MARITIME CENTRE of EXCELLENCE for WOMEN'S HEALTH

Promoting social change through policy-based research in women's health

Gender Planning: Developing an Operational Framework for En-Gendering Healthy Public Policy

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to aid in the development of an operational framework for gender planning. Prior to the development of an operational framework, a conceptual framework should be developed. Thus, the companion paper, *Gender Mainstreaming: Developing a Conceptual Framework for En-gendering Healthy Public Policy* (Saulnier et al., 1999), focuses on conceptual issues. Both papers synthesize national and international lessons learned in regards to these issues. Gender planning, or the development of a plan of action and operational framework for applying the conceptual framework, is the subject of this paper. Gender planning facilitates the process of institutional change from gender-neutral to gender-sensitive policies and programs.

This paper argues that when developing a gender planning process, one must be clear about what needs to be changed and what realistically can be changed. Gender planning aims to make changes at various levels; for it to be most effective it should be aimed at different levels and include several programs. For example, employment equity, pay equity and other affirmative action programs are parallel strategies that should be in place before introducing a gender mainstreaming strategy. Integral to developing an operational framework to mainstream gender is the development of tools, guides, and other initiatives. This paper examines initiatives designed to effect change and to support the integration of gender analysis into mainstream policies and programs, including 'how-to' guides, cabinet submission guidelines and economic indicators.

There are several limitations to formalizing cabinet submission guidelines to require gender analysis. Cabinet documents are secret, and the lack of transparency could pose a problem. There needs to be a champion of these guidelines at the table with political clout. Further, this strategy is demand-driven and under-resourced ministries are often forced into a reactive role. To optimize the effectiveness of 'how-to' guides, certain 'stages' of the policy process must be targeted (e.g., the screening and developmental or design stages). However, the effectiveness of the gender based analysis depends on the information or research used to answer the questions in these 'stages' and throughout the policy process. Other challenges include addressing the gap between academic researchers, community researchers and policy makers. Moreover, there is a lack of both qualitative and quantitative data and a need for better uptake of policy research that already exists. Finally, there is a need for ongoing development of comprehensive indicators that can monitor and evaluate progress, thus the role of economic gender equality indicators (EGEI) is examined.

The last section of this paper clarifies the role and importance of core elements or success factors, including the need for adequate resources, political commitment, leadership and champions, education and training, public consultation and participation, accountability, and monitoring and evaluation measures. Successful training and education measures will both raise awareness and enhance skill development by increasing policy makers sensitivity and technical capacity to integrate gender concerns in to the policy making process. Monitoring and evaluation are key components for assessing the effectiveness of gender management system initiatives in achieving their objectives. There should be a combination of rewards and sanctions focused on achieving particular results or accountability measures because, in their absence, the process will not proceed systematically.

This paper also examines the importance of not just doing gender analysis but of changing or adapting the way that policy is made, so that women's voices and concerns are heard and so that existing research about women's needs is reflected in the policy making process.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this paper is to aid in the development of an operational framework for the Gender Equity Lens Project (GEL).[1] The paper *Gender Mainstreaming: Developing a conceptual framework for En-Gendering Healthy Public Policy* (Saulnier et al., 1999) serves as a companion to this one and focuses on conceptual issues. Both the operational and conceptual frameworks are integral to a Gender Management System (GMS). A GMS, a term coined by the Commonwealth Secretariat, is "an integrated web of structures, mechanisms, procedures and management processes put in place within a given institutional framework for the purpose of guiding, managing and monitoring the process of gender integration into mainstream policies, plans and programs in order to bring about gender equality and equity" (Matlin, 1998). Gender planning, or the development of a plan of action and operational framework, is the subject of this paper. Gender planning "consists of developing and implementing specific measures and organizational arrangements for the promotion of gender equality and ensuring that adequate resources are earmarked. It means identifying how to mainstream" (ILO, 1995).

A variety of jurisdictional and policy sector-specific gender analysis guides and other initiatives have been developed across Canada and internationally.[2] Their effectiveness and impact in Canada (whether federal or provincial/territorial) are difficult to discern because this kind of analysis is still in its infancy. The GEL project conducted an extensive literature review on gender analysis 'tools' and gender initiatives, and this paper synthesizes this literature. Beyond documentary research, the crucial part of any exercise such as this is to get those who have developed and/or used gender analysis 'tools' and guides to report their findings and misgivings. In this regard, and as a companion to this paper, interviews were conducted with some key policy makers. These findings are presented in *Lessons from the Field: Policy Makers on Gender-Based Analysis Tools in Canada* (Skinner et al., 1998).

This paper identifies operational barriers and challenges to operationalizing a gender analysis framework and synthesizes major findings about how to effectively deal with them by examining some strategies used thus far. Initiatives designed to support the integration of gender analysis into mainstream policies and programs, including cabinet submission guidelines, economic gender equality indicators (EGEI), and 'how-to' guides, are critically examined, exposing both their potential and limitations. Recognizing that the policy-making process is somewhat rational but mostly political, this paper focuses not only on the technical matters such as acquiring reliable data, comprehensive research, and skill development etc., but on political factors and attempts to affect change. In the latter case, this means that resistance will surface in many forms. Thus, this analysis initially focuses on the nature of the policy-making process and bureaucracy, and on the need for adopting realistic strategies to affect change.

2.0 AFFECTING CHANGES

When developing a gender planning process, it must be clear what needs to be changed, what realistically can be changed and what can be changed in the short term as compared to the long term. It is important to recognize the fragility and the need for continual reinforcement of gains and to develop "(r)ealistic strategies ... based on concrete, incremental steps that are selected in light of long-term goals" (Schalkwyk et al., 1996, p. 17). Moreover, a change in structure, e.g., bureaucracy or programing, is not the sole answer to what is essentially a problem of attitude, behavior, and expertise. At the same time, interim reporting mechanisms and analytic tools must support

measures to change behavior and attitudes in the long run (McLaren et al., 1995). For example, in 1993, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had problems in implementing its policy because it focused on changing attitudes and behavior and did not address structural considerations. CIDA refocused its policy on measurable results in programing and increased accountability measures. The CIDA policy overestimated the incentive effect of using a performance appraisal system and underestimated the intensity of both incentives and accountability systems needed to change professional behavior (McLaren et al., 1995).

Gender planning seeks to make changes at various levels. For it to be most effective, it should be aimed at all of the following levels: individual, societal, structural and systemic, as well as the policy and planning process itself. Commitments aimed at integrating gender into mainstream policies and programs include many initiatives. However, there is some confusion about the relationship of these initiatives to earlier attempts aimed at addressing the status of women. For example, in Justice Canada's gender equality initiative, there was confusion in the department between gender equality initiatives and their relation to employment equity (McLaren et al., 1995, p. 9). Employment equity is a program that works to ensure that women and other identified "equity" groups are fairly represented in the labor force. However, it is a policy aimed only at "adding" women to the institution and not specifically at challenging the nature of the institution and the reasons for the under-representation in the first place. Underlying employment equity programs is the principle that everyone should have a fair chance to find employment, to receive promotion, and to reach his/her potential without discrimination. Yet certain groups, including women, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and visible minorities, still face discrimination in hiring and promotion (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1998). Employment equity programs highlight the need for systemic and structural changes. As New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) observed, one problem in the bureaucracy is its hierarchical nature, with a disproportionate number of men at the top and a concentration of women at lower levels. Other blockages exist because of the appointment of lone women who lack support or power (MWA, 1991). Employment equity, pay equity and other affirmative action programs are parallel strategies that should be in place before gender mainstreaming strategies. Nonetheless, one does not replace the other.

When considering how to affect change, one must understand that the nature of the policy process and the bureaucracy dictate that changes are gradual and slow. Moreover, the policy process is affected by geographic location, timing, recent events (local to global), future prospects, economic climate, current trends and ideas, and the fundamental values of the participants and of society in general (Majury, 1998). However, by favoring the gender planning method, developing guides, etc., it is assumed that the policy process should be more rational. The British Columbia Ministry of Women's Equality's guide suggests that a thorough analysis of women's needs and circumstances can and should be included as a routine element in policy development and evaluation across the government. In other words, gender analysis guides and training offer a "better" way to do policy and existing practices should be changed so that gender analysis becomes a standard, integral part of the policy process (Teghtsoonian, 1996). However, gender issues hold a particular challenge specific to them; gender issues can be personalized and this may intensify resistance to doing gender analysis. Some strategies for gender planning and supporting gender analysis are examined

below, including the development of cabinet submission guidelines, gender analysis guides, and economic indicators to assess progress.

2.1 CABINET SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

In British Columbia, for all cabinet submissions, "the impact of a policy option on women must be analyzed ... and, where appropriate, in specific groups of women ... the analysis should consider whether the policy choice supports equality for women" (Government of British Columbia, 1993, p. 15). These guidelines are designed to encourage those who need to do the screening to use the gender analysis analytical tool and consult with the Ministry of Women's Equality. Like B.C., other jurisdictions (i.e., Yukon, Newfoundland) have instituted cabinet submission guidelines that require gender analysis of all documents submitted to cabinet. Formalizing the use of gender analysis through government-wide cabinet submission guidelines while a positive step to ensuring that the analysis is included, does not ensure that the analysis shapes the policy outcome. Also, the gender analysis component of these submissions is often "too brief or superficial to identify underlying gender dimensions" (Skinner et al., 1998, p. 7-8).

There are several limitations to formalizing cabinet submission guidelines to require gender analysis. Successful planning requires that the initiative be monitored and evaluated. One problem of relying on cabinet submission guidelines is that for this tool to be most effective, there needs to be transparency in doing the analysis. Transparency is required for accountability, monitoring and evaluation. However, neither cabinet documents nor committee discussions are routinely made public. Second, targeting cabinet means that the implementation of gender analysis might depend on the political clout of the individual minister in charge of the lead agency (Teghtsoonian, 1996; Skinner et al., 1998). While this is not always a barrier, having such a minister at the cabinet table is not always possible. Moreover, in Canada, aside from the federal Status of Women Canada, only British Columbia has a free-standing ministry with its own minister (Ministry of Women's Equality). Finally, cabinet submission guidelines are more demand-driven and are thought to force the ministry responsible for developing the analysis or coordinating it into a reactive role. For example, when there is a need to do the analysis, the Status of Women or the Ministry of Women's Equality will be contacted. Given that these ministries or lead agencies are often under-resourced, it is difficult for staff to meet all demands. Other measures such as guides could play an important role in mainstreaming gender in policy.

2.2 GENDER ANALYSIS GUIDES

Integral to developing an operational framework to mainstream gender is the development of tools, guides, and other initiatives. Guides embody a 'how to' approach in a somewhat flexible document and are not as prescriptive as a tool. A 'tool' is more of a checklist and downplays the complexity of both gender analysis and the policy process itself.

Using a gender lens guide or gender analysis analytical framework to implement gender analysis facilitates the process of doing policy analysis because it is not seen as providing the answer. It is a focusing device, not a checklist (Teghtsoonian, 1996, p. 17). Gender analysis guides enable policy analysts to identify how a policy option might affect men and women differently. Using gender analysis guides can ultimately "extend the promise of a more inclusive and equitable approach to policy making ... they have the potential to foster a real improvement in the fit between the policies and services developed by government and the realities of all women's [and girls] lives" (Teghtsoonian, 1996, p. 38). Unlike tools or

checklists, which generally appear inappropriate or patronizing, these frameworks provide guidance on which options would be more equitable (McKinlay, 1993). Tools were the predecessors to guides.

However, even guides are not sufficient for mainstreaming gender. Thus other initiatives such as training and professional development are required. These are examined below.

2.2.1 GENDER ANALYSIS AND THE RESEARCH 'STAGE'

In gender analysis guides, certain 'stages' of the policy process are targeted as crucial for the effectiveness of the analysis. The SWC guide indicates that gender analysis must be included or introduced in the developmental stages of a policy. In the early stages of policy development, introduction of gender analysis is "more efficient and potentially less costly in human and social terms for women" (SWC, 1995, p. 17). Similarly, McKinlay in New Zealand concluded it is crucial to do gender analysis during the design stage of a policy when policy options are developed, especially before the parameters of the "policy have been set" (1993, p. 4). The other crucial 'stage' or step is screening, where the question 'whether it will have gender specific impact' is asked. However, whether the analysis is used throughout the policy process and whether the analysis is adequate, depends on the information or research used to answer the questions in these 'stages' and throughout the policy process. Indeed, "(a)ll subsequent stages in the GBA process ... are dependent on the research used" (Bélanger and Regehr, 1998, p. 2).

GBA has been accompanied by "an increasing recognition within the federal government of the importance of policy research as a prerequisite for good policy and planning" (Bélanger and Regehr, 1998, p. 3). The research needed is "research whose primary focus is linked to the public policy agenda, and whose results are useful to the development of public policies that promote women's equality" (Bélanger and Regehr, 1998, p. 4). There is also a need for multidisciplinary and multifactorial health research now that many jurisdictions acknowledge that health should be approached through a determinants perspective that recognizes that a broad range factors affect people's health status, not just biological factors. However, policy makers and those who are to use gender analysis guides face challenges posed by the lack of adequate or appropriate research and by the gap between academic researchers and policy makers.

While several recent initiatives deal with these issues, including the SWC's Policy Research Fund and the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health, there are problems that need to be overcome for the effective uptake of research into the policy process. Ponée (1998) argues that good research exists without the policy uptake, while some policies are implemented without enough knowledge about how best to proceed.

The gap between academic researchers, the community, and policy makers that needs to be addressed. There is some misunderstanding and lack of willingness to understand each others' concerns, ways of working, etc. Some researchers, for example, are concerned about the integrity of their research process because when their research is funded primarily to inform policy, the government agenda could set the research agenda. Also, policy makers and researchers often have incompatible timetables; the research process is much slower and thus policy decisions are often not based on the evidence.

In developing strategies to address to these barriers one must recognize that "(t)he determinants of women's health research parallel the determinants of women's health: structural

more so than behaviourial" (Ponée, 1998, p. 13). There is a lack of both qualitative and quantitative data as well as a need for better uptake of policy research. Finally, there is a need for ongoing development of comprehensive indicators to monitor and to evaluate progress. The following section examines the development of economic gender equality indicators.

2.3 ECONOMIC GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS

Economic gender equality indicators (EGEI) have been developed to support gender mainstreaming initiatives, and in response to challenges posed by the lack of appropriate research. EGEIs provide a strong information base and research resource on which to make decisions and can be used to evaluate outcomes. These social indicators are designed to measure well-being or quality of life. The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women (FPT) initiated development of EGEIs to monitor progress toward gender equality in economic well-being (FPT, 1997). These indicators highlight economic disparities and inequalities between men and women. They are relational, focusing on the power relationship between men and women. Where possible, they attempt to reflect the situation of women according to age, education, occupation, and employment characteristics (McCracken and Scott, 1998).

EGEIs are 'objective' measures that provide information necessary to make 'evidence-based' decisions and to assess outcomes. Both of these functions are increasingly seen as integral to government decision making. However, the 'evidence' in 'evidence-based decision making' must be both qualitative and quantitative. EGEIs alone cannot provide the complete picture; it requires more qualitative or subjective dimensions. Consultation is a fundamental means of collecting qualitative data and should be integral to a gender mainstreaming strategy. This issue is discussed below as a critical success factor when gender planning.

3.0 CRUCIAL SUCCESS FACTORS

While it is not possible to deal with all the challenges faced when gender planning, there are certain core elements or success factors that must be integrated into gender planning strategies such as guides, EGEI, etc. Probably the most critical success factor is to provide sufficient resources for these initiatives and to allocate an adequate budget and staff. Staffing includes the need for expertise and skills training. As Teghtsoonian (1996) points out, government downsizing counters this need. Thus, staffing policies must also undergo gender analysis. In times of cutbacks, staff may perceive gender analysis to be too complex and only adding to their overwork. However, gender analysis cannot be an 'add-on'. Eventually, it will be seen as a routine part of policy making. This success factor, while critical, may also be one of the most formidable tasks to achieve because of the resistance to sufficiently resource these initiatives. However, "(t)his interest in gender analysis also fits within the overall public demand on governments everywhere for greater public accountability for policy design and outcomes; when resources are limited, costly mistakes are ill-afforded" (Bélanger and Regehr, 1998, p. 1).

Other success factors include (but are not limited to) political commitment, leadership and champions within the organization, education and training, accountability, monitoring and evaluation, education and training, and public consultation and participation. Each of these factors is discussed below in turn.

3.1 POLITICAL COMMITMENT, LEADERSHIP AND CHAMPIONS

There are certain developments that lend some optimism to the possibility of implementing these gender analysis strategies. There has been some social change in Canada as a whole as a result of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada has also made certain international commitments, and there is a legal framework for moving forward on these initiatives. In Canada, the legal framework that promotes women's rights also includes federal, provincial and territorial human rights legislation and commissions, and employment equity legislation. Canada has endorsed numerous global plans of actions and conventions, including the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Canadian government, in preparing for Beijing and the Fourth World Conference on Women, developed a federal plan of action for gender equality. This plan, *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender,* is "both a statement of commitments and a framework for the future" (SWC, 1995, p. i). In this document the federal government sets out its proposal for implementing gender based-analysis (GBA) throughout its departments and agencies. The federal government has made a political commitment toward gender planning by proposing to:

- develop and apply tools and methodologies for carrying out gender-based analysis;
- train policy makers on gender-based analysis of legislation and policies;
- develop indicators to assess progress made toward gender equality;
- collect and use gender-disaggregated data as appropriate;
- use gender-sensitive language throughout the federal government; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of the gender-based analysis process (SWC, 1995, pp. 17-18).

However, the federal government's commitment to GBA only specifically ensures that "all future legislation and policies include, *where appropriate*, an analysis of the potential for different impacts on women and men" (SWC, 1995, p. 17; emphasis added). While providing the flexibility that policy analysts may require to do their job, this proposal neither provides an incentive to do GBA, nor a penalty if it is not done. The decision to do the analysis is left to the discretion of individual departments. Only when it is learned that policies may differentially affect men and women will it be "appropriate" for a consistent application of GBA. Put this way, individual departments and agencies will be disinclined to do the analysis. Moreover, the legal status of these international agreements, political commitments and their impact on other jurisdictions, particularly provincial or territorial, is not always clear. This is especially the case in the area of health and related social programs which constitutionally fall under provincial jurisdiction. There is some difficulty achieving horizontal (across sectors) support, co-operation and collaboration because of the hierarchical or vertical nature of organizations and the competing interests within and between sectors and jurisdictions.

The federal government is attempting to promote multi-sectoral decision making as it recognizes that not all issues fit into one department or sector. However, obtaining political commitment at the highest levels of government is just as important as securing co-operation between different ministries or

departments and between these ministries and stakeholders (Matlin, 1998). The level of commitment to these initiatives is reflected in the amount of authority (e.g., strong clear policy and objectives), resources (e.g., financial and staff), and degree of institutionalization (e.g., co-operation among departments) that gender planning receives (Roberts, 1996). While it may not be enough to ensure the success of gender planning, a lack of senior or even middle management commitment can hamper the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming. Gender planning "marks a major change in the institutional customs and culture of government apparatus," and thus depends on the acceptance of senior management to enact procedures that will ensure it is followed through (SCF, 1998, p. 18). For all of these reasons leadership and high-level commitment to these initiatives is important.

Equally important are champions of advancing the objectives of gender equality who are well-placed in the bureaucracy and in a particular organization or agency. For example, the gender initiatives at the World Bank were significantly advanced when the President of the World Bank (Wolfenson) publicly addressed women's issues and increased attention paid to gender issues by requesting annual progress reports (Williams, 1997). The same can be said of the gender initiatives of the former federal Minister of Justice Kim Campbell (McLaren et al., 1995). However, as important as champions are, the initiatives must outlast the champion.

Whether there is sufficient political commitment and leadership on these issues is reflected in management's ability to hold staff accountable for gender planning. Thus it is important to examine accountability as a success factor.

3.2 Accountability

Women's Eyes on the World Bank argues that even when gender analysis and participatory processes are conducted "the absence of any accountability mechanisms often results in a failure of this analysis" (Williams, 1997, p. 3). The purpose of accountability is to ensure that whoever is responsible for a policy or program meets the publicly stated goals. This requires clear and explicitly stated goals and objectives. Governments are accountable for evaluating outcomes as compared to stated goals. Ultimately the government is accountable to the women who are affected by its policies and programs; within an agency employees are accountable to colleagues and supervisors. It is important to set clear goals to measure how well they have met their objectives and what the outcomes have been, where the lines of accountability are, and what accountability measures are in place (Volunteer Sector Roundtable, 1998).

There is a need for a combination of rewards and sanctions focused on achieving particular results or accountability measures. These could include building responsibility into job descriptions, work plans, programing guidelines, performance evaluations, and regular reporting mechanisms (McLaren et al., 1995). The greatest challenge to invoking these mechanisms is that they make those doing the analysis vulnerable and thus produce defensive responses. A monitoring plan and evaluation framework are important tools in decreasing the likelihood of such responses.

3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective gender analysis of policies and programs is crucial for avoiding inadequate design. To ensure that policies and programs have the intended effect, their outcomes must be evaluated. There needs to be monitoring to ensure that GBA is not used as a cover to avoid committing resources and/or marginalizing it, i.e., restricting GBA to women-specific policies or using it to approve gender-neutral policies. A monitoring and evaluation plan allows for

regular periodic review of progress (monitoring) and shows the changes that have occurred (evaluation) as a result of project activities. Monitoring is tracking whether the project is moving in the right direction. Evaluation generally assesses the amount of change in key indicators between the beginning and the end of the project or/and points in between. Evaluation involves assessing the whole project, the linkages between components and levels, and can include some type of cost-benefit analysis (Caro and Lambert, 1994).

One of the challenges to monitoring and evaluating GBA initiatives is to discern how to measure approaches aimed at mainstreaming gender. The evaluation system must measure whether projects actually address gender inequities and meet women's needs. It should not simply evaluate whether policies and projects contain gender-related actions and "address gender" (Williams, 1997, p. 3). Often, objectives are written to focus on the policy process, not their affect on women.

Integral to the evaluation process is the ability to measure outcomes. Outcomes depend on the scope of the commitment, the given objectives, and the implementation process. Long-term outcomes are difficult to measure. Short-term outcomes are often more process-oriented and sometimes involve institutional change which is more easily measured. Clearly, both (short term) process and (long term) outcome evaluation are important and go hand in hand. It is important to recognize the difficulty in measuring the outcomes and impact of long-term goals including achieving gender equity and improving women's health status. However, policy makers must ensure that short-term goals work towards these ends. In terms of changing the way policy makers work, one short-term goal is to institute education and training programs aimed at developing skills and gender awareness.

3.4 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Change in structures is not the sole answer to what is essentially a problem of attitude, behavior, and expertise. Thus, structures and reporting mechanisms and analytic tools are interim and supporting measures to change behavior and attitudes in the long run (McLaren, 1995, p. 15). A key to a successful gender planning process is a comprehensive training and education program focused on raising gender awareness, skill development, and attitudinal change. The gender analysis guides, by their nature, assume that the omission of gender considerations is both due to oversight and lack of skill. As Majury (1998) found, in government, the level of gender analysis is fairly simplistic; considerable education is needed and values need to be shifted.

The strategies developed will depend on the level of awareness and skills of individuals applying the strategy. Gender awareness or sensitivity training is about realizing the importance of gender as a significant variable and recognizing when an issue has gender implications. To try to raise awareness about gender bias and discrimination is extremely sensitive because it has personal and behaviorial implications. It is difficult to discuss and is often avoided (McLaren et al., 1995).

Skills development workshops aim to instil the ability to realize when an issue will have a differentially negative impact on women or when differences should be accommodated, and how to actually do the analysis, including when to seek assistance and consult with others. Workshops would differ in content depending on their purpose and audience; the components must cover both conceptual and operational issues. Workshops would introduce key concepts and analysis, teach 'how to' skills and, the most difficult but most important part, challenge attitudes. In addition, there must be ongoing time and energy spent on training and

follow-up. There is a need for both specialized training and routine training because a few days of training is insufficient to enable competency or to change attitudes (Oxfam, 1995).

3.5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

Consulting with women's groups and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is one of the key elements or success factors that should be integrated in the policy planning process. These groups should be involved at all stages, from developing gender analysis guides to implementing training and education programs, to holding the government accountable, and to evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives. Indeed, there is some evidence that the government now recognizes the need to consult and be in contact with the "real world" when making policy (Ponée, 1998, p. 6). The federal plan for gender equality acknowledges the work of women's organizations in achieving gender equality and the importance of community groups and NGOs as partners in the "quest for an equitable society" (SWC, 1995, p. i). Nonetheless, no specific plan of action is offered that recognizes not only the importance of consulting women's groups and women, but of creating an environment that allows for a more participatory process.

This is significant because, as Women's Eyes on the World Bank revealed, the lack of systematic genuine participation of NGOs is a key barrier to the advancement of World Bank initiatives. Accordingly, participation is an essential element and means to explicitly address gender concerns (Williams, 1997). But, there needs to be *systematic, genuine participation* wherein all stakeholders are active decision makers engaged at each stage of the policy or project. Currently, women's groups are reacting to government policy. All their time, energy and resources are devoted to dealing with "the consequences of government policy which does not accurately reflect the different realities of men's and women's lives" (NBWRC, 1998, p. 5). For genuine participation to occur, there is a need to offer useful and specific measures to address gender-specific constraints on women's participation such as cultural and legal barriers, and women's relative lack of time and mobility due to their heavy workloads and multiple roles.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This paper outlines the importance of matching the means with the ends; taking into consideration the challenges when making a commitment to implementing a gender management system or initiative such as developing gender analysis guides, when using strategies such as cabinet submissions guidelines, and when developing indicators such as EGEIs. To change the way policies and programs are developed, implemented and evaluated requires understanding that change in the policy process and bureaucracy is gradual and slow. Gender planning strategies are not so much end-products as they are processes that contribute to the long-term goal of improving women's health status and ensuring their equitable treatment and benefit from healthy public policies and programs. We can overcome many barriers and develop strategies of least resistance for gender planning, but we must recognize that the structural/systemic and cultural barriers are larger than individual ones. However, individuals are not insignificant, especially when it comes to gender analysis.

To develop a gender analysis guide is a small, albeit important part of gender planning and thus of a gender management system. The guide should never stand alone; it should be accompanied by adequate resources, political commitment, leadership and champions,

accountability, monitoring and evaluation measures, and education and training. While teaching 'how to' skills and providing appropriate materials are important, training must also be about changing attitudes and behaviors. The actual development and consultation process plays a key role in garnering support and compiling information and expertise. This speaks to the importance of not just doing gender analysis, but changing or adapting the way that policy is made so that women's voices and concerns are heard and so that existing research about women's needs is reflected in policy and programs.

Unless these factors or core components are integrated into gender planning strategies, there will be no significant progressive impact on women's health and no significant changes in the position or condition of women. Rather, we may only succeed (as the World Bank has done) to integrate "gender analysis activities" at the level of planning and policy making and produce reports that serve only as reference documents with no significant action plan attached to them (Williams, 1997).

Glossary

Employment equity refers to the provision of practical remedies for the under-representation or concentration of, and employment barriers to, certain groups of people, including women, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people, and visibility minorities.

Gender is a sociocultural variable that refers to the comparative, relational, or differential roles, responsibilities, and activities assigned to females and males. Gender is relational in that it identifies the relationship between men and women. Gender refers to the social characteristics and culturally prescribed roles of men and women, but are not bound to either men or women. These roles vary among societies and over time. **Gender roles** are what a society or culture constructs and prescribes as proper roles, behavior and personal identities, wherein that which is associated with women is feminine, with men is masculine, with the latter given more hierarchical value.

Gender analysis is a method to collect and analyzing information regarding the different needs and concerns of women, to address the barriers that have disadvantaged them. As an analytical framework, it is used to identify gender roles and to systematically study the different conditions and positions of women and girls versus men and boys.

Gender bias refers to providing differential treatment when it is ill-founded or unjustified; it has come to refer to favoring men as a gender.

Gender equality refers to treating men and women the same and attaining equal conditions for women to be able to contribute and to benefit politically, economically, socially and culturally; women are thus empowered as agents of change.

Gender equity refers to treating men and women differently, or the same when appropriate, to achieve outcomes that satisfy the needs of both.

Gender mainstreaming is an approach that considers why gender analysis is *integral* to the policy and program process, and incorporates women's views and priorities into the *core* of policy decisions, institutional structures and resource allocations. It is the conceptualizing stage of a gender management system.

Gender Management System (GMS) refers an integrated web of structures, mechanisms and procedures put in place within a given institutional framework for the purpose of guiding, managing and monitoring the process of gender integration into mainstream policies, plans and programs in order to bring about gender equality and equity.

Gender neutral to ignore or not take into account sex composition and/or gender characteristics

Gender planning the development of a plan of action and operational framework for applying the conceptual framework, it facilitates the process of institutional change from gender-neutral to gender-sensitive policies and programs by developing and implementing specific measures and organizational arrangements for the promotion of gender equality.

Sex is an analytical category that distinguishes males and females based on biological characteristics; the categories are mutually exclusive and exhaustive and the sexes are not interchangeable. Sex roles are universal; they do not change over time, nor do they change depending on their context.

References

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2. For an overview of the guides and tools see the annotated bibliography by Saulnier et al. (1998). For a summary of Canadian (federal and provincial/territorial) initiatives, see also Appendix B of Skinner et al. (1998).

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