed to development of legislation and policies. Furthermore, Sida has been active in promoting donor coordination.

## Sammanfattning

Utvärderingen visar hur jämställdhet kan främjas i svenskt bilateralt stöd för utbildning. Rapporten behandlar följande huvudfrågor:

- Vilka faktorer är viktiga i främjandet av jämställdhet inom utbildningssektorn?
- Hur använder Sida *dialogen* med aktörer i utbildningssamarbetet för att främja jämställdhet inom utbildning? Vilka frågor tas upp och varför?
- I vilken utsträckning främjar Sida jämställdhet inom utbildning genom *kapacitetsutveckling*?

Svensk policy, internationell forskning och erfarenhet av att främja jämställdhet i och genom utbildning bildar en ram för utvärderingen som bedömer hur jämställdhet i utbildning formulerats i några samarbetsländers politik och strategier och i Sidadokument. Utvärderingen ger exempel från Bolivia, Kosovo, Etiopien, Tanzania (inkl. Zanzibar), Afghanistan, Bangladesh och Kambodja.

Utmaningar och god praxis för att främja jämställdhet inom utbildning identifierades i en *skrivbordsstudie* av svenska och internationella policydokument och en sammanfattning av forskning och erfarenheter på området. *Telefonintervjuer* genomfördes med tjänstemän vid svenska ambassader i alla sju länder. Dessutom gjordes en *fallstudie* med kvalitativ ansats omfattande Kambodja, Tanzanias fastland och Zanzibar. Fallstudien bygger främst på intervjuer med Sidas handläggare på huvudkontoret och de svenska ambassaderna, olika befattningshavare i ministerier för utbildning och kvinnofrågor, representanter för biståndsgivare, personal vid nationella och internationella icke-statliga organisationer och FN-organ, samt personal och studenter på utbildningsinstitutioner i de utvalda länderna.

Intervjuer genomfördes i huvudsak från december 2009 till februari 2010. De flesta policyer, strategier och andra dokument var giltiga under 2010.

Svaren avseende utmaningar inom jämställdhet och utbildning är i stort sett de samma som anges i forskning. De är bland annat inskrivning, fullföljande av skolgång, lärares attityder och dåliga skollokaler.

Utvärderingen konstaterar att några av exemplen på god praxis för att främja jämställdhet inom utbildningssektorn återspeglas i det undersökta utvecklings-samarbetet. Likväl ligger stödet inte i framkant jämfört med internationella erfarenheter. I de undersökta fallen fokuserar Sida på jämn könsfördelning trots att flickor registreras och stannar kvar i utbildning i samma eller högre utsträckning än pojkar. Sidas fokus ligger dessutom på lägstadiet utbildning, medan erfarenheten visar att lägstadiet utbildning är långt ifrån tillräcklig för att främja kvinnors frigörelse.

I de undersökta fallen har Sida varit aktiv i dialogen. Ändå finns få exempel på att Sverige medvetet och uttryckligen har uppmärksammat jämställdhet genom biståndet

i utbildningssektorn. Det betyder inte att Sida har varit inaktiv; på policy- och programnivå har Sida bidragit till utvecklingen av lagstiftning och policyer. Dessutom har Sida varit aktiv i att främja givarsamordning.

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Table 1: Retention to grade five, in per cent; 2007

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## Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Woman
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DP	Development Partner
DPG	Development Partner Group
DTMT	District Training Monitoring Teams, Cambodia
ESDP	Education Sector Development Programme
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
JTWG-Ed	Joint Technical Working Group in the Education Sector, Cambodia
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MoCDGC	Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, Tanzania
MoEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Tanzania
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Cambodia
MoWAV	Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veterans, Cambodia
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TEN/MET	Tanzania Education Network/Mtandao wa Elimu Tanzania
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme

TWG	Technical Working Groups
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

### *Education and Gender*

Education is chosen as the main target to attain the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3): “*To promote gender equality and empower women*”. The target is: “*The elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015*”.<sup>1</sup>

The rationale for a gender equality perspective in education implies a rights perspective as well as a development perspective. Education is a basic human right according to Art. 26 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “*Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit*”.<sup>2</sup>

Education is essential for the ability to exercise rights and consequently for women’s empowerment. Education enables girls and boys, women and men to participate in social, economic and political life and is a base for development of a democratic society. The social and economic benefits of education are well-known since long; also, the advantages of education that girls and women can draw upon. Increasingly, interventions in development cooperation focus on the coupled approach of access to and quality of education, both related to gender equality.

Gender inequalities also affect the structure and management of the education system, the practices and attitudes of teachers, learning materials and the content of the curriculum. Interventions in the education sector cannot solve the problems of gender inequality in society, yet education can have a major impact on the lives of girls and women, boys and men. Education can be crucial to changing attitudes into accepting gender equality as a fundamental social value.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations (2000) The UN Millennium Development Goals: Goal 3, target 3 A, see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml> (2011-02-08). Some countries have got a longer time span; the goals for Afghanistan, for example, are set to 2015 and 2020, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (1946) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Art 26.

The Swedish contribution to education amounted to somewhat more than 1000 million SEK in 2008. More than 80 per cent of Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) support to education consists of bilateral program support. Sweden has bilateral cooperation in education with around 15 countries including conflict and post-conflict countries. The bulk of the contributions is directed towards primary education (around 45 per cent) while post-primary and higher education together receive some 5 per cent of the total contributions. Twenty-five per cent of total contribution is directed to educational systems in the partner countries. A similar share goes to global programmes such as the Fast Track Initiative and international organisations, e.g. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

### *Gender equality in Swedish development cooperation*

Gender equality has long been a core issue in Swedish development cooperation. In 1996 it became a development goal, and in 2003 the Swedish parliament decided that gender equality is one of eight central component elements applicable to both the Policy for Global Development and International Development Cooperation.<sup>3</sup> In 2008 the importance of gender equality and the role of women in development were highlighted as one of three thematic priorities in development cooperation for the electoral period along with democracy/human rights, and environment/climate. Within the thematic area of gender equality and women's role in development, there are four prioritised issues:<sup>4</sup>

- women's political participation;
- sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including HIV/AIDS;
- women and security, including gender-based violence and trafficking;
- women as economic actors.

Education is not one of the prioritised issues within the thematic area of gender equality. However, it can be argued that without education girls' and women's progress and advancement are less likely attained in any of the four prioritized issues mentioned above.

## **1.2 Evaluation Objectives**

The evaluation seeks to illustrate how gender equality can be and is promoted through bilateral support to education and also aims at assessing how bilateral support to the education sector is used as a channel to promote gender equality. The evaluation aims at improving Swedish support to gender equality through education by generating knowledge, diffusing experiences and providing learning opportunities on how promotion of gender equality can occur through dialogue and capacity development in development cooperation in the education sector.

<sup>3</sup> Prop. 2002/03:122; p 2; bet. 2003/04:UU3; rskr. 2003/04:122.

<sup>4</sup> Prop. 2007/08:1, utg.omr. 05, bet. 2007/08:UU1, rskr. 2007/08:64.

The evaluation is primarily carried out for the use by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), Sida and the partner countries.

### 1.3 Evaluation questions

The report seeks to respond to the following three main questions:

- What factors are important in the promotion of gender equality in the education sector?
- How does Sida use the *dialogue* with actors involved in the education cooperation for promotion of gender equality in education? What issues are raised and why?
- To what extent does Sida promote gender equality in education through *capacity development*?

The evaluation does not evaluate the results of Sweden's support to education, neither in general nor in terms of enhanced gender equality in the education sector of the partner countries.

### 1.4 Evaluation criteria

With gender equality as a point of departure the criterion<sup>5</sup> for this evaluation is *relevance*.

The evaluation seeks to assess whether the thematic area gender equality, and the interventions in education that are supported by Sida, viewed from a gender equality perspective, are found relevant by stakeholders. The stakeholders are here relevant ministries in the partner countries, for example the Ministries of Education and the Ministries of Women's Affairs (or equivalent), and other partners in the cooperation. Other stakeholders are other organisations involved in the programme or in individual projects, as well as organisations working in the area of gender equality and education as well as, for example, teachers and students at education institutions.

The evaluation assesses how and to what extent objectives related to gender equality in education are formulated in the partner countries' policies and strategies and in Sida documents. Moreover, the evaluation assesses the relevance of the dialogue issues related to gender equality, paying particular attention to the beneficiaries' requirements and perceptions of the countries needs.

### 1.5 Methodology

The evaluation covers countries that received Swedish funding to education of 30 MSEK or more in 2009 and that have at least one Education Programme Officer employed at the Swedish Embassy. The countries are Bolivia, Kosovo, Ethiopia, Tanzania (incl. Zanzibar), Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Cambodia. The criteria for country selection also included geographical spread, type of support, and cultural diversity. Moreover, Sweden should be among the biggest donors to education in the selected countries. Support to Cambodia, mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar (here dealt with as a separate case due to the type of support) is studied more in depth.

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<sup>5</sup> See OECD/DAC (2010) *Evaluating development co-operation – Summary of key norms and standards*.

A *desk study* including a short overview of relevant policy documents, Swedish as well as international, and a brief summary of research and experiences of gender equality in education, constitutes a background for the evaluation. With this base the evaluation aims to assess how Sweden has responded to commitments and policies and how Sweden has considered and made use of international experience.

Four types of documents have been reviewed:

- literature about gender and education in general, state of the art research, reports, studies and evaluations;
- documents produced by MFA and Sida, such as country strategies, assessment memos for education interventions, country gender analyses, dialogue plans for the specific countries, as well as policy and strategy documents on education and gender equality;
- official documents produced by the governments and ministries in the respective countries, for example strategies, plans, guidelines, statistics and reports related to education and gender, respectively;
- documents written by national Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and researchers.

*Telephone interviews* were conducted in December 2009 with Education Programme Officers at the Swedish Embassies in all seven countries. Questionnaires were prepared and sent in advance to the respective respondents.

Staff at Sida's headquarters was also interviewed by phone; usually staff with responsibility for the specific country (development analyst, policy team member or programme officer) were contacted.

In addition, a *case study* with a qualitative approach, involving Cambodia, mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar was selected, given that the aim was to explore and explain how gender equality is promoted through education. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide with themes and issues. The evaluation relies mainly on interviews with Sida officers at the headquarters and the Swedish Embassies, staff of various positions at the Ministries of Education and Ministries of Women's Affairs, donor representatives, staff of national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies, as well as staff and students of education institutions in the chosen countries.

Interviews were conducted individually or in focus groups. With Sida staff the interviews focused on

- perceptions of gender equality as a thematic priority;
- main challenges as regards gender equality in education;
- the dialogue: what issues are discussed and why, forms for dialogue, and experienced challenges.

With Ministry staff and other stakeholders in the three countries the interviews dealt with

- the concept of gender equality in education;
- achievements and challenges regarding gender equality in education;
- experience from the cooperation with Sida.

Similar questions were raised in the interviews with other respondents, i.e. representatives from donors, UN agencies, CSOs and others.

See Appendix 1 for people met.

### *Limitations*

The findings refer mainly to a limited number of interviews conducted from December 2009 to February 2010. Most of the policies, strategies and other documents that are discussed were valid in 2010. In some cases, older documents are referred to as well.

In addition, this evaluation is no exception to the rule that evaluations depend on the respondents' willingness to participate. In this case, the evaluation deals with an issue that affects human relations and power structures. Although the respondents were informed that the evaluation team represented an independent evaluation agency, they sometimes probably thought of the team as a donor representative. Thus, it is likely that some respondents provided answers they believed would be appreciated.

## **1.6 Outline of the report**

The evaluation report comprises the following:

- The present background chapter, which includes the evaluation methodology.
- Chapter 2 *Swedish policy frameworks and international experience* describes relevant Swedish policies and international research and experiences, with the aim to provide a framework for the discussion on Sweden's work to promote gender equality in education.
- Chapter 3 *Gender equality in education and society - perceived challenges* consists of the interviewee responses regarding key challenges with respect to gender equality in education and at societal level.
- In Chapter 4 *Sida's work to promote gender equality in education* a discussion about Sida's work to promote gender equality in education is presented.
- Chapter 5 *Conclusions* presents conclusions, based on the findings.

## 2 Swedish policy frameworks and international experience

The present chapter gives an overview of the Swedish policy framework governing gender equality and education and provides a brief account of international experience as regards the promotion of gender equality in and through education.

### 2.1 Sida documents on gender equality in education

Guiding documents by Sida on gender equality and education are:

- Handbook for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in the Education Sector (1997)
- Education for All: a Human Right and a Basic Need (2001)
- Promoting Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (2005)

The Sida *Handbook for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in the Education Sector*<sup>6</sup> states that gender is relevant for education since investing in the education of girls and women is a means to enhance women's quality of life, employment and income prospects as well as participation in social and democratic life. It is also associated with improved health, higher productivity, and lower fertility. The handbook also states that it is more important to focus on the extent to which the education system supports the goal of gender equality through curriculum and teaching practices than it is to focus on access. Education is declared to play a crucial role in socialisation and transmission of norms and values. As such, education can have a significant influence – either positive or negative – as regards gender equality attitudes towards, for example, equal partnership of women and men in the family, the community, employment, and public life of the nation. In sum, the handbook states that the education sector has the potential to have a major impact on the life prospects of girls and women and on the acceptance of gender equality as a fundamental social value.

Sida's education policy from 2001 *Education for All: a Human Right and a Basic Need*<sup>7</sup> states that the overriding goal of poverty reduction and the goals of human rights and democracy, gender equality and sustainable development depends on and promotes education, training and competence. The policy holds education of girls to be one of the most important determinants of development and endorses the Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA). The policy also identifies a number of obstacles to education for all. The constraints preventing girls from attending or completing school include early marriages, pregnancies, sexual harassment, and "traditional" attitudes. The gender balance of teachers is also put forward as an explanatory factor to gender disparities among students. The policy also emphasises the importance of addressing gender issues in the curriculum. Among the policy priorities concerning

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<sup>6</sup> Sida (1997) *Handbook for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in the Education Sector*.

<sup>7</sup> Sida (2001) *Education for All: a Human Right and a Basic Need*.

assessments, follow-up activities, dialogue, and contributions to capacity development there are a number of priorities related to gender issues.<sup>8</sup>

Sida's gender policy *Promoting Gender Equality in Development Cooperation*<sup>9</sup> from 2005 does not discuss the links between gender equality and education to any significant degree. The policy, however, adheres to the *Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in which one of the articles is to ensure that women have equal right to education.<sup>10</sup> The policy also supports the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action, where education and training of women is one of twelve critical areas.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2 Gender Equality – a thematic priority

In the 2008 Budget Bill, the importance of gender equality and the role of women in development is highlighted as one of three thematic priorities in the development cooperation policy. The thematic priorities are described as “*issues of certain importance in Swedish international development cooperation during the electoral period*”.<sup>12</sup> They are specified in several ways:

- The priorities indicate a special orientation for Swedish development cooperation
- The priorities mean that special thematic initiatives are identified in development cooperation
- The priorities mean that policy and methods development in each area are enhanced
- The priorities are a starting point for the ongoing dialogue with partner countries on their national strategies for poverty reduction and development
- The priorities provide support in the work to identify specific measures and initiatives during the Swedish EU Presidency in the second half of 2009.<sup>13</sup>

The Budget Bill for 2008 states that “*a gender equality perspective should permeate all aspects of the development cooperation, which should clearly reflect the recognition that gender equality concerns all*”<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Sida (2001) *Education for All: a Human Right and a Basic Need*.

<sup>9</sup> Sida (2005) *Promoting Gender Equality in Development Cooperation*.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations (1979) *Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, article 10.

<sup>11</sup> Beijing Platform for Action (1995) Action for equality, development and peace, platform for action.

<sup>12</sup> Prop. 2007/08:1, utg.omr. 05, p. 64, bet. 2007/08:UU1, rskr. 2007/08:64.

<sup>13</sup> Prop. 2007/08:1, utg.omr. 05, p. 53, bet. 2007/08:UU1, rskr. 2007/08:64.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. "Ett jämställdhetsperspektiv måste genomsyra alla delar av utvecklingsarbetet, som tydligt bör avspegla insikten om att jämställdhet berör alla".

### 2.3 International experience of gender equality in and through education

For quite some time gender parity, a rights perspective and quality in education have been on the agenda in international education evaluations, reports and studies.

#### *Gender parity*

For a long time gender parity in education was dominating the discourse and the interventions. It is still commonly believed that gender inequalities in education will be resolved if equal access for boys and girls is provided and if gender disparities in enrolment figures and retention rates are eliminated. Access to schooling is a critical issue that still requires attention; however, a wider approach is necessary, which, for example, includes the learning content of education such as curriculum, textbooks and teaching-learning practices. It is gradually being recognized that promotion of gender equality in education goes beyond access. To consider achievement of gender parity as a goal to strive at is “*a rather narrow aspiration*”.<sup>15</sup> Education is not only about knowledge acquisition; education is crucial also in the socialisation process and in the transmission of norms and values, such as the notion of gender equality.

#### *A rights perspective*

From a rights perspective education for all is a fundamental human right and essential for the ability to exercise other rights. Education enables girls and boys, women and men to participate in social, economic and political life and is a foundation for the development of a democratic society. The report on *Girls' right to education*<sup>16</sup>, from the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, underscores the centrality of education as not only a personal right but also a right with benefits for the society such as lower mortality rates, fewer unwanted births, and efforts to combat poverty, HIV/AIDS and malnutrition.<sup>17</sup> Aikman and Unterhalter draw on Amartya Sen's approach and consider development of freedoms of all individuals as necessary for the achievement of gender equality in education, i.e. “*freedom to attend school, to learn and participate in safety and security, to develop identities that tolerate others, and to enjoy economic, political and cultural opportunities*”<sup>18</sup>. They conclude: “*Putting gender equality in place in the classroom is a key to connecting schooling and citizenship with human rights*”<sup>19</sup>.

A great deal of research evidence shows how equality of opportunity is linked to participation in labour, land, financial and product markets. Yet women's ability to participate productively in the labour market is constrained in many regions, particularly due to their lower educational level.<sup>20</sup> Tembon and Fort conclude: “*Research conducted in a variety of countries and regions has established that educating girls is one of the most cost-effective ways of spurring development. Female education creates powerful poverty reducing synergies and yields enormous intergenerational gains. It is positively correlated with*

<sup>15</sup> Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) *Beyond Access: Transforming Policy and Practice for Gender Equality in Education* p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Villalobos (2006) *Girl's right to education*.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) *Beyond Access: Transforming Policy and Practice for Gender Equality in Education* p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Buvinic, et al. (2008) *Equality for Women? Where Do We Stand on Millenium Development Goal 3?*.

*increased economic productivity, more robust labour markets, higher earnings and improved societal health and well-being*".<sup>21</sup>

### *Quality education*

The concept of quality education includes the learning content, teaching methods, student activities, peer relations, management, etc. Quality education that seeks to promote gender equality is aware of gender inequalities and addresses them in teacher training, teaching and learning practices, curriculum and textbook content, school management, student-student and teacher-student relations, stakeholder involvement, etc. and, not least, in national policies and strategies. Thus, gender equality in education is a much wider concept than gender parity.

It is often argued that quality education is crucial for gender equality<sup>22</sup>. Aikman and Unterhalter argue that quality education requires gender sensitive use of resources and budget allocations. Quality education embraces education as a process aimed at transforming society, promoting social change and building a democratic society. Maintaining gender discrimination makes quality education impossible. "*Quality education cannot be achieved without gender equality and equity*".<sup>23</sup>

## **2.4 Challenges and good practise**

Education that aims at gender equality faces a number of obstacles and challenges. Girls and women are disadvantaged in numerous ways. Although changes in government policies and implementation of more holistic strategies are needed there are also minor measures that can be undertaken that when added together, can contribute to changes in practice in the direction of greater gender equality in education. Notwithstanding all the barriers for egalitarian treatment of girls and women in education, there are many examples of successful projects and programmes. A short summary of the main hindrances to achieving gender equality in education and a brief review of the many good practices that exist worldwide are provided in Appendix 2. The main factors can be summarised under the headings gender parity; curriculum; school environment; socio-cultural and socio-economic context; and legislation and policies.

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<sup>21</sup> Temboin and Fort (2008) *Girl's Education in the 21 st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment, and Economic Growth*, p. vii.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) *Beyond Access: Transforming Policy and Practice for Gender Equality in Education*.

<sup>23</sup> Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) *Beyond Access: Transforming Policy and Practice for Gender Equality in Education* p. 4.

### 3 Gender equality in education and society- perceived challenges

The present chapter consists mainly of an account for the results of the interviews with the stakeholders in Cambodia, mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar as regards gender equality in education, as well as gender equality challenges in society at large. Some information on experiences in Bolivia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Ethiopia is also provided.

#### 3.1 Gender equality in education – perceived key challenges

Stakeholders reported essentially four different issues that more severely affect girl's education:

- Low enrolment;
- Low retention rate;
- Widening gender gap at higher education levels;
- Low achievement in school.

Most respondents considered girls' access to and retention in secondary and higher education, including vocational training, as the most important challenge to gender equality in education and in society at large.

The general, all-embracing problem related to gender equality as reported by the Sida respondents in all seven countries is that girls do not complete their education. Without equal participation in education gender inequalities will remain. It is commonly believed that girls drop out prematurely and do not complete even a primary education of five to six years. However, the last few years have obviously brought about a change.<sup>24</sup> The situation in the studied countries is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Retention to grade five, in per cent; 2007<sup>25</sup>

Country	Male	Female
<b>Bolivia</b>	83	83
<b>Afghanistan</b>	47	50
<b>Bangladesh</b>	52	58
<b>Cambodia</b>	61	64
<b>Ethiopia</b>	64	65
<b>Tanzania</b>	85	89

<sup>24</sup> According to UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report 2010, the retention rate of primary school students in developing countries is 81 per cent and girls stay in school to a higher degree than boys: 83 per cent of girls complete primary school (UNESCO (2010) *EFA Global Monitoring Report*).

<sup>25</sup> The information in Table 1 is derived from the following sources: Mansory (2007) *Dropout Rate in SCA supported Primary Schools*; and UNESCO (2010) *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Data has not been found for Kosovo.

Only in Bolivia and Tanzania do more than 80 per cent of students stay in school at least up to grade five. The other countries show a retention rate of 65 per cent or less. Girls complete primary education (up to grade five) to a similar or larger extent than boys in all countries.

As regards Net Enrolment Rate (NER) the picture given in Table 2 emerges. The Gender Parity Index (GPI)<sup>26</sup> in primary education is close to one in all the studied countries with the exception of Afghanistan.

Table 2 Net Enrolment Rate (NER) (per cent) and Gender Parity Index (GPI); 2007<sup>27</sup>

Country	Primary education			Secondary education		
	NER Male	NER Female	GPI	NER Male	NER Female	GPI
<b>Bolivia</b>	93	94	1.01	70	70	0.99
<b>Afghanistan</b>	61	42	0.56	38	15	0.38
<b>Bangladesh</b>	85	91	1.06	40	43	1.05
<b>Cambodia</b>	90	87	0.96	36	32	0.88
<b>Ethiopia</b>	81	75	0.93	31	--	0.64
<b>Tanzania</b>	100	99	1.00	31	25	0.80

Also, NER in *primary education* is over or close to 90 per cent; that is, practically all boys and girls of relevant school age enrol in primary schools. The gap between boys and girls has narrowed considerably, yet Afghanistan is an exception. Although NER is not far from 100 it is known that the last 10 per cent is difficult to reach and it takes quite some time to achieve more than 90 per cent; among the studied countries only Tanzania has reached NER of 100 per cent for boys and 99 per cent for girls.<sup>28</sup>

In *secondary education* the gender gap is wider. In Bangladesh, however, there are more female than male students also in secondary schools. The NER percentages in secondary education do not reveal the fact that there are huge discrepancies between rural and urban areas. What is conspicuous as regards NER for secondary education in the studied countries is that it is so low for both boys and girls. In Tanzania, for example, around 100 per cent of all children are enrolled in primary schools but only 31 per cent of boys and 25 per cent of girls enrol in secondary education. No figures are available for retention rates in secondary education; however, it is well known that the drop-out rate is high. Thus, in the Tanzanian example, only 25 out of 100 girls enrol and of these an estimated half or less complete the secondary cycle. Thus, the general education level among the population remains fairly low, only some 5-7 years.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the fact that both boys and girls enrol in secondary education to a very low degree, only girls' low participation in education is a matter of great concern for all interviewees. The gender gap is slightly wider in secondary education compared to primary education and widens further at tertiary levels. With the exception of Bolivia, only 15-43 per cent of all girls are still in school at the secondary level. However, boys' enrolment rate is not much higher, spanning from 31 to 40, Bolivia excluded.

<sup>26</sup> Gender Parity Index is the number of females by the number of males enrolled.

<sup>27</sup> The information in Table 2 is derived from the following sources: Ministry of Education, Afghanistan (2010) *National Education Strategic Plan*; Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Tanzania (2009) *Basic Education Statistics*; and UNESCO (2010) *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Data has not been found for Kosovo.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Tanzania (2009) *Basic Education Statistics*.

<sup>29</sup> UNESCO (2010) *EFA Global Monitoring Report*.

These percentages constitute the average and conceal the probably lower enrolment, particularly of girls, in rural parts of the countries.<sup>30</sup>

Based on the information provided by the respondents the factors perceived as important in relation to inequalities in education, which among other things is illustrated by girls' underrepresentation in education above the primary level, well reflect observations listed in Chapter 2 and Appendix 2, and can be referred to:

- schools;
- socio-cultural and socio-economic context;
- legislation and policies.

### 3.1.1 Schools

#### *Access, retention, dormitories and scholarships*

The higher the level of education, the wider the gender gap. Girls dropping out prematurely and lagging behind boys in retention rates were issues of highest concern in all countries. Access to secondary education was mentioned as one of the biggest problems and one of the main reasons for girls' lower enrolment in secondary education. Secondary schools are mainly located in urban areas or in district centres, which implies that students either have to walk a long distance to school or have to stay in dormitories for entire weeks, months or semesters. In either case this situation affects girls more than boys. Girls are more vulnerable to insecurity and unsafe roads and dormitories are often unsafe for girls.

In *Cambodia* some dormitories had been introduced.<sup>31</sup> Being expensive dormitories are fairly rare in most countries and the available findings as regards their effect on girls' participation in secondary and higher education are contradictory. Parents are reluctant to send their daughters in case the hostel environment is not trusted as fully safe. Students, both girls and boys, have been victims of abuse in dormitories and hostels in several countries. If a dormitory is located far away from a girl's home, she may not be able to visit her family as often as needed for her parents to maintain a sense of influence and control. An advantage of the dormitory being situated close to a girl's home is that it reduces her and her family's travel expenses. However, dormitories tend to be located in urban areas and consequently do not benefit rural girls, who are the most deprived of educational opportunities. Dormitories seemed to be a solution more favoured by donors than by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) representatives. According to the Department of Planning, construction of lower secondary schools (grade 7-9) is planned in every municipality of Cambodia, i.e. around 3600, and upper secondary schools are planned in each district. With increasing numbers of schools, girls' participation is expected to improve. Another measure that had been undertaken in Cambodia was the implementation of Child Friendly Schools (CFS), supported by UNICEF, where teachers and peers act (voluntarily) as Girls' Counsellors in order to reduce dropout rates. Whether this has had any effect is not known.

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO (2010) *EFA Global Monitoring Report*.

<sup>31</sup> According to MoEYS in Cambodia, the current dormitories include around 5000 beds in total.

Scholarships in addition to dormitories were favoured to facilitate girls' participation in secondary education. Scholarships would, it was believed, motivate parents to refrain from their daughters' monetary contributions, i.e. the earnings from, primarily, working at the garment factories. A scholarship would compensate for the salary loss. A scholarship scheme had recently been implemented at a low scale in some parts of the country, implemented by the MoEYS and funded by several donors (e.g. the World Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency).<sup>32</sup> However, since the size of the stipend corresponds to less than one-tenth of the average salary a young girl would be paid in a factory, it may not be enough to encourage parents and girls. In addition, decisions on who is entitled to stipends and on the distribution of the money have shown to be prone to corruption. Moreover, as UNICEF's representative in Phnom Penh mentioned, scholarships tend not to reach the poor students.

According to the education specialists of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in *Tanzania*, the lack of access to secondary schools in Tanzania does not explain why girls enrol in such small numbers. They claimed that there are community schools with secondary education for girls that are empty. The transition period between primary and secondary education consists of some five to six months off from school. According to the CIDA representative, this period is too long and allows girls to marry and get pregnant, keeping them from turning up as secondary school students after the break.

In Tanzania the World Bank (WB) plans to introduce so-called "conditional cash transfers", i.e. parents who send their daughters to school would be remunerated in cash.

The experience of dormitories for teacher candidates was not very good according to a Department for Teacher Training representative in Tanzania. However, since recruitment of teachers from rural areas is crucial for the development of education outside cities and towns, dormitories were nevertheless considered a necessity. The need to establish safe dormitories for female teacher trainees was also emphasised.

### *School facilities*

The school's physical environment was also mentioned as an obstacle to girls' participation in education, particularly from adolescence and onwards. Schools have no access to water and no toilets, and sanitation is generally of poor standards. This situation affects girls more than boys and may be an obstacle to enrolment and retention.

### *Teachers' attitudes and behaviour*

Several respondents emphasized teachers' need for gender training. In Cambodia, gender mainstreaming was claimed to be implemented as a rule in all sectors, yet teachers' lack of gender awareness was raised as an issue of great concern. It was argued that gender equality is a concept that is familiar by name only or is misunderstood to mean gender parity; teachers have never heard of gender sensitive

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<sup>32</sup> The donors stipulated different conditions and different amounts, some favouring only girls, others both boys and girls, and the stipends ranged from 30 to 95 USD per year.

teaching methodologies; neither do teacher trainers know about it. Gender stereotyping is common and textbooks are frequently gender biased. The generally poor quality of teaching and teachers' low qualifications negatively affect a gender-sensitive pedagogy, as explained by UNICEF in Dar es Salaam.

Very few, if any, studies on teachers' attitudes regarding gender roles and teachers' relationships with boy and girl students, respectively, in the classrooms had been conducted; at least the respondents did not know of such reports. Studies show that teachers pay more attention and give more feed-back to boys. "*A teacher's role is to encourage girls*" said one of the focus group participants at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) in Tanzania. Also the content of education needs to be revised and be gender sensitised according to the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP)<sup>33</sup>. In Cambodia, the MoESY has adopted the UNICEF-launched CFS programme, which among other things implies gender mainstreaming at all levels, active counsellors for girls in schools and Gender Focal Points (GFP) in government agencies.

"*Girls are discriminated by our teachers*", Tanzania Education Network/Mtandao wa Elimu Tanzania (TEN/MET) in Tanzania argued. All the more serious is the information that girls are directly abused by some teachers, abuse ranging from "light" sexual harassment to violent rape. The idea that intercourse with a virgin girl may cure an HIV infection is still present even among some teachers. This has led to, in addition to the traumatic experience of being raped, young girls being infected with HIV. Not only teachers, but also male classmates were reported to have been involved. "*Girls are afraid to go to school*" said a representative at the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children "*and this is one of the causes for low enrolment*". HIV/AIDS was brought up by many respondents in Tanzania as an obstacle to girls' education. In Cambodia HIV/AIDS was mentioned only once; the Minister of Education asserted that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS has dropped as a result of education of girls.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high among teachers in Africa, which among other things implies high teacher absenteeism, which in turn affects the quality of education for both girls and boys. Since boys are generally allowed to spend time on homework while girls have to engage in domestic chores, girls generally suffer more from irregular teaching.

The need to changing teachers' mind-set, attitudes and behaviour was generally expressed; however, there were few, if any, suggestions on how to accomplish this. Teachers are not different than others yet play a crucial role in the upbringing and education of each country's young generation. Teacher training institutions ought to have an important role to play in educating teachers. At a Teacher Training College outside Phnom Penh the curriculum included 15 hours of a subject called gender equality. In Tanzania TEN/MET claimed that there are so many competing messages and priorities in school nowadays – HIV/AIDS, environmental protection, climate change, conflict resolution, peace education, life skills etc. – and gender equality is therefore downsized in education. "*Girls and women are discriminated*" they argued.

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<sup>33</sup> TGNP works towards a transformative feminist and empowered society where there is social gender equality, equity, social and economic justice. See [www.tgnp.org](http://www.tgnp.org).

### *Learning achievements*

A much debated issue in Tanzania was girls' low performance in secondary schools, particularly in subjects such as math, science and English. Since these subjects – in particular math and science – tend to be valued higher than humanities, jobs that require studies in these fields are commonly better paid and held in higher esteem and more often bring about leading positions. Therefore, if girls perform lower than boys in math and science it has implications for the development of gender equality in education as well as in society. If, as in the case of Tanzania, girls' achievements in English are lower than that of boys, it may add to women being less attractive on the job market. In Tanzania the problem was general and large, yet it was not mentioned in the other countries. Whether this is due to ignorance or lack of attention – maybe the problem had not yet been discovered – or to absence of the problem is not known. In Cambodia, girls scored – all subjects included – on average somewhat higher than boys in secondary education, but there was no particular information about scores in math and science. The reason behind Tanzanian (and possibly other) girls' lower performance in math and science may be related to a belief that girls have a predisposition to humanities and not to science.<sup>34</sup> Some measures were undertaken by the MoEVT to correct the situation, for example summer schools for girls.

#### **3.1.2 Socio-cultural and socio-economic context**

*“Poverty forces girls to stay at home”* declared the representative of ActionAid in Dar es Salaam. Also in Cambodia poverty was considered to be the main cause of girls' low enrolment. Girls take care of the family and after grade five girls drop out to a high degree, i.e. *“when they are old enough to contribute financially to the home”* explained the Director of Primary Education at MoEYS in Pnom Penh. The obligation to support the family rests also with boys but was considered to be a heavier burden on girls. School participation is impeded by domestic chores and the need to take care of younger siblings, a workload Cambodian girls share with their Tanzanian sisters. UNICEF's representative in Cambodia, for example, explains that informal costs and opportunity costs affect girls' as well as boys' retention in school negatively, although girls drop out to a higher degree. Girls (and boys) have to work to contribute financially to the family and girls (not boys) have to stay at home and assist their mothers in domestic chores and childcare. Boys are not hindered in the same way in either of these countries. While the Cambodian girls start to work in factories at an early age, girls from Tanzania and Zanzibar are busy in farming activities. Thus, sending children to school implies opportunity costs that poor families cannot afford.

Sending children to school also implies direct costs for e.g. school material, uniforms and transport, expenses that poor families cannot meet. In Cambodia, boys are prioritised if parents have to choose who to send to school. The Deputy Director of the Teacher Training Department explained that parents often disapprove of girls' education and prioritise boys, particularly in rural areas. Sons are generally more valued than daughters. Girls in rural schools drop out to a greater extent than girls in

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<sup>34</sup> Not long ago girls performed lower than boys in science and math also in Western countries (today the opposite is true). This was shown to generally be an attitude and expectation problem. Teachers and parents did not expect girls to have good marks in math since girls were believed to have a predisposition to humanities, not to science. Girl students internalised these ideas and commonly underachieved.

cities. Violence and lack of safety on the roads are additional reasons mentioned among others by Save the Children-Norway and Voluntary Services Overseas.

The participants in the Focus Group at MoEVT in Dar es Salaam seemed to share the idea that lingering norms and values esteemed by particularly rural families in conjunction with economic scarcity are the main reasons for girls' substandard level of education. One of the participants stated: "*Girls are treated unfairly by their families*". Gender roles within families allow boys to continue their education and spend time on homework while girls have to quit school and help their mothers at home. Early marriages, early pregnancies, initiation rites such as female genital mutilation, and the dowry tradition are expressions of ignorance and may be a result of the increasing adult illiteracy in rural areas of Tanzania and Zanzibar, as reflected on by the ActionAid representative.

The rising number of early pregnancies was an issue high on the agenda in Tanzania.<sup>35</sup> Four to six per cent of dropouts are due to early pregnancies.<sup>36</sup> The fact that a pregnant girl is expelled from school has attracted quite some attention, in particular by the donor community. Some marry (a girl is allowed to marry from the age of 14 in Tanzania) but a great number become single mothers. Some young mothers are expelled from their families according to a respondent at the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children (MoCDGC). Besides general norms and values, the reason for the high prevalence of early pregnancies was, according to TEN/MET, the lack of sex education in schools. Young people are not informed about contraceptives. According to TGNP, early pregnancies and marriages are not the main or even an important reason for drop-out; these girls were generally from poor families and would probably have left school prematurely anyway. TGNP maintained that the re-entry discussion must be linked to a wider context. Incomplete education and low enrolment in secondary and higher education is poverty-related. Education does not give students, particularly girls, the life skills they need, including sex knowledge. The silence about sex, sex relations and gender-based violence inside school, on the way to and from school as well as outside school is almost total. This silence is considered to be part of the problem and to largely be associated with girls' lower enrolment and retention in education. According to TGNP, media has a strong impact on young people's minds and has to be mobilised to advocate responsible sex in order to avoid teenage pregnancies.

However, re-entry of young mothers to school was one of the most important issues to address gender inequalities in education according to several donor representatives, for example the Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank. The Swedish Ambassador viewed it as a strategic issue since it is related to a vulnerable group and to gender equality, one of Sweden's thematic priorities. The issue was considered to be important enough to render it a position of "key issue" in Sweden's Dialogue Plan of 2009. It was considered as "*linked to other important issues such as SRHR, HIV/AIDS and power relations and is pursued in other sectors as well*".

<sup>35</sup> There is no definition of what "early" implies as regards early pregnancies.

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Education and Vocational training (2009) *Basic Education Statistics*. 3000-4000 girls become pregnant each year.

The DFID representative claimed that the percentage of early pregnancies is much higher than what MoEVT has admitted (6 %). No reliable statistic exists and "*is not needed; the problem is obvious*".

In Cambodia and in Zanzibar, early marriages were mentioned as a common reason for drop-out. In Zanzibar, a married daughter implies one mouth less to feed since girls when married move to the husband's family. A reason for not sending daughters to school in Zanzibar is parental fear of pregnancy out of wedlock, an unacceptable condition in a Muslim society, according to respondents at MoEVT in Zanzibar. Still, the representative of Save the Children-UK in Zanzibar claimed that teenage pregnancies are common. In Cambodia the situation is the opposite; the married daughter's husband moves into her family and is expected to bring additional income to the household. Nevertheless, motherhood and being a wife is usually regarded as incompatible with being a student in both countries.

Generally, there were many assumptions as regards the number of teenage pregnancies and early marriages and to what extent these phenomena are reasons, or main reasons, for girls dropping out or for not attending school. Reliable data on these issues were not available.

### 3.1.3 Legislation and policies

Respondents were generally satisfied with the elaborated policies and strategies for promoting gender issues in education. "*Institutionally the Government recognizes the problem [with girls' low enrolment and retention] and has addressed the issue through a political framework*" according to ActionAid in Tanzania. TEN/MET in Tanzania also viewed the efforts by the Government as praiseworthy and stated "*there is a political will for gender in education and improvements have been made; yet, many challenges remain*". The GFP and the Gender Desk at MoEVT are good initiatives but are marginalised and without influence, according to TEN/MET. In Cambodia the Head of the Gender Working Group declared the gender policy and gender mainstreaming strategic plan to be excellent documents although "*funding for implementation is missing*". The Minister of Women's Affairs chairs the Technical Working Group on Gender, a large group including Development Partners (DP) and CSOs, that convenes regularly to monitor certain gender indicators. Gender has also been mainstreamed in the National Strategic Development Plan, aligned with the MDGs, in various reform documents and in the decentralization process. The government had recently finalised a Gender Strategic Plan, which includes six priorities, education being one. Each ministry has to report to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veterans, Cambodia (MoWAV) and there is a gender mainstreaming group at every ministry. At the MoEVT in Tanzania the Gender Working Group has, supported by consultants from UNICEF, elaborated a Gender Policy in Education as well as a Gender Strategy in Education 2006-2010.

Policies, strategies, action plans and guides to promote girls' education are in place but are not always implemented in practice. The lack of financing was referred to as the main reason for this.

Besides a lack of economic resources at the family and societal levels and the cultural norms that hamper girls' participation in education, the fact that the international community as well as national governments focus so intensely on primary education was seen as contributing to the present situation. Donors have until recently been interested in funding merely primary education. Education for all has implied primary education for all and education above this level for an elite only – that is, mainly for a small number of city males. Illiterate or half-literate women – a few years of

education and no opportunities to practice literacy after finishing school leaves students semiliterate – do not participate in school committees or in other forms of political and social bodies, a common reality as pointed out by a representative of TEN/MET<sup>37</sup>. When girls and women have access only to elementary education, it was argued, women remain not only politically disempowered but also without opportunities for economic empowerment. Moreover, a low number of girls completing secondary education implies a minimal number of female teachers and headmasters, who are needed not only to teach girls and boys but also to serve as role models as female professionals and leaders.

To develop the education sector with a gender equality perspective the focus must shift from attaining equal enrolment in basic education to an approach that promotes women’s empowerment through education, according to TEN/MET. Female leadership is a must in order to develop the education sector. Similar notions were expressed in Cambodia. In virtually all departments of the MoEYS, promotion of women to leadership positions, for example promotion of female teachers to headmasters and education directors, was mentioned as a way to promote gender equality.

Very few interviewees expressed a need for research on gender roles and relations. One of the few was the Head of the Gender Working Group in Cambodia, who viewed studies and research as an immediate requirement and included the necessity to study “*the negative behaviour in the Cambodian society*”.

### **3.2 Gender equality in society - perceived key challenges**

All respondents were asked to reflect on what they considered to be key challenges as regards gender equality in their respective societies. The most important issues as regards the status of gender equality in the studied cases as defined by the interviewees are related to:

- traditional norms and values;
- the level of gender awareness;
- available financial resources;
- women’s participation in societal affairs;
- women’s health status;
- the education level.

#### *Traditional norms and values*

In all countries the need to change people’s mindset, men’s in particular but also the attitudes of women, was brought up as a necessary and pressing requirement for the advancement of gender equality. Women’s subordination to men was seen as evident in all areas of life: at home, in school, in the workplace and in society, i.e. in all kinds of human relations – as a daughter, sister, mother and wife, as a student or a teacher,

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<sup>37</sup> TEN/MET is a national network of over 200 national NGOs and CBOs, international NGOs and district networks throughout Tanzania that are concerned with the promotion of education. See [www.tenmet.org](http://www.tenmet.org).

as a community member and national citizen, as a government or private employee or as an informal breadwinner. Univocally, respondents claimed that in their societies females are considered inferior and secondary to males.

Patriarchal patterns and relations, which exclude women from decision-making positions, also – and in the case of Cambodia in particular – at domestic level, were commonly suggested as root causes. In Tanzania, women’s unheard voices at society level were more frequently brought up than their inferior position in the family.

Traditional roles and customs remain. Early marriages, for example, were seen as an effective measure to maintain women in secondary positions; girls marry prematurely to a much higher degree than boys. Women’s subordinate roles at home and in work are essentially interpreted as an issue of power relations; an extreme expression of these is the gender based violence. Concerns were often expressed regarding violence against women, which was reported to be on the increase domestically as well as in communities.

Even when men do not use violence to oppress women it is common among men to regard women as less able and competent than men – that is, such a view was reported to be held by other men but not by the male respondents themselves. Women tend to internalise such images and accept or even believe in men’s superiority. “*The problem is*”, explained one participant in the focus group discussion in Dar es Salaam, “*that women are not aggressive enough. For example, there are quotas for women in the Parliament but we do not even compete for those*”.

#### *Level of gender awareness*

The conclusion drawn in many discussions with various stakeholders was that gender awareness needs to be urgently promoted. The lack of understanding of the meaning of gender equality and of how gender inequalities are manifested in society, the ignorance of or lack of will to promote gender equality, or, in short, the low level of gender awareness in general, was considered as one of the main obstacles. However, in Cambodia it happened more than once that the respondent (always male) explicitly stated “*gender discrimination does not exist any longer in Cambodia*” and that “*Cambodia is a gender-equal society*”. Conversely, the great majority of those interviewed, particularly the women, were, even when admitting that progress had been made, less positive. The facts that few women have leading positions and that parents prefer to send only sons to school are only two examples of the long way to go before Cambodia becomes a gender-equal society. A need for gender sensitisation and advocacy was expressed.

#### *Availability of financial resources*

In all three countries it was argued that a policy framework was in place and also that legislation in favour of women’s rights was implemented. However, it was mentioned, for example by the Deputy Director of MoCDGC in Tanzania, that the resources required for implementation are not available. “*Gender is on the agenda everywhere*”, she and many others said, “*but our finance people do not want to pay*”. Another example is the position as GFP. At the MoEVT in Dar es Salaam there were GFPs appointed at each department to support the centrally located GFP. Plans were made but no budget was allocated for the planned activities.

*Women's participation in societal affairs*

The fact that an overwhelming majority of leaders and decision-makers are men was an often discussed issue; in Cambodia information on the male-female ratio among managers and directors was frequently provided as well as the will to encourage women to accept leadership positions. Promotion of female participation in the societal and political spheres appears to be high on the agenda also in Tanzania. At MoWAV in Phnom Penh the Minister herself and a whole delegation of prominent staff, all females, discussed that MoWAV is responsible for mainstreaming of gender. Gender has been mainstreamed in the National Strategic Development Plan, aligned with MDGs and other international documents. Laws on counter-trafficking, domestic violence and sexual abuse have been endorsed. The legal protection together with the provision of education facilities, health services and economic empowerment of women were seen as crucial for improving women's participation and thereby for gradually transforming the whole society.

*Women's health status*

Women's health was brought up, particularly in Tanzania and Zanzibar, as critical to achievement of gender equality. The rising death figures in HIV/AIDS, with extensive consequences, and the alarming increase in maternal mortality were of extraordinary concern to many respondents.

*Education level*

Education was referred to as essential and critical for advancing gender equality in any society. "*Education is the key*", declared the Director of Planning at the MoEVT. "*Women's literacy is decisive for any change to take place*," asserted the Deputy Inspector General of the Department of Inspectorate of Education in Phnom Penh, also Chair of the Gender Working Group in MoEYS. In Cambodia, the fact that girls drop out prematurely was said to be due to a lack of understanding among parents or a general depreciation of the education of girls. The gender gap as regards enrolment rate increases with the level of education in all countries: the higher the level of education the fewer the girl students. The respondents indicated that direct discrimination of girls in school, sometimes as outright abuse, adds to the broadening gender imbalance in education, particularly in Tanzania and Zanzibar.

## 4 Sida's work to promote gender equality in education

In the present chapter Sida's work to promote gender equality in education is illustrated. It contains a brief review of strategic documents, dialogue and capacity development support. The analysis is not strictly comparative and the cases should be seen as providing additional and complementary information rather than forming the basis for a comparative assessment.

### 4.1 Strategic documents

Country strategies and assessment memos are documents that specifically guide and govern Sweden's development cooperation in partner countries. These documents related to the studied cases have been analysed as to the extent they include the thematic priority gender equality and as to whether they consider promotion of gender equality in the support to education.

#### *Cooperation strategies*

Support to the education sector is one of the objectives or one of the focus areas in the development cooperation with all the countries; in Cambodia primary education is mentioned specifically and in Tanzania the Education Sector Programme includes also Research. Gender equality as a thematic priority is referred to as a point of departure or as a platform only in Bolivia's and Kosovo's country strategies, while the Cambodia strategy states that gender equality permeates the entire strategy, "*with focus on education*". Often, gender equality is not spelled out; instead gender is mentioned either as women's and girls' situation, women's and children's rights, or as a mainstreaming issue.

As regards the education sector, gender aspects are considered in various ways, for example as a focus on women and girls (Afghanistan, Bangladesh), on poor women and girls in particular (Bolivia) as well as on poor boys (Cambodia). Education is mentioned also as a means to "*enhance women's and men's capacity to participate in economic growth opportunities, as well as to reduce non-income poverty and strengthening democratic governance*" (Tanzania).

One country strategy, the one for Bolivia, specifically mentions education as a key to gender equality. Other country cooperation strategies mention girls' right to education, quality education with focus on girls etc. No strategy explicitly views the aim of the support to education as a means to promote gender equality.

The support to the education sector aims at increasing access and improving quality (Bangladesh, Bolivia), distributing resources to rural areas (Cambodia), or enhancing the participation of professionally active women and men (Kosovo, Tanzania).

### *Assessment Memos*

Eight assessment memos were reviewed.<sup>38</sup> It was found that gender equality aspects were less prominent in the assessment memos than in the country cooperation strategies. In three countries, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Tanzania, interventions specifically targeting gender in education are found. In Afghanistan, Sida supports UNICEF's education programme, which aims at increasing primary enrolment of girls and increasing female literacy rates, and UNESCO's programme, which aims at countering the widespread gender discrimination. In Bangladesh, the Primary Education Development Plan includes a Gender Strategy, which consists of measures such as recruitment of female teachers, development of a gender sensitive curriculum and an increased number of women in school committees. The assessment of Haki-Elimu in Tanzania mentions that gender dimensions are important in the organisations' activities.<sup>39</sup> In addition, in Tanzania GBS is also provided. In Zanzibar, capacity development has been linked to school construction and management issues at MoEVT. With Sida funding, UNICEF is engaged in capacity building in Cambodia.

Most funding is allocated to primary education; of the total sum 14 per cent is allocated to secondary education.

## **4.2 The dialogue**

*"The purpose of the dialogue is to make aid work more effective. Dialogue is used to achieve this purpose in two ways: through increased coordination and adjustment to the positions of the partner countries and other donors, and by promoting Swedish positions in certain issues, including gender equality."*<sup>40</sup>

Dialogue is conducted in different kinds of development cooperation and is used in different processes, e.g. when discussing poverty reduction strategies and policy issues. The use of dialogue for influencing attitudes and positions in partner countries has increased.<sup>41</sup>

One country, Tanzania, had a specific dialogue plan valid for 2009.<sup>42</sup> Gender equality is included as one of three priorities with many possible entry points; the one related to education refers to the expulsion of pregnant girls.<sup>43</sup> When Sweden had the chairmanship of the joint support to education in 2008 a short document with dialogue issues for education was produced. Among six issues three referred to gender: gender equality, gender disaggregated data and the expulsion of pregnant girls from education.

<sup>38</sup> The assessment memos for the following interventions were reviewed: UNICEF Education programme in Afghanistan, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, UNESCO's Program on Inclusive Education in Afghanistan, Primary Education Development Programme in Bangladesh, Joint Support to Education in Bolivia, General Budget Support in Tanzania, Haki-Elimu's Education Programme in Tanzania and the Education Sector in Zanzibar.

<sup>39</sup> Sida (2008) *In-depth Assessment of support to the implementation of the Program Strategy of HakiElimu, "citizens for quality basic education and democracy in Tanzania", 2008-2011*. Assessment Memo, Embassy of Sweden in Tanzania.

<sup>40</sup> Sida (2006) *Dialogue and strategic Communication in Development Cooperation* p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Afghanistan is preparing one in 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Embassy of Sweden in Tanzania (2009) *Dialogue Strategy for the Swedish Embassy in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania – part of the overall Communication Strategy for the embassy*.

In all of the seven countries, with the exception of Kosovo, coordination bodies of some kind and a structure for dialogue are in place, albeit with varying stability, utility and agendas. Below some aspects of the dialogue are discussed.

### *Dialogue structures*

Among the studied countries, Tanzania has the most elaborated structure for dialogue. The organisation is well developed and the respondents by and large assessed the process to be working well. Sida was perceived to have been instrumental in getting the dialogue structure in place. There is an Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) chaired by the Permanent Secretary at MoEVT, which includes representatives from the DPs as well as NGOs. The latter are represented by the umbrella organisation TEN/MET. Below this level is the Task Force, chaired by the Commissioner, where issues are prepared before taken to the ESDP. Moreover, there are seven Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in the education sector. On average, there are 20 participants in a TWG meeting and the DPs make sure they have representation in each of these groups. Sida was a member in three groups, those dealing with budget issues, monitoring/evaluation, and higher education. Other TWGs deal with, for example, access and quality issues. One TWG deals with "cross-cutting issues", one of which is gender equality. All of the above levels or groups have meetings at least four times a year.

The dialogue structure seems to be well developed in Bangladesh as well, with a Local Consultative Group and 22 subgroups; one of which is on education and another on gender equality. The education subgroup has in turn a number of subgroups.

In Tanzania there is also an Education Sector Review every year where a progress report is presented. Based on this, the DPs produce an *Aide Memoire* with milestones, which are turned into an Action Plan. A similar annual review is undertaken in Bangladesh by a Coordination Body in education.

The Zanzibar Education Sector Committee meets quarterly and involves all donors and stakeholders. Yet, for the most part, Sweden pursues the dialogue through bilateral meetings with MoEVT.

In Cambodia the dialogue takes place in the Joint Technical Working Group in the Education Sector (JTWG-Ed), where government representatives and DPs meet on a bi-monthly basis. The JTWG-Ed is chaired by the MoEYS and draws participants from several ministries, NGOs represented by the umbrella organisation, and development partners. In addition to this group there is a programme Management Committee as well as TWGs. Worth noting is that many government representatives did not know about the dialogue structure and did not know how the cooperation with development partners was organised.

In Afghanistan, the country that receives the biggest share of Sweden's education support, Sida is, together with 18 donors, a few NGOs and the Ministry of Education, a member of an Education Board. There are a number of TWGs on various issues, one of which deals with girls' education.

### *Donor coordination*

In total, there are 16 donors involved in the education sector in Tanzania. However, only seven of these (CIDA, DFID, Sida, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, WB) are considered active in the dialogue. The DPs have separate meetings once a month in a development partner group (DPG). This work is led by a “troika” consisting of CIDA, DFID and Sida. The troika has separate meetings and also meets with the Permanent Secretary and the Director of Policy and Planning. UNICEF and UNESCO are responsible for providing the secretariat for the DPG.

The DPs meet separately in Cambodia too, in a forum called the Education Sector Working Group, chaired by UNICEF. In total, there are 16 donors involved in education in Cambodia; the respondents perceived the most active partners to be ADB, EC, Sida, UNICEF and the WB. In addition, the EU members have a forum in which division of labour is discussed. Yet, the attendance at the EU meetings is quite low and usually consists only of representatives from the European Commission and Sida.

The overall aid architecture is far more fragmented in Zanzibar than in mainland Tanzania and the development partners are less coordinated and harmonised. There are a number of DPs active in Zanzibar, such as the WB, UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and USAID, and the dialogue mainly takes place on a bilateral basis.

### *Gender equality in the dialogue content*

In Tanzania almost everyone was satisfied with the structure of the dialogue, yet some respondents expressed concerns that too much effort was being focused on process rather than content. High staff turnover among DPs was identified as a challenge. The quality of the dialogue and the results that can be achieved were seen as highly dependent on the actual donor representatives, i.e. their professional qualifications as well as their personal characteristics and interests. The fact that Sida's Education Programme Officer was active in TWGs on budgeting, evaluations and higher education likely corresponds to his qualifications and interests – besides time constraints that do not allow for participation in all groups.

Regarding gender equality, it was clear that this was an issue Sida considered important in the dialogue with the government and with DPs. Nevertheless, no evidence of Sida being a key actor in this area was found. This can potentially be explained by the fact that other DPs also prioritised gender issues, and that Sida therefore implicitly had delegated this to other actors. Sida was not active in the TWGs on quality education or cross-cutting issues. Respondents at the ministries in Zanzibar expressed that the Sida representatives often brought up gender issues in the dialogue and that there were demands from Sida to constantly take gender issues into account. Yet, the respondents said that practically the only issue discussed had been related to girls' enrolment.

Similarly, in the dialogue with UNICEF, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and the WB in Afghanistan Sida considers girls' access to education as the most important dialogue issue together with quality in education. When it comes to gender equality issues in Cambodia, Sida did not recognise a need to push UNICEF in any particular

direction; UNICEF was not perceived to have an agenda that differed from Sida's. The concept of CFS was referred to when asked about how gender equality was discussed in the dialogue. In general, Sida expressed that the dialogue must be adapted to local contexts and circumstances. If pushing too hard, there will be no results, it was argued.

In Bolivia Sida, “*for strategic reasons*” maintains a low profile as regards gender equality and instead promotes all children's right to education, i.e. inclusive education.

#### *Harmonisation and ownership versus thematic priorities*

In Cambodia far from all donors participate in the DPG and many participate on an irregular basis. However, coordination was expressed to be higher than it used to be, and the education sector was found by most respondents to be among the best coordinated sectors; a number of bilateral meetings with the government were also taking place. One respondent expressed that all donors more or less had their own favourite ministry to work closer with. Yet, respondents at the ministries did not experience donor fragmentation as a problem. On the contrary, there were demands for more direct and less multilateral support. For example, it was argued that working through others hides the true contribution, reduces accountability and creates confusion. Such statements were directed towards Sida in the Cambodian education sector, as Sida channels its resources through UNICEF and there is no direct dialogue between Sida and the Cambodian government. Working through UNICEF was seen, by Sida, as an efficient way to reduce costs; yet the disadvantage was that it made it more difficult to explicitly promote Swedish thematic priorities. A similar situation was found in Afghanistan.

In Zanzibar Sida has been pushing the MoEVT to hold meetings in order to increase harmonisation and make the dialogue more structured, so far though without much success. In Tanzania, on the other hand, the level of harmonisation among DPs is considered to be high, as is the level of ownership from the Tanzanian side. The dominating aid modality, GBS, has likely contributed to this high level of ownership. The high level of harmonisation and ownership is in accordance with the Paris Declaration, but implies a number of challenges. Firstly, to assess the results becomes more challenging compared to traditional project or programme support. Secondly, from the perspective of promoting Swedish priorities, the high level of harmonisation and division of labour among DPs makes it more difficult for Sida to push for the three Swedish thematic priorities.

#### *The dialogue dilemma*

The concept of dialogue can in itself produce some challenges. For example, there is a delicate balance between promoting ownership and conducting a two-way dialogue while still promoting Swedish specific priorities. In other words, to conduct a dialogue of mutual giving and taking, to be a good and patient listener “*with the goal of empowering the partner country's representatives*”<sup>44</sup> and also have a high profile in terms of advocacy presents a challenge and sometimes a dilemma.

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<sup>44</sup> Sida (2006) *Dialogue and strategic Communication in Development Cooperation*, p. 8.

The support to broader programmes as is the case in Tanzania implies that issues such as gender equality in education are brought up in the dialogue on a fairly general level. Specific interventions aiming directly at gender equality are not expected. Another type of dilemma is evident in Cambodia where Sida channels all its support through UNICEF.<sup>45</sup>

A qualified sector- and policy dialogue puts strong requirements on capacity and competence among the field personnel. Not only is a strategic approach and planning necessary but also cultural competence and language skills as well as extensive expertise in the area addressed in the dialogue.

### 4.3 Capacity development

In *Tanzania* there were a number of activities undertaken by the government, and supported by the DP collective, when it comes to capacity development and gender and education. To start with, there had been a lot of work on policy and strategy development as well as on reviewing policies and strategies to make sure they were gender responsive. The Education and Training Policy was put forward as a positive example, and there had also been progress on legislation, for example as regards the Marriage Act and a Child Act, both of relevance for the education sector. Much effort and focus had been given to making re-entry of young women possible after having children, and a new law was expected shortly.

MoCDGC was responsible for educating the GFPs that are placed at all ministries. The GFP at MoEVT had a gender desk at her disposal and was considered to be relatively strong compared to counterparts in other ministries; still, however, the GFP worked under severe financial constraints and with limited influence. An Education Sector Management Information System gathering statistics and gender disaggregated data had also been established.

Respondents in Tanzania argued that teachers and teacher training were areas of capacity development identified as crucial for improving gender equality. Teacher training included sensitisation of teachers to make them responsive to gender issues. Aspects of gender-based violence were also included in the training. Gender-responsive pedagogy, e.g. paying particular attention to girls, avoiding gender stereotyping and improving the learning environment, was mentioned as a recently introduced concept. When it comes to curricula and textbooks, some of the respondents expressed that gender biases had been removed and that gender-responsive learning material had been developed – both for teachers and for children. Other activities aimed at promoting gender equality included building hostels close to schools in order to improve the security and thus the attendance of girls. Facilities, such as toilets and water, had also been in focus as well as learning equipment in general. There was also a programme of science camps directed towards girls in order to improve their performance in science and math. Female teachers were here seen as crucial since they could act as role models and motivators.

Despite the almost exclusive focus on GBS, Sida respondents expressed that there is some room for manoeuvre when it comes to providing additional funds for capacity

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<sup>45</sup> Sida, EC and UNICEF are working on a new structure where Sida and EC are to provide sector budget support to education as well as a trust fund for capacity development. This is done in close cooperation with the government.

development. Importantly, however, the MoEVT is reluctant to receiving Technical Advisors (TA), thus this is not pursued by Sweden. The reluctance towards TAs is said to be based on previous experience when there were around 30 TAs in the MoEVT and there was hardly any coordination among them. Moreover, the high turnover (TAs normally stayed for a year or two) made cooperation extremely difficult. Gradually, the MoEVT has now accepted TAs but only when the MoEVT itself is given the opportunity to decide on who, when, where and for what purpose. In Afghanistan, the situation is the opposite; most donors, but not Sweden, provide TAs to the Ministry of Education.

In previous years Sida had been very much engaged in, for example, teacher training and capacity development of ministry staff in Tanzania. As part of these trainings, gender components were a rule. It is not unlikely that Sida has contributed to the relatively advanced level of gender awareness found among the Ministry staff in Dar es Salaam.

In the national training resource centre in *Zanzibar* gender-sensitive training of teachers has been undertaken. Gender sensitisation campaigns have also been directed towards ministry leaders, school inspectors, and parents. Much of the advocacy work has been done through media campaigns. Swedish funds have not been used in any of these activities. When asked about who supports capacity development in relation to gender equality issues, respondents at the MOEVT in Zanzibar largely referred to the UN bodies.

There is a Gender Officer at the Zanzibar MoEVT, but she has no budget of her own and said that there is a lot to be done when it comes to gender issues in the education sector. There is some cooperation with other ministries, for example with the Ministry of Youth, Women and Child Development, which has a unit on gender and advocacy. However, lack of management and coordination as well as lack of resources remain challenges.

Sida support has in recent years been related to construction of classrooms: training of stonemasons, building inspectors, artisans, and of teachers to perform simple school maintenance work, procure toolkits and other types of equipment as well to distribute these to classrooms. The MoEVT is hoping for a basket fund for general capacity development, yet other donors have not been very interested.<sup>46</sup>

The five-year plan, Zanzibar Education Development Programme, has recently been developed into a three-year plan, partly on request from Sida and supported through a Sida-funded consultant.

On the management level, capacity development efforts in Zanzibar have been directed towards management of schools and development of school committees as well as training of their members. The school inspectorate has also been strengthened and the MoEVT has trained head teachers and purchased equipment to support the inspectorate. No evidence that gender equality had been included in these trainings was found.

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<sup>46</sup> Sida has responded positively and a new three-year went into effect on 1 July, 2010.

As to the capacity-development work currently undertaken by UNICEF in *Cambodia*, and supported by Sida, a lot of work is centred around the concept of CFS. Gender responsiveness is one of the six dimensions of this concept and, according to policy, the objective is to promote awareness in schools, families and communities about their roles and responsibilities for providing equal and equitable education and educational opportunity for both girls and boys so that they can participate equally in all activities in school, family and society. More specifically, activities for example aim at eliminating gender stereotypes in curricula, textbooks and teaching-learning processes. In addition, a lot of emphasis was put on the practice of having counsellors who are trained to support girls in school and have a special focus on trying to reduce the drop-out rate among girls. The counselling programme for example involves District Training Monitoring Teams (DTMT), provincial education officers, principals and female teachers. Another means to reduce drop-out was to organise peer-to-peer groups among the students so that girls at risk for dropping out could be identified and supported. The counsellors also communicate with the parents.

The CFS concept is central in the teacher training supported by UNICEF, and as such includes gender aspects. The teacher training department of MoEYS has through an NGO (KAPE) conducted training for teacher trainers all over the country on the CFS concept. In general, the promotion of female teachers was put forward as an important factor for promoting gender equality in education at large.

TAs contracted by UNICEF support the work of the Gender Working Group at the MoEYS. This group has developed a Gender Policy that is currently under review by various stakeholders as well as a Gender Strategy in Education. In addition, an evaluation tool has been developed – “*Quality Standards and Indicators of Gender Mainstreaming in Education*” – which is used to track progress and identify improvement areas. In addition to UNICEF there are a number of DPs providing technical assistance, and there are a number of TAs in the ministry. They were generally appreciated by the ministry staff, although some concern over lack of coordination was expressed.

Taken together, in the area of gender and education, UNICEF is working with capacity development on all levels. Yet, when it comes to specific activities at the school level the support given – through the Expanded Basic Education Programme II – covers six of Cambodia's 24 provinces. However, the CFS concept has been integrated in the national policy, i.e. it is to be applied also in provinces not supported by UNICEF. The teachers will not be trained directly – only DTMTs and school leaders will. Although it might be considered uncertain to what extent the CFS Programme will be implemented outside UNICEF's six provinces, informants at the ministry stressed the work being done by UNICEF as important and said they are working on replicating their work in other provinces as well. In addition, in order to promote girls' education, ministry representatives highlighted the importance of constructing schools close to communities, improving the facilities at the schools, and providing scholarships directed primarily to girls.

## 5 Conclusions

This report has focused on three issues in promoting gender equality in and through education: contributing factors, dialogue mechanisms and capacity development.

Worldwide, there is abundant evidence of how education can and is effective in promoting gender equality. The challenges reported by the respondents correspond with common international research findings, the main issues being:

- *Low enrolment and retention rate.* All countries except Bolivia show low net enrolment rates for both girls and boys in secondary education. Only Bolivia and Tanzania have retention rates above 80 per cent; in the other countries only 50-60 per cent of girls and boys complete five years of education. Retentions to grade five are higher for girls than for boys. A major problem seems to be the enrolment in secondary education for both girls and boys.
- *Girls' access to and retention in education* are reported problems, in particular from secondary education and upwards, although the gender gap has narrowed considerably in all six countries - more in primary than in secondary education. As regards early marriages and pregnancies and to what extent they are reasons for drop-out more reliable data is needed. Boys' participation in education above primary level, a challenge in the studied countries, is however not reported to any great extent in international studies.
- *Poor school facilities* are commonly reported, and constitute an obstacle to learning achievements as well as to gender equality.
- *Teacher attitudes* and (mis)behaviour seem to be highlighted more by the respondents than maybe is the case in other evaluations; in general, the norms and values that underlie and relate to various socio-cultural conditions and the socio-economic context were strongly emphasized by the respondents.
- Biases and *stereotyping* were identified as common problems, manifested in teachers' and male classmates' attitudes and behaviours but also in curricula and textbooks.
- *Low achievement in school.* Girls' low performance is a concern in some circumstances, particularly when it comes to math and science. Data is not available and more studies would be needed in all the countries to get a clear picture of the situation.
- *Poverty* causes parents not to send children to school but to instead request their children's labour; this affects girls more than boys. Sons are generally preferred and get advantages.
- *Legislation and policies* in favour of gender equality have greatly improved, but the implementation is often financially constrained.

Gender equality is clearly on the agenda in the studied cases – Cambodia, mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar - and there are several examples of legislation, policies and strategies, some of which present high-quality and advanced measures. This goes for both gender equality overall and the education sector.

Incentives, hostels and sanitary facilities to increase retention; curriculum revisions and gender subjects in teacher training to improve the quality of education; and advocacy and media campaigns to address traditional norms have to a minor or higher degree been tried in all three cases. Sida seems to have been active in assisting or suggesting the development of policies and strategies, but the implementation is often weak.

In all the studied cases, donors, not least Sida, had sought to achieve *donor coordination*. There was a general consensus on the need to strengthen gender equality. Mostly girls' enrolment and access were on the agenda. No country had developed a gender equality analysis and strategy in the education sector. From a gender equality perspective, girls' (and boys') enrolment and retention in secondary education has not received the attention and support it requires.

Gender issues are found in all the *cooperation strategies*, either as part of the overall objective or as a cross-cutting/mainstreaming issue. Gender equality as one of the three thematic priorities is a point of departure for Bolivia's and Kosovo's cooperation strategies. Gender issues are also reflected in dialogue priorities but less so in the assessment memos, i.e. at the intervention level with the exception of targeted support in Afghanistan, the integrated approach in Bangladesh and the support to Haki-Elimu in Tanzania. Gender equality in education is explicitly considered as a dialogue issue only in Bolivia's cooperation strategy.

In the studied cases Sida's focus is on gender parity although girls enrol and remain in education to the same or a higher extent than boys. Sida's focus is furthermore on primary education although experience shows that primary education is far from enough to advance women's empowerment. Gender analyses are rare.

Little evidence of Swedish involvement in conscious awareness-raising to promote gender equality in education was found; in fact, there seem to have been only a few examples, e.g. UNICEF in Cambodia. However, there was obvious evidence of Sweden having actively addressed the issue of teenage pregnancies in Tanzania.

Sida seems to have focused most efforts on policy development but also on poverty-related obstacles and less on female participation in secondary and higher education, and gender norms, values and gender awareness for instance in teachers' education.

In Tanzania the use of *dialogue* seems to have developed the furthest and most consistently, at least as regards the structure and also as regards priorities content-wise. Sida seems to have played an important role in developing this dialogue. In Zanzibar the dialogue was conducted irregularly on a bilateral basis. In Cambodia Sida's dialogue is with UNICEF, which in turns conducts the dialogue with the government. Only the Embassy in Tanzania had a dialogue plan, addressing several gender issues.

To engage in the dialogue is a demanding task for the staff at the Swedish Embassies. Not only do they need to be technically proficient as regards education but also competent in promotion of gender equality. Professionalism in communication tactics is another requirement. The few education officers, usually only one, select areas in which they feel competent and have an interest. Gender equality may not always be one of those. In Tanzania gender equality had been “delegated” to other donors, more due to lack of resources than to lack of interest.

Very little is seen of Swedish direct support to *capacity development* in education, which is likely a result of the aid modalities involved in the studied countries. In Cambodia, Sweden channels the education support through UNICEF. The CFS Programme focuses on capacity development and promotes a rights perspective in education via issues connected to gender equality. In Tanzania support is given mainly as GBS and the government has undertaken a number of activities as regards capacity development, gender and education. No sign of gender equality promotion through support for capacity development was found in Zanzibar.

Some of the examples of good practices as regards gender equality in education are reflected in the studied development cooperation. Yet, the studied support is not at the forefront when compared with international experience. In the studied cases there are few examples of Sweden having explicitly and consciously addressed gender equality through development cooperation in the education sector. This is not to say that Sida has been inactive; at a policy and programme level Sida has contributed to development of legislation and policies.

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## Appendix 1 List of persons met

### *IN SWEDEN*

#### ***Sida***

Arvidsson, Stellan

Backlund, Robert

Belcastro, Helen

Borda, Rebeca (Bolivia)

Ericsson, Lovisa (Kosovo)

Herrman, Louise

Lindblom, Lina

Malakar, Monica (Bangladesh)

Martinez Bergström, Sara (Bolivia)

Nauckhoff, Eva

Orrebrink, Sofia

Pehrsson, Hans

Saemundsson, Magnus

Wadstein, Susanne

Westin, Martin

Wickman, Kenth

Wiking, David

von Malmborg, Marianne (Afghanistan)

#### ***Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs***

Hector, Julia

Latham-Johnsson, Gerd

Nilsson, Johanna

Woodford Berger, Prudence

#### ***Others***

Bjälkander, Owolobabi, Stockholm University

Freidenwall, Lenita, Stockholm University

Kuusela, Kirsti, Karlstad University

Mahdi, Hawha, University of Gothenburg

Pehrson, Kajsa, Consultant

Rosenberg, Kerstin, Karlstad University

Schlyter, Ann, University of Gothenburg

Schmidz, Catharina, IPM-InDevelop

Thynell, Marie, University of Gothenburg

### *IN TANZANIA*

#### ***Mainland Tanzania***

Binagi, Ellen, TEN/MET

Frankenberg, Anders, Embassy of Sweden

Hassan, Safina, Action Aid

Herrström, Staffan, Embassy of Sweden

Huntington, Corey, CIDAKachecheba, Stanley, Action Aid

Kibona, Lidey, Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children

Lang, Ulrika Embassy of Sweden

Maggid, Hadita M. Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

Mallya, Usu, Tanzania Gender Network

Mgweno, Gresce Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children

Minja, Glory Athanasio, Action Aid

Mwalakilingo, Anthony, TEN/MET

Omari, Beatrice, CIDA

Sanlwa, Glnasin M, TEN/MET

Sekwao, Cathleen, M., UNESCO

Senzighe, John, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

Tealuma, Zippora Shekilango, TEN/MET

Tesha, Joyce, Embassy of Sweden

Tumbo-Masabo, Zubeida, UNICEF

Vere, Joseph, UNESCO

Winifrida, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

Zebroff, Tanya, DFID

### *Zanzibar*

Abdallah Ali, UNICEF

Ali, Juma Salim, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

Ekerege, Fundikira J., Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

Eliamringi, Israel, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training,

Feruz, Mgeni, Ministry for Education and Vocational Training

Gabusa, Costansia P, Ministry for Community Development, Gender and Children

Lasway, Rest B., World Bank

LeBlanc, Thomas, USAID

Maalim, Mpaji, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

Maman, Mubarak, Save the Children- UK

Mdeskei, Meskech, Ministry for Community Development, Gender and Children

Moh'd Mbarak, Khadija, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

### *IN CAMBODIA*

Aksland, Markus, Save the Children Norway

Asplund Eva, Sida

Borann, Thong, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Botum, Sivann, Ministry of Women's Affairs

Bou, Noeun, European Union

Bunroeun Nath, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Castillejo, Alice, VSO- Voluntary Service Overseas

Chie Takahashi, UNICEF

de Vries, Peter, UNICEF

Heang, Neang, Unicef

Jinnai, Teruo, UNESCO

Karlstrom, Kerstin, Unicef

Kim Ly, Eng, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Lim Sri, Chroeung, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Luon, March, Sida  
Noeun Bou, Programme Officer in Education, European Commission Delegation  
Phavi, Ing Kantha, , Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veterans  
Saemundsson, Magnus, Sida  
Schelzig Bloom, Karin, Asian Development Bank  
Seng Hak, Leang, , Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
Sereyrath, Sam, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
Sethy, Im, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
Sideth, Sam, UNESCO  
Simeth, Beng, World Bank  
Sonthara, Kong, World Education  
Sovann, York, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
Takahashi, Chie, Unicef  
Talbi, Nesrine, European Union  
Thavarak, Tuon, Ministry of Planning  
Van Chankan, Nhim , Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports  
Vantha, Chea, Education Coordinator VSO- Voluntary Service Overseas

## Appendix 2 Obstacles to and opportunities for female education<sup>47</sup>

	Challenges	Good practices
<b>Gender parity</b>	<p>While the gap in primary school enrolment is narrowing, it is widening in secondary and tertiary education.</p> <p>Irregular attendance is more common among girls than boys.</p> <p>Girls drop out of all levels of education to a higher degree than boys.</p> <p>A majority of out-of-school children are girls.</p> <p>The number of female graduates of all levels of education is lower than that of males.</p> <p>Girls' performance is lower than that of boys, particularly in math and science.</p> <p>Female adult illiteracy remains high and is higher than among males.</p>	<p>Studies on dropout rates and reasons for dropouts with recommended measures to be taken.</p> <p>Economic incentives to promote girls' participation in secondary &amp; tertiary education.</p> <p>Female facilitators/homework assistants to support girls' homework and provide compensatory teaching for absent days.</p> <p>Alternative education for out-of-school girls, e.g. Accelerated Learning.</p> <p>Compensatory courses/summer schools for girls in science and math.</p> <p>Female adult literacy programmes combined with business activities.</p>

<sup>47</sup> The information in table 1 is derived from the following sources: Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) *Beyond Access: Transforming Policy and Practice for Gender Equality in Education*; Chowdry (2005) *Beyond Access: Partnership for Equality with Equity*; Leach (2003) *Practicing Gender Analysis in Education*; Oxfam (2005) *Gender Equality in Schools*; Rose and Subrahmanian (2005) *Evaluation of DFID Development Assistance: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Phase II Thematic Evaluation: Education Glasgow: DFID*; Subrahmanian (2006) *Mainstreaming Gender for Better Girl's Education: Policy and Institutional Issues*; Villalobos (2006) *Girl's right to education*; and UNESCO (2008) *EFA Global Monitoring Report Education for All by 2015, Will we make it?*.

	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Good practices</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<p>Gender biases in textbooks are common and strengthen gender stereotypes in text and pictures.</p> <p>Sex education is non-existent in many countries, or when included in the curriculum it is not implemented.</p>	<p>Regular revisions of curricula and textbooks and introduction of gender-sensitive approaches and gender perspectives.</p> <p>Specific committees of male and female experts with the task to eliminate stereotypes in textbooks and recommend alternative texts.</p> <p>Flexible curricula with relevant content for out-of-school girls.</p> <p>Projects in which girls play an active part in identifying their educational, social and cultural needs.</p> <p>Sex education that combat patriarchal attitudes and foster sexuality founded on love, respect and responsibility, and which include HIV/AIDS information.</p> <p>Relevant programmes for girls with special education needs, e.g. girls with learning problems or physical disabilities and girls from ethnic minorities.</p>

	Challenges	Good practices
<b>School environment</b>	<p>Classroom practices favour boys: teachers generally pay more attention and give more feedback to boys.</p> <p>Teachers' perceptions reinforce gender patterns. Teachers are unaware of their gender biases.</p> <p>Schools, particularly in rural areas, have more male than female teachers, which can be a barrier to girls' participation. Lack of female teachers also implies lack of role models for girls.</p> <p>Schools have poor physical facilities; lack school buildings and sanitary facilities, which harm girls more than boys.</p> <p>Schools, particularly secondary schools are located far from especially rural girls' homes.</p> <p>Schools have big classes, from which girls suffer more than boys.</p> <p>Girls are victims of sexual harassment, sometimes violent, in and outside school by male teachers and peers.</p> <p>Girls suffer more than boys from unsafe roads to school.</p> <p>Teachers employ corporal punishment, and when girls are beaten it involves more shame.</p>	<p>Studies on actual classroom situations, including teacher-student and student-student relations with recommended actions to be taken.</p> <p>Continual gender training for male and female teachers including awareness-raising of sexist language, expectations for girls etc.</p> <p>Joint exercises with students and teachers to analyse gender stereotypes in classroom activities, textbooks and curriculum.</p> <p>Special measures for recruitment of female teachers, e.g. economic contributions and free housing, particularly to rural areas.</p> <p>Construction of sanitation facilities for girls; provision of sanitation pads</p> <p>Construction of safe hostels for girls within weekend reach of their homes.</p> <p>Establishment of schools close to the community, also secondary schools for girls</p> <p>Establishment of gender segregated classes</p> <p>Provision of simple, secure and confidential mechanisms for girls to report acts of violence towards them at educational institutions.</p> <p>Legal actions against male teachers and peers who have been engaged in sexual harassment.</p> <p>Prohibition of corporal punishment and legal actions taken against teachers who disrespect the law.</p> <p>Provision of sufficient physical space for girls' play, sports and recreation, on an equal footing with boys.</p>

	Challenges	Good practices
<b>Sociocultural &amp; socioeconomic context</b>	<p>Parents are unwilling to invest or take an interest in girls' education since girls are seen as lost when they marry out of the family.</p> <p>The returns of educating girls are seen as lower since girls' employment prospects are lower.</p> <p>Early marriages and early pregnancies prevent girls from attending or continuing their education.</p> <p>Restrictions on girls' freedom of movement and expression exist in many countries; a long distance to school may therefore be a barrier.</p> <p>Decency standards according to local customs require separate classes or schools for girls.</p> <p>School fees and costs for textbooks, stationery, school uniforms and travelling are hindrances particularly for girls from poor families.</p> <p>Girls from poor families are required to work in agriculture, in the household, with infant care or as paid labour, which hamper their participation in education.</p> <p>Girls infected by HIV/AIDS have to quit school; girls whose parents have died of AIDS have to take on the responsibility for siblings, making education unrealistic.</p> <p>Girls in wars and emergencies constitute an increasing number of out-of-school children.</p>	<p>Provision of alternative education programmes after the identification of sociocultural factors that impede egalitarian treatment of girls. Measures to eradicate those are included.</p> <p>Gender awareness training for parents and community members.</p> <p>Engagement of media in combating traditional gender roles and relations, harmful practices, e.g. female genital mutilation.</p> <p>Advocacy and campaigns for girls' and women's rights in society and in education, including professionally active women as role models</p> <p>Trainings and occupations usually associated with boys offered to girls.</p> <p>Research into employment opportunities for girls who have graduated from secondary education.</p> <p>Alternative education programmes to attract back and retaining pregnant teenagers and adolescent mothers.</p> <p>Abolishment or reduction of school fees and other costs for poor students.</p> <p>Provision of free school lunch.</p> <p>Health education with information about the risks associated with early pregnancies.</p> <p>Special classes for girls in refugee camps.</p>

	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Good practices</b>
<b>Legislation &amp; Policies</b>	<p>Very few examples of constitutional and legal guarantees for gender equality in education.</p> <p>Not all countries have national policies that guarantee completion of primary education for girls.</p>	<p>Constitutional revisions, national policies and strategies that endorse education as human right for both girls and boys.</p> <p>Abolition of laws that allow marriages before 18 years.</p> <p>Implementation of laws that guarantee teenage mothers the right to formal education.</p> <p>Prohibition of corporal punishment in schools.</p>

