

EU DONORS UNDER WOMEN'S WATCH

WIDE checks up on Gender Equality and Women's Rights in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda on the road to Busan 2011



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About WIDE

WIDE is a European feminist network of women's organisations, development NGOs, gender specialists and women's rights advocates. WIDE monitors and influences international economic and development policy and practice from a feminist perspective. WIDE's work is grounded on women's rights as the basis for the development of a more just and democratic world order and the search for alternative approaches to the economic mainstream.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development
AGDEN	African Gender and Development Evaluators' Network
AWID	Association of Women in Development
BAR	Bilateral Aid Review
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CONGDE	Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCD	Development Cooperation Department
DFID	Department for International Development
DG POLDE	Dirección General de Planificación y Evaluación de Políticas de Desarrollo
EU	European Union
GAD	Gender and development
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
GEDEA	Gender in Development and Aid Effectiveness Network
GNI	Gross National Income
HLF-3	Third High Level Forum
HLF-4	Fourth High Level Forum
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IDC	International Development Committee
IPAP	International Partnerships Agreement Programme
MAR	Multilateral Aid Review
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MP	Member of Parliament
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PWYF	Publish What You Fund
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAW	Violence against women
WID	Women in development
WIDE	Globalising Gender Equality and Social Justice
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

About the report

This report maps the degree to which European Union donors from Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK comply with the commitments they made in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, and the impact this has on gender equality and women's human rights. While each of the five Paris Declaration principles offers concrete opportunities to advance the gender profile, the report focuses on democratic ownership and mutual accountability as the most political and with the biggest potential to reduce the gaps and empower women. The WIDE-check is about the intentions and actions of donors, not about the concrete results in developing countries. The report highlights positive cases and initiatives, criticises the gaps, and points out the opportunities for improvements, reflecting the evidence-based voices of women's organisations from the EU. The countries reviewed in the report were selected on the basis of WIDE membership and the platforms' engagement in the aid and development effectiveness process.

This report is part of the broader work WIDE has undertaken to ensure that the aid effectiveness agenda moves towards development effectiveness with gender equality and human rights at its core. While WIDE acknowledges the importance of the principles agreed in Paris and, particularly, later in Accra, we have been critical of the process and continue to engage in it from that critical perspective.

The report is the result of collective work. The country chapters were drafted in cooperation with WIDE platforms and – where possible – after consultations with gender advisors in the relevant ministries and development agencies. The report was written by Kasia Staszewska at the WIDE Secretariat, who also ensured the overall coordination for the process.

For more information about WIDE's engagement in the aid effectiveness process, please contact Kasia Staszewska at: kasia@wide-network.org.

Introduction and context

This mapping study is an attempt by WIDE to take stock of the current level of implementation of the ownership and mutual accountability principles set out in the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action. We have reviewed the development cooperation policies of the European Union (EU) through the example of five Member States. Gender equality and women's human rights are both the motivation and the perspective that guide our work.

The report comes at a critical time, just half a year before the Fourth High Level Forum (HLF-4) on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (29 November to 1 December 2011). The Forum has a mandate to assess the level of implementation of commitments made in Paris and Accra and its impact on fostering the aid and development effectiveness process. Its outcome will determine whether the new agenda moves towards a development effectiveness approach or aid architecture reforms are put on hold.

What progress has been made against the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action indicators is not clear at this time, and differs depending on the donor, partner country and the sector. As donors were not obliged to report on the quality of the aid they provided, it has been extremely difficult for civil society to track it.¹ As usual, this has been even more complex for gender equality and women's human rights. Emerging findings so far have pointed to progressive attention being paid to gender at the policy level, but insufficient implementation and monitoring. The case is the same for the donors and developing countries in the South.²

It is widely recognised that development cooperation has helped to address some of the most difficult challenges in the poorest parts of the world; however, this is not the maximum possible impact that is being delivered. As for WIDE, it considers aid a relatively small instrument for financing for development that is constantly sidelined and undermined by the EU's neo-liberal approach and externally gender-blind policies – agriculture, trade or energy, to name just a few. This is why **moving beyond just aid, towards a human rights-based development effectiveness approach**, is our first message and the key demand to take to HLF-4 in Busan.

¹ For more information about the evaluation process, please see Box 2 (below).

² See DFID, Buitenlandse Zaken, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Irish Aid, *Making Aid more Effective through Gender, Rights and Inclusion: Evidence from Implementing the Paris Declaration*, June 2008.

Box 1. Why the aid and development effectiveness process matters

The aid effectiveness process launched with the Paris Declaration in 2005 and accelerated further with the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008 currently defines the relationship between donors and recipient developing countries. It also determines how aid is delivered. The Paris outcomes motivated major reforms for most of the European donors. It is a very technical process, but at the same time also a political one.

Women's organisations are engaged in the aid effectiveness reforms, yet they are not signatories to the process and, therefore, question the OECD's leadership as not democratic and inclusive enough. The Paris and Accra agendas are still gender-blind. Most of the women's organisations' recommendations have not been addressed.³ At the same time, aid money is the main funding source for the women's organisations, even though it is clear that gender equality represents a very tiny proportion of the overall volume.⁴

The Busan Forum is the momentum which will provide the basis for the future of the aid and development effectiveness process. It is crucial for women's organisations to stay engaged.

Why assess the donors' efforts?

There are **three key reasons that pushed us to WIDE-check on donors' efforts** with regard to gender equality and women's human rights in the aid and development effectiveness context:

1. The matter of justice. Women represent more than 70% of the world's poor, yet their rights, needs and voices have been ignored. They lag far behind men in access to land, credit and decent jobs. While they contribute to producing about two-thirds of all the food produced in developing countries, women own less than 1% of the land.⁵ In mid-2009 only 17 heads of state or government were women.⁶ Yet gender-based violence caused more death and disability among women than cancer, malaria and war combined.⁷ These numbers do not lie. Nor are they coincidence. There is no aid or development effectiveness without gender equality and women's rights at its core.

2. Accountability. Finally in 2008, gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability were recognised in the Accra Agenda for Action as the cornerstones for development and the engine for its realisation (paragraph 3).⁸ This was very much welcomed by women's organisations, as this recognition is the first step towards operationalisation. Nevertheless, the Accra Agenda for Action failed to put in place the concrete, time-bound indicators to assess delivery.⁹ There was also no mandatory reporting or evaluation for all the parties involved. WIDE strives to act as watchdog on implementation so that donors are held accountable for the commitments they have subscribed to.

³ See the AWID analysis by Nerea Craviotto, *Premier #8: The Accra agenda for Action: A brief review from a women's rights perspective*, AWID Development Cooperation and Women's Rights Series, February 2011.

⁴ See the AWID report by Joanna Kerr, *The Second Fundher Report: Financial Sustainability For Women's Movements Worldwide*, June 2007.

⁵ Source: <http://www.actionaid.org/main.aspx?PageID=21>.

⁶ Source: http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/democratic_governance/.

⁷ Source: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/News-Stories/2011/Mitchell-UN-women-launch-welcome/>.

⁸ See the full document at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/4700790-1217425866038/AAA-4-SEPTEMBER-FINAL-16h00.pdf>.

⁹ For more information, see the AWID analysis by Nerea Craviotto, *Premier #8*, February 2011.

3. The moment. Ahead of HLF-4 in Busan the official discussion in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) is supposed to be based on evidence. The *Evaluation of the Paris Declaration (Phase 2)* and the accompanying *Progress Since Paris* report are the key documents in the preparations for HLF-4, yet, at least for the evaluation, the process has been almost completely gender-blind.¹⁰ The final drafts of the findings are expected for presentation during the WP-EFF plenary meeting in July. Building on them, the WP members are supposed to discuss the draft Busan outcome document in July (6–7) and then at the following meeting in October (5–6).¹¹ WIDE aims to contribute to the evidence collection process and present concrete cases of successes and challenges when putting the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action into practice. We will strive to feed our findings into the *Progress Since Paris* report and influence the EU's position for HLF-4 ¹².

Box2. Collection of evidence for HLF-4

The first key input for the Forum is the *Evaluation of the Paris Declaration (Phase 2)*. It combines 21 partner countries' studies and the analysis of the six donors' headquarters.¹³ To ensure the independence of the process, the evaluation is being managed by the International Reference Group, comprising the country members of the WP-EFF, members of the DAC Evaluation Network and representatives of civil society. The final draft of the evaluation report is expected for presentation during the WP-EFF plenary meeting in July 2011.¹⁴

The second input is the *Progress Since Paris* report. It is being coordinated by the OECD Secretariat and builds on the 2011 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration. There is an optional module on Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness in the survey, yet this only covers developing countries and the fragile states (donors do not report here, and there is no parallel process that covers their efforts). The survey findings are expected to be complemented by the external partners – i.e. GENDERNET, UN Women, civil society organisations (CSOs) – who were invited to submit their evidence to the OECD Secretariat by 31 March 2011.¹⁵

¹⁰ More information about the official evaluation and monitoring process can be found in Boxes 2 and 3.

¹¹ Source: *Better Aid internal calendar of Busan-related events*.

¹² The critical milestones in Europe are: past EU consultations in Budapest (May) and the European Commission communication on aid effectiveness planned for September/October 2011

¹³ Most of the studies are already available at:

http://www.oecd.org/document/60/0,3343,en_21571361_34047972_38242748_1_1_1_1,00.html.

¹⁴ For more information about the evaluation, see *Evaluation of the Paris Declaration (PD) - Phase 2. Entry Points for the Topic "Division of Labour"*, OECD Fact Sheet Update, September 2010.

¹⁵ For more information about the Survey, see http://www.oecd.org/site/0,3407,en_21571361_39494699_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.

Methodology

The methodological approach taken for this report was driven by the fact that **there are hardly any data on the EU donors' compliance with their commitments from Paris and Accra from a gender equality and human rights perspective**. It is also a direct response to the gender-blind nature of the official evaluation and monitoring process, which is voluntary and has a predominant focus on the partner states.

Box 3. Optional module on gender equality and aid effectiveness for the partner countries

In 2011 for the first time the Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration in developing countries will include the optional module on gender equality and aid effectiveness. This is the big success of gender equality advocates with GENDERNET at the forefront.

The module indicators are being grounded in the existing Paris Declaration indicators and Accra Agenda for Action commitments but offer a gender dimension to the monitoring process. As at February 2011, 12 developing countries had committed their voluntary participation, and discussions were underway about using the module in at least 10 others.¹⁶ This is only about 20% of the Monitoring Survey coverage but still a very good score for the beginning of the process. The full optional module document is available at: http://www.oecd.org/site/0,3407,en_21571361_39494699_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.

Obligatory reporting, monitoring and evaluation for all has been the key demand of women's organisations from the beginning. We have called for human rights-based indicators, and the participation of women's groups in the data collection and monitoring processes.¹⁷ As this is not actually happening, WIDE decided to make its own check on the EU donors and the practical implications of ownership and mutual accountability. As there are no datasets that allowed us to undertake a comparable review, we draw on our indicators and the sources we have been able to determine.

Data sources and limitations

The WIDE-check is about the intentions and actions of the governments of Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and UK as donors, but not about the concrete results in developing countries. While each of the five Paris Declaration principles offers concrete opportunities to advance the gender profile, the report focuses on democratic ownership and mutual accountability as the most political and with the biggest potential to reduce the gaps and empower women.

We have focused mostly on the donors' bilateral efforts. We aim to produce a review reflecting the evidence-based voices of women's organisations from the EU. We have highlighted positive cases and initiatives, criticised the gaps, and pointed out the opportunities for improvements. The countries reviewed in the report were selected on the basis of WIDE membership and the platforms' engagement in the aid and development effectiveness process.

¹⁶ Source: GENDERNET e-update, February 2011.

¹⁷ See *Recommendations of the International Consultation of Women's Organizations and Networks and Aid Effectiveness*, 31 January – 1 February, Ottawa, Canada; or *Women's Forum Statement: Recommendations for Action on Development Effectiveness in Accra and beyond*, 30 August 2008, Accra, Ghana.

The data sources used for this report included: review of international and national documentation related to the aid effectiveness process, countries' policies, strategy papers, annual reports, CSOs' analysis, and semi-structured interviews with representatives of WIDE country and regional platforms. Where it was possible, we have also asked for a review by colleges from development agencies and relevant ministries. The data sources used did not cover all the issues we wanted to report on, and we have struggled with the shortage of information. Still, we believe that we have managed to identify the main trends to picture the real progress – or the lack thereof – in the EU donors' efforts to ensure gender equality in the context of the development effectiveness process.

The detailed bibliography is outlined in Annex 1. The list of the people consulted is included at the end of the country chapters of this report.

Indicators

We have decided to review the donors' performance on the basis of the alternative indicators built on the comprehensive analysis of the women's organisations (i.e. AWID and AGDEN) and other gender advocates (i.e. UNIFEM, GENDERNET, GTZ). This was directly motivated by the fact that official Paris Declaration indicators fail to respond to the complex nature of the commitments and do not cover their gender aspects. The actions that donors should have already taken on ownership and mutual accountability were grouped into nine indicators under two categories:

OWNERSHIP

- 1a. Structures in place for systematic participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in development planning, implementation and monitoring
- 1b. Aid policy framework based on a human rights approach, built on a gender analysis of poverty, referring to international conventions such as CEDAW, and linked to the operational budgets
- 1c. Quality indicators to review the gender sensitivity of all policies, implementation efforts, monitoring and evaluation
- 1d. Resources allocated to support civil society – women's organisations in particular.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- 2a. Civil society, including women's organisations, meaningfully involved in reviewing progress in implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action
- 2b. Credible, independent and inclusive monitoring and evaluation system with an accountability mechanism in place
- 2c. Quality, timed information on progress in implementation of the commitments on gender equality and women's human rights
- 2d. Parliamentary scrutiny over governments' compliance with aid effectiveness commitments and their impact on gender equality and women's human rights
- 2e. Resources earmarked for the accountability-related actions to strengthen the role of national women's machineries – women's organisations in particular.

These indicators assess the number of ownership and accountability elements from a gender equality and human rights perspective. They are clearly far from exhaustive and may not equally picture all of the donors' efforts – as was the case with Poland. The table below outlines in greater detail how the indicators relate to the potential of donors' gender-responsive engagement, the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action ownership and mutual accountability definitions, and the official monitoring process. WIDE has analysed Austrian, Dutch, Polish, Spanish and UK aid since 2005 against the alternative indicators to monitor the progress made. The findings make up this report.

<p style="text-align: center;">Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">WIDE Proposal*</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Definition</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Official indicators of progress</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Potential areas for donors' gender- responsive engagement</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Alternative indicators</p>
<p>Ownership in Paris Declaration Responsibility for coordinating development actions lies with the partner countries who commit to exercise leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies in dialogue with donors and encouraging the participation of civil society and the private sector. Donors commit to respect partner country leadership and help strengthen the partner country's capacity to exercise it.</p> <p>Ownership in Accra Agenda for Action <i>Country ownership is key.</i> Donors will support efforts to increase the capacity of all development actors – parliaments, central and local governments, CSOs, research institutes, media and the private sector – to take an active role in dialogue on development policy and on the role of aid in contributing to countries' development objectives.</p> <p>Developing countries and donors will both ensure that their respective development policies and programmes are designed and implemented in ways consistent with their agreed international commitments on gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability (Paragraph 8 and 13c).</p>	<p>Number of countries (at least 75%) with national development strategies that have clear strategic priorities linked to a medium-term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets (Indicator 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic and meaningful engagement with different stakeholders, women's organisations in particular (in both donor and partner countries), in order to strengthen democratic ownership over development planning, implementation, and monitoring • Founding all aid policies frameworks on gender analysis of poverty, existing gender equality and women's empowerment commitments such as CEDAW or BPfA and linking them with operational budget programme. • Developing a set of CEDAW-related indicators assessing the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed in all policy dialogues, implementation action and monitoring efforts • Strengthening the capacity and enabling environment for the national women's machineries to meaningfully influence policy processes and budget allocations, among others, with specific instruments such as gender budgeting and/ or gender audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Structures in place for the systematic participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in development planning, implementation and monitoring</i> • <i>Aid policy framework based on a human rights approach, built on a gender analysis of poverty, referring to international conventions such as CEDAW, and linked to operational budgets</i> • <i>Quality indicators to review the gender sensitivity of all policies, implementation efforts, monitoring and evaluation</i> • <i>Resources allocated to support civil society – women's organisations in particular</i>

<p>Mutual Accountability in Paris Declaration Mutual accountability in the use of development resources and results. Stronger role of the parliaments and a participatory approach. Partner countries and donors jointly assess progress in implementing the Paris Declaration.</p> <p>Mutual Accountability in Accra Agenda for Action <i>Achieving development results – and openly accounting for them – must be at the heart of all we do.</i> In line with the principle of mutual accountability, also to parliaments and citizens, development actions implemented by partner and donor countries should translate into positive impacts on the lives of the most vulnerable people in society (Paragraphs 10 and 11).</p>	<p>Number of partner countries (all of them) that undertake mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, including those in this Declaration (Indicator 12).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an enabling environment for civil society, women’s organisations in particular, to hold the donors’ and partner countries’ governments accountable for agreed commitments related to gender equality and women’s empowerment and for the development effectiveness process in general • Setting up a credible independent monitoring and evaluation system with gender-sensitive indicators and targets in place to measure aid effectiveness in terms of ownership and international human rights standards, including women’s rights • Tracking and disseminating information about the volume, allocation and results of development expenditure in relation to gender equality and women’s human rights commitments to the constituencies in the donors countries and partner states • Engaging with parliamentarians to ensure that they are informed about the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment in development cooperation and hold the government to account for its performance. Supporting the relevant process in the partner countries • Finding incentives so that national women’s machineries in donor and partner countries, including civil society groups, are capable of participating in collecting data and monitoring indicators of progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Civil society, including women’s organisations, meaningfully involved in the review of progress in implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action</i> • <i>Credible, independent and inclusive monitoring and evaluation system with an accountability mechanism in place</i> • <i>Quality, timed information on progress in implementation of commitments on gender equality and women’s human rights</i> • <i>Parliamentary scrutiny over governments’ compliance with commitments on aid effectiveness and their impact on gender equality and women’s human rights</i> • <i>Resources earmarked for accountability-related actions to strengthen the role of national women’s machineries – women’s organisations in particular</i>
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*The WIDE proposal builds on the analysis conducted by: EC/UN Partnership (*Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness: Results and Indicators*, 2008); GENDERNET (*DAC guiding principles for aid effectiveness, gender equality and women’s empowerment*, 2008); AWID (*Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness: Alternative Indicators for Monitoring Ownership and Accountability*); AGDEN (*AGDEN Gender Sensitive Paris Declaration Indicators*, 2008); GTZ (*What do new aid modalities have to do with gender?*, 2009); as well as WIDE’s own analysis.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The WIDE-check focused on actions taken by Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK on democratic ownership and mutual accountability, to which they committed in Accra and Paris. The findings build on the WIDE platforms' reviews of their governments' performance on the alternative indicators outlined in the methodological chapter of this report.¹⁸ We have managed to gather quite a lot of data for some of the fields, and we have struggled with others. Still, we believe that we have captured the real progress – or lack of – in the EU donors' efforts to promote gender equality in the context of the development effectiveness process.

Ownership and mutual accountability trends

EU donors' progress on ownership and mutual accountability from a gender equality perspective has been uneven and varied across the countries and the indicators. There are the usual Dutch front-runners, new discoveries such as Spain, old UK allies with some controversial approaches, and the last in the field being Austria and new EU Member States. The tables below illustrate the trends.

Table 1. OWNERSHIP MAIN TRENDS

		Austria	Netherlands	Poland	Spain	UK
Little action						
Elements exist						
Actions taken						
Developed						
Sustainable						
Progress since 2005	Little					
	Genuine		*		**	*

* WIDE is concerned about the sustainability of progress with the newly elected government.

** A change in government is expected, which may not favour the sustainability of progress made so far.

Table 2. MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY MAIN TRENDS

		Austria	Netherlands	Poland	Spain	UK
Little action						
Elements exist						
Actions taken						
Developed						
Sustainable						
Progress since 2005	Little					
	Genuine				**	*

* WIDE is concerned about the sustainability of progress with the newly elected government.

** A change in government change is expected, which may not favour the sustainability of progress made so far.

¹⁸ The indicators have been developed by WIDE on the basis of the analysis done by women's organisations (i.e. AWID and AGDEN) and other gender advocates (i.e. UNIFEM, GENDERNET, GTZ). For more information, see the Methodology chapter of this report.

Key findings

Finding 1

Commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment within development policies of the EU Members States has become more explicit, yet budgets are still gender-blind and insufficient.

Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK are all credited for strengthening the approach to gender equality and women's empowerment in their policy framework, which is supposed to facilitate implementation of the commitments made. This is the general truth for all aid coordination mechanisms: from planning to delivery, monitoring and evaluation. WIDE members acknowledge that the aid effectiveness process, particularly HLF-3 in Accra, has been an important way to raise the profile of gender in their countries' development policies. This is the big win for women that the Paris and Accra agendas have brought.

Yet, although there has been progress at the policy level, the WIDE mapping demonstrates again the limits of a gender equality and human rights approach when confronted with powerful obstacles of policy coherence, budget allocations, genuine mainstreaming and results for women on the ground.

WIDE maintains that operationalisation of gender strategies and action plans has not been advanced. Funding for gender equality is very limited and subject to cuts with the fall in EU Member States' aid volumes. Out of the group reviewed, only the Netherlands made concrete commitments and budget allocations. Spain had the necessary quota, but this has been dropped due to the financial crisis and an overall decrease in aid. It is no secret that when there is no budget, there is no implementation. Given the current political climate and the fact that, apart from the UK, there is very little chance of aid increasing, putting gender policies into practice will present a continuing challenge for women's organisations.

Finding 2

The approach to gender equality remains narrow in the development programmes of EU donors which fail to analyse the gender impact of macro-economic policies and address power relations between women and men in real country and development contexts.

EU donors have committed to put women at the heart of development, but in reality women are addressed most of the time in specific, ascribed gender roles including mothers (with a priority on sexual and reproductive health), girls (a priority on education) or conflict situations (a priority on UN Resolution 1325). There is still little support for women's voice, economic empowerment, political leadership or participation or to strengthen the women's movement. WIDE has no doubt that the first three priorities above are of great importance for the poor women in the South. Nevertheless, it is crucial that EU Member States follow the positive example of Spain and progress from a women in development approach to one of gender and development. It is also crucial to strengthen policy coherence¹⁹ and gender mainstreaming and reach out to sectors usually not referred to for women (i.e. trade, agriculture) but crucial to close the empowerment gap.

¹⁹ By 'policy coherence' we understand here the holistic approach to gender equality and women's rights which takes into consideration gender-sensitive macro-economic policies, women's care work and other aspects of crucial importance for women's lives.

Finding 3

The participation of women's organisations and gender advocates in policymaking processes is not meaningful enough in Europe and seriously shrinking in the South.

The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action raised the profile of democratic ownership and offered a reference point to strengthen the dialogue with civil society organisations (CSOs), yet the EU donors have not progressed it enough. After 2005, new consultation spaces and instruments have emerged, yet from the perspective of women's organisations, this has been more a strategy for governments to improve their credibility than a meaningful process to share experiences. This has been the case in Austria, recently in the UK, and in Poland for most of the time.²⁰

EU donors' direct engagement with civil society and women's organisations in partner countries has been shrinking, as the priority is on government-to-government support. Women's organisations are generally not consulted when the programme documents or country strategy papers are being developed. The absence of capacity-building opportunities has also made it difficult to engage with complex issues such as macro-economic policies or budget/sector support. Apart from that, women's organisations everywhere face increasingly serious funding challenges and, especially in the South, draconian laws that hold back their engagement in holding their governments to account.²¹

New aid modalities can be of great importance to strengthen partner countries' ownership, but by no means should they justify the cuts for civil society's work. The WIDE-check has credited the UK for its decision to set aside the equivalent of 5% of its budget support to strengthen CSOs in partner countries to hold their governments to account. This is the path the other EU donors should follow.

Finding 4

Accountability to civil society is weak, concentrated mostly on financial aspects and increasingly driven by the value-for-money approach.

The Netherlands is the only one of the five EU countries studied in which the WIDE platforms have been satisfied with the quality of and the space for the accountability process. This challenge is even greater at the level of partner states. The emerging picture from the Paris Declaration evaluations is that donors' accountability towards the government is slowly improving, while for citizens it generally remains weak.²²

WIDE is seriously concerned about the growing UK-led power of the value-for-money approach. First, because it is targeted at the tax payers in the donor countries, not the development owners from the South. Second, because it increases the risk of reducing activities where progress is slow and difficult to demonstrate – such as gender equality and women's rights, for example. While more focus on results and a stronger approach to monitoring and evaluation is very welcome, this should be done in a democratic and inclusive process, thus with civil society at the forefront.

²⁰ For details please go to the specific country chapters of this report.

²¹ See, for example, the country chapter on Spain.

²² See, for example, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Ahead of the Crowd?" *The process of implementing the Paris Declaration Case study: the Netherlands*, Report produced for the synthesis of the results of the first phase of the evaluation of the Paris Declaration, 27 February 2008.

Finding 5

EU donors lack the capacity to track funding for gender equality within the new aid modalities, and there is not enough information or primary data on budgets, implementation and the impact on the situation of women on the ground.

Since 2005, transparency has improved, yet still there are hardly any gender-disaggregated data or regular reporting practices on the impact and outcomes of aid. The gender marker, used by most of the DAC, is a step in the right direction, yet not enough to provide comprehensive information on budget allocations (who is getting the money and for what), and without any reference to the impact or quality of the process.²³ Many of the countries, i.e. Austria, Poland or Netherlands, do not even have a clear results framework outlined in their policy approach. This undermines the accountability principle and holds women's organisations back when holding donors to account.

There has been serious concern among women's organisations, but also among the donors themselves,²⁴ that gender equality and women's rights are losing ground when channelling programme aid in line with the Paris Declaration. This is about a re-orientation towards budget and sector support but also donors' weak capacity to track funding for gender equality within the new aid modalities. The challenge is about demonstrating causal and quantifiable links between inputs and practical results in the complex macro-interventions that engage other donors that provide the budgets. The methodology developed so far falls short of responding to the new modalities that are taking over. This is the case for both missing indicators and their actual application to the complexity of programme and sector support.

Finding 6

The current political climate in EU Member States is unfavourable to push for progressive commitments during HLF-4.

Today's political map of Europe is much more challenging than it was for the High Level Forums in Accra and Paris. Since 2005, many of the governments have changed. In some cases, i.e. Spain, this has had a very positive impact on the approach to gender equality. As for the others, be it the UK or the Netherlands, the shift is still too recent, yet women's organisations already feel that space for genuine consultation has narrowed and previous ambitious policies are being replaced.

Although the Paris Declaration facilitated major changes within development cooperation throughout the EU, some Member States are still far behind in implementing their commitments. Some, such as Poland and other new EU Member States, are only starting the adjustment process now. Others, i.e. Austria, are done with the initial steps, but there is still a long way to go.

HLF-4 comes at a time when the conservative governments in Europe are on the rise. The focus is on value for money, the security agenda and economic growth, as has been recently demonstrated in the context of European Commission- and EU-level debates on the Green Paper on European Development Policy in support of inclusive growth.²⁵

It is highly unlikely that the EU will be leading on HLF-4, as was the case in Accra. Some of the European donors may even want to end the aid effectiveness process in Busan. WIDE is

²³ For more information, see Lydia Alpizar, Cindy Clark, Sarah Rosenhek and Verónica Vidal, with inputs from Lucia Carrasco, *Context and Trends Influencing the Funding Landscape for Gender Equality and Women's Organizations & Movements*, Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), 2010.

²⁴ See, for example, the country chapter on the Netherlands.

²⁵ For more information, see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/5241_en.htm.

concerned that these trends could undermine support to gender equality, human rights, democratic ownership and poverty eradication. This, therefore, requires a strong advocacy approach from us and a search for new allies to make HLF-4 a meaningful space for discussion.

Recommendations

The High Level Forum in Busan is unique, as for the first time CSOs, including women's organisations, are recognised in the official process. As part of the BetterAid platform, we are members of the OECD Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, therefore with better access to information and an opportunity to influence the process. The creation of UN Women and its forthcoming engagement with the Forum is also an opportunity to promote gender equality and women's rights in development effectiveness debates.

The Busan outcome will be crucial for women, and we need to work to ensure the success of the agenda progress. Nevertheless, as the WIDE-check has shown, there are still very serious gaps in implementation of the commitments already made. That is why WIDE calls on EU donors to accelerate their efforts to deliver ownership and mutual accountability and take a progressive stand for the High Level Forum in Busan 2011.

Recommendation 1

EU donors must translate their rhetoric into practice by increasing budgets to implement the gender equality commitments they have made.

EU donors will demonstrate real commitment to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment only if it is implemented with adequate resources. Therefore, Member States' financial frameworks must show an increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and clear budget allocations for the implementation of the national gender strategies and programmes, as well as regional commitments such as the EU Gender Action Plan on Development²⁶.

WIDE calls on EU donors to follow the example of the Netherlands, which usually allocates 20% of its overall aid budget to gender equality and women's empowerment – a big share of that directly to strengthen the women's movement.²⁷ It is also crucial to move forward with a twin-track approach and combine actions targeted specifically at women with mainstreaming, particularly in the context of programme support. EU donors should always integrate a gender-responsive budgeting tool when channelling programme aid in line with the Paris Declaration. Nevertheless, the twin-track will not make a real change unless combined with a holistic approach as outlined in the concluding remark below.

Recommendation 2

EU donors need to move their approach to gender equality forward by addressing the power relations and impact of macro-economic and sector policies on the lives of women on the ground.

WIDE calls on EU donors to follow the positive example of Spain²⁸ and progress from a women in development approach to one of gender and development. Women need to be addressed in

²⁶ EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation (2010-2015)

²⁷ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Development Cooperation), *Results in development. Report 2007–2008*, May 2009. See also *Recommendation of the meeting of the UN Expert Group on Financing for Gender Equality – the UN Commission on the Status of Women*, Oslo, September 2007.

²⁸ Master Plan of Spanish Development Cooperation (2005-2008; 2009-2012); Gender Strategy of Spanish Development Cooperation.

the complex matrix of social, productive and political roles; therefore, it is crucial that gender in development can become both thematic priority and cross-cutting issue in development cooperation efforts. EU donors should strengthen their gender impact assessments on internal and external policies and pay more attention to women's rights in the macro-economic context – for example, the impact of the economic crisis. It is important that donors take note of this while designing their gender strategies and channelling specific funds to women's organisations with the aim of tackling these concerns.

Recommendation 3

EU donors have to carry out regular, inclusive and meaningful policy dialogues on development cooperation and support the necessary conditions, including funding, for women's organisations so that they can fully exercise their role in the development process.

The contribution and role of women's organisations are key to democratic and sustainable development. EU donors must stop instrumentalising consultations and complete government-to-government dialogues with more political will to directly engage with women's organisations in partner countries in the South.

WIDE calls on EU donors to create meaningful political spaces at all stages of the development process (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) by including the voices of women and girls from diverse backgrounds and setting up clear rules and instruments for participation.

EU donors have to strengthen the enabling environment for women's organisations as development actors in their own right through earmarked and increased funds and simplified access to them. There must also be a significant increase in investing in women's rights organisations and movements by strengthening the contribution to funds managed by women's organisations. EU donors must strive for substantial, predictable and multi-year core funding so that women's organisations can eventually play meaningful watchdog, advocacy and support roles in both Europe and countries in the South.

Recommendation 4

EU donors must deliver on the principle of mutual accountability founded on strong national accountability mechanisms and political will to support the participation of national women's machineries – women's organisations in particular.

EU donors must recognise and operationalise mutual accountability as a vector principle for aid and development cooperation efforts. The foundation must not be a value-for-money approach but a strong national accountability mechanism (both in the EU and partner countries) backed up by political will to engage and support the participation of national women's machineries and particularly women's organisations and parliamentarians, to ensure the quality of the process.

EU donors must continuously draw their legitimacy from their constituencies in Europe and countries in the South. This means engagement and support for capacity development, particularly for civil society and women's organisations so that they can monitor governments and hold them to account. WIDE encourages EU countries to follow the positive example of the UK, which has committed to set aside an amount equivalent to at least 5% of its budget support funds to strengthen accountability mechanisms in partner countries. A similar modality should be also introduced throughout Europe so that civil society and women's organisations can also follow this path.

Recommendation 5

Donors need to make more and better information available on policies and budgets, implementation of aid architecture reform and the gender impact of development cooperation on the lives of the poor.

WIDE maintains that transparency is the first step towards accountability and that it is governments' responsibility to make sure that the general public and civil society are informed to be able to monitor and engage with aid and the development effectiveness process. Consequently, EU donors need to invest in:

- 1) efforts to disclose comprehensive information on the policies, implementation, plans and budgets corresponding to the commitments undertaken. It should be easily accessible and user-friendly – for example, an e-database format that assess the gender equality and human rights focus throughout all interventions;²⁹
- 2) reporting on the actions taken to implement aid architecture reform. This could be, for example, integrated with the annual CRS reporting to the OECD DAC on aid quality, or feed into the other mechanisms such as MDG reviews. It is crucial for the reporting to be systematic and to go beyond the gender-blind indicators used in the Paris Declaration. WIDE calls on EU Member States to take on the indicators developed by GENDERNET and others, as they map the spaces for engagement on gender equality and guide this review.³⁰ Women's organisations from both Europe and the South must be engaged in data collection and the review process; and
- 3) capacity to manage the results and track the gender impact at country level. This translates into completing results frameworks for the strategies and programmes, acquisition and improvement of sex-disaggregated data, and improving and engendering monitoring and evaluation – for example, by adopting existing reporting and monitoring systems for human rights compliance such as the Gini Index of Income Inequality, as well as other processes such as CEDAW or the UN SCR Resolution 1325. It must also be explicitly stated how the data for indicators are being generated so that women's organisations can both generate the data and monitor the indicators. Only in this way can progress be measured accurately.

Recommendation 6

EU Member States must meet their aid budget pledges and Paris and Accra commitments together with international and regional gender and development obligations such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the EU Gender Action Plan on Development.

WIDE calls on EU donors to stop cutting aid and take a responsible stand to deliver the promised ODA of 0.7% of GNI (for the EU-15) and 0.33% of GNI (for the 12 new EU Member States) by 2015. Although aid and development effectiveness are mostly about the new and strong democratic approaches to ownership and accountability, volumes, modalities and institutions underpin the results.

EU donors need to raise the profile of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) to guide their development cooperation for gender equality and women's rights. The EU must also make an effort to coordinate its actions on implementation of the Paris and Accra agendas as

²⁹ The International Aid Transparency Initiative recommends that the database should assess the gender marker. WIDE considers this a step in the right direction, yet a gender marker alone is not enough for comprehensive information. For more on the key asks of IATI, see <http://www.aidtransparency.net/>.

³⁰ For concrete proposals on indicators, please refer to the methodological chapter of this report.

well as its commitments from the EU Gender Action Plan on Development.³¹ The EU should stop counting only on the performance of leading countries, since it is the performance of all Member States which matters, and drive positive change for women on the ground.

Concluding remark

The EU must take a joint stand for a progressive, forward-looking and human rights-based politically binding agreement in Busan.

The success of HLF-4 in Busan will partly depend on the commitment of the EU to proactively engage in the negotiation process and lead by example. Therefore, WIDE calls on EU donors to show more political will and interest to ensure an ambitious and binding agreement that deepens the current commitments and goes beyond aid towards a development effectiveness approach.

The Busan outcome must be consistent with human rights conventions and include clear, time-bound targets with obligatory independent and inclusive monitoring of implementation at the international and national levels. It cannot be considered as Paris and Accra are now – in isolation from the wider, damaging neo-liberal and gender-blind context of debates at European Commission and EU level. Aid reform should be part of the holistic approach to development, relate to other goals and processes (such as MDGs, Financing for Development) and contribute to implementation of the international human and women's rights commitments such as CEDAW or BPfA. An agreement in Busan must be the result of a genuine and equal negotiation process between all stakeholders: partner governments, donors, multilateral institutions, parliamentarians, local governments and civil society, with women's organisations and gender advocates on board.

HLF-4 is expected to be a milestone in defining the new development architecture. WIDE supports the call by CSOs united in the BetterAid platform to create an equitable and fully inclusive multilateral forum led by developing countries as an immediate successor to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. A Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) within the UN mechanism could be the space to explore.

Box 4. BetterAid CSOs demands on the road to Busan

WIDE is a signatory and supports the BetterAid *CSOs Key messages and proposals* that sets out the main demands from civil society organisations in the run-up to the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in November 2011.

CSOs Key messages and proposals is a living document. All CSOs are invited to propose their comments and contributions, to be considered in the future when the paper is revisited. You can learn more about BetterAid and read the paper at <http://www.betteraid.org/>

³¹ Full reference: Commission Staff Working Document, *EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010–2015*, Brussels, 8 March 2010.

Country Chapters

Austria: Aid effectiveness is mostly about the new and strong democratic approaches to ownership and accountability, but modalities, volumes and institutions still underpin the results

Introduction

Austrian aid is in crisis. This is not only because of the shrinking volume of the aid provided, but also and foremost because of the complex institutional landscape which simply makes it impossible to implement the aid effectiveness commitments Austria has made.³² Paris and Accra principles are applied for bilateral interventions, but these constitute only 10% of the overall aid budget.³³ Furthermore, the main strategies spoken about so far limit themselves to alignment – namely, increasing budget support, probably at the cost of cutting resources for CSOs – and harmonisation – closing down country offices and withdrawing from certain sectors, to be more precise.³⁴ The rest of the Paris and Accra principles have not practically affected the strategic approach for Austrian aid.

Shrinking aid volume and Austrian institutional puzzles have a strong impact on delivery for gender equality and human rights. As the WIDE-check has mapped, there are strong references to gender-sensitive ownership and mutual accountability in the policy framework, but they are not followed up by proper institutionalisation and adequate budget. Since 2005 some positive developments have appeared; yet with the continued budget cuts their sustainability is rather questionable.

In 2011, with only months left before HLF-4 in Busan, Austria has only a few aid effectiveness principles on board. To go further, Austria first needs to focus more on the modalities and scale up the volume of its ODA. This, however, would be just a start, and then more ambitious actions should follow.

Austrian aid at a glance

Austrian aid is decreasing. Such a big fall – from 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2007 to 0.32% in 2010³⁵ – is mostly because of the significant drop in debt cancellation.³⁶ Austria is also in the last-but-two position among DAC donors for the share of country programmable aid.³⁷ Despite this, the government still claims to be living up to international aid quantity targets. This

³² Progress is limited because of the big fragmentation of Austrian ODA, the lack of a ‘white paper’ approach, inadequate formats of policy and strategy documents, unclear distribution roles of the involved actors, and the very low priority of development cooperation on the Austrian political agenda. See Austrian Development Agency (ADA), *Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, Phase 2. Case Study Austria. Final Report*, December 2010.

³³ Ibidem.

³⁴ See, for example, Austria’s self-assessment on PD progress: Austrian Development Cooperation, *Austrian Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness 2006–2010/11. Review on implementation of Paris Declaration Commitments. Report 2008*, August 2008.

³⁵ See Publication of preliminary data on Official Development Assistance 2010:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/221&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

³⁶ As the OECD DAC pointed out in the last Peer Review (2009), in 2007 debt relief accounted for 52% of total Austrian ODA, an unprecedented situation for any DAC member country before. For more information, see OECD, *Austria Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review*, 2009.

³⁷ See *Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, Phase 2*.

is hardly possible, also in light of the recent 10% cut in the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) budget, and the forecast for 2011 of ODA at only 0.32% of GNI.³⁸

According to the latest data released by the OECD DAC, Austrian aid focused on gender equality accounted for 24% of all the total sector-allocable aid screened by the gender equality policy marker in 2008.³⁹ Austria systematically improves the application of this gender marker in its reporting to DAC.

Austrian aid for gender equality and women's empowerment is focused on three core areas: capabilities – meaning health, education and self-determination; opportunities – engaging with economic resources and political agency; and personal security – with particular emphasis on implementation of UN Resolution 1325 and a focus on women in conflict and post-conflict situations.⁴⁰

WIDE has analysed Austrian aid since 2005 against alternative WIDE indicators to monitor progress against ownership and mutual accountability committed to in Paris and Accra. This is what we found.

Ownership

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1a): Structures in place for the systematic participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in development planning, implementation and monitoring

The policy document *NGO Cooperation*⁴¹ recognises ownership and states the government's commitment to engage with CSOs in Austria and partner states. Indeed, CSOs are often consulted, though the outcome is weak. Since 2005, some strategic instruments have been introduced – namely, a structured dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials at operational level. The standard was about two meetings per year; however, with the present budget cuts, the future of this instrument has not yet been determined.⁴²

As for specific engagement with women's organisations, there is a space for participation in the consultations with the government as a part of the CSO National Platform – Global Responsibility. Unfortunately, from the CSOs' side, consultations and structured dialogue are rather the government's instruments for credibility than a meaningful process to include the experiences of the actors involved.

As the DAC Peer Review (2009) has stated, enhancing civil society contributions in the partner states is more of a challenge. It was evident in Ethiopia, for example, that CSOs receiving support from Austria had not been consulted over the formulation of the new country programme.⁴³

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1b): Aid policy framework based on a human rights approach, built on a gender analysis of poverty, referring to international conventions such as CEDAW, and linked to operational budgets

³⁸ Source: Aidwatch internal briefing (draft 1), *Between austerity and political will: EU MS ODA budgets in 2011*, January 2011.

³⁹ The OECD DAC methodology to count aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment is a bit confusing. When analysing gender-focused aid, it is important to always keep a reference to the volume actually screened through the gender marker. In the case of Austria, 2008 total-sector aid screened was US\$312 million out of a total of US\$395 million. For more information, see OECD-DAC Secretariat, *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, March 2010.

⁴⁰ See Austrian Development Cooperation, *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. Policy document*, April 2006.

⁴¹ See Austrian Development Cooperation, *NGO Cooperation. Austrian Development Cooperation. Policy document*, May 2007.

⁴² See *Austria Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review*, 2009.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

*Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (2006)*⁴⁴ is a policy document that sets out a framework for gender-sensitive country programming and the promotion of gender-sensitive projects and programmes in Austrian aid. The framework is good, including, for example, general recommendations of the CEDAW Committee for country programming or gender assessment of projects and programmes before the contract is signed. This framework is further supported by the focus papers, namely: *Focus: Women, Gender and Armed Conflicts (2010)*⁴⁵ and *Focus: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (2009)*.⁴⁶ Recognition, commitment, even progressive language – all are there – but this is operationalisation which is at stake.

Since policy and focus papers are not considered documents of utmost importance, their systematic integration into the complex institutional matrix of Austrian aid remains a challenge. Furthermore, the gender framework is very much process-oriented but not specific about concrete actions, outcomes and results. Last but not least, there are just not enough human resources, let alone the budget, to implement gender policy. There is just one (!) full-time gender equality advisor in ADA to follow up on all the programmes and projects and promote gender budgeting for programme support.⁴⁷ Even with the greatest expertise and the strongest personal dedication ever, this is simply not manageable.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1c): Quality indicators to review the gender sensitivity of all policies, implementation efforts, monitoring and evaluation

In general, there are quality indicators to review the gender aspects of the planned interventions.⁴⁸ As the 2009 gender focus paper states: all project proposals are supposed to be subjected to a gender audit; in some cases binding recommendations are also included in the project agreements. A recent positive development was the introduction of the gender checklist for programme-based aid, even though this applies to very small proportion of Austrian ODA.⁴⁹ Orientation on the process is good. Follow-up in implementation, monitoring and evaluation are the challenges.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1d): Resources allocated to support civil society – women's organisations in particular

There is no specific budget line for gender equality and women's rights in the Austrian aid system, despite women's organisations lobbying over years and particularly before the Doha Financing for Development Conference in 2008. At the moment Austria simply has no means to implement its ambitious commitments. There is also no chance of introducing gender into the operational budget, unless Austria finally stops cutting aid.

Funding for Austrian CSOs is currently under debate. Since the overall volume of Austrian aid is shrinking and the government wishes to move towards programme support, civil society is concerned about the impact this may have on resource allocation.

Another challenge is the lack of a clear role for CSOs as contractors and/or development partners. Austrian NGOs have traditionally implemented the lion's share of the budget managed

⁴⁴ See *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. Policy document*, April 2006.

⁴⁵ See *Focus: Women, Gender, and Armed Conflicts*, August 2010.

⁴⁶ See Austrian Development Cooperation, *Focus: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women*, October 2009.

⁴⁷ See *Austria Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review*, 2009.

⁴⁸ See *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. Policy document*, April 2006.

⁴⁹ Gender budgeting is a binding principle in Austria. Article 7 of the Federal Constitution obliges the Federal Government, the Provinces and the local authorities to equal treatment of women and men in actual fact. The most recent amendment to the Federal Constitution (art. 13(3)) also obliges the same entities to aim at gender equality in the context of budgetary management, and the 2009 federal budget will already include a gender component. Other articles refer to effective implementing arrangements. The reference is taken from: *Making Budgets Gender-Sensitive: A Checklist for Programme-Based Aid*, January 2009.

by ADA (about 50%).⁵⁰ Within the context of aid reform, the government has started to promote 'the new role' for civil society as watchdogs and advocates. This, unfortunately, goes hand in hand with the potential budget cuts for development projects and is not really followed up by government willingness to discuss the process. Austrian civil society is taking a strong stance on diversity and the need for both a bottom-up and top-down approach. At the moment it is not yet clear what the outcome will be. Nevertheless, as an Austrian CSO platform has stated: "A predictable NGO budget line within the operative bilateral ADA budget is of increased importance to complement government programmes and to root development cooperation in civil society both in the North and the South."⁵¹

According to the OECD DAC, Austrian support for women's equality organisations and institutions accounted for only 1% of all the sector-allocated aid screened.⁵²

OWNERSHIP

Strengths – commitment to gender budgeting, strong recognition of gender equality in the policy framework

Weaknesses – very weak institutional capacity to implement ambitious commitments

Mutual accountability

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2a): Civil society, including women's organisations, meaningfully involved in the review of progress in implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action

Austria is credited for volunteering to take part in Phase 2 of the evaluation of the Paris Declaration. CSOs were invited and participated in the evaluation, yet women's organisations were not involved. The report that came out contains some strong points on the institutional shortages and covers some of the key civil society demands and messages. At the same time, however, it is completely gender-blind.⁵³

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2b): Credible, independent and inclusive monitoring and evaluation system with an accountability mechanism in place

Monitoring and evaluation of the gender aspects of Austrian aid remain a big challenge due to the factor that hampers accountability in the all other areas – the lack of a results framework against which strategies and programmes could actually be monitored and/or evaluated.

The government is promising improvements in its focus on results. The capacities are, however, inadequate. As the numerous evaluations have already revealed, the strategic, not financial, monitoring system in Austrian aid has an extremely low profile.⁵⁴ This is also because of the weak institutional strength of the evaluation bodies. The evaluation function is a sub-unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, therefore not independent, has no budget and only one member of staff.⁵⁵ Moreover, the numerous evaluations already undertaken have not been properly

⁵⁰ Source: Austrian CSO platform contribution paper to the OECD DAC Peer Review (2009): *Global Responsibility, Austrian Platform for Development and Humanitarian aid, Funding of Austrian Development NGOs*, 23 December 2008.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² See *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, March 2010.

⁵³ See *Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, Phase 2. Case Study Austria. Final Report*, December 2010.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ See *Austria Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review*, 2009.

addressed. Every new report continues with the same list of shortages. This also applies to gender and human rights.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2c): Quality, timed information on progress in implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's human rights

Quality and timed monitoring cannot happen without clear indicators of progress, which are missing for all Austrian aid. Austrian Development Cooperation annual reports, which are the main source of information on the results, focus alternately on the priority themes (gender equality among them) and the partner countries.⁵⁶ The quality of the information, however, remains weak. As pointed out in the CONCORD Aidwatch report (2010), *"There is a tendency to present contributions to small-scale projects and minor contributions to humanitarian activities as major efforts, as well as to present privately funded activities performed by NGOs together with government activities."*⁵⁷ The case is the same when reporting on the gender progress.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2d): Parliamentary scrutiny over governments' compliance with commitments on aid effectiveness and their impact on gender equality and women's human rights

Aid is a minor political issue in Austria, so parliamentary debate is limited. Scrutiny is also quite weak, mostly because of the lack of a standing parliamentary committee on development cooperation. Joint work with MPs is, however, one of the themes for the ADA Focus Papers, so in theory accountability instruments should be in place.⁵⁸

As for the South, Austria is committed to strengthening parliamentary scrutiny and recognises the role that women MPs can play in gender equality. As an example, Austria is engaged in so-called North-South parliamentary dialogue aiming to share experience and build capacity for parliamentarians in Mozambique.⁵⁹ Since there is only partial information available, the full scale of the support provided could not be determined.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2e): Resources earmarked for accountability-related actions to strengthen the role of national women's machineries – women's organisations in particular

Just as there is no special budget for gender equality, there is none for accountability either. Austria supports the work of women's organisations in the South and East to advance the monitoring of implementation of women's rights.⁶⁰ As for the actions taken at home, Austria is the donor for the Open Forum for CSOs Development Effectiveness, a civil society platform with women's organisations on board.⁶¹ These are, single, but important, actions rather than a strategic approach. For genuine instruments for mutual accountability, more efforts are needed.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Strengths – good and easily available statistical information (financial accountability)
Weaknesses – lack of clear results framework to be accountable for

⁵⁶ Reports are available online in English at: <http://www.entwicklung.at/services/publications/reports/en/>.

⁵⁷ See Concord Aidwatch, *Penalty Against Poverty. More and better EU aid can score Millennium Development Goals*, 2010.

⁵⁸ See Austrian Development Agency (ADA), *Focus: Parliaments and Poverty Reduction*, February 2007.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ See *Focus: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women*, October 2009.

⁶¹ For more about the CSO Forum, see <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/?lang=en>.

After consultations with:

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Hilde Wipfel, WIDE-Netzwerk Women in Development Europe
Christinna Stummer, Austrian Development Agency

WIDE in Austria: Netzwerk Women in Development Europe (WIDE Austria)
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The Netherlands: WIDE supports the Dutch view on aid being more effective with the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action in place than without. Nevertheless, too much attention is being paid to the way in which aid is delivered, and too little to what aid has actually attained⁶²

Introduction

The Netherlands' commitment to Paris and Accra implementation has been high. In fact, various principles of the current aid effectiveness agenda were part of the Dutch aid policy long before 2005 – namely, ownership and alignment with a sector-wide approach (SWAP). For the last five years the Netherlands has continued with its progressive actions and self-critical thinking, backed by strong civil society support. This also includes the open recognition of the shortages of the Paris Declaration – the prevalence of macro-economic issues, restricted civil society ownership and limited accountability, to be more precise.⁶³

Although a leader and the most progressive thinker on gender, recent developments have threatened to take the Dutch performance down. After the 2010 elections the government has made a shift to the political right. In early 2011 civil society in Europe was taken aback by the communication that the Netherlands wants to re-open the discussion on ODA and have military spending counted as aid.⁶⁴ This has been followed by the tangible aid effectiveness fatigue and a presumption that the Dutch may want to end the process after HLF-4. This is a serious discouragement for civil society advocating for further human rights-based development with the Forum in Busan.

The Netherlands has been a champion for a long time, with a model performance of delivering on gender equality and human rights. It is crucial that it maintains its position and continues with progressive actions at the policy level and on the ground.

Dutch aid at a glance

The Netherlands met its commitment to give 0.8% of GNI as ODA in 2010.⁶⁵ A sector-wide approach has been the main aid modality used so far. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs self-assessment, however, pointed to its shortages, and recommended a re-focus on, for example, civil society support.⁶⁶

Gender equality has been among the key pillars of Dutch development cooperation. The trademarks are sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), combating violence against women (VAW), and implementation of UN Resolution 1325. The Netherlands has also played an important role in rebalancing the two-track strategy with programmes focused only on gender equality and women's rights. Unlike in most other countries, there is an earmarked budget as there is for women. According to the latest data from the OECD DAC in 2008, gender-focused aid accounted for 21% of all the total sector-allocable aid.⁶⁷

⁶² See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Development Cooperation), *Our common concern. Investing in development in a changing world*. Policy note on Dutch development cooperation 2007–2011, October 2007.

⁶³ See Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *“Ahead of the Crowd?” The process of implementing the Paris Declaration Case study: the Netherlands*, Report produced for the synthesis of the results of the first phase of the evaluation of the Paris Declaration, 27 February 2008.

⁶⁴ See The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release on Deputy Minister Ben Knapen's visit to the OECD DAC on 9 February 2011: http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/Nieuws/2011/02/Knapen_overlegt_met_OESO_over_ontwikkelingssamenwerking.

⁶⁵ See Publication of preliminary data on Official Development Assistance 2010: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/221&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

⁶⁶ See *“Ahead of the Crowd?”*, 27 February 2008.

⁶⁷ The OECD DAC methodology to count aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment is a bit confusing. When analysing gender-focused aid, it is important to always keep a reference to the volume actually screened through the

Over the last five years, particularly under the 2007–2010 administration, recognition for gender equality became stronger in Dutch ODA. The fact is, however, that in the case of the Netherlands it was not really the aid effectiveness agenda that accelerated progress. Rather, it was the feminist tradition and the country's commitment to gender equality and women's rights that engendered the Paris Declaration, and not the other way round.

WIDE has analysed Dutch aid since 2005 against alternative WIDE indicators to monitor progress against ownership and mutual accountability committed to in Paris and Accra. This is what we found.

Ownership

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1a): Structures in place for the systematic participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in development planning, implementation and monitoring

Dutch development policy reflects the view of women's organisations relatively well. The WIDE-check has credited the Netherlands for the cooperation between a number of CSOs, knowledge institutions and government ministries – the WIDE country platform among them – within the framework of the Schockland Agreement.⁶⁸ The direct outcome was the Dutch National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Resolution 1325 – *Taking a stand for women, peace and security*⁶⁹ – and Working Group NAP 1325 with a mandate for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plan. The practice could serve as a good example as far as translating democratic ownership into practice is concerned. The shortfall is the uniqueness of the process, as, unfortunately, it has not yet been followed for any other strategic theme.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1b): Aid policy framework based on a human rights approach, built on a gender analysis of poverty, referring to international conventions such as CEDAW, and linked to operational budgets

Surprisingly, there is no overall gender action plan or strategy to guide the Netherlands' ODA. Still though, women's organisations consider Dutch aid policy to be grounded on a relatively good analysis of gender. Until 2010 the gender equality and women's human rights focus was integrated into the strategic policy framework, as 'more rights and opportunities for women and girls' used to be among four top priorities for Dutch development cooperation.⁷⁰ Also, at the multilateral level, CEDAW-related actions were highlighted as an important area of involvement to complement the bilateral efforts.⁷¹

In the current policy of the new government, women's organisations are urging the government to continue a twin-track approach: with both standalone gender policies and gender mainstreaming for the priority sectors. The new priorities are: security and peace, water, agriculture, and SRHR.

Unlike in most of the countries reviewed, gender policies in the Netherlands are operational and delivered. The Dutch government provides specific funding for women's rights and gender

gender marker. In the case of Austria, 2008 total-sector aid screened was US\$312 million out of a total of US\$395 million. For more information, see OECD-DAC Secretariat, *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, March 2010.

⁶⁸ For more about Schockland Agreements, see http://www.minbuza.nl/en/Key_Topics/Development_Cooperation.

⁶⁹ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Development Cooperation), *Dutch National Action Plan on Resolution 1325. Taking a stand for women, peace and security*, December 2007.

⁷⁰ See *Our common concern*, October 2007.

⁷¹ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Development Cooperation), *Working together on global challenges. The Netherlands and multilateral development cooperation*, 2007.

equality; in 2009 the budget amounted to €47.7 million.⁷² In addition, significant resources were also channelled for SRHR and civil society support, a large share of which benefits the gender case and strengthens policy operationalisation at the same time.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1c): Quality indicators to review the gender sensitivity of all policies, implementation efforts, monitoring and evaluation

This is the area where Dutch performance is less consistent. The government should improve gender indicators in its development programmes. This is, for example, the case for the NAP. Although it is the best in ownership terms, it has missed out delivery benchmarks, which are vital. The Working Group's challenge is now to write a new plan that avoids the weaknesses of the previous one.

Another issue is the government's open concern about gender equality and women's rights losing ground while channelling programme aid in line with the Paris Declaration. Tracking gender delivery is the direct responsibility of the thematic divisions at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its technical capacity to review complex macro-interventions is, however, at risk. The methodology developed so far falls short in responding to the new modalities taking effect.⁷³ Thus the issue of concern is not the indicator framework but its actual application in the context of programme support. Concerted efforts are urgently needed so that attention is not diverted away from gender principles.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1d): Resources allocated to support civil society – women's organisations in particular

The Dutch government provides specific funding for gender equality and women's rights under the policy article 'Increased Human and Social Development'. This usually constitutes about 20% of the overall volume of ODA.⁷⁴ As for 2011, 3% of the funds (€42 million) have been earmarked for gender. Out of that, approximately €18 million is dedicated to the MDG3 Fund and about €20 million channelled to embassies for gender projects. This is a bit less than in 2010 but still a major success for the women's organisations that lobbied so hard against the projected cuts. The same policy article also earmarks the budget for SRHR and support for civil society in the South (in 2011, respectively, 10% and 34%).⁷⁵ These are all very important instruments supported by women's organisations.

The Netherlands is definitely championing financing for women's rights. One of the best practices is its MDG3 Fund. Launched in 2007, the Fund is supposed to run until 2011 with a total budget of €70 million. The Fund is for women's organisations from developing countries in the South in particular. It pays special attention to property and inheritance rights, gender equality in the labour market, women's political participation, and combating violence against women. There is also an amount earmarked for organisations working on UN SCR 1325.⁷⁶

⁷² See Concord Aidwatch, *Penalty Against Poverty. More and better EU aid can score Millennium Development Goals*, 2010.

⁷³ The Netherlands' main tools for assessing programme aid performance have been: 1) The Track Record (since 1994) to obtain information for making decisions about opting for modalities of macro-support; 2) Sector Track Record (since 2007) introduced to complement the general Track Record by providing a detailed assessment of performance for those sectors in which the Netherlands is substantially involved. Both provide the analytical input for the context analysis underlying the Multi-Annual Strategic Plans (MASPs). For more information, see "*Ahead of the Crowd?*" 27 February 2008.

⁷⁴ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Development Cooperation), *Results in development. Report 2007–2008*, May 2009.

⁷⁵ Source: http://www.rijksbegroting.nl/2011/voorbereiding/begroting,kst148610_12.html.

⁷⁶ For more about the Fund, see

http://www.minbuza.nl/en/Key_Topics/Millennium_Development_Goals_MDGs/Dutch_aim_for_MDG_3/MDG3_Fund/Project_grants.

OWNERSHIP

Strengths: genuine democratic ownership with regard to NAP on UN SCR 1325; financing for women's rights and MDG3 Fund

Weaknesses: conservative political climate in the country

Mutual accountability

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2a): Civil society, including women's organisations, meaningfully involved in the review of progress in implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action

The Netherlands took part in Phase 1 of the Paris Declaration evaluation. CSOs actively working on gender equality and women's rights were engaged, yet only the largest. The report has some strong gender-related points and includes the recommendation to strengthen the gender focus of Dutch development cooperation.⁷⁷

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2b): Credible, independent and inclusive monitoring and evaluation system with an accountability mechanism in place

The Dutch government openly recognises its weakness in clearly demonstrating the causal and quantifiable link between inputs and practical results, especially when it comes to gender equality and women's rights. The first reason for this is embodied in the aid effectiveness agenda itself – it is difficult to track 'Dutch' input while practising programme support that engages other actors than those that built the budgets.⁷⁸ Consequently, there are not enough gender equality impact evaluations showing which interventions are the most effective and which ones fail. This is something the Netherlands should focus on improving.

On the positive side, the government supports inclusive accountability spaces and engages in genuine discussion with civil society and women's organisations, particularly with regard to implementation of NAP 1325. Accountability towards civil society in partner countries, however, still remains a challenge.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2c): Quality, timed information on progress in implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's human rights

The main reference material providing information about the implementation progress is the report *Results in Development*, published every two years.⁷⁹ It focuses mainly on the MDGs, including MDG3, and gives examples of the concrete bilateral and multilateral actions; yet not all financial contributions and partner countries are covered. The Netherlands' input is presented in the context of global trends. This is a high-quality document, but gender-segregated data from all the countries are missing; they are needed for genuine progress to be made. In the last progress report (2007–2008) CSOs' actions were included for the first time. This is a positive development.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2d): Parliamentary scrutiny over governments' compliance with commitments on aid effectiveness and their impact on gender equality and women's human rights

⁷⁷ Paris Declaration evaluation synthesis report (2008) engaged HIVOS, ICCO and Oxfam Novib. For more information, see "Ahead of the Crowd?", 27 February 2008.

⁷⁸ For more information, see *Results in development. Report 2007–2008*, May 2009.

⁷⁹ Ibidem.

The Dutch government reports to Parliament about the progress made in implementation of the Paris Declaration on an annual basis. However, as the Paris Declaration evaluation report says, Parliament has not really shown any explicit interest in the aid effectiveness process so far.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2e): Resources earmarked for accountability-related actions to strengthen the role of national women's machineries – women's organisations in particular

Generally speaking, the Dutch government supports the accountability actions with the financing for gender equality instruments. Funds are earmarked for women's organisations to help them monitor the legislation and hold governments to account. Money is channelled via co-financing organisations and the embassies that, where relevant, take the initiative to support the accountability of the central government institutions and the local authorities of the partner states.

Strong additional commitments to foster accountability have been drafted with the Dutch Paris Declaration/Accra Agenda for Action Action Plan (2009). The Fund for Development, Pluralism and Participation (FOPP) has been announced, as well as a move towards sector-wide approach 2.0 with civil society engaged in a more meaningful way. Unfortunately, no follow-up information could yet be obtained. Since the new administration is in favour of less development aid and a 'new orientation', the status of the ambitious commitments made in 2009 is in jeopardy.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Strengths: strong political commitment to gender equality linked to the budget

Weaknesses: inadequate and unreliable methodology to comprehensively monitor and evaluate the results

After consultations with:

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Elisabeth van der Steenhoven, WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform

WIDE in Netherlands: WO=MEN, Dutch Gender Platform

<http://www.wo-men.nl/>

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Poland: The road to effective development cooperation can be tough; but these are the newcomers that get a chance to learn best practices and avoid the mistakes their colleagues have already made

Introduction⁸⁰

Poland belongs to the group of 12 countries (referred to as ‘new Member States’) that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. By signing the Accession Treaties they have all assumed the obligation to build their development cooperation systems on the policies of the EU, and to be bound by political declarations by the UN and OECD to increase both the quantity and quality of aid.

As a signatory to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, Poland strives to provide aid in accordance with the latter. However, it is not currently possible to review the effectiveness of Polish development cooperation due to the criteria applied to the donors that are members of the DAC. This is mainly because Poland has not yet endorsed an overarching legal and operational framework that should provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all other actors with guidance for operations in the medium and long term. As for WIDE’s mapping and Alternative Indicators, most of the findings reveal no or almost no action taken to fulfill the commitments. When reviewing the results, however, it is good to remember that Poland is still in its early days of development cooperation, which, according to civil society and women’s organisations, presents both an opportunity to engage and a challenge to build the capacity for the process.⁸¹

Polish bilateral assistance is missing a focus on poverty reduction as a development cooperation objective. Weak engagement in the South as well as hardly any focus on MDGs make Polish aid ‘unique’, although this is not necessary the quality for which CSOs would have advocated. What is urgently needed is a comprehensive review of Polish aid to define comparative advantages that could bring real added value to the development process.⁸² Gender equality and human rights should be the priorities and mainstream issues from the beginning, and the WIDE platform in Poland recognises this chance.

Poland is going to hold the EU presidency for the first time in the second half of 2011. This is the time when the EU’s positioning for Busan and HLF-4 itself is going to take place. Civil society and officials from the Development Cooperation Department (DCD) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognise this as a crucial time to move forward and advance the development agenda in the country. First steps – strengthening the institutional capacity of the DCD and consultations with civil society – have already been taken. Still, however, more political will from the top management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is needed so that Poland can be a responsible partner for developing countries and the real EU actor it has an ambition to become.⁸³

Polish aid at a glance

Poland has rapidly increased its ODA since joining the EU in 2004. The EU budget is also the first channel for Polish funds, as bilateral aid usually constitutes not more than 25% of the total.⁸⁴ New Member States were supposed to reach ODA of 0.17% of GNI by 2010 and 0.33% by 2015,⁸⁵

⁸⁰ This chapter builds on the analysis and directly quotes large parts of the paper the author has written together with the colleges within the framework of another assignment. See Katarzyna Staszewska, Emily Esplen and Veronique Dion, *Action Brief: Development cooperation and gender equality in the New Member States of the European Union*, June 2010.

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² See Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, *Specjalizacja Polski w międzynarodowej współpracy na rzecz rozwoju - szanse, wyzwania, zagrożenia*, Raport z konferencji, May 2010.

⁸³ Polish foreign policy’s priorities include: Poland strong in Europe, patron and promoter of the EU Neighborhood and Eastern policy. See Grupa Zagranica, *Polska Pomoc Zagraniczna 2009*, Warszawa, 2010.

⁸⁴ See DAC *Special Review of Poland*, May 2010.

⁸⁵ See *Council Conclusions, Accelerating Progress towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, 24 May 2005.

yet the Polish government has already conceded that these volume targets will not be met.⁸⁶ As for 2010, Polish aid accounted for 0.08% of GNI, which is a drop by 0.01% from the year before.⁸⁷ These figures, however, still overstate the progress, if any, as statistics are heavily inflated by counting such non-aid items as debt cancellation, students' scholarships and refugee costs which usually constitute the bulk of bilateral aid.

Poland has not managed to escape the trap of channelling aid in support of political interests and regional stability over and above a poverty reduction and human rights approach. Analysis of disbursement practices reveals that the lion's share of the funds is channelled to middle-income countries in Eastern Europe in line with the objectives of the Eastern Partnership initiative⁸⁸ to support the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-driven one. The other concern is the security agenda, as the funds for Afghanistan increase and are managed by the Polish Armed Forces. Finally, for the last three years, most of the Polish aid went to China. This is because of the export credits that are supposed to give Polish–China trade relations a boost.⁸⁹

A lack of political will combined with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' weak expertise resulted in gender equality and human rights receiving very little attention in the development cooperation policies already endorsed. If gender equality or women's human rights emerge as priorities, this is more an outcome of individual actions by dedicated actors, rather than the systematic approach women's organisations would like it to be. Yet, in spite of this black picture, there are opportunities to advance the profile of gender with the work on the legal and operational framework that is going on now. KARAT Coalition, the WIDE regional platform, is engaged in the process and strives to ensure that the new approach puts gender equality at its core.

WIDE recognises that it is difficult to assess Polish aid with regard to implementation of the Paris and Accra commitments on the basis of the same criteria applied to the donors of the DAC but has still tried to map the progress in the area of ownership and mutual accountability. We have analysed Polish aid since 2005 against alternative WIDE indicators to see what initiatives have already emerged. This is what we found.

Ownership

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1a): Structures in place for the systematic participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in development planning, implementation and monitoring

The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not have a policy or guiding framework that defines the relationship with national and partner countries' CSOs, let alone any quota to engage with gender advocates. As for its structures, some years ago there used to be the Council for Cooperation with NGOs (2003), later replaced by the Forum for Cooperation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but the body has hardly met since its establishment in 2008. The consultation process with civil society in Poland has been revived recently due to the re-launch of work on a legal framework and a medium-term strategy for Polish aid. So far, CSOs are satisfied with the results, and KARAT Coalition, the WIDE regional platform, also finds itself part of the process.

⁸⁶ See *DAC Special Review of Poland*, May 2010.

⁸⁷ See Publication of preliminary data on Official Development Assistance 2010: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/221&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

⁸⁸ Eastern Partnership is the initiative by Poland that aims to improve the political and economic trade relations of the six post-Soviet states: [Ukraine](#), [Belarus](#), [Moldova](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Armenia](#) and [Georgia](#) with the [European Union](#). It was launched in 2009, and, even though democracy and the rule of law have been taken as priorities, civil society remains concerned that this is strictly a political and economic initiative to reduce Russia's influence in the region. Polish aid became an instrument for this initiative, overshadowing the poverty reduction and human rights focus in partner states. For more information, see <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1858>.

⁸⁹ For more analysis on disbursement practices of Polish aid, see Grupa Zagranica, *Polska Pomoc Zagraniczna 2009*, Warszawa, 2010.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1b): Aid policy framework based on a human rights approach, built on a gender analysis of poverty, referring to international conventions such as CEDAW, and linked to operational budgets

A good legislation and policy framework is the cornerstone for effective development cooperation. Legislation is especially important in terms of enshrining in law the principle that aid must contribute to the central goal of poverty reduction. So far, Poland has no such legislation in place. A development cooperation act has been in the pipeline for the last six years and rejected numerous times before reaching Parliament.⁹⁰ The last draft framework from February 2011 recognised gender equality as one of the key principles of development cooperation and, fortunately, was accepted by the Ministers Council.⁹¹ Poland's civil society and officials from DCD hope that a legal act can finally be approved in 2011, as a change in the post of Under-Secretary of State⁹² and the EU presidency have both provided an opportunity to raise the profile of development cooperation in the country.

In addition to legislation, development cooperation actors need an overarching framework for their work – including gender policy and an action plan with an earmarked budget – which fully reflects key international commitments and provides guidance in the main areas of operation. This part is also missing. Public consultations on the medium-term strategy launched in February 2011 are a first step in the right direction. This, however, is just the necessary beginning for genuine and comprehensive work towards development effectiveness with a strong gender equality framework.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1c): Quality indicators to review the gender sensitivity of all policies, implementation efforts, monitoring and evaluation

This is the area where progress is less consistent. As there are hardly any policies to guide Polish development cooperation, there are also no indicators to assess their gender profile.

Gender equality is, however, a requirement in calls for funding proposals addressed to NGOs, embassies and other ministries. The guidelines recommend that all implementing organisations recognise men's and women's different interests and guarantee their equal access to project results.⁹³ In practice, however, the extent to which these guidelines are seriously translated into action is down to the individual NGO – the recommendations are neither enforced nor monitored. Unsurprisingly, results are uneven and patchy. Supported projects range from initiatives which clearly address gender inequalities and contribute to women's empowerment, to initiatives which are entirely gender-blind – i.e. they do not take gender into consideration, and sometimes even reinforce the inequalities that exist.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1d): Resources allocated to support civil society – women's organisations in particular

The government channels funds for Polish CSOs to implement projects in developing countries and awareness-raising activities in Poland. Although the latter usually constitute a large part of the DCD-managed bilateral budget, civil society has highlighted on numerous occasions the need to go beyond service delivery – for example, building schools or wells – and supporting the

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

⁹¹ The draft project is available at:

<http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Przyjecie,Zalozen,do,projektu,ustawy,o,wspolpracy,rozwojowej,,1129.html>.

⁹² In 2010 Krzysztof Stanowski became Under-Secretary of State in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is committed to development cooperation objectives, and his work so far has been very positively evaluated by Polish CSOs.

⁹³ See the guidelines at:

<http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/files/inne%20dokumenty%20PDF/Pomoc%20zagraniczna%202011/konkurs%202011/Regulaminy%20konkursu%20PR%202011%20-%20zal%20nr%201,2,3,5,6,7,8.pdf>.

agenda of the CSOs and women's organisations in the East and South. Awareness-raising projects so far have been of a micro and super-short nature (three to five months), and women's organisations have hardly ever taken advantage of them.

There seems to be a positive development at the beginning of 2011, as more calls for proposals have been announced; however, this is for core and sustainable funding based on contract relationships that Polish organisations are asking for. Earmarked budgets, or at least quotas, should be introduced from the beginning to make sure that gender equality-focused initiatives are not sidelined by other proposals from development NGOs or government ministries that all compete for the share of the overall budget.

OWNERSHIP

Strengths: recent consultations and scale-up of the political will to engage with Polish CSOs

Weaknesses: no legal framework for Polish aid

Mutual accountability

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2a): Civil society, including women's organisations, meaningfully involved in the review of progress in implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action

So far, Poland has not focused enough on Paris and Accra implementation; therefore, there has been no evaluation. Polish civil society and women's organisations, however, have invested a great deal of effort to engage with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and hold it to account. A yearly independent review of Polish aid by the NGO platform Grupa Zagranica usually serves as the impetus and the reference point to take stock of implementation of the commitments made.⁹⁴

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2b): Credible, independent and inclusive monitoring and evaluation system with an accountability mechanism in place

The WIDE-check calls for the urgent set-up of a monitoring and evaluation framework for Polish aid. So far, accountability, as it is understood by the government, equals financial scrutiny instead of a sustainable focus on results. Legal constraints, combined with the limited approach, also make it impossible for development partners to take stock of any progress made by Polish aid.

The good thing is that the Polish government is aware of the challenge. WIDE hopes that a recent step-up in efforts will continue in the right direction and conclude with quality monitoring and evaluation systems by the end of 2011.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2c): Quality, timed information on progress in implementation of the commitments on gender equality and women's human rights

Poland reports to the OECD DAC on its overall support to partner countries and international organisations, yet the details of these expenditures are not being provided. The OECD has called Poland to urgently improve its system of collecting information, reporting and informing the public about the results achieved. This also includes establishment of a results framework in the

⁹⁴ All reports are available at: www.zagranica.org.pl.

assistance programmes to partner states, as so far there are hardly any results Poland can account for.⁹⁵

Every year, about September, the government publishes an annual report on the actions taken with Polish aid.⁹⁶ Yet this is more a public relations exercise than a release of genuine information on the progress achieved. Gender equality and human rights are usually not included.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2d): Parliamentary scrutiny over governments' compliance with commitments on aid effectiveness and their impact on gender equality and women's human rights

So far, parliamentary engagement in development cooperation debates has been limited. Nevertheless, Polish NGOs have recently invested a great deal of effort to reach out to Parliament and advocate for change. There has been a proposal to establish a sub-committee to oversee the entirety of Poland's ODA under the Foreign Affairs Committee. New alliances have emerged, yet the matter is still being discussed.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2e): Resources earmarked for accountability-related actions to strengthen the role of national women's machineries – women's organisations in particular

There is no budget to support accountability-related actions in Poland and its partner states. If they are lucky, CSOs manage to obtain resources from the modalities described under Indicator 1d, yet this is hardly ever the case.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Strengths: independent monitoring reports by Grupa Zagranica that build momentum to take stock of progress

Weaknesses: lack of monitoring and evaluation framework

After consultations with:

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⁹⁵ See *DAC Special Review of Poland*, May 2010.

⁹⁶ The reports are available at: www.polskapomoc.gov.pl.

Spain: Political will is key to change; these are concrete budgets, actions and instruments that make it happen for real

Introduction

Just before the world economic crisis, the volume and quality of Spanish aid had been radically changing for the better. The aid effectiveness agenda was enthusiastically taken on board by the socialist government (2004 to date), demonstrating strong political will to drive the reforms. The Third Master Plan (2009–2012)⁹⁷ – the most important document in Spanish development cooperation – has even put forward development effectiveness beyond the aid effectiveness approach. Conceptualisation of women's issues has been championed from a traditional 'women in development' to a 'gender and development' approach, and full implementation of the Paris and Accra commitments has been promoted.

The socialist government has lifted the Spanish aid system out of decline and provided a vision for the future. This is vital. The challenge has been putting the vision into practice. It has been noted that Spain's progressive commitments too often are just not much beyond political discourse. This is, above all, the result of the uncompleted reform process and/or an unsystematic use of the framework in place. As FRIDE – European Think Tank for Global Action – has described it: *"The complex net of intentions and capacities (or lack thereof) has been created; and Spain is finding it difficult to escape this trap."*⁹⁸

Sustaining progress in practice and political will are currently both key issues. Hit by the economic and financial crisis, Spain has cut its budget for aid. After the election in 2012 a change in government is expected in favour of the Conservative party. Most probably, Spain will still be an ally for women's organisations in Busan, but not necessarily afterwards. Therefore, more work alongside all the political parties is needed to make sure that the gains are not lost but continue for positive change for men and women on the ground.

Spanish aid at a glance

Before the crisis, Spain had constantly increased its aid and aspired to reach ODA of 0.7% of GNI by 2012.⁹⁹ In 2008 Spain had grown into the fourth largest donor in the EU and the sixth worldwide.¹⁰⁰ After 2008 the situation has changed dramatically. Due to fiscal restrictions, the government decided to cut its ODA budget and move the 0.7% target to 2015. In 2010 aid accounted for 0.43% of GNI.¹⁰¹ Over €1 million has been projected for cuts in 2011. Aid budgets in different autonomous communities in Spain have also registered an approximate cut of €53 million.¹⁰² This will imply a fall to 0.4% of GNI, the volume before 2008.

On the positive side, gender equality and women's rights have become much more visible and stronger in Spain's development policy than they were before the aid effectiveness process started. The most important gain is the evolution of the conceptualisation of women's issues from a traditional focus on a women in development to a gender equality and development

⁹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2009–2012 *The Master Plan of Spanish Development Cooperation. Main Guidelines*, October 2009.

⁹⁸ FRIDE – A European Think Tank for Global Action, *Spanish Development Policies: The Obstacles to Progress*, Policy Brief Nº 30 – January 2010.

⁹⁹ See OECD, Spain. Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review, 2007

¹⁰⁰ See FRIDE, Nº 30 – January 2010.

¹⁰¹ See Publication of preliminary data on Official Development Assistance 2010:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/221&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

¹⁰² See *Pacto de Estado Contra la Pobreza*, Documento de Acuerdos Comisión de Seguimiento del Pacto de Estado Contra la Pobreza, 16 February 2011.

approach. This latter approach recognises unequal power relations and strives to analyse different gender realities and obstacles in the context of a given society or a development process. Consequently then, gender in development became both a cross-cutting issue and a sector priority for Spanish aid.¹⁰³

WIDE has analysed Spanish aid since 2005 against alternative WIDE indicators to monitor progress against ownership and mutual accountability committed to in Accra and Paris. This is what we found.

Ownership

WIDE Alternative indicator 1a): Structures in place for the systematic participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in development planning, implementation and monitoring

The Cooperation Council (*Consejo de Cooperación*) is a general body that oversees Spanish development cooperation. As a multi-stakeholder space it engages all the relevant actors including development NGOs which are elected via the Spanish NGO Network (*Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo – España, CONGDE*). The Council has three working groups, one of them on gender, open to all stakeholders willing to be involved. The interest from women's organisations is, however, limited, as the outcomes of participation remain unclear. The consultation process has been frequently undermined by the short time for inputs, lack of genuine discussions and feedback to follow the process.

Engagement with civil society from partner countries has recently come to the fore while negotiating the Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs) – agreements signed between Spain and the partner countries that guide development cooperation in the medium-term. Local organisations so far have been excluded from the process, and only Spanish actors were invited to participate. On the other hand, the new 2.0 methodology for the CPF negotiations recognise civil society's fundamental role and proposes the identification of specific mechanisms to ensure its participation. It also offers information on best practice where it has been possible and has worked successfully, so there is potential for improvement with the new CPFs to come.

Women's organisations are crediting Spain for its pioneering support for *Dialogos Consonantes* – the space for debates on aid effectiveness, gender equality and women's rights between the government and feminist organisations in Spain and Latin America. *Dialogos Consonantes* aims to enhance the Southern partners' understanding of the new aid architecture and strengthen the partnerships.¹⁰⁴ As an outcome, specific recommendations for Spanish cooperation have been developed, among them a timely call to guarantee the participation of feminist and women's organisations in consultation and decision-making about the CPFs (Lima, Peru, 2010).¹⁰⁵

WIDE Alternative indicator 1b): Aid policy framework based on a human rights approach, built on a gender analysis of poverty, referring to international conventions such as CEDAW, and linked to the operational budgets

Spain has a gender strategy for development cooperation.¹⁰⁶ The document has been a huge step forward.¹⁰⁷ It takes up the Beijing Platform for Action as a road map, focuses on women's human rights and incorporates horizontally and sectorally the operative application of the Paris

¹⁰³ See 2009–2012 *The Master Plan of Spanish Development Cooperation, Main Guidelines*, October 2009.

¹⁰⁴ For more information, see <http://www.dialogosconsonantes.org/>.

¹⁰⁵ *Women's Rights in Development Aid Instruments, Agreements and Common Grounds, Democracy, Development, Interculturality, and Feminism*, Dialogos Consonantes declaration, Lima, 30 April 2010.

¹⁰⁶ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, "Gender Equality" Strategy Paper. *Spanish Development Cooperation. Executive Summary*, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

Declaration to gender and development. As a result, women's issues have become much more visible and open to political debate.

The challenge with the strategy is the lack of a transparent budget and so far a weak focus on implementation. At the time of writing this report the gender operational plan for the Spanish development agency, AECID, has been in the process of approval. Women's organisations hope that it will improve strategy guidance so that gender equality and human rights maintain a high profile.¹⁰⁸

This gender strategy aims to guide Spain's development cooperation. Unfortunately, concrete actions on the ground are not always keeping up with the model. Women's organisations in Spain have been seriously concerned about the risk of moving gender equality away from the dialogue with partner countries, particularly during the CPF negotiations. In order to balance the process, the General Directorate of Planning and Development Policy Evaluation (DGPOLDE) and AECID have developed methodological guidelines to support the country strategy process. Currently, four CPFs have been signed (El Salvador, Uruguay, Bolivia and Ecuador). Eventually, thanks to the strong advocacy and commitment from DGPOLDE, the outcome has been quite positive: Uruguay has prioritised gender equality as an intervention sector, Bolivia has developed a gender mainstreaming framework to guide all its actions, and Ecuador has focused on VAW.¹⁰⁹

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1c): Quality indicators to review the gender sensitivity of all policies, implementation efforts, monitoring and evaluation

Cross-cutting issues, gender in development among them, reflect the core values and objectives of Spain's development cooperation. There is a good methodology in place to critically screen all the interventions;¹¹⁰ however, its systematic application remains a challenge. As for monitoring and evaluation, gender-based indicators are missing. Thus it is very difficult for CSOs to assess the actual impact Spain's development programmes have on gender quality and human rights in developing countries.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1d): Resources allocated to support civil society – women's organisations in particular

The strategy adopted by the former Ministry of Equity¹¹¹ says that 15% of Spanish aid should be allocated to gender equality and women's human rights: 6% for SRHR and 9% for gender issues in general.¹¹² The fact is that from 2003 to 2007 Spain's ODA for gender and health increased by over 88%.¹¹³ The commitment has been delivered; however, with the current economic and political context, it will not be sustained.

Traditionally the funds channelled via CSOs, including women's organisations, constituted a relatively large part of Spanish aid. This may be shrinking, particularly in the context of the partner countries, as Spain moves towards more government-to-government support. Women's organisations are also concerned about the growing focus on public-private partnerships, for which more aid money is likely to be channelled in the future.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Operational plan for Spanish Agency for International Development (*Plan de Actuación Sectorial de Género*) was officially presented for discussion on 16 March 2011, but it has not yet been published.

¹⁰⁹ Source: WIDE consultations with DGOPOLDE, 28 April 2010.

¹¹⁰ See 2009–2012 *The Master Plan of Spanish Development Cooperation, Main Guidelines*, October 2009.

¹¹¹ Now a Secretary of State, under the Ministry of Health, Social Policies and Equity.

¹¹² See Instituto de la Mujer (Ministerio de Igualdad), *Strategic Plan 2008–2011 for Equal Opportunities*, 2008.

¹¹³ See Spanish Agency for International Development, *Gender and Development*.

¹¹⁴ See Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs in her first appearance in Parliament: www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L9/CONG/DS/CO/CO_724.PDF.

AECID does not have earmarked budget lines to support the work of women's organisations in Spain; however, the latter have taken advantage of the existing funding opportunities which maintain a high profile for gender. Big organisations that have the capacity to fulfill the government's requirements have benefitted from four-year financing agreements (*Convenios de Cooperación*). They have empowered some women's organisations to participate in or influence public policies in the country.¹¹⁵

To target its contribution thematically, Spain has also supported UN-managed trust funds such as UN Women's End Violence Against Women Fund and the Gender Equality Fund. The latter finances women's organisations worldwide to review gender equality policies, plans and strategies.¹¹⁶ The Funds have been very positively evaluated by women's organisations globally,¹¹⁷ yet WIDE in Spain points out that government should also contribute to the Funds managed by women's organisations, not just the multilateral structures.

OWNERSHIP

Strengths: progressive policy commitments, Dialogos Consonates, support to multilateral funds

Weaknesses: translating political will into practice

Mutual accountability

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2a): Civil society, including women's organisations, meaningfully involved in the review of progress in implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action

Unfortunately, there are no common civil society assessments of progress on the aid effectiveness agenda. The issue is being tackled individually by certain CSOs and women's networks, while Cooperation Council could be the space for reflection. Spain has done its own evaluation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action and participated in the Paris Declaration Evaluation Phase 2.¹¹⁸ Women's organisations and civil society were generally not involved in the evaluation.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2b): Credible, independent and inclusive monitoring and evaluation system with an accountability mechanism in place

So far gender in development has not been evaluated as a sector, yet this is an obligatory horizontal issue for each evaluation team to follow. Spain is constantly increasing its efforts to strengthen its evaluation culture – for example, from 2009 to 2010 the Evaluation Unit has grown in terms of budget and resources (from four to eight people at the moment), and the gender team in DGPOLDE has been working more and more with the Evaluation Unit in different processes.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ For more information about this modality, see

http://www.aecid.es/web/es/ongd/subven_ONGD/convocatorias/2009_07_16_se_conceden_subvenciones_a_las_1.html.

¹¹⁶ For more information, see http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=782.

¹¹⁷ See AWID report by Joanna Kerr, *The Second Fundher Report: Financial Sustainability For Women's Movement's Worldwide*, June 2007.

¹¹⁸ At the time of writing this report, the Spanish study was not yet ready. The donors' reports can be accessed at:

http://www.oecd.org/document/60/0,3343,en_21571361_34047972_38242748_1_1_1_1,00.html.

¹¹⁹ Source: consultations with Nava San Miguel and Laura González (DGPOLDE), 5 May 2011.

Inclusive accountability remains a challenge in Spain. Steps to implement the development effectiveness agenda should be, but are not, taken through the framework of the Cooperation Council. As for the South, there are often structural and legal obstacles that block the process. In Ethiopia – the most appealing example – a new draconian law prohibits Ethiopian CSOs from receiving more than 10% of their budget from abroad to engage in accountability-related actions with regard to human rights or gender equality. As Spain has not done enough to engage with local CSOs, there has been no follow-up by women’s organisations on Spanish sectoral support, which is a vital.¹²⁰

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2c): Quality, timed information on progress in implementation of commitments on gender equality and women’s human rights

The government publishes every year a review of the Annual Development Cooperation Action Plan (PACI), the *Annual International Cooperation Plan Monitoring (Seguimiento PACI)*. The document is in Spanish only, and reports on the volume and distribution of aid.¹²¹

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2d): Parliamentary scrutiny over governments’ compliance with commitments on aid effectiveness and their impact on gender equality and women’s human rights

The Commission on Development Cooperation at the Spanish Parliament is responsible for monitoring and accounting for policies on development cooperation. CONGDE signed an agreement with all the political parties in the Parliament, entitled *State Pact against Poverty*. Gender issues (SRHR as well as the need for gender mainstreaming in all planning instruments and their implementation) have been included as recommendations in the monitoring of the Pact.¹²²

As for engagement in partner states, different meetings are organised to strengthen relationships between Spanish women MPs and African, Asian, and Latin American ones on gender issues globally. The challenge is that the impact of these meetings does not usually go beyond sharing experiences, and that there are no instruments to sustain the crucial linkages between the meetings.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2e): Resources earmarked for accountability-related actions to strengthen the role of national women’s machineries – women’s organisations in particular

There is no budget earmarked for accountability-related actions; however, women’s organisations in Spain are striving to make the most of the available funding scheme. Accountability with regard to gender equality and women’s human rights receives funding, albeit not enough, under the ownership support instruments described under Indicator 1d. Accountability, to be genuine and mutual, should be applied to both the donors and the partner states. So far, Spain has not made provisions for parallel civil society support while channelling its programme aid. This is not only undermining the democratic potential that new aid modalities have, but also puts gender equality and women’s human rights at risk when it comes to policy negotiations and delivery results (as with the Ethiopian case). Spain should address this issue as soon as possible in order to comply with its commitment on results management and the Accra Agenda for Action that has driven the reforms.

¹²⁰ For more information, see Red Activas, *Ayuda eficaz para mejorar la salud y los derechos sexuales y reproductivos. Estudio de casos en Etiopía, Níger, Senegal*, February 2010.

¹²¹ See

http://www.maec.es/es/MenuPpal/CooperacionInternacional/EstadisticasAOD/Paginas/estadisticas_ayudaoficialdesarrollo.aspx.

¹²² See *Comisión de Seguimiento del Pacto de Estado contra la Pobreza*, February 2011.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Strengths: ambitious policy commitments

Weaknesses: lack of information and clear results framework against which to be held to account

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United Kingdom: Development is not a market with value for money approach, all donors must deliver on human rights commitments

Introduction

The UK is perceived in the international arena – specifically, by the OECD DAC – as a global leader and effective development cooperation model.¹²³ The fact is that the UK played a leading role in pushing for and agreeing on the more progressive commitments in the Accra Agenda for Action, which is commendable, even though the Accra HLF gains have been modest. The UK's focus at that time was mostly on the issues of transparency and promotion of civil society as an actor in its own right.¹²⁴ These have been positive developments for which the UK should be praised.

British performance today on the issues pushed for three years ago in Accra is, however, somehow mixed. While the UK scores very highly on commitment to transparency (the UK government, together with the Netherlands, is the founder of the International Aid Transparency Initiative, IATI),¹²⁵ the WIDE-check has mapped a worrying push for a 'value-for-money approach', meaning basically that aid delivered should return to Britain and serve its interests. The space for engagement with British civil society has been closing. The government's rationale behind this is that the UK is already a world leader in development (committed to reaching the ODA target of 0.7% of GNI) and is putting women at the heart of its work; therefore, the scale of accountability actions, particularly in the UK, may be reduced.

The British government is considered a champion in delivering on aid and the development effectiveness agenda. It has also been proactive in seizing other opportunities to promote development in the wider area: using its G8 and EU presidencies to press for the Gleneagles commitments, and supporting the creation of a single, strengthened UN body for women's rights, for example. This does not, however, give the UK government the green light for accountability-free actions, but just more responsibility to deliver in the new international framework on development effectiveness to be agreed in late 2011 in Busan.

UK aid at a glance

After the elections in 2010, the UK reiterated its commitment to give 0.7% of GNI as aid from 2013. This was very much welcomed by CSOs in the country,¹²⁶ as it came in the context of dramatic spending cuts of 25–30% right across the budget of almost all other departments. At the time of writing this report, there was also a draft bill going through Parliament which will make it a legal obligation that all future governments meet this minimum level of aid from 2013.

Preliminary figures for 2010 point to UK ODA of €10.391 billion, its highest level ever, and equivalent to 0.56% of GNI.¹²⁷ According to the latest data released by the OECD DAC, Department for International Development (DFID)¹²⁸ aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment accounted for 33% of all the total sector-allocable aid screened by the

¹²³ See Department for International Development, *Eliminating World Poverty: Building our Common Future*, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for International Development by Command of her Majesty, July 2009.

¹²⁴ See Accra Update: CSOs successfully join forces for Better Aid, download from: <http://www.bond.org.uk/resources.php/326/accra-update-csos-successfully-join-forces-for-better-aid>.

¹²⁵ For more on IATI, see <http://www.aidtransparency.net/>.

¹²⁶ See CSOs' reactions at <http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/uk-spending-review-2010.html>.

¹²⁷ See Publication of preliminary data on Official Development Assistance 2010 at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/221&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

¹²⁸ DFID is the UK government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. It delivers the bulk of British aid (85–90%), so UK and DFID aid are used interchangeably for British aid. This approach is also applied in this document.

gender equality policy marker in 2008.¹²⁹ This is one of the biggest shares among DAC members applying the gender marker in their CRS reporting.

Gender equality and women's rights became more visible in the international development policy of the UK than they were before the aid effectiveness process started. That fact is, however, that a rights-based approach is not mentioned much now, and corporate language streamlined into a 'value-for-money' approach is getting stronger.¹³⁰ This is a break with the past. The new coalition government in power since May 2010 has committed to 'putting women at the heart of development', but in reality there are many mothers and girls out there with little support for their voice or economic welfare. This seriously jeopardises the progress made by the previous government and points to a new UK instrumental approach to gender equality and aid.

WIDE has analysed UK aid since 2005 against alternative WIDE indicators to monitor progress against the ownership and mutual accountability committed to in Paris and Accra. This is what we found.

Ownership

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1a): Structures in place for the systematic participation of CSOs, including women's organisations, in development planning, implementation and monitoring

In its Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP),¹³¹ as well as in the last White Paper from 2008, the UK government is making a commitment to build partnerships that will make a significant contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels. But it is not the institutional mechanisms but the relationships with DFID that allow UK CSOs to be consulted formally or use informal channels for consultations.

Since the general elections in May 2010 there has also been a strong sense that space for meaningful civil society engagement in development cooperation in the UK is closing, despite the strong rhetoric on accountability from the new coalition government. It is even more severe in relation to women's rights advocates, as the UK claims to be prioritising women in its development corporation, so officials are expecting praise, not criticism. This is in direct contradiction to what the UK is communicating with regards to countries in the South, where CSOs are very much encouraged to genuinely participate and hold governments to account.

This closing space for engagement by UK civil society is being manifested, for example, through very tight deadlines on consultations which inhibit the possibility of real dialogue and participation. A worrying recent example was the complete lack of consultation with civil society on DFID's new gender strategy (*Gender Vision*),¹³² which was drawn up behind closed doors. After concerns were raised by civil society and supportive MPs, a consultation was finally launched, but the document was already on the verge of being signed, so scope for influence was negligible. It was disappointing that DFID did not draw on the extensive expertise of civil society and women's organisations, which should have been a vital ingredient.¹³³

¹²⁹ The OECD DAC methodology to count aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment is a bit confusing. When analysing gender-focused aid, it is important to always keep a reference to the volume actually screened through the gender marker. In the case of the UK in 2008, total-sector aid screened was US\$ 4.594 billion out of a total of US\$ 5.419 billion. For more information, see OECD DAC Secretariat, *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, March 2010.

¹³⁰ A partnership with Nike Foundation is listed in first place under UK commitment to lead international action to empower girls and women. For more information, see Department for International Development, *Business Plan 2011–2015*, November 2010.

¹³¹ See Department for International Development, *Gender Equality Action Plan 2007–2009. Making faster progress to gender equality*, February 2007.

¹³² The document was not yet publicly available at the time of writing this report.

¹³³ At the time of writing this report the new strategy was not yet available in the public domain.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1b): Aid policy framework based on a human rights approach, built on a gender analysis of poverty, referring to international conventions such as CEDAW, and linked to operational budgets

The UK has a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP, 2007–2009), which was extended but is now to be replaced with the new Gender Strategy by the coalition government currently in power. The GEAP was a very technical document, but still progressive, and it undoubtedly contributed a lot to raising the profile of gender equality within DFID. The GEAP had specific objectives for improving evidence and managing for results, increasing the effectiveness of resources, strengthening partnerships with different stakeholders, and building for the future – meaning skills development within DFID. There were obviously financial resources linked to the implementation of the plan, but the numbers were not indicated. The only source of information for determining the whole picture as far as aid for gender equality and women’s empowerment is concerned is a gender marker in the UK CSR reporting to the OECD DAC.

There is currently not enough publically available data to determine if GEAP has been implemented, and to what extent. The last progress report (2008/2009)¹³⁴ highlights some important advances – changes within country programmes and greater engagement of DFID staff – but acknowledges that gains are still fragile and very inconsistent across countries and programme areas.¹³⁵ Gender equality advocates in the UK are waiting for a report on the full implementation of the plan that will hopefully give a complete picture of the all actions taken and will not limit itself to partial cases.

As for now, the critical issue of concern is the consolidation and continuation of efforts to ensure that momentum is maintained when the plan comes to an end – especially given the context of *Gender Vision* being written behind closed doors and its instrumental ‘investing in women and girls approach’. A second issue is the need to link gender policies with the most important documents guiding UK actions on aid delivery. In the new DFID Business Plan (2011–2015), for example, there is no reference to the GEAP, nor the new Gender Strategy, although there is a strong commitment to lead international actions (on education and reproductive health) to improve the lives of girls and women. On the other hand, all departments in DFID have been asked to prepare operational plans which should include at least one target aligned to the Gender Vision focus.¹³⁶

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1c): Quality indicators to review the gender sensitivity of all policies, implementation efforts, monitoring and evaluation

As the Paris Declaration Evaluation Phase 1 has already proved, DFID is quite poor at qualitative reporting and is mostly dependent on the DAC’s survey methodology.¹³⁷ In the last progress report on GEAP implementation, the UK committed to improve its own mechanisms and indicators for measuring the impact of interventions on gender and women in particular, ensuring that there are gender targets in the business plan, and better usage of sex-disaggregated data in the country planning, joint assistance strategies and performance assessment frameworks (Paragraph 4.2.). However, to find out about the results, we have to wait for the full GEAP implementation report to come.

¹³⁴ See Department for International Development, *DFID’s Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). Second Progress Report 2008/2009*, July 2009.

¹³⁵ In the Africa Division, for example, in Uganda, while there is now gender parity in primary school enrolment, primary completion rates are falling for girls. And progress is also often only partial: access to secondary education, family planning and safe abortion remains very low. For more information, see *ibid*.

¹³⁶ Source: consultations with Simon Williams, Europe Department, DFID.

¹³⁷ OECD DAC, *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration. Synthesis Report*, July 2008.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 1d): Resources allocated to support civil society – women’s organisations in particular

The UK has committed in the GEAP to use financial resources more effectively in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment. This commitment has been delivered, albeit to a different extent in the UK and partner countries in the South.

In the UK there is a support for CSO engagement in development processes, but no mention of women’s organisations in particular. As for the South, there are special budgets to support gender advocates – for example, in India DFID has launched a large new International Partnerships Agreement Programme (IPAP) that will translate to hundreds of local Indian NGOs engaged in advocacy, capacity-building, service delivery and safeguarding the rights of women and excluded groups¹³⁸ – but the whole picture with the numbers, objectives and locations is not easily accessible.

According to the OECD, the UK’s aid for women’s equality organisations in 2008 accounted for only a bit more than 1% of the total sector-allocable aid screened by the gender equality policy marker.¹³⁹

OWNERSHIP

Strengths: promoting women on the international agenda, particularly with regard to MDG5

Weaknesses: narrowing ownership space for CSOs in UK, and their gender concerns

Mutual accountability

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2a): Civil society, including women’s organisations, meaningfully involved in the review of progress in implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action

At the time of writing the report, the UK was completing country evaluations on its progress against Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action targets. As there are no final data available yet, it is difficult to determinate the quality of involvement. The positive thing is, however, that the emerging findings were shared and discussed with CSOs in the UK and partner countries in the South. There is, therefore, a potential for a positive score on this indicator while the country evaluations progress.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2b): Credible, independent and inclusive monitoring and evaluation system with an accountability mechanism in place

Monitoring and evaluation is the new priority focus for British aid; however, inclusiveness is weak and mandate questionable. Civil society in the UK has recently been taken aback by the Multilateral (MAR) and Bilateral Aid Review (BAR), asked by the new government to set out policy directions for aid spending over the coming years. Both reviews were done in line with a ‘value-for-money approach’. WIDE’s biggest concern here is the focus on the British tax payers, not the development owners from the South, as well as the fact that this increases the risk of reducing actions where progress is slow and difficult to demonstrate – gender equality and women’s rights as an example.

¹³⁸ For more information, see DFID’s *Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). Second Progress Report 2008/2009*, July 2009.

¹³⁹ See *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment*, March 2010.

Both the MAR and BAR, although of strategic importance, have been almost entirely internal processes with no contribution from CSOs.¹⁴⁰ This goes against the principles of ownership and mutual accountability that the UK government has subscribed to.

As for evaluation, in October 2010 the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) was established.¹⁴¹ This is a positive development, although worrying as far as the main mandate – delivery of ‘value for money’ for UK taxpayers – is concerned. The ICAI reports to the Secretary of State for International Development and is fully independent from the government. It aims to produce around 20 reports a year, using a traffic light system to rate the effectiveness of aid programmes, also from the perspective of gender. In January the ICAI launched a consultation asking the public which areas of UK aid they would like to see scrutinised. But the consultation is a distraction from the bigger decisions to be taken via the MAR and BAR on the overall direction of UK aid policy.¹⁴²

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2c): Quality, timed information on progress in implementation of commitments on gender equality and women’s human rights

The UK is scoring very highly on transparency. According to Publish What You Fund (PWYF), the UK is the second-highest bilateral donor, mostly because of its continued leadership of the IATI and promotion of the ambitious agenda for aid transparency globally.¹⁴³ After coming to power in June 2010, the UK coalition government has introduced an ‘Aid Transparency Guarantee’ with the aim of making aid fully transparent to citizens in both the UK and recipient countries.¹⁴⁴ DFID now also enables the public to see summary information on the projects and programmes it supports through a project database on its website.¹⁴⁵ From February 2011 the database is expected to be adjusted to the IATI format. This will incorporate the gender marker, thus making it possible to identify projects that have principal or significant gender objectives and then examine all the financial data, the actors and the documentation associated with those interventions.¹⁴⁶

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2d): Parliamentary scrutiny over governments’ compliance with commitments on aid effectiveness and their impact on gender equality and women’s human rights

Parliamentary scrutiny over UK aid is quite strong in the UK, as is the support for this in partner countries. The International Development Select Committee keeps an eye on DFID, as does the National Audit Office, which controls public spending for Parliament, auditing the accounts of all government departments and agencies, including DFID. As a White Paper (2008) indicates, the UK has supported over 30 projects aiming to strengthen governance since 1998. Unfortunately, there is no information on the gender dimension of the support provided.

WIDE Alternative Indicator 2e): Resources earmarked for accountability-related actions to strengthen the role of national women’s machineries – women’s organisations in particular

In the White Paper (2008) the UK has committed to support media and civil society organisations, Parliaments and other bodies, including gender advocates. The UK is credited for its promise to set aside an amount equivalent to at least 5% of its budget support funds to

¹⁴⁰ For more information, see <http://www.wdm.org.uk/climate-debt-campaign/mar>.

¹⁴¹ See the DFID press release at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/News-Stories/2010/New-independent-commission-unveiled/>.

¹⁴² Source: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/climate-debt-campaign/mar>.

¹⁴³ See Publish What You Fund, *Aid Transparency Assessment*, 2010.

¹⁴⁴ For more on the Aid Transparency Guarantee, see <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/ukaid-guarantee>.

¹⁴⁵ See <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/About-DFID/Finance-and-performance/Project-information/>.

¹⁴⁶ Source: email consultations with Karin Christiansen (PWYF) and Brian Hammond (IATI Secretariat).

strengthen mechanisms for making states more accountable to their citizens in the countries benefiting from this type of aid modality from DFID. However, relevant actions were not introduced in the UK. On the other hand, a scarcity of resources and dependency on the government funding by many gender-focused CSOs creates a kind of reluctance to be too critical in case this jeopardises their financial security.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Strengths: genuine commitment to transparency and global leadership in this area

Weaknesses: equating effective delivery with a 'value-for-money' corporate approach

After consultations with:

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