

# Gender Equality and Development Effectiveness

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Summary of Global Report

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## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Key Findings .....	4
a. Guidelines, mechanisms and indicators for gender equality in CSOs.....	4
b. Main challenges facing CSOs in order to put gender equality into practice .....	8
c. Creating an Enabling Environment for gender equality and effective development .....	10
3. Recommendations .....	13
a. Recommendations to CSOs.....	13
b. Recommendations to governments of aid receiving countries.....	15
c. Recommendations to donors (states, multilateral agencies, donor CSOs).....	17
4. Annex - Summary and highlights of regional consultations and surveys .....	21
a. Asia Pacific.....	21
b. Latin American Consultation.....	27
c. Africa Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness .....	32
d. Consultation of CEE and CIS countries.....	38

## 1. Introduction

Istanbul Principle Two ‘*Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girl’s rights*’ states that:

*‘CSOs affirm that gender equality and women’s rights, in all their dimensions, is essential for realizing sustainable development outcomes. The empowerment of women through gender equity promotes the goal of gender equality – equal access for women and girls to opportunity, resources, and decision-making at all levels. ... Advancing gender equity goes beyond improving practical conditions for women, to redressing strategic inequalities in power among men and women, tackling discriminatory laws, policies and practices. ... Women’s organizations and movements are essential actors in development, and have been particularly important as a force for women’s empowerment and democratization.’*

The Open Forum for Development Effectiveness held a series of gender consultations virtually and face to face with CSOs in Africa, Asia/Pacific, Latin America, East Europe and CIS, as well as a global virtual survey, in order to elaborate the specific policies, practices and conditions that civil society organisations require in order to be effective development actors for gender equality and women’s rights. The starting point of the consultations was the Open Forum’s commitment to gender equality as the Principle Two of the eight Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness adopted by the first Global Assembly of the Open Forum.

The focus of Open Forum is to promote among CSOs the capacity for operational action and genuine accountability to all women, particularly marginal women, fully aware of the vital need for an enabling environment to put gender commitments into action. Achieving gender equality in CSOs institutions and programmes requires a reshaping of the aid architecture in order to give women greater access to and control over resources. A clear message from the Open Forum gender consultations is that the donor community must recognise CSO resource needs to implement good gender practices in ways that support and interact with communities and people’s organisations. The struggle for gender equality and women’s rights needs to guide the work of all donors, governments, and CSOs.

The consultations concluded that women need to be given greater access to and control over resources, their bodies, and political power - but this requires much more than good aid policy, even though that is an important goal in itself. If we are to have **effective development**, we need to move beyond ‘fixing’ the aid architecture and understand systemic inequalities. This requires CSOs to go beyond the framework of international cooperation and begin to put in place economic and social justice where gender equality is the core.

CSOs need both to build critical analyses of the limits of development cooperation and continue mainstreaming gender equality into that critique and into the strategies to build new economic

and social systems. CSOs also need to continue mainstreaming gender issues while being vigilant in respecting the autonomy of the women's and feminist movements and their knowledge, processes and resources. Gender is a complex transformative agenda which cannot be instrumentalised. The expertise and knowledge of women's movements has to be respected by all CSOs. CSOs must be careful not to exploit resources set aside for gender mainstreaming to the detriment of women's empowerment. There are clear areas where women and feminists must take the lead, such as processes which support social reproduction – gender-based violence, revaluing care, community enterprises for marginal communities. It is therefore important that there are enough resources allocated for women's empowerment.

## 2. Key Findings

*'The Open Forum is recognised as an important process, and an opportune time for CSOs to reflect inwardly on genuine accountability to women, but we should not lose sight of the bigger picture about reshaping the aid architecture, to give women greater access to and control over resources.'* - Asia Pacific Gender Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness

### a. Guidelines, mechanisms and indicators for gender equality in CSOs

The following summarizes the key findings from the consultations on how CSOs can ensure gender equality within their organizations as well as being accountable to international development agreements on gender equality in their programming.

As the above quote from the Asia Consultation indicates CSOs do not see gender equality as a simple goal for development effectiveness. While looking for practical and measurable indicators it remains a challenge to define how the Open Forum can be specific yet realistic in having indicators that allow for CSOs to go through a process of becoming more inclusive of women and gender inequality. It is important that CSOs avoid simple universal indicators which could be prescriptive or homogenizing of women and CSOs particularly if developed outside of a particular context. The diversity of women's experiences, contexts, identities, and power, as well as the diversity of CSOs need to be considered when developing strategies and guidelines.

Achieving gender equality is a complex process; it is not possible to expect changes overnight. The process of building greater gender awareness among CSOs, governments and donors requires, first and foremost, establishing within CSOs a culture of accountability and responsibility to gender equality in line with international human rights standards. The Principles can be taken as a guiding framework for effective development which CSOs need to adapt according to their needs and priorities, with a key understanding that gender is cross-

cutting not merely a stand-alone set of indicators. Working on gender as a cross cutting theme enriches and expand CSOs' fields of action. In terms of public policies, gender as a crosscutting theme is important, because it prevents excluding a significant part of the population (women) and increases effectiveness in incorporating women as subjects of development.

*Gender cuts across economic and social class, ethnicity and religion ... plans are made and projects are designed to address unique needs of various groups of women and where women themselves remain engaged as planner and stakeholders.*

(Response from Global Survey on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

- *Building capacity in CSOs on gender*

Capacity building on gender and development effectiveness at all levels (from grassroots, national and international CSOs to government and donors and among the media is therefore crucial. There is the tendency to see gender as a women's issue rather than as a critical requirement for development effectiveness processes that address power relations between men and women, in all aspects of economic, political, social and cultural development.

Conceptual clarity therefore needs to be built within organisations on substantive gender equality in a fully comprehensive approach that covers all levels of organizational arrangements in depth. Building experience and best practices around gender include ensuring that all CSOs, particularly women's CSOs, become familiar with the complexity of the new instruments and new modalities of assistance, particularly as they adapt to the current difficult international context. In this way CSOs can bring a strong social justice gender perspective rather than just responding to the immediate need on a service delivery basis. Resources for capacity building and training on gender need be ring fenced in CSOs budgets and provided by donors in the form of institutional financing.

When establishing meaningful and realistic processes and mechanisms for CSOs to achieve accountability for gender equity it is important that donors account for the differing capacity and resources between organisations to implement 'best practices'. Marginalised groups and small grassroots organizations require particular attention in order to ensure that all the needs of the different constituencies of women CSOs are included.

Advocating for gender awareness in donor community is also critical. Donors can be gender blind and misunderstand the call for gender equity seeing it as a threat rather than as a positive step for development effectiveness.

- *Elaboration, adoption and implementation of gender policy*

Gender policy requires working with all of the CSOs' staff in order to develop the best gender sensitive methodology of work in the organization's specific context. It is important to

mainstream gender in all organization's activities at all stages, starting from gender sensitive needs assessment, through elaboration of the projects, its implementation, management and evaluation. CSO budgets should be designed from a gender perspective, in order to provide resources to diverse activities that guarantee gender equality.

*It will be hard for small CSOs to develop and implement the strategies if they do not receive any core fund for gender implementation. Most of organizations' management have the commitment to support these activities and strategies, but without budget support, gender equality enhancement will never move forward.*

(Asia Pacific Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

- *Building effective participation of women in CSOs*

CSOs need to be proactive in providing effective spaces for women to participate in CSOs, and develop built-in mechanisms to put gender guidelines into practice. Supporting women's participation means understanding the factors that impact women's ability to participate, e.g. women's existing heavy workloads/gendered roles including as mothers and carers as well as being aware of practical considerations where women are not safe out at night. CSOs should take into account practical barriers experienced by women who are mothers– e.g. through providing crèche facilities in the organisation where possible, incorporating child minding facility into programme budgets so that participants can bring dependent children. The provision of flexible working hours can take into account for women's other duties such as taking children to school, cooking or caring for family members. These measures do not ignore the need to challenge unequal sharing of home duties between men and women, but acknowledge the realities posed for women by entrenched social norms. In mixed organisations CSOs may be able to model shared gender responsibilities through considering both maternity and paternity provisions. Benefits such as Health Plans should include dependents, and incorporate a broad definition of family (eg same-sex partners). The provision of translators would remove language as a barrier or excuse for having only men participate (due to more opportunity to learn English).

Spaces are needed within CSOs for women to break their silence. Potential indicators include the presence of Anti-discrimination policies, inclusive not protectionist in nature, (e.g equal opportunity; anti-sexual harassment) so that women have avenues to address sexual harassment, gender-based violence etc in CSOs.

Regular gender awareness capacity building provided for women and men, so that staff develop increased consciousness and reflect this in institutional and programme aspects. Job descriptions should have a gender dimension. Gender focal points for mainstreaming gender sensitivity and a gender sensitive checklist for staff to use. Undertake regular monitoring for gender sensitivity – applies both to programme and institutional aspects.

- *Practice transparency and accountability*

CSOs need to implement mechanisms for consultation with staff in decision-making, such as recording decisions of management and governance, sharing information. Specific mechanisms to support participatory decision-making (including policy development etc) such as monthly meetings where all staff are free to table agenda items. A transparent approach needs to be reflected in the presence and utilisation of organisational policies, from financial management to rules and procedures. This includes transparent affirmative action policies and actively promoting women's inclusion in staff, management and governance levels, in a qualitative not simply quantitative approach.

- *Promote women's leadership and equal opportunities*

CSOs need to promote equality of opportunities taking into account all diversities. It is important to provide relevant training and skills building, planned with specific considerations that enable women's participation. These opportunities should build on, recognise and harness women's existing knowledge and skills including attracting and empowering young women activists and strengthening networks across the women's movement, including marginalised groups such as women with disabilities, LGBT groups, migrant workers and indigenous women.

- *Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity*

The guidelines should explicitly state women's participation in decision-making and standard setting for Partnership Agreements. A partnership Agreement *"needs to ensure that it is free from bureaucratic, hierarchal, economic and socio-cultural structures that prevent women's initiatives and those in the marginalised sectors"*.

CSOs not working on gender issues need to work more closely with organizations that specifically address women's rights. Such alliance building among CSOs will bring critical gender issues to the public agenda and in policy making such as in sexual and reproductive health, the increase in gender violence, the effective political participation of women, and feminization of poverty. Women's rights organizations will bring to the wider CSO constituency their perspective and methodologies in order to identify and demonstrate what still must be achieved to reach gender equality. It has to be underlined that women's participation *per se* does not guarantee that women's interests and needs are proposed or defended.

- *Knowledge networks and research on gender equality*

It is important to build knowledge networks among CSOs working on gender concerns to share information and strategies, create opportunities for collaboration through peer-peer exchanges and exposure visits. CSOs need to collect evidence and record events as part of evidence based research which can address the roots of the gender problem and lead to positive, sustainable change. In order to address gender inequalities, gender discrimination within CSOs,

governments and donors need to be recorded. Collecting gender disaggregated data with indicators that measure community involvement including men's involvement in gender equity processes are also important for strategizing effectively.

*"Women's autonomy in private and public life is fundamental for guaranteeing the exercise of their human rights. The ability to generate their own income and to control assets and resources (economic autonomy), to have control over their bodies (physical autonomy), and their full participation in the decisions affecting their lives and women overall (autonomy in decision-making) are three pillars of gender equality and joint citizenship."*

(Observatorio de la Igualdad de Género de América Latina y el Caribe)

## **b. Main challenges facing CSOs in order to put gender equality into practice**

### *- Patriarchal culture*

Patriarchal culture is present in varying degrees in all societies. It is evident in cultural norms and religious beliefs as well as in the gender blindness of public laws, customary teaching and practices. It is crucial for CSOs to aim to overcome the discrimination, subordination and exclusion of women in patriarchal society all of which are major institutional and political challenges for CSOs working on women's rights,

The gender discrimination and subordination of women is also a challenge inside civil society organizations. Patriarchal cultural expectations for example, can push women in the CSOs sector into softer issues such as education, health and women's rights and make it difficult for women to engage in other development issues like climate and trade.

The lack of legal framework or affirmative action for women allows gender inequality to prevail also in work conditions with a lack of acceptance of alternative work methodologies such as distance working, working from home, working part time, inadequate maternity and paternity coverage and absence of day-care facilities.

### *- Lack of political will*

The lack of awareness of gender by government and donors interrupts the gender equality work of CSOs. This can be combined with limitations to freedom of expression, especially in countries where the government and/or state laws are intolerant of dissent. In these contexts lack of freedom of speech prevents effective advocacy for women's rights and there is an absence of leaders who are champions in influencing policy making for gender equality. High levels of corruption in some contexts also contribute to an unfriendly environment for women's participation in decision-making processes.



- *Lack of information and resources*

CSOs can be denied access to government information on policies, budgets and development initiatives which prevents them from effective advocacy work for gender equality. Heavy directives and donor conditionality can prevent CSOs from taking up the issues that impact on gender in their work, leading to high transaction costs, and interference in the aims and goals of CSOs working on gender. This can be exacerbated by the lack of mechanisms for CSOs to engage with donors in order to build mutual learning and policies to improve gender aware development effectiveness.

Too often unpredictable finance and lack of funds for management and programme oversight prevent sustained and long term projects on gender and instead leads to one-off project-oriented and accountability reduced to “results-based management” rather than accountability to the local women which the gender project is trying to reach. Donors in following top down guidelines fail to take into account the changing dynamics of developing countries.

In some contexts this leads to CSOs seeking resources from the corporate and private sector which can have complex agendas that CSOs are not always privy to follow and allowing states to abdicate responsibility.

Heavily technical funding processes can be very inaccessible or exclusionary towards smaller CSOs and grassroots members. Donors’ reliance on logframes, extensive reporting, quantitative measures and indicators can produce a scenario where a substantial amount of staff time needs to be devoted to donor management and handling rather than program implementation. This can perpetuate inequalities amongst civil society where organisations that are most comfortable with donors’ technical jargon are the organisations that receive the most support, rather than organisations that are the most knowledgeable about the issue.

- *Poor implementation of policies*

Many policies and programmes at national and local levels fail to analyse the impact of macroeconomic and sector policies on the marginalized women thereby applying band-aid solutions which do not address the root of the problem.

- *Funding policies that focus on short term projects rather than long term sustainability*

Project-based funding reduces the economic and job security of CSO staff, leaving CSOs struggling to pay operating costs and unable to provide social security, insurance for their staff, benefits that the organisations are promoting as human rights. Project-based funding also brings disproportionate burdens of reporting and unrealistic expectations on CSOs, detracting from their accountability to constituents, and reduces their ability to respond to emerging grassroots needs.

### c. Creating an Enabling Environment for gender equality and effective development

- *Moving from values to action.*

An enabling environment for effective development requires that women are decision makers and active participants and beneficiaries. This requires legal, bureaucratic, informational, political, cultural and behavioural changes and commitments from governments and donors to women's rights and gender equality. Such an enabling environment will allow the principles to be put into action. This means challenging the existing stereotypes, work with media and decision makers as well as community leaders, involvement of men in discussing, understanding and ultimately supporting women's public roles and finally creating policy and instruments encouraging women to take up decision making at their local and national level through effective Women's Machineries, appropriate legislation, quotas in public and economic spheres, other forms of institutional support.

- *Build women's skills and knowledge*

In order to operate effectively in the wider environment CSOs need women and men trained not only in gender equality and women's rights but also the awareness of the broader environment, a knowledge of the functioning of democratic mechanisms along with skills (i.e. leadership, advocacy, speech writing, debating, political communication, political negotiation etc) and working effectively with the media to challenge and change stereotypes.

- *Working in alliances to promote gender equality as part of social justice and development work*

It is important to develop strategic partnerships of women's organizations and other CSOs at all levels, in order to exchange experience, involve in global movement and strengthen civil society. This will help to facilitate women's networking at local, national and international level and Agreeing common understanding of basic issues which women's' organizations and other CSOs work on, developing common agenda and undertaking joint actions with gender sensitive content in partnership agreements. As a result gender dimension included in CSOs work on human rights, social justice, democratic mechanisms, education etc. Joint actions may involve, common advocacy, awareness rising through education, public events, media, research, campaigns etc.

Traditional leaders and institutions across the CSO spectrum need to embrace and accept women's rights and bring women's rights issues to the center of their agenda and movements.

Funding allocations and program strategies should reflect a commitment to gender equality, both in being targeted to women's issues and through accountability to analyse impacts from a transformational perspective - whether empowerment is really occurring.

In this it is important that funders increase core funding which is essential to provide organisations the flexibility to provide job security for women and men; and implement the range of policies and practices that have been identified as enabling women's participation. Women human rights and community development activists, many of whom are single or single mothers and enjoy little financial security, deserve economic justice to support them in carrying out their work.

- *Challenge the narrow economic focus of many gender programmes*

The growing dominance of economic development programs as a model for women's empowerment raises a need for significant reflection by CSOs. The micro-credit approach appears an easy response for governments and NGOs who link economic development to women's empowerment but often the impacts for women have not been adequately assessed. At grassroots level women say they need income - for children's education, transport etc. Not discounting there is a place for economic development initiatives but there needs to be proper monitoring and critique of the value systems behind the models – and this applies equally to all programmes addressing women's needs. To achieve greater scrutiny and analysis there is a need for capacity building from grassroots level NGOs to 'donor CSOs' to strengthen the focus on empowerment outcomes.

- *Commit to realising positive sustainable change*

For sustainable change, CSOs need to take a social justice approach to their work, from engaging with communities to understand the roots of the issues, to advocacy and service delivery. People's movements need to take a politically informed stand on women's issues. Identifying women's rights violations and consciously addressing them (i.e. explicitly stating women's rights in organisational missions, values and programme strategies) indicate that a group is promoting gender equality by analyzing and challenging the causes.

Initiate and build spaces for cross learning among movements. What is required is mentorship for new feminist leadership within movements. Social justice and human rights movement needs adequate qualitative and quantitative representation of women.

- *CSOs need to incorporate women's perspective into environment and sustainability*

Women, particularly rural and indigenous women, are highly experienced in managing natural resources, bringing valuable knowledge that should be harnessed through bottom-up

processes. Environmental sustainability requires harnessing traditional knowledge and skills, particularly that of women.

Women's role in sustaining their environment; their family's wellbeing and their health, are threatened by environmental degradation and by the practices of development actors entering communities and failing to consult with women and recognise their resilience in natural disasters and climate events (e.g. being seed keepers and knowing how to adapt crops to climate conditions).

Women's access to and control over resources are removed by CSOs and others (for example entities in public-private partnerships) engaging in practices that fail to adequately include women in decision-making as required in international agreements. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for example, gives a clear directive for free, prior and informed consent. When donors or others only consult with men, or give inadequate attention to meaningful and inclusive representation of women, they fail to meet their obligations under international standards.

- *Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity; create and share knowledge and mutual learning*

CSOs are primarily accountable, financially and more broadly, to women and men in their constituencies. Provision of public information via websites, list serves, audio visuals (videos), reports etc, need to be accessible to women of different abilities, and available in different languages.

International Cooperation for Development (ICD) is an important instrument for overcoming poverty and inequalities, but it cannot nor should it be used to substitute the primary tool possessed by contemporary societies—which consists of State resources. The use of these resources is stipulated in public policies that must promote equality between genders.

- *Guaranteeing women's security*

Safe spaces need to be provided where women can speak out in and outside the movement, and protecting the safety and security of women human rights defenders and women leaders.

It is urgently necessary to prioritize the head-on battle against all forms of violence against women within the overall agenda of CSOs. This includes the violence experienced on a daily basis within families, and work environments and political spaces as well as femicide (defined as the violent death of women—through murder, homicide or parricide—due to the simple fact that they are women), constituting the most severe violation of women's rights.

Public policies must propose explicit ways to remedy and thereby overcome the situation in order to verify that women are effectively being involved and are actors in development, it is necessary to verify that all policies, programs and projects are effectively aimed at guaranteeing

women: (i) control over their own bodies and fertility; (ii) economic autonomy and administration of resources; and (iii) political participation (at macro, medium and micro levels) from the perspective of their own interests and options.

### 3. Recommendations

Each region proposed a set of recommendations to put the Principles and Framework into action, which were context specific aware of the different situations particularly marginalised women face (please see annex for details from each regional report). The recommendations below are addressed to CSOs, governments and funders at a more general level.

As the Latin American consultation concluded if Principle Two of Istanbul were to be applied it would transform significantly the culture of CSOs and indeed the development agenda. CSOs must take on board the feminist agenda and promote gender equality within its structures and activities; this requires capacity building for CSOs to understand the available international instruments to advance gender equality. If CSOs can genuinely take up a gender equality agenda then development effectiveness based on social justice and human rights will emerge.

#### a. Recommendations to CSOs

##### 1) Build a gender aware culture and practice in and among CSOs:

- Build solidarity based on partnership mutual learning, collaboration, information and resource sharing among CSOs working on gender concerns
- Find opportunities for collaboration – peer-peer exchanges or exposure visits
- Undertake explicit agreements, ethical partnerships and code of conduct ensuring the coherence between practice and discourse in relation to gender equity guided by the Istanbul principles
- Respond not only to the immediate need on a service delivery basis but include a clear human rights and social justice gender perspective.
- Develop a monitoring capacity of key gender instruments to ensure governments compliance to them
- Build region wide strategies to support gender equality programmes creating the possibilities of regional peer – peer exchange and joint advocacy.
- Hold an open and frank dialogue with the large northern NGOs on gender equality to ensure that CSOs from the North do not see gender equality and equity as only an issue of the South

**2) Be accountable to gender equality and equity in all operations and delivery of services:**

- Assess the gender implications of the planning, design, development and implementation for any activity, decision or project undertaken
- Utilize international and regional gender instruments as a basis for advocacy

**3) Take affirmative action for gender equity within the CSO:**

- Ensure equity in remuneration and benefits for women and men employees
- Ensure gender balanced composition of decision making bodies in the CSO
- Ensure gender goals are part of the CSO agenda setting
- Ensure a gender friendly work environment
- Guarantee parity and redistribution of power and resources among women and men in the organisation

**4) Build leadership capacity of women in CSOs:**

- Ensure that there is parity of women and men in decision making processes
- Allocate resources for gender training including skills building, education and capacity building and strategies for working with the media
- Ensure adequate and appropriate personnel to integrate and mainstream gender in theory and practice within the organization and programming
- Provide services to enable women staff to reconcile their work, public involvement and family life

**5) Ensure sustainability of gender programmes:**

- Diversify sources of funding for sustainability of gender based programmes e.g. engage local corporate organisations through social corporate responsibility and local philanthropy
- Build fundraising and resource mobilisation skills for gender projects

**6) Bring women's rights and gender equality concerns to 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan:**

- Conduct political analysis of gendered aspect of the structural issues underlining the challenges of development effectiveness
- Work in alliance with women's advocates to advance human rights, especially women rights and gender equality in the efforts for poverty reduction and overcoming of inequalities in a context of changing development cooperation policies and practices
- Produce evidence based research for women's rights based main messages for Busan

**7) Bring a feminist and women's rights agenda to CSOs understanding of development:**

- Ensure women's economic, social and political autonomy
- Make sure women's specific concerns around sexual and reproductive rights are understood as critical to development effectiveness
- Understand and look closely at the issues of gender equality and equity with those of racism, sexual orientation, indigenous rights

## **b. Recommendations to governments of aid receiving countries**

**1) Create an environment where women's rights are respected and promoted:**

- Take a role in promoting cultural changes to institutionalise respect for women's human rights through measures such as incorporating gender equality into the curriculum in basic education.
- Abolish protectionist policies towards women instead to conduct programs to change men's behaviour.
- Support women in organising for their rights –particularly community women and migrant workers.
- Take responsibility for the rights of migrants, undocumented and 'stateless' people (including trafficked women, girls and boys).
- Pass and implement law on gender equality in workplaces, in policy and decision making bodies, and amend election laws to ensure women's equal participation in politics.

- Ensure sufficient knowledge and enforcement of internationally agreed gender instruments

**2) Recognise and support Civil Society efforts and mandates:**

- Abolish patriarchal law and policies from property rights, to protecting the rights of women in unregistered marriages, bride kidnapping and arranged marriage (including child marriages).
- Make legislation regarding CSO registration progressive.
- Provide policy support for CSOs to raise funds and mobilise local and international resources for women's rights and gender equality.
- Demonstrate political will to include meaningful participation of women and their organisations in decision making, by implementing a national framework of policies and programs to ensure this

**3) Observe international agreements and commitments to protect women's human rights:**

- Adopt and use international instruments which promote women's rights and gender equality (Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

**4) Promote a Bottom up development of gender agenda rather than donor led agenda:**

- Promote ownership of the gender agenda among communities by allowing them to drive the process in order to encourage community ownership (i.e. people centred and rights based).
- Give priority to gender in planning and implementation (including gender impact assessments) of all development projects
- Allocate funds to the gender equality theme and strengthening the capacity and expertise of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and/or other institutions responsible for the planning and implementation of development policies and cooperation
- More vocal support for strategic goals for gender equality, not just addressing immediate needs of women and girls.
- More effective engagement with local advocacy groups.



- Include CSOs from recipient's countries in developing concept and drafting the programs

**5) Adopt Gender Mainstreaming and specific measures in development policy:**

- Take a Twin-track approach: gender mainstreaming (mainstreaming gender issues into all aspects of development policy) and specific measures (aimed at socioeconomic and political empowerment of women)
- Involve Gender Equality State Institutions in foreign policy issues related to gender equality incl. development cooperation
- Monitor and assess the impact of development aid from gender perspective including the use of gender budgeting

**6) Create mutual learning opportunities and information sharing between governments, CSOs and donors**

**c. Recommendations to donors (states, multilateral agencies, donor CSOs)**

**1) Work towards harmonization:**

- Avoid duplication and complement each other's work ( and CSOs) on gender equality with a harmonization of agendas and coherent strategic and connected plans to combat gender inequalities effectively
- Ear mark funds by gender-responsive budgeting
- Take a unified stance in international development debates and processes to advocate a human rights approach to development with a strong gender pillar

**2) Address structural inequities in the global funding environment:**

- See civil society both as a recipient for aid money and as stakeholders in setting aid priorities. Reduce the competition for funding between multi-lateral agencies and civil society
- End the financial practices of multi-lateral agencies of hiring highly paid consultants often from the global North,

- Include women and associations promoting gender equality in policy debates. Women citizens must have the means of demanding investigations of abuses of their rights or neglect of their needs.
- Fund social transformation programmes with a commitment to support long-term change for women.
- Make more funding made directly available to southern CSOs, rather than channeling funds through multi-lateral agencies or Northern CSOs.
- Create formal space for genuine dialogue with Southern CSOs, joint setting of programme strategies and priorities with particular attention to including the voices of women

### **3) Demonstrate commitment to supporting women:**

- Implement democratic practices including enabling (funding) participation of women's groups in consultations; represent women's agendas and take steps to address internal power / discrimination structures when entering communities.
- Take a policy approach to meeting women's needs including being prepared to fund and support specific measures such as breastfeeding facilities, crèche services (within CSO operations and in programme activities); women's capacity building and networking.
- Support CSOs to have accountability mechanisms including the capacity to provide access to information to diverse women (websites, annual reports in accessible languages and formats).
- Take women's perspectives into account when setting programme strategies. Programmes should not be driven by donor priorities in isolation from full and inclusive participation of women, particularly marginalised women.
- Give more resources to informal women's rights groups that are not formally registered as associations and organisations.
- Increase the proportion of funding that is made available to women's programmes.
- Undertake critical analysis of development initiatives to determine whether empowerment or reinforced discrimination is occurring. Make opportunities to learn directly from women.
- Adopt a gender equity approach and reject moral policing and protectionist policies.
- Implement realistic and meaningful reporting requirements with greater emphasis on qualitative achievements.

**4) Provide core funding:**

- Move from Project-based funding which reduces the economic and job security of CSO staff, leaving CSOs unable to provide social security along with disproportionate burdens of reporting detracting from their accountability to constituents
- Increase Core funding which is essential to provide organisations the flexibility to provide job security for women and men; and implement the range of policies and practices that have been identified as enabling women's participation.

**5) Support programmes for gender equality:**

- Promote knowledge of the legal framework that defends the rights of women in each country.
- Strengthen the structures for applying the laws that promote an end to violence against women.
- Finance and provide technical assistance to the CSOs dedicated to helping people take ownership of laws to end violence against women
- Require the CSOs to explicitly stipulate how they will assume their commitment to gender equality and work with established entities in the specific work of defending women's rights
- Promote ownership of the gender agenda which is people centred and rights based

**6) Allocate resources for gender training including skills building, education and capacity building and strategies for working with the media:**

- Provide support to gender education and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at combating existing stereotypes which sustain gender inequality and do not allow women to fully benefit from development
- Support wider use of gender sensitive methodology in development programs planning: gender segregated statistics, gender budgeting, conducting gender-related legal expertise of the legislation in force and draft laws and normative acts
- Help 'translate' or adjust donor infrastructure and funding processes for smaller CSOs or grassroots groups. Allow more space for organisations to present their results in a manner that better fits their needs and capacities (e.g. audio-visual methods, videoing).

**7) Promote transparency and openness in all development programs:**

- Include CSOs and local authorities in decision making processes, monitoring and assessment of development cooperation

**8) Finance long term programmes:**

- Focus on achieving sustainable outcomes not possible to achieve in the short term
- Work with CSOs to form a democratic, transformative agenda based on gender equality, social justice and human rights

## 4. Annex - Summary and highlights of regional consultations and surveys

### Introduction

The consultations focused on institutional practices of CSOs and CSO Programmes and Women's Rights Movements; and what is required for donors and governments to provide an enabling environment for gender equality and women's rights. Each Regional Consultation reflected the different interests and concerns of the regional constituency as well as the nature of the consultations. The following reflects the main points which emerged from face to face and virtual consultations.

### a. Asia Pacific<sup>1</sup>

***Coordinated by the Asia Pacific forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)***

*'CSOs, donors and governments if they are committed [to the principles] need to go beyond recognition to practice ... not to limit their role to just providing money or services ... to identify and address violations of women's human rights.'*

(Asia Pacific Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

**Who participated:** 26 participants (24 women and 2 men) from 23 national and regional organisations attended the workshop from Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and input provided by Sri Lanka. Representation included migrant workers, women's rights, disability rights, and civil society umbrella organisations, indigenous and rural women. Representatives from the Thailand offices of two European CSOs also attended.

*'The exclusion of women prevents sustainability and effective development'*

(Asia Pacific Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

### Gender within all the Principles

The consultation first considered how to ensure gender equality and women's rights are integrated into all the Istanbul Principles.

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<sup>1</sup> Complete regional report for Asia Pacific available at: [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/asia\\_gender\\_consultation\\_report.pdf](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/asia_gender_consultation_report.pdf)

Principle 1 – *‘Respect and promote human rights and social justice’* – requires that CSOs challenge cultural norms and gender stereotypes by addressing the patriarchal practices in NGO. This requires attention at every level of the development effectiveness debate, from within CSOs and people’s movements, to donors and the ways and methods they choose to allocate funds, to the role of governments in creating and enforcing structural barriers to women.

Principle 2 – *‘Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls’ rights’* – needs to consider diversity and issues of intersectionality within the women’s movements, and the particular needs of women’s marginalized groups such as migrant women workers, indigenous women, women with disabilities, LGBTI women and women in situations of conflict and forced displacement.

Principle 3 – *‘Focus on people’s empowerment, democratic ownership and participation’* requires that women and marginalized people are considered partners in leadership and in all levels of organisational operations. The terms ‘democratic ownership’ and ‘citizen’ are problematic for groups such as undocumented migrants, refugees, and stateless people and minority groups.

Principle 4 – *‘Promote Environmental Sustainability’* – needs to include the need to “*promote viable traditional/indigenous knowledge and practices on environmental sustainability and strengthen the role of rural and indigenous women in these processes*”. The concern was raised that this principle led to constructive engagement among CSOs and donors (such as donors supporting environmental impact assessments and ensuring environment environmental safety for rural and indigenous women in government or commercial projects) rather than placing constraints on CSO operations.

Principle 5 – *‘Practice transparency and accountability’* – needs to recognise women in groups that work outside or contrary to mainstream power structures such as migrant groups, working with undocumented people) and human rights activists, particularly women. In some contexts, transparency may endanger these communities. Accountability needs to beneficiaries (such as ensuring the right to information) needs to outweigh accountability to donors. This includes CSOs making available financial and annual reports to participants showing the resources coming in, work implemented and results. Provision of public information via websites, list serves, audio visuals (videos), reports etc, needs to make accessible to women of different abilities, and available in different languages.

Principle 6 – *‘Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity’* – needs to ensure genuine two-way engagement among donors and CSOs and among CSOs and concerned women in the communities. It is important to enhance solidarity through mapping of CSOs working on gender concerns to find opportunities for collaboration – peer-peer exchanges or exposure visits.

Principle 7 – ‘*Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning*’ – it is important not to burden unduly grassroots women to document their work respecting the valid use of their time. CSOs, donors and governments if they are committed [to the principles] need to go beyond recognition to practice ... not to limit their role to just providing money or services ... to have women’s rights as human rights as a central tenet and identify and address violations of women’s human rights.

Principle 8 – ‘*Commit to realising positive sustainable change*’ – sustainable change in relation to women’s human rights is a long-term goal and movements should actively build the capacity of new feminists and activists, and strengthen networks between movements. The realisation of this principle requires the centrality of gender equality across all aspects of development and within all the 7 other principles.

### ***Ensure the participation of women in marginalized groups in the lead up to Busan***

The Open Forum process needs to take into account the concerns and needs of marginalized groups, particularly marginalized women from the indigenous, migrant and refugee community. Those women working ‘on the margins’ or in highly politicized environments require the Open Forum process to strengthen their voices rather than further marginalise them and their constituencies. The Open Forum needs to pay specific attention to include marginalized women such as indigenous and migrant women in all processes in the lead up to Busan.

### **CSOs embodying gender equity and equality in institutional practices**

Traditional leaders and institutions across the CSO spectrum need to embrace and accept women’s rights and bring women’s rights issues to the centre of their agenda and movements.  
(Asia Pacific Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

The consultation focused in detail on guidelines, mechanisms and indicators for CSOs to put into practice Istanbul Principle Two.

#### ***- Embody gender equity***

Funding allocations and program strategies should reflect a commitment to gender equality, both in being targeted to women’s issues and through accountability to analyse impacts from a transformational perspective - whether empowerment is really occurring. Economic empowerment is important but there needs also a critique of the value system behind dominant economic models. In order to achieve greater scrutiny and analysis there is a need for capacity building from grassroots level NGOs to ‘donor CSOs’ to strengthen the focus on empowerment outcomes, for example the micro finance initiatives which often have placed greater burdens on women while men’s responsibility has diminished.

The primary focus of CSOs is accountability to their constituencies, and on establishing meaningful and realistic processes and mechanisms for CSOs to achieve accountability for gender equity. The Principles are taken as a guiding framework for effective development which CSOs should be able to adapt according to their needs and priorities, with gender equality as cross-cutting and not merely a stand-alone set of indicators. This raises the need for resources for CSOs to implement the principles and recognition and commitment from donors. A major challenge is to be specific yet realistic in having indicators that allow CSOs to go through a process of becoming more inclusive of women rather than expecting large changes overnight.

- *Build conceptual clarity*

It is important to build capacity within organisations on substantive gender equality so that CSOs are informed and act with an understanding of the implications. Such a capacity has to be holistic, and cover all levels of organisations in depth the awareness and approach need to be internalised throughout the structures of CSOs, and once internalized, to be fed into grassroots membership.

Funding allocations and program strategies should reflect a commitment to gender equality, both in being targeted to women's issues and through accountability to analyse impacts from a transformational perspective - whether empowerment is really occurring.  
(Asia Pacific Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

- *Address structural barriers to the full participation of women in CSOs*

Existing discriminations (barriers) must be addressed through mechanisms to promote women's full participation. CSOs need to be proactive in providing effective spaces for women to participate. CSOs need to develop built in mechanisms to put the guidelines into practice in full recognition of women's existing heavy workloads/gendered roles including as mothers and carers; and practical considerations where women are not safe out at night. The provision of flexible working hours to account for women's other duties such as taking children to school, cooking or caring for family members. These measures do not ignore the need to challenge unequal sharing of home duties between men and women, but acknowledge the realities posed for women by entrenched social norms. In mixed organisations CSOs may be able to model shared gender responsibilities through considering both maternity and paternity provisions.

Spaces are needed within CSOs for women to break their silence through anti-discrimination policies, inclusive not protectionist in nature, (e.g equal opportunity; anti-sexual harassment) so that women have avenues to address sexual harassment, gender-based violence etc in CSOs. CSOs need to provide regular gender awareness capacity building for women and men, so that staff develop increased consciousness and reflect this in institutional and programme aspects.



Other measures include: Job descriptions should have a gender dimension; gender focal points for mainstreaming gender sensitivity and a gender sensitive checklist for staff to use; regular monitoring for gender sensitivity. This also requires ensuring safety at work, including providing spaces where women speak out in and outside the movement, and protecting the safety and security of women human rights defenders and women leaders.

- *Practice transparency and accountability*

It is important to implement mechanisms for consultation with staff in decision-making, such as recording decisions of management and governance, sharing information. Specific mechanisms to support participatory decision-making (including policy development etc) would be monthly meetings where all staff are free to table agenda items along with a transparent approach reflected in the presence and utilisation of organisational policies, from financial management to rules and procedures.

- *Promote women's leadership*

CSOS need to provide opportunities for relevant training and skills building, planned with specific considerations that enable women's participation. This includes: recognising and harnessing women's existing knowledge and skills; empowering young women activists and to strengthen networks across the women's movement, including marginalised groups such as women with disabilities, LGBTI groups, migrant workers, indigenous women.

Implementing transparent affirmative action policies and actively promote women's inclusion in staff, management and governance levels has to be understood as ensuring qualitative and not simply quantitative representation.

(Asia Pacific Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

- *Commit to positive sustainable change*

For sustainable change, CSOs need to take a social justice approach to their work. People's movements need to take a politically informed stand on women's issues explicitly stating women's rights in organisational missions, values and programme strategies.

Women's role in sustaining their environment; their family's wellbeing and their health, are threatened by environmental degradation and by the practices of development actors entering communities and failing to consult with women and recognise their resilience in natural disasters and climate events (e.g. being seed keepers and knowing how to adapt crops to climate conditions).

Indicators of mutual accountability and true partnership towards gender equity between CSOs (eg North and South) include equity in decision making including meaningful involvement of all partners, and gender-sensitive content in Partnership Agreements.

Women's CSOs need to engage directly with donors and governments to increase their recognition of true empowerment – provide awareness raising and exposure to CSOs work in order to ensure initiatives from the CSO perspective rather than donor's perspective.

*'Sustainable change in relation to women's human rights is a long-term goal and movements should actively build the capacity of new feminists and activists, and strengthen networks between movements.'*

(Asia Pacific Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

## **b. Latin American Consultation<sup>2</sup>**

***Coordinated by a coalition of women, feminists and CSOs under the leadership of ALOP***

The Latin America Consultation on gender equality and equity was based on 3 working modalities: 5 country meetings which took place in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, and Nicaragua with the participation of around 560 people (mostly women). One regional face-to-face meeting held in Bogotá with 50 participants mostly women from 16 countries. And a virtual questionnaire that was responded by 300 Spanish speaking CSOs from 23 countries; from these respondents, 89 are CSOs identify them selves as women organizations, plus 67 which do not identify them selves as women organizations but devote more than 75% of their personnel to women's programmes; this means that 38.6% of the respondents are working specifically on women's issues, and the rest 61.4% are CSO working in development issues in general.

The consultations elaborated the 8 principles drawn up in 2010 by the Open Forum in Istanbul, which examined how women's and feminist movements must establish women's human rights as a central component to democracy and development. The development effectiveness agenda cannot be compromised by failing to take gender equality and equity and women's rights into account. The Open Forum must therefore promote women's organisations and women's voices in the political arena in order to end discrimination against women and so that gender equality and human rights become the basis of democracy and development.

The consultation concluded that if Principle Two of Istanbul were to be applied it would transform significantly the culture of CSOs and indeed the development agenda. CSOs therefore must take on board the feminist agenda and promote gender equality within its structures and activities; this requires capacity building for CSOs to understand the available international instruments to advance gender equality. Women's and feminist organisations must participate in all levels of CSOs life as part of an open and democratic culture of CSOs, in this context violence against women must become an integral part of the CSOs agenda. If CSOs can genuinely take up a gender equality agenda then development effectiveness based on social justice and human rights will emerge. Equality and respect of women's human rights has to be seen as a central component of democracy and development. CSOs need to ensure that the agreed international instruments which consecrate these rights are upheld by governments and society. The development effectiveness agenda cannot be unrelated to these commitments."

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<sup>2</sup> Complete regional report for Latin America available at: [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/consulta\\_de\\_genero\\_version\\_final\\_9\\_esp\\_para\\_publicacion.pdf](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/consulta_de_genero_version_final_9_esp_para_publicacion.pdf)

The CSOs participating in the Latin American consultation acknowledged the contribution made by women's and feminist organizations to promoting the right to organize. The consultation argued strongly for women to be present in the public space, for women to engage in the formulation of public policies, for all CSOs to promote participative budgets and to monitor public policies to ensure gender equality and women's rights are included. A gender equity policy for development effectiveness entails the strengthening of women's participation in all forms of public life as well as direct strategies to overcome gender based discrimination.

### **Principle 2 for gender equity**

Discussion on the Istanbul Principle Two opened up an important space in all the Latin American consultations on how to transform CSO practice to include gender equity. Despite best intentions in practice contradict this principle. Not only a gender discourse is needed but also institutional practice that warrants parity and power distribution within CSOs.

Although many CSOs see human rights as critical and universal they do not always see women's rights as needing specific attention, they rather see those rights as being the terrain of women's or feminist organizations. For example, sexual and reproductive rights which warrant reproductive autonomy or freedom to make choices, such as those linked to ethics and economy, are not on the agenda of CSOs which do not identify themselves as women's organizations; whereas economic rights (for economic autonomy and income generation for women included) tend to be more commonly on the agenda of broader development CSOs.

It is clear that gender needs to be more understood and developed conceptually, along with the methodologies and the instruments that effectively allow the incorporation of a gender perspective into the all CSOs and, consequently, the follow-up of its effectiveness.

There is a clear tension between the cross-sectional inclusion of gender perspective within CSOs in general and the strengthening strategies of women's organizations in particular. It is important that taking up a gender perspective does not undermine the autonomy of women's organizations as political actors in their own right in development struggles. It is also important to include conceptually within CSOs the fight against racism and ethno-centrism as well as the discrimination against sexual orientation.

### **Democratic and egalitarian societies: changing the imaginaries**

To advance in equality implies the consolidation of democratic societies able to move the foundations of patriarchal categories, which place women in subordinate spaces. The consultation underlined that the State is principally responsible for securing women's human rights. States have responsibilities to adhere to international instruments, resolutions and

recommendations of international jurisprudence in favour of equality. The consultation indicated that generally there is insufficient knowledge of these instruments and insufficient emphasis is given to enforce them. It is important for CSOs to develop a monitoring capacity, and advocacy strategies to ensure governments comply with international instruments. Such strategies would include the transfer of knowledge among countries creating the possibilities of regional peer – peer exchange and joint advocacy.

### **Promote equity within CSOs**

Advancement in women's strategic requires an in-depth power analysis within CSOs committed to development prioritizing the work within CSOs to reflect feminist agendas and a gender approach. A richer analysis of gender relations will enable CSOs to better understand the meaning of gender approach and to assume it in an active and structural way. Training spaces in CSOs are needed to ensure CSOs know and manage international instruments and resolutions related to gender, and to advance in the application of a self-reflection of their own gender power relations within organizations. In this analysis it is important to consider that the construction of democratic agendas involves the active participation of diverse subjects such as discriminated and marginalised, women, indigenous people, black movement and LGBT people, all these groups need to work together within a democratic and effective agenda for human rights. In this it is critical to focus on the local sphere and to build up a common agenda rather than imposing a top down international agenda. This requires that finances are available for women's organizations and civil society organizations to increase their political effectiveness from a legal and ethical dimension. CSOs should promote the establishment of explicit agreements (e.g., ethics codes, transparency agreements, etc.) that would reflect the varied dimensions of the Istanbul principles, such as coherence between practice and discourse in relation to gender equity.

On the development effectiveness agenda should be both economic justice and sexual and reproductive rights. Women's empowerment should be interpreted as the capacity of women to decide upon resources, linked to their bodily autonomy and emancipation. It is important to prioritize economic empowerment of women, and to pay attention to the topic of property and women's capacity to decide upon their patrimonies (with the distinction made between holder of rights in law and being a subject in law). The topic 'violence against women' must equally be part of the democratic agenda of CSOs and should not be isolated as a specific problem of marginal projects, but it should be part of citizen and public security programmes, and one of central elements for development effectiveness.

Along with the efforts to ensure that a gender perspective is held by all CSOs generally, in addition there must be efforts to strengthen feminists and women's movements as a specific topic of special relevance to development. The development agenda with gender equality at its centre can only be reached if women are given the political space to advance women's rights and women's autonomy.

The consultation in Latin America concluded that gender equality and women's rights are already recognized as issues within the CSO community. What is required is a much more effective understanding of the nuances of gender in order to ensure an effective understanding of gender approach within CSOs that would help secure women's rights and the development of equalitarian societies.

**The recommendations which emerged from Latin America are for all CSO organisations to:**

- Put into practice gender equity within the organisation by guaranteeing parity and redistribution of resources and real power among women and men in the organisation
- Ensure that there is parity of women and men in decision making roles
- Ensure women's economic, social and political autonomy
- Make sure women's specific concerns around sexual and reproductive rights are understood as critical to development effectiveness by all the CSOs as well as the governments and development cooperation agencies
- Build the capacity of all CSOs to understand gender conceptually
- Overcome the tension around the concept of gender by ensuring that gender is perceived not just as a women's issue but a concern for all CSOs including within CSOs organisational arrangements
- Understand and look closely at the issues of gender equality with those of racism, sexual orientation, indigenous rights
- Hold an open and frank dialogue with the large northern NGOs on gender equality to ensure that CSOs from the North do not see gender equality as only an issue of the South



## Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness

- Open up new democratic spaces that are built on gender equality challenging patriarchal and colonial images of subordinated women.
- Promote development as a process that is about political, ethical and legal change.
- Enshrine a gender equality agenda based on women's human rights using the existing commitments of international legal instruments on gender
- Ensure new funds are made available to support women's movements and CSOs and a genuine shift to new forms of democracy based on human rights and social justice.

### c. Africa Consultation on Gender and Development Effectiveness<sup>3</sup>

#### *Coordinated by Women for Change*

**Who Participated:** A total of 23 participants attended the consultation from a cross section of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) representing Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Gender issues are now being seen as a critical criterion for the effective achievement of the MDGs, rather than as a theoretical and technical policy. This needs further strengthening but this can only be done if gender issues are mainstreamed into local, state and federal government development strategies.

(CSO Response to Africa Survey on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

#### **Gender and Open Forum process and aims**

It is important that the Open Forum engages small grassroots women's organisations especially those situated in rural areas. The Open Forum processes need to ensure a wide involvement at community levels even if a lack of capacity and resources could prove a hindrance. In understanding aid effectiveness the main measure is how development aid reaches the most vulnerable groups among women, girls and boys in the provision of shelter, food, health, training and education.

A major concern was in the same way the MDG campaign lost its vibrancy the Open Forum initiative will go the same path. Therefore it was critical to focus on operationalising the principles and for CSOs to take charge of the effectiveness agenda rather than it being decided for them. The main challenges highlighted were the divided CSO world and the high donor dependency levels among some CSOs.

While most countries had signed to a number of instruments relating to gender and have gender policies and frameworks in place, implementation remains a challenge. It is therefore important to have guidelines that focus on affirmative action on women's participation in all the 8 Istanbul principles.

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<sup>3</sup> Complete regional report for Africa available at: [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/africa\\_gender\\_consultation\\_report\\_april\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/africa_gender_consultation_report_april_2011.pdf)



When seeking to operationalise the principles it is important to take into account the views of grassroots women and girls as well as advocating adoption of the Principles at the highest level such as the engagement of regional bodies such as the SADC Council of NGOs.

### **Creating a secure environment for women and communities**

Development cannot happen in conflict situations, it is important that CSOs are part of peace building processes, and that the voice of women is clearly heard in relation to the impact of conflict and war.

Creating a peaceful environment requires building a critical mass of women and men at the decision – making levels in fragile contexts and conflict areas. This will allow more women to address the root causes of conflict and to participate in problem solving. CSOs and the donor community need to provide avenues for women to share information on women’s best practices for peace, including lessons learned on women’s traditional role in mediation and reconciliation as well as an assessment of their relevance to present day situations. To avoid conflict it is important that CSOs establish communication networks to facilitate cooperation between local women leaders, women politicians and peace researchers for mutual support, early warning and early response; and develop a common understanding of the impact of violent conflicts, especially from a gender perspective.

### **The funding environment**

The shrinking space for CSOs in Africa has had negative impact in gender programming with women’s CSOs having to struggle to gain limited resources. It is critical that gender does not get buried among the other principles but to be given prominence in order to allocate resources to the sector.

Funders (and CSO partners) need to take the bottom up support model to development of the gender agenda rather than donors dictating it. This requires promoting ownership of the gender agenda among communities which is people centred and rights based. International donors should encourage African governments to prioritise gender in planning and implementation and fund mutual learning opportunities and information sharing between governments, CSOs and donors.

### **Patriarchal barriers**

There are crosscutting issues that affect organisations whether women focused or mainstream organisations due to the patriarchal nature of African societies. For example, funding can be gender blind since funding bodies’ tend to be male dominated. There is an apprehension about

demands for gender equality and equity due to the misunderstanding of the concept of gender by men who dominate the higher structures of decision-making. Gender is viewed as a woman's issue because so far it is an issue that is being led by women and for women, thus it is mostly linked to women and feminist movements. Consequently, there is need to ensure guidelines are inclusive and take on board economic, political, social and cultural aspects so that the concept of gender is not seen as a threat but something that addresses power relations between women and men in a positive light.

In most organizations, there are not enough resources for women to advance in their academic/professional studies. This also depends on the funding that is available for such courses, and also on the attitude of the Executive Director and the Board in terms of whether they appreciate the need for their staff to engage in professional advancement.  
(CSO Response to Africa Survey on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

### **Successful strategies for gender effectiveness**

Successful strategies for gender effectiveness that are working in the African region include gender mainstreaming, empowerment and capacity building, gender budgeting and gender disaggregated data (for indicator purposes).

Other strategies for success include community involvement, including men's and traditional leadership involvement, encouraging positive discrimination towards women, including policy and legislation in favour of women and economic empowerment for women and girls. Building institutional capacity, includes undertaking research and documentation, along with lobby and advocacy including at grassroots level and increasing awareness of gender issues through the media and movement building mobilisation.

### **Promote dialogue**

Civil society organizations need to continuously engage with the traditional gatekeepers, namely traditional leaders and religious leaders in ensuring that they appreciate that women and men need equal opportunities to engage in socio-economic and political processes. This will ensure that ordinary women have an opportunity to take part effectively in community projects without fearing that the traditional/religious leaders might denounce them as 'immoral women' who want to challenge the status quo especially in rural areas.  
(Africa Survey on Gender and Development Effectiveness)

### **Creating an enabling environment for CSOs**

The lack of an enabling environment for gender equity and women's rights is due to the lack of adequate policy frameworks on gender and where they exist their implementation. Public laws, customary teaching and practices are gender blind and most policies and programmes at national and local levels have failed to analyse the impact of macroeconomic and sector policies on the marginalized groups of women.

In some areas there is a lack of freedom of speech undermining lobbying and advocacy efforts and a general lack of leadership championing gender and influencing policy making. Much of the resources are put in the hands of corporate or private sector and a high level of corruption has created an unfriendly environment for women's participation in decision-making processes.

This situation is exacerbated by cultural norms and religious beliefs which paint women as followers rather than leaders reflecting the chauvinistic characteristics of Africa. It seems women lack the motivation to take up leadership as men look down on their abilities and thus remain subservient to males both in the church, politics and community activities.

An absence of capacity building opportunities for women has made it difficult for women to engage in other development issues like climate and trade but rather focus on 'softer' issues such as women's rights.

There is a general lack of affirmative action, lack of acceptance of alternative work methodologies such as distance working, working from home, working part time. Inadequate maternity and paternity coverage and lack of day-care facilities prevent women's full engagement in work including CSO sector.

### **Creating political for gender programming at all levels**

While there are a number of instruments in places addressing the subject of gender equality and women's participation, the levels of commitment to the policies are not adequate. This is evident in the numbers of continuing high rates of HIV and AIDS among women and girls, gender based violence and limited number of women being able to take up micro finance projects even in the agricultural field. There continues to be few women in leadership and decision making positions both in the political and economic spheres and gender fails to be covered adequately in the media.

The gender blindness and bias at policy level is indicated by gender blind budgeting in most countries, most countries in Africa do not reach the 30% female participation in political leadership and the feminisation of poverty in the continent.

**Charters to build gender commitments in Africa:**

Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Legislative advocacy on domesticating UN Resolution 1325, Affirmative Action

Protocol to the African charter on human and People's rights on the rights of women in Africa

Maputo Plan of Action on Maternal Health in Africa

MDG Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action Declaration

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

African Democracy Charter

The law on female genital mutilation

**Guidelines for sustained gender aware CSO projects**

A gender assessment in planning, design, development and implementation should be pre condition for any activity, decision or project undertaken. The project needs to be accountable to gender equality and equity in all its operations and delivery, guided by international and regional instruments that have gender equality as a goal along with ethical partnership principles. Gender equity needs to be a principle in the project's remuneration and benefits, with women having equitable access to and control over resources, opportunities and benefits.

In order to reach sustainability a project/programme should diversify sources of funding e.g. engage local corporate organisations through government creation of local framework for support to CSOs (Social corporate responsibility; local philanthropy). Ensure women are part of

the fundraising efforts and mobilization skills efforts included in decision making and agenda setting processes and that a gender friendly environment is ensured.

The capacity of the partners involved in the project would include understanding and application of gender concept (theory and practice); access to skills and education (part of resources should be towards capacity building in gender for funded programmes); secure adequate and appropriate personnel to integrate and mainstream gender within the organizations. The CSOs' would promote economic, political, cultural, technological and social empowerment an integral part of gender work with strategic use of the media, mutual learning and solidarity and be flexible enough to seize funding opportunities which respond to changing needs of communities.

#### d. Consultation of CEE and CIS countries<sup>4</sup>

*Coordinated by KARAT Coalition for Gender Equality*

*'There is a broad consensus on supporting gender equality in target countries. In reality, it seems, there is little attention paid to these issues in the policy documents or projects funded'*  
(EE CIS Survey).

*'There is no real cross cutting policy'*  
(EE CIS Survey, Slovakia)

**Who Participated:** The region includes EU New Member States (NMS), non EU Eastern European and Balkan countries, Caucasus and central Asia. The questionnaire was sent to 85 organizations and a few individual experts from 23 countries of the CEE/CIS region based on the list of potential participants of the survey which was carefully compiled of women's organizations, development organizations and other CSOs and individuals that KARAT identified as relevant for gender and development work during its few years experience in this field in the region. In total 41 questionnaires filled by the organizations from 17 countries of the region were returned to KARAT. 26 of them describe themselves as women's organizations, 21 as development NGOs. Most of them work in urban and rural areas in their home countries as well as in other countries of the region. In general about 70 – 75% of the beneficiaries of their activities are women.

As well as in their home countries, the NMS organizations taking part in the survey implement their activities also in Balkan countries, Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan), Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan), Eastern Europe (Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia), Asia (China, India, Pakistan), Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Uganda), Haiti and Middle East region. They also cooperate with different European partners. The majority of the organizations work both in urban and rural areas. The majority of the NON EU organizations taking part in the survey work both in urban and rural areas, a few (3) work exclusively with rural women. Apart from activities in their home countries some of the organizations closely cooperate with partners from neighbouring countries.

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<sup>4</sup> Complete regional report for CEE and CIS countries available at: CEE and CIS countries: [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/open\\_forum\\_survey\\_questions\\_summary\\_karat.pdf](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/open_forum_survey_questions_summary_karat.pdf)

*'There is increasing awareness about gender in development cooperation, but not yet sufficient (...) not yet any gender mainstreaming in development cooperation in Estonia among CSOs'*  
(EE and CIS Survey, Estonia)

## **Regional context**

Development cooperation and especially in gender context is very new issue in the region. The region covers both, donor and recipients countries. Working together under the framework of development cooperation is a new situation for both groups of the countries. Neither EU New Member State (NMS) are experienced donors nor do developing countries of the region see them as such. Countries in the region do not identify themselves with the 'Global South' although in many cases they are listed by OECD DAC among low-income countries, lower and upper middle income countries and recipients of ODA.

What the NMS and other countries of the region share is the experience of the political and economic systemic transition, which, apart from political reasons, also seems to be a basis for the current development cooperation between them. The newly established (or in progress) development policies and programs of EU NMS set the developing countries of the region (Eastern Europe, Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia) as the priority countries for NMS development cooperation.

The awareness on development cooperation is low in NMS societies and this issue is also not among the priorities of the governments. The development policies and strategies in NMS are functioning for relatively short time or are just being developed. As for gender in development it is an issue hardly recognized by decision makers, CSOs and general public. This is generally related to the fact that awareness and understanding of gender equality and women's rights is very low in NMS. Development CSOs are not focusing on gender issues and they are rarely mainstreaming gender in their activities. At the same time only few women's organizations are involved in development cooperation, which does not help the recognition of gender aspects of development by the CSOs and decision makers.

In addition, it seems that the transition process in NMS is not completed in the area of gender equality. Women's organizations in NMS are still using international standards (mainly EU) as tools for gender equality related work, therefore they better understand their gender standards with women's organizations in developing countries of the region, rather than their own countries' achievements in the area of gender equality.

*'There is gender sensitiveness only in those areas in which the gender concept is regulated by law, so there is forced and formal gender awareness not a real one.'*  
(EE and CIS Survey, Macedonia)

In non EU countries of the region, which are often the recipients of development aid from NMS, the situations seem to be similar. Gender equality and women's rights are not mainstreamed properly in development cooperation activities. Women's organizations are involved in work on various women's issues which are development issues (economic status of women, reproductive health, women's participation in public life, girls' education etc) but they do not always identify themselves as development cooperation actors. This is due to the low awareness of both development and gender issues and the fact that development donors' in these countries rarely include gender issues in their agenda.

In general the NMS organizations agree that the awareness on gender in development among decision makers and NGOs is not sufficient and that the policies and instruments of development cooperation which are still new or just being developed and do not cover sufficiently the gender aspects of development. Still, even if some issues are included in documents they are hardly ever properly implemented in practice.

Almost all of the NON EU organizations agree that the gender awareness of the decision makers is low. The situations varies depending on countries, some , i.e. Caucasus organizations see signs of improvement mainly as far as adopting of gender related legislation is concerned, others, for example Ukrainian organizations perceive the situation very negatively and provide examples of total ignorance of the decision makers in the area of gender equality.

The majority agrees however that while the situation is not dramatic in terms of the adopted laws (numerous examples of relevant acts on gender equality, women's rights and other related laws are provided by the surveyed organizations) at the same time the implementation of the law leaves a lot to be desired. The laws are often not understood by the decision makers due to their lack of gender awareness which is a consequence of already mentioned deeply rooted and not addressed gender stereotypes and traditional patriarchal cultures.

An unstable political situation influences negatively the continuity of work on gender related issues. It is also mentioned that very often CSOs manage to cooperate with gender sensitive decision makers who do not however have enough power, strong position and abilities to foster the wider implementation of gender related legislation.



Gender awareness among CSOs is assessed more positively, the majority agrees that despite there is still much to do the CSOs awareness of gender issues and interest in working on gender is growing. There is a number of examples of successful implementation of the projects/initiatives jointly by women's organizations and other CSOs.

The majority of NON EU organizations share the view that the role of the international donors is essential as far as the funding of gender equality and women's rights related activities is concerned, due to the fact that they are relatively more sensitive to these issues in comparison to other donors.

*'The role of the country's development partners and donor community is crucial to achieving progress in this domain from both points of view – that of financial support and that of informational assistance and experience'*

(EE and CIS Survey, Moldova)

In spite of the appreciation of donor's engagement, it was also noticed that the funds available are not sufficient and decreasing in many countries. It is an opinion shared by many organizations that the donors are not in effective dialogue with local women's NGOs, which leads to the situation where the actual needs are often not addressed, the funds are not spent most efficiently and there is not enough partnership in implemented activities.

*'Donor community is at political declaration level is gender sensitive at the level of its commitments implementation is very weak. Joint country support strategy is not gender sensitive. Adequate resources are not allocated for gender equality and women's rights advancement, it is not adequately mainstreamed and capacity of their staff is not sufficient to make their policies and program in the county gender sensitive. Women's organizations are not involved into the priorities development as well as into the joint monitoring process. Lack of effective and constructive cooperation process led to lack of sustainable dialogue among donors' community and women's organizations on women's issues and gender equality'*

(EE and CIS Survey, Kyrgyzstan)

A few organizations mentioned that the international donors; agencies compete with the local organizations in accessing the funds as well as by implementing their own projects.

A crucial problem of donors' approach is lack of institutional funding for CSOs which is essential in the whole 'post communist' region due to the fact that the civil society has very short tradition here, it is still weak and needs sustainable support in order to establish themselves in

the relatively new democratic societies, or in the countries which are still far from democracy. Funding based on short term projects makes this goal impossible to reach.

Finally, all surveyed organizations constantly stress the importance of the problem of traditional patriarchal cultures and gender stereotypes existing in their societies. Addressing this problem requires long term strategic activities which require funds which are lacking.

*'One of the main ways to overcome the mentioned problem is elaboration and implementation of systematic educational, and awareness raising programs for different age population. Financial resources to carry out these kinds of activities are limited. It should be mentioned that these activities are mainly implemented by CSOs, which greatly depend on donor organizations'*  
(EE and CIS Survey Armenia)

The consultation process met with large interest from the approached organizations and hopefully it was the first step for further activities in this area.

### **Main activities of Gender CSOs - EU New Member State (NMS)**

#### *- Education/Awareness raising/Advocacy on gender*

CSOs undertook activities to raise gender awareness among the general public, media, decision makers, and CSOs through campaigns and education actions on gender aspects of development such as presenting MDGs from gender perspective in schools, exhibitions, movies and other materials presenting women's economic and social situation in developing countries. They produced analysis, policy papers, shadow reports, manuals, advocacy work to promote gender issues through international instruments, like CEDAW, BPfA, etc). A main goal was to end gender stereotypes in education system through a gender analysis of textbooks at school and university levels; women's technological empowerment (education on ICTs); Access to education for girls - supporting equity in access to education in Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan

#### *- Women's economic empowerment*

Raising women's economic empowerment is a major focus through education on and campaign for women's labour rights and decent work especially in feminized sectors (i.e. consumers' campaigns, trainings for- also male, trade unionists, analysis and education on gender aspects of CSR etc), as well as campaigns to combat gender stereotypes and gender discrimination in the labour market CSOs support economic participation and economic independence of women by promoting women's entrepreneurship, providing practical skills-based trainings, business

skills trainings, financial literacy trainings and access to credit and material support for business development, education and advocacy on gender budgeting at local level.

- *Women political participation*

CSOs undertake **education**, capacity building and campaigning for more women in local parliament campaign, supporting political participation of women from ethnic minority, trainings to support women's leadership and directly encouraging women to take a more active role in community planning. CSOs held meetings with local authorities and NGOs to raise awareness for gender budgeting in the local budget, capacity building for political parties to improve gender balance in decision-making and overall gender awareness, as well as regional networking of women's local leaders for solving of one concrete local problem of women, ongoing cooperation with authorities through monitoring and consultation.

#### **Main activities of Gender CSOs - Non EU countries**

- *Awareness raising/Education/Advocacy*

A focus among Non EU countries on gender equality and women's rights is on violence against women. Their awareness raising actions target general public, media, national and local decision makers and other specific groups i.e. policemen. CSOs are involved in education and advocacy for reproductive rights (i.e. access to sexual education, safe abortion, services related to family planning and contraception etc), medical and health care programmes for women, prevention of trafficking, assistance for women victims of domestic violence (emergency services and long term support programs). A number of organization monitor women's rights implementation and realization of the CEDAW in their countries and follow with advocacy and campaign actions in specific issues.

- *Economic empowerment of women*

Many organizations stressed their contribution to strengthening women's economic independence through building expertise on women's economic situation and its implications (i.e. rural women access to the economic resources, survey and expertise on property and hereditary women's rights, women's workers' rights, etc) CSOs also provide women with services enabling their economic empowerment (i.e. professional qualifications trainings for women entrepreneurs, reintegration of women- victims of domestic violence in the labour market, capacity building and facilitation of networking of women informal workers etc ).

- *Political participation of women*

Contributions in this area involve awareness raising campaigns and advocacy for quotas as well as capacity building for women leaders, election candidates and facilitation of networking among women local leaders which led among others to increased number of women in rural areas actively participating in decision making processes at the level of local communities as well as the inclusion of women-informal workers as target groups in national programmes and the campaign against the poverty).

- *Peace Building*

NON EU organizations also stressed the importance of involving women in peace building processes in post conflict areas, particularly the CSOs of Central Asia.

### **Challenges to gender equity and women's rights in development policy - EU New Member State countries**

- *Lack of understanding and awareness of gender issues among the public and decision makers*

The lack of understanding of gender is due to dominating traditional social and culture models, stereotypes and lack of education. This leads to constant marginalizing of gender problems and continuous ridiculization of gender issues in the society. There is a need for more awareness and 'more in-depth, complex understanding of gender related issues and knowledge on constructive ways how to address the challenges related to lack of gender equality and equity – particularly relevant to the CEE region where development cooperation has a much shorter tradition and hence the level of knowledge and experience is much lower. There is a lack of capacity in terms of 'know how' and human resources. Gender issues are not yet embraced by all CSO, very few organizations have gender policies that guideline their work. CSOs staff is not able to work on gender issues due to lack of expertise and experience, there is a need of 'user friendly' trainings for CSOs and networking with women's organizations. 'The language used is too complicated, too technical and “gender mainstreaming” is often perceived as just another burden on development planners and practitioners’.

- *Lack of political will and real commitment by decision-makers*

There is a lack of political will among national and lower levels of administration to achieve equality and uphold to the rights stipulated in the constitution or binding international

instruments related to women's and girls' rights. Gender Policies are underestimated and therefore not given proper attention. Women's organizations are often not recognized as partners for dialogue with the authorities.

- *Funding*

There are limited funds for gender issues, distributed according to the donors' agenda not the actual needs of women, no funding for long term activities which do not bring immediate outcomes, like advocacy. Project based funding causes lack of stability of women's organizations and lack of continuation, sustainability of long term activities.

- *Weakness of women's movement*

Apart from instability of women's organizations, there is insufficient solidarity among women, especially successful women who could contribute to women's movement and low interest among young women

### **Challenges to gender equity and women's rights in development policy - Non EU countries**

- *Lack of political will and real commitment by decision-makers*

The lack of political will with a poor attitude of the state structures towards activities of women organizations and gender equality in decision making processes. The international commitments on gender equality and advancement of women's rights are not fully implemented and unstable political situation in a few counties in the region interrupts proper functioning and continuity of the states' structures. Another problem is the low number of women in decision-making and leadership positions.

- *Lack of understanding and awareness of gender issues*

This lack is caused by traditional perception of women's role in the society, patriarchal stereotypes and prejudices deeply rooted in societies' mentality which is difficult to change especially that also media contribute to preservation of this perception of gender issues. There is also lack of gender sensitive education and upbringing. The low awareness and understanding of gender issues is also related to the lack of capacity of CSOs to work on gender issues and thus lack of commitments of CSOs to gender equality and women's rights, lack of equality vision among leaders of CSOs and lack of gender equality in agenda of CSOs.

- *Funding*

A lack of resources and lack of interest from international donors in supporting gender related work leads to organizations working based on short - time projects are financially unstable and not able to implement long term strategies. It was also noticed that lack of sufficient and long term funding for gender related work is another barrier so as lack of cooperation of women organizations and other CSOs, there is no strong networks between them and gender activists are too weak and not successful in influencing other CSOs.

- *Weakness of women's movement*

Among the women's movement there is a lack of capacity for strategic positioning in order to make significant and sustainable changes in society, lack of appropriate human resources in women's' CSOs, low level organization's management, limited knowledge and skills in using media, etc. Women's organizations are also not recognized as partners for dialogue with authorities. Low awareness and motivation of women is not helping to change the situation. Specific problem of migration (brain drain) is negatively influencing NGOs staff was observed by Organization Nasl, Tajikistan.

- *Political environment*

Many organizations from different sub regions (Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, Eastern Europe) stressed the importance an unstable political environment. They mentioned general lack of mechanisms of interacting with the state, ignoring by state organs national and international commitments on human rights, rights of women; lack of institutions responsible for monitoring of implementation of such commitments; not recognizing gender equality and women's rights as issues to be included in states policies, strategies and budgeting; patriarchal attitude and beliefs of core number of individuals responsible for decision making, corruption, bureaucracy. In some contexts such as Belarus women risk imprisonment, loss of job and sexual harassment if they become involved in women's organizing.

**Strategies for moving forward**

Almost all surveyed organizations stress the importance of the strategies based on co-operation between women's NGOs and other CSOs. Successful gender mainstreaming of social justice and democracy movements would be an ideal situations. In order to achieve this the organization propose capacity building of both women's organizations and other CSOs aimed at joint agenda development in the areas of economic and social justice, human rights and democratic society development. This should be followed by common activities: awareness raising, research,

advocacy, activities targeting general public and decision makers. This should be done through networks/specific forums of cooperation/platforms between women's organizations and other CSOs.

It is crucial to strengthen the link between gender and development issues which is not understood in the Region and raise awareness of gender aspects of development which is very weak both among women's and development organizations, this requires training for staff and board on gender and development, gender and democratization and human rights

Greater networking between women's and development organizations needs to be encouraged based on common agenda on gender in development, with various networks, national NGOs platforms, etc. Build common activities addressing gender and development issues in various areas and through diverse actions, at national, regional and global level, i.e. Joint debates, constructive and inspiring – e.g. at national level and in the CEE region – with the participation of speakers/facilitators from western Europe where there is more experience in working with gender issues in development.