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Integrating Gender Awareness in ICT4D Research

Concept Paper for ACACIA
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Introduction

“Where gender is concerned, we are all, both men and women, part of the problem. It is our attitudes that keep the system going (Underwood 1991).”

This paper is written for the purpose of stimulating the integration of gender awareness in ICT4D projects. It has been written from the understanding that integrating gender awareness in our lives and work is a personal undertaking that requires not only facing our attitudes ‘that keep the system going’ but also the will and the courage to change them when necessary. Integrating gender awareness is not a technical quick fix undertaking, although ‘gender analysis’ checklists will be useful as planning and monitoring tools to support the decision of change once that has been taken.

This paper is, as it is seen now, the last step of ACACIA’s undertaking to enhance gender awareness amongst Programme Officers and Research Partners and as such this text can be read in conjunction with the other documents that have been produced for this purpose.

The ACACIA Gender Awareness Workshop, held in Fez, Morocco from April 15 to 17, designed and facilitated by Ineke Buskens and Nancy Hafkin generated a Final Report that comprised (amongst other) the following elements:

- A Guide to Gender-Aware Research Conversations for Programme Officers and Research Partners;
- A checklist of potential gender issues in ICT projects;
- An overview of the various theoretical/policy approaches to women/gender and development;
- Overview of research paradigms highlighting a focus on gender transformation.

Another ACACIA Gender Awareness Workshop took place in Johannesburg on 10 and 11 October 2008, designed and facilitated by Ineke Buskens and Natasha Primo. This workshop generated the IDRC Acacia Gender Integration Guide for Project Proposal

Development, Monitoring and Appraisal which was compiled by Natasha Primo. This guide was an updated amalgamation of the Conversation Guide and the Theoretical Policy Overview developed in 2007 by Buskens and Hafkin. This guide did also take into account the paper "Gender analysis grid for research projects" which was developed by Joelle Palmieri in August 2008 on the basis of the 2007 ACACIA documents written by Buskens and Hafkin.

Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) as a discipline focuses on the questions whether and how ICT can stimulate social change for development purposes. The fields of women and gender studies, poverty eradication, education, health, government, management studies and environmental concerns amongst others, have all turned to ICT for creative and innovative solutions for current development needs. As a research field ICT4D has thus attracted many and varied researchers from a variety of disciplines.

ACACIA has committed itself to 'mainstreaming gender awareness' in all its ICT4D projects and in and of itself this could be considered a controversial stance: the question can be raised whether gender mainstreaming ICT4D research with all the capacity building this entails, would be warranted given the current development needs and the fact that ICT4D has such pertinent and diverse research challenges to explore.

Our answer to this question would be that we have no other option.

As development researchers we have the mandate to inform the development agenda and align our work to development purposes. As development researchers we also have to realise that we operate in a gender imbalanced field. Whilst every society is imbalanced with regards to gender relations, in developing countries this gender imbalance takes on very stark forms: 70% of the world's poor are women for instance. And yet at the same time, women's position is crucial to development: it has become obvious that aggravating women's burden in developing countries has a direct negative effect on the nutritional and educational status of children, families and communities, whilst an improvement in women's position has immediate positive effect (Sen, A.)

In a gender imbalanced world, ICT policy that is implemented in gender blind ways, will automatically disadvantage women because it will benefit the ones that hold the greatest 'gender' power (Hafkin and Huyer; Buskens and Webb 2009). In a gender imbalanced world, the term 'gender neutral' is thus in fact a euphemism for 'gender insensitive'. Gender insensitive development research will result in biased knowledge construction and it will inform the development agenda accordingly. And as such, it will thwart the very purpose of the development project that gives ICT4D its reason for existence. Because we will impact on this gender imbalance with every research decision we take, whether it be the choice of a concept, a method, or a team member, we will impact on the research environment and the gender imbalance within this environment. As a consequence, our research will either add to the burden of the women whose lives will be directly or indirectly affected by our work, or it will make their lives better.

Yet, socialised in a gender imbalanced and sexist world, policy makers and researchers would inevitably be blind to the mechanisms and effects of 'gender insensitive' knowledge construction and research action. The work to become gender aware is thus a personal undertaking that should not be underestimated: it cuts to the heart of our perspectives, perceptions and identities and will rock the 'taken-for-grantedness' of the ways in which we frame and experience ourselves as gendered human beings.

Because all research is unique and ICT4D research arguably even more so because it is such a young and fluid field, a 'Gender Mainstreaming' strategy for ICT4D research will have to respect this uniqueness.

Through this paper we want to offer ICT4D researchers and programme officers the knowledge, the scope and the tools to construct their own project - specific gender awareness strategy in a way that respects the project's unique purpose and embeds the integration of gender awareness into the project's general striving for research quality.

This paper comprises two parts:

- Part 1 gives an historical overview of the development of the various gender awareness perspectives, positions this paper historically and ideologically in terms of the concepts of development and gender.

- Part 2 focuses on integrating Gender Awareness in ICT4D research in terms of theory, methodology and researcher attitude.

This text is not a gender evaluation of Acacia's ICT4D projects, so whilst the study of these projects has prompted the structure of the paper and its focus and inspired the creation of the visual tools, the examples given in the text do not refer to these projects.

In giving knowledge about the concept of gender as it evolved in the field of development, in framing gender awareness as part of the striving for quality in ICT4D research, this paper hopes to achieve that ICT4D researchers to find their own position with regards to integrating gender awareness in their work and are empowered to make future research choices not only on what to about with gender in ICT4D research but also, and this may be more important, how to go about it.

ICT4D research is conceptualised in this paper as a specific form of Development Research where the nexus between ICTS, gender and development creates specific dynamics and challenges.

Whilst integrating gender awareness in an ICT4D project will of necessity be just as much an individual creation as the particular research design is, this paper aims to offer concepts that can be used to inform the decisions that need to be made in designing a project – specific Gender Awareness Strategy.

PART 1: Striving towards excellence in development practice - Integrating a gender perspective

Social justice advocates and international development scholars argue that “good” development practice must of necessity be gender-aware and transformative. This paper outlines the evolution of arguments by feminist and sustainable and human development advocates to focus on rights-based development and for integrating a feminist perspective in development practice - where by "feminism," we mean the belief that women should not be disadvantaged because of their sex, and that their human dignity should be recognized as equal to that of men.

The paper starts by tracing the outlines of the feminist debate on women, gender and development and shows the intersection of these debates with approaches to development from the 1970s to the 2000s. It outlines the contours of 2 conversations: one among feminists in which they interrogate the capacity of existing theories to explain the lived realities of women in different countries and social contexts and helps to deepen the analysis of gender inequality and gender injustice around the world, bringing in ever more diverse voices and experiences to inform the debate, and the second one in which feminists provide critical comment on the impact of mainstream development approaches on women and “gender relations”, highlighting how mainstream “development” can go hand-in-hand with the violation of women’s rights - and can even be predicated on it and promoting more gender-aware development policy and practice at the local, national and international levels and regional levels.

The paper continues by reviewing arguments by alternative development theorist Amartya Sen and feminist philosopher Martha Nussbaum that development must seek to increase the capabilities of all men and women so that they may live a life of dignity and that development must be about “human development” and go beyond the limited goal of “economic growth.” For it to have lasting impact, development practice must not only bring more women to participate in development projects but also build the potential to change unequal social/gender relations and empower women to have more control over their lives.

This section is not a mini-manual on “how-to” integrate a gender perspective into development projects. It is focussed on the feminist debates about gender discrimination, and also offers an insight into feminist critiques of how mainstream development has then gone about integrating - and diluting - feminist ideals in development practice. As such it offers a “why you should integrate gender” argument as well as providing insight into how the political process can impact on a transformational “gender agenda.”

This section is organised into three parts outlining (i) the key concepts, (ii) the evolution of the feminist debate on gender and development as well as a brief look at some of the different frameworks for conducting gender analysis, and (iii) reviewing the argument for a human development approach and its potential for advancing gender justice.

Clarifying the key concepts

What “is” gender? The concept of gender refers to the social and cultural constructions that individuals, communities and societies assign to behaviours,

characteristics and values belonging to men and women, and that are often reinforced by symbols, laws and regulations, institutions, and subjectivity. As racial differences have historically been used to construct racism and racial discrimination, sex differences are transformed into social, economical and political inequities where these constructed “male characteristics” and activities are perceived as superior to women's. Their resilience resides in the notion that they are considered natural and immutable, when in fact they are shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural determinants. Because of the way gender identities are interwoven with cultural, ethnic and other identities in communities, both men and women often actively police these dominant constructions of what it means to be a man or woman - as well as how men and women interrelate - in their specific communities.

Weaknesses of a growth strategy

- growth may not occur, especially in very poor countries where the physical infrastructure (like roads and electricity) and the pool of economically valuable skills are weakest;
- while there may be growth, the number of jobs created may be few;
- growth and employment may both increase but the kind of the jobs that are created may be insecure and hazardous to human health and welfare;
- growth may lead to irreversible environmental damage;
- the kind of economic adjustments historically advocated by the IFIs reduces the role of the state in the provision of social services and places the burden of survival on the poor, but especially on poor women.

The concept of gender refers neither to “man” or “woman” but rather to the social constructions of “femininity” and “masculinity” and to the relationship aspect of these constructions. The concept of gender relations normally refers to relationships between men and women but can also refer to intra-gender relationships where the relationship is grounded in the conceptualisation and lived experience of gender as in female sexism for instance. The main feminist motivation for making the distinction in the 1960’s between sex and gender was to counter biological determinism or the view that biology is destiny.¹ Gender as a concept in development studies gained currency following a critique of development practice that target “women” for development inputs without also attending to unequal power relations that women occupy vis-a-vis men. Thus, “gender” became a category that has to do with *relations* between men and women as well as with *politics* because gender attributions are oppressive and rigid both for men and for women (although historically it is women who have lost more in this relation). In its original conception, the “gender” agenda was a radical concept that drew attention to unequal power between men and women and called for transformation of these into a social system with more *just* relations between women and men.

Critical evaluation of how “gender” has been integrated in “development” discourse and practice - by government, NGOs and multilateral agencies like the United Nations bodies - shows that the meaning of “gender” has become more ambiguous and a catch-all for different and sometimes contradictory things like - for example - collecting gender-disaggregated data, and strategies for “empowering women.” For many feminist analysts, the very rise of the concept of gender seems - with hindsight - to be tied to its use as a softer option for talking about rights and power. Hence, people with very different political agendas - conservative and transformative - could all comfortably call for an integration of “gender” into development practice.² One consequence of this conceptual fuzziness has been the dilution of work that challenges gender oppressive social practices. Increasingly, feminists argue that as the essentially political – and at the same time, deeply personal – issues of gender get rendered within training frameworks and within bureaucracies, the political project of gender and development has been reduced to a technical fix so that gender ‘becomes something that is ahistorical, apolitical and decontextualised’.³

1 See “Feminist perspectives on sex and gender,” in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender>

2 See Andrea Cornwall, 2007, “Revisiting the Gender Agenda” in IDS Bulletin Vol 28 No 2, p69-78.

3 Mukhopadhyay, 2004: 95 quoted in Cornwall, Harrison & Whitehead 2008)

While the battle for attention to gender injustice is won and there is increased donor and governments' support for 'doing gender,' some feminist analysts are calling for a new engagement with development practice, one that restores a focus on rights and "women's empowerment" because "[i]t offers the prospect of re-politicising and reinvigorating a "gender agenda" that is concerned with making visible and transforming inequitable power relations. It creates the space to talk once more of rights and power, and to highlight the discrimination against and persistent material, social and political disadvantages faced by women."⁴

A women's "rights" discourse asserts women's *entitlement* to access her human rights, where the content of these rights is provided by the various international (like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), regional (like the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights) and national human rights instruments developed over the years which governments have signed on to. Feminists further highlight the importance of women *realising* their rights instead of these rights only existing in international protocols and national laws. Thus, they recognise the struggle for women's rights as also a struggle for "women's empowerment,"

Gender-aware development is critical

because:

- attaining gender justice for women and men in the household, communities and societies at large, and for not further disadvantaging women and men;
- without it, development is flawed as it ignores the needs and aspirations of more than half the population in society and, consequently, its long term effectiveness, sustainability and impact will be limited;
- not taking account of the potential (economic) contributions of women, squanders the creativity and knowledge of more than half the population.

where women enter the political process and develop the capacities to challenge and transform existing discriminatory power relations with a view to replacing them with new social and gender relations based on equity and that recognise the human dignity for all.

"The term empowerment refers to a range of activities from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenge basic power relations. [snip] Empowerment, therefore, is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systemic forces that marginalize women and other disadvantaged sectors in a given

context."⁵

4 Cornwall *ibid*, p71.

5 Miller et al, p.34

Women's empowerment is thus seen to be multidimensional, combining different elements. It can equally be about opening access to decision-making as well as about people becoming aware of themselves as being able to make decisions, it can be about making choices and being able to shape what choices are on the table, or about women challenging the existing powers structures that shape women into subservient beings.⁶

Similarly, the meaning of "development" has been the subject of critical debates for some time. Are we to understand it as increasing the wealth of a country? Or is it something more intractable, like increasing the happiness and well-being of the majority of a national or global population?

Historically, the dominant notion of development favoured *economic growth* - increases in national wealth - as the primary means for measuring development. Concomitantly, the dominant framework for evaluating the success of economic policy was - and largely remains - that of "*economic efficiency*" and maximising an output (based on consumer choice), while ignoring the distribution of purchasing power (and hence also the distribution of income and wealth) within a national population. Advocates of this approach to development - called the neo-liberal approach - argue that the state should not interfere in the economy. Instead, private companies and individuals should drive the economy as they are considered more efficient and best equipped to stimulate economic growth and employment. It is argued that this growth and employment will - over-and-above the profits of private companies and individuals - generate incomes for many individuals and families, and that the benefits of this economic growth would "trickle down" to the poor through increased job opportunities and access to income.

In response to this mainstream neo-classical argument, international development scholars and practitioners have long argued that a growth-oriented strategy is inadequate for measuring development and that the experiences in many developing countries show that growth-oriented development is an imperfect strategy with many weaknesses. Evidence from the 1980s and 1990s also showed that because of the economic adjustment measures demanded by international financial institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), developing country governments became less able to

6 Zoe Ozaal with Sally Baden, 1997, Gender and empowerment: definitions, approaches and implications for policy.

actively pursue development strategies that aid human development.⁷ One of the consequences was that women's lives worsened as they took on more unpaid care work and bore the brunt of problems generated by developing countries' implementation of these economic structural adjustment programmes.⁸

Over the last 15 years, the mainstream discourse on what constitutes "development" has shifted. This is reflected in the United Nations emphasis on the need for "human development" by which they include among others increases in life expectancy, increased adult literacy as well as increases in average income. The 1996 *Human Development Report* opens with the fundamental statement that "human development is the end - economic growth a means." The report notes that "economic growth, if not properly managed, can be jobless, voiceless, ruthless, rootless and futureless, and thus detrimental to human development. The quality of growth is therefore as important as its quantity; for poverty reduction, human development and sustainability."⁹ Evidence of the growing influence of the critique of the neo-classical approach is that even its bastions - like the World Bank - are now also looking for strategies that go beyond economic development and will foster more sustainable development outcomes.¹⁰

7 After consistent opposition and critique, the World Bank now acknowledges that the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) implemented in the 1980s and 1990s were ill-suited to the development needs of developing countries. They agree that governments must play a role in meeting social needs like primary education and primary health.

8 Vickers, J. 1991, "Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women," in *Women and the World Economic Crisis*, pp15-42.

9 See *Human Development Report 1996*, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1996/>

10 See World Bank 2000, *Beyond Economic Growth: Meeting the Challenges of Global Development*. Available at <http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/beyond/beyond.htm>

What is a gender-aware approach to development practice and why do we need it?

What does it mean to have a gender perspective or to conduct gender-aware development practice? In the simplest terms, having a gender perspective means that one is sensitive to the ways in which women's and men's social roles may differ, and how social programmes may have different consequences for men and women in society. It involves a commitment to understand and clarify how it is - in various spheres of life - that women and girls are disadvantaged in relation to men and boys. In the context of devising development strategies to benefit the poor, having a gender perspective means that one recognises that women play a central role in both the economy and the household, that women are both income-earners and carers who tend to the young, the sick and the elderly, and that placing their needs at the centre of a development strategy will impact positively on both economic growth and human well-being. From a feminist perspective, it is a process of analysing and understanding more deeply the systemic way in which women are discriminated against, how women are active agents and participants in their own oppression and disadvantaged positions, and can also include the implementation of activities and longer term strategies that advance women's empowerment and their demand for recognition of their human rights.

Gender-awareness is key to understanding the gendered relations within a social setting or society at large and - where conducted - provides the bases for formulating gender-sensitive - and hopefully feminist - development policies and interventions. A World Bank study that found that "projects with gender components to be more effective overall, [and] also recognises that such projects may also reflect better identification of the target population, design and implementation"¹¹.

What is a gender-aware approach?

Gender-aware approaches to policy-making and development practice assist decision makers, development practitioners and community members to conduct their work in such a way that the gendered environment and its impact on both women and men is considered in the process – both as part of the processes as well as in considering the impact of decisions made. In contrast, *gender-blind* approaches treat men and women as if their lived experiences are equal in nature and value and would lead to development interventions that take no account of the impact on women or gender relations of the people impacted by the project.

11 See Chamberlain, 2002.

In practice, gender analysis involves the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in the home, community, workplace and other social institutions in order to identify, understand and redress gender-based inequities. Gender analysis can be practically implemented across the phases of a project life-cycle - including implementation, monitoring and evaluation - as well as to build donors', government actors' and community members' awareness of gender-based discrimination and a commitment to gender-aware development planning and practice.

Gender analysis:

- examines the differences in women's and men's lives, including those which lead to social and economic inequity for women, and applies this understanding to policy development and service delivery;
- is concerned with the underlying causes of these inequities;
- aims to achieve positive change for women

There exists a number of different frameworks for conducting gender analysis. These include the Harvard Analytical Framework (or, gender roles framework), the Moser Gender Planning Framework (that distinguishes between practical and strategic gender needs), the Sarah Longwe Women's Empowerment Framework, and Naila Kabeer's Social Relations Framework.¹²

The methodologies and components of gender analysis are shaped by how gender issues are understood in the institutions concerned. Each framework has its strengths and weaknesses and their value-add depends on the scope of a particular project and what gendered impacts it seeks to achieve. However, it stands to reason that if we want to advance gender justice, more complex approaches that allow us to monitor and address gender discrimination in various/multiple spheres will deepen our understanding of the prevailing gender dynamics in a social setting and allow for more finely tuned development projects.

Southern women's perspectives provide us with good principles on which to assess the development process and suggest some of the outcomes we should demand from development processes in different countries and globally. These principles include the firm belief that (i) the development process should facilitate access to resources like work, productive resources (like land, water) and affordable reproductive resources (like health care, education) that are necessary to care for human beings, (ii) that such care and the

12 [See http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/plngaps1.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/plngaps1.htm)

development of human potential should drive the pursuit of economic growth, and (iii) that class/gender/race/ethnic inequalities should improve as a consequence of the development process, or a specific development intervention for that matter.¹³

The Gender Roles framework- for example - focuses on describing women's and men's roles and their relative access to and control over resources. The analysis aims to anticipate the impacts of projects on both productive and reproductive roles. It takes the household as the unit of analysis and does not look at the state or markets where gender equalities are reinforced. The framework has been critiqued for an assumption that women are a homogeneous group, and are subject to similar gender-roles across time and cultures. It was critiqued for being strong on gender roles but light on gender relations as it does not deepen understanding of the social processes through which women experience subordination and poverty. It was further critiqued by the empowerment approach for its hierarchisation of strategic over practical gender needs, and the dismissal of concerns with practical gender needs as being less feminist. [The empowerment approach rehabilitated the importance of practical/basic needs - like food, shelter, land, etc - as part of the third world woman's feminist struggle for freedom from oppression.]

In turn, the Social Relations approach seeks to expose the gendered power relations that perpetuate inequities. Drawing on the experiences of southern women, this analysis moves beyond the household to include the community, market, and state institutions and thus involves collecting data at all these levels. It also seeks to uncover differences between women, divided by other dimensions of social differentiation such as class, race and ethnicity. The Social Relations approach requires that the data on gender differences are collected to cover a range of social institutions, while also analysing data about different "kinds" of women in a social setting. The Social Relations framework tries to respond to the feminist call for transformative development practice that is system-wide, and that recognises redressing rights and power differentials as key components of a strategy to bring about gender justice for women.

That said, Juliet Hunt¹⁴ (2004) sets out some key steps for "doing gender analysis" - using any of the analytical framework - as follows:

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- 13 Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, 1995. *Markers on the Way: The DAWN Debates on Alternative Development*, p14.
- 14 Hunt, J, 2004. 'Introduction to gender analysis concepts and steps', *Development Bulletin*, no. 64, pp. 100-106. Available at http://devnet.anu.edu.au/GenderPacific/pdfs/23_gen_mainstream_hunt.pdf

1. Collect sex disaggregated household, workplace and community data/information relevant to the program/project for each area below.
2. Assess how the gender division of labour and patterns of decision-making affects the program/project, and how the program/project affects the gender division of labour and decision making.
3. Assess who has access to and control over resources, assets and benefits, including program/project benefits.
4. Understand women's/girls' and men's/boys' different needs, priorities and strengths.
5. Understand the complexity of gender relations in the context of social relations, and how this constrains or provides opportunities for addressing gender inequality.
6. Assess the barriers and constraints to women and men participating and benefiting equally from the program/project.
7. Develop strategies to address barriers and constraints, include these strategies in program/project design and implementation, and ensure that they are adequately resourced.
8. Assess counterpart/partner capacity for gender sensitive planning, implementation and monitoring, and develop strategies to strengthen capacity.
9. Assess the potential of the program/project to empower women, address strategic gender interests and transform gender relations.
10. Develop gender-sensitive indicators to monitor participation, benefits, the effectiveness of gender equality strategies, and changes in gender relations.
11. Apply the above information and analysis throughout the program/project cycle.

The interpretation one brings to the data collected through gender analysis turns on one's values and political beliefs - whether liberal, traditionalist, marxist-feminist, socialist, etc - and will shape the strategies recommended for bringing change. These steps can be followed as a mechanical process by the researcher or development practitioners in relative isolation with very little political engagement with the communities concerned. Alternatively – if one takes seriously gender justice and the recognition of women's human rights - the data and analysis can be developed collaboratively with men and women in the communities concerned, and provide an opportunity for collective empowerment of the community of the members concerned, involving both the process of making meaning through research and

creating opportunities to collectively demand their rights.

Evolution of feminist analyses of development discourse and practice

Since the 1970s, there has been ongoing engagement by feminists and women's rights activists with the prevailing development approaches, providing both critical comment of the dominant development approaches and promoting alternative development approaches that would advance social justice, and specifically gender justice. As more women's rights activists and feminists join this dialogue - including historically marginalised, rural women, and women from/in the global south - the critiques of dominant development approaches and the proposals for development alternatives have become more diverse and nuanced.

The evolution of feminist discourse around women, gender and development has two - often interwoven - strands: it is both (i) a conversation among feminists - the so-called intra-feminist disputes - to deepen the analysis of gender inequality and gender injustice around the world, bringing in ever more diverse voices and experiences to inform the debate and broaden our understanding of the forms and shapes of oppressions, and (ii) a critical voice that seeks to highlight the impact of mainstream development approaches on women and gender relations, with a view to promoting more gender-aware development policy and practice at the local, national and international levels.

The intra-feminist conversation: from WID, WAD, GAD, to WCD

For the duration of the colonial period until the mid-1970s development policies and programmes primarily addressed women in their reproductive role. Within male-dominated western development agencies, the notion of the ideal woman – centred on a role as wife and mother – framed the welfare strategies targeted at Third World women living in poverty. The *welfare* approach targeted development aid at bringing improved homemaking, nutrition, and family planning practices.

The first feminist critiques of the dominant modernization development emerged in the

1970s. It was a confluence of two influences: the dominant discourse and practice of modernization, and an upsurge of feminism – the second wave - in the West.¹⁵

It critiqued the prevailing aid approaches for its western-centrism, for treating women as passive beneficiaries of development, locked into reproductive roles without any production responsibilities. The *Women in Development* (WID) critique drew on the seminal 1970s work of Ester Boserup¹⁶ in which she argues that women are left out development - in their capacity as producers - because of planners' ignorance about and the invisibility of women's economic roles. Proponents of the WID approach highlighted the propensity of the dominant modernisation approach to perpetuate the existing gender roles within the patriarchal state and the family -instead of promoting individual woman's autonomy. While WID was uncritical of the concept of “development” as “modernization,” it was still considered threatening and unpopular by many governments and the development aid organisations of the day. Its main concern was to maximise “third world” women's access to the modern sector.

As early as the mid-1970s, the WID approach was critiqued by both neo-marxist feminists as well as third world (or southern) feminists. The Women and Development (WAD) approach emerged as a neo-marxist critique by arguing that third world women have always been integrated into development - not excluded, but rather exploited by global capitalism. WAD proponents added a class analysis to the feminist debate on development, noting also that both southern men and women are exploited by global capital.

Both the WID and WAD approaches were critiqued by proponents of the *gender and development* (GAD) approach. GAD criticized the WID approach (i) for homogenizing and stereotyping 'Third World' women as poor, illiterate and subordinate to and uniformly exploited by men, (ii) for not problematizing “modernisation as development,” (iii) for failing to take account of class and nations hierarchies, (iv) for failing to account of difference between western and TW women and assuming an un-problematized notion of global sisterhood, and (v) for centring sex equality as “development.” GAD called not only for women to be integrated into development but for development initiatives to transform unequal gender/social relations and empower women – and to not reinforce existing inequalities.

15 “First-wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States. It focused on legal inequalities, and primarily on gaining women's right to vote. The term first-wave was coined retroactively in the 1970s. The women's movement then, focusing as much on fighting lived (unofficial) inequalities as legal ones, acknowledged its predecessors by calling itself second-wave feminism.” See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-wave_feminism

16 See Boserup (1970) *Women's Role in Economic Development*.

The GAD critique of the women and development approach (WAD) approach centred on their privileging class over gender in its explanation of women's exploitation by global capitalism while it skirts over women's exploitation under patriarchy, and failing to acknowledge that (southern) men also exploit and benefit from women's domestic labour. GAD calls for a socialist state to take on the burden of social reproduction (historically carried by women) but acknowledges that its success hinges on receptivity of development institutions to participatory planning and gender transformation. Thus, the GAD analyses sets the stage for the emergence of "gender mainstreaming" as an approach to development practice.

Most recently - since about 2000 - the inclusion of more feminist voices from the global south raised awareness of an underlying assumption in earlier gender and development discourses that the "third world woman" is a perpetual victim of "culture." Instead, the emergence of the *women, culture and development* (WCD) approach has

resurrected the possibility of women's agency by promoting an approach to culture (and gender relations) as "lived experience." Informed by scholarship in cultural studies, its adherents sees culture as subject to challenge, negotiation and change instead of being a set of immutable social relations between men and women. Culture as lived experience allows focus on the interlinkages between production and reproduction and allows for new avenues for development - and gender relations to emerge. It also makes visible women's ability to affect change - that is, women are seen as having agency.

The WCD approach is non-western in origin and focus. "Development" is seen as a colonial and post-colonial cultural imposition. Drawing on 'post-development' thought, feminists located in the WCD framework, fault WID, WAD and GAD adherents for not taking culture seriously, and always seeing southern women as victims of their cultures and without

What is poverty?

There are three different views on what constitutes poverty. From the *income perspective*, a person is poor only when her income falls below that which is necessary to buy a specific amount of food. This income level is usually specified. From the *basic needs perspective*, a person is poor when she is deprived of the basic elements that will allow her to fulfil her human needs like food, clothing, employment, health and education, and so forth. From the *capability perspective*, a person is poor when she lacks the basic capabilities to function, including physical needs like clothing, food, health, and shelter as well as social aspects like the ability to participate in community decision-making, for example.

agency. WCD proponents argue the need to take seriously the voices of grassroots women activists and third world scholars, and to mainstream a focus on culture in gender and development analysis and practice.

Intersection of a feminist critique and approaches to development

In this section we briefly list the different approaches to development and how mainstream development incorporated elements of the feminist critiques of development.

Combating poverty

Anti-poverty approaches were implemented from the mid-1970s onwards. This approach was implemented in response to critiques of the assumption that development will trickle-down to the poor with increased modernization of developing country economies. This critique prompted a shift to a “basic needs” approach to development, with the debate focussed on what constitutes a basic need.

The basic needs approach concentrated only on productive roles of women, and development inputs were focussed on supporting skills development for women - with a view to increase their productivity - increase their income-generating capacity. Few governments supported this approach and it was left to NGOs to implement with their limited resources. The emphasis was on assisting poor women meet their practical gender needs - food, shelter, etc - by earning an income through small-scale income-generating projects.

Improving efficiency

In the late 1970s and 1980s, feminists argued for the inclusion of gender perspective in development policy-making and practice on the basis that it would enhance *efficiency* in the deployment of human (economic) resources. As women constitute roughly half the population in most countries, any development policy and intervention that ignores the potential contributions women can make to development is likely to undermine efforts to grow the national economy. Thus, the argument goes, for developing countries and their

economies to grow, women's economic contribution is needed. This approach defined equity in economic terms, and women's participation in the economy was seen as gender equity. Its major shortcoming is that it ignores that women can be - and often are - integrated into the economy on highly unequal terms. In a period of economic stabilization and structural adjustment in the 1970s, governments relied on women's triple roles - as producers, providing care in the home, and participation in community development - and assumed an elasticity of women's time where it would fill the care gaps left by declining social services. The efficiency argument remained firmly rooted within the neoliberal model of development and offered no critique of the conception of development as economic growth.

In the 1970s a number of developed and developing country governments created women's ministries or focal points - often reporting directly to presidential offices - to ensure that women benefit from development projects and have better access to development inputs like land and (micro-)credit schemes and the like. These initiatives were trying to respond to the evidence that women had little to no access to production inputs - like land, credit, etc - and that poverty became progressively feminised. Globally, third world women had become the face of poverty.

Mainstreaming gender

The 1970s strategies of integrating women into development by establishing separate women's units or women's programmes within state and development institutions had made slow progress by the mid-1980s. Hence, development organisations and government identified the need for system-wide institutional change in order to address unequal gender relations and advance towards gender justice.

In the period post-1985, more international development agencies and local organisations took on the challenge to *systematically* bring a gender perspective to all aspects of the institutions' policies and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability. Thus responsibility for the implementation of gender policies and programming became diffused across the organisational structure, rather than being concentrated in a small central unit.

Gender mainstreaming emerges from the GAD project to understand the (re)production of gender ideologies and unequal power relations in all spheres and levels of the development sector, and to design strategies that would mitigate the (unconscious) reproduction of

gender-based discrimination - both within development institutions and the way they practice development. This shift created a wide-spread need for gender training, the introduction of incentive structures to reward efforts on gender, and the development of gender-specific operational checklists and guidelines. While gender mainstreaming initially found limited support, some governments eventually declared their intentions to mainstream a gender perspective into the national policies and programmes. Technically, *everyone* became responsible for ensuring a gender perspective was integrated into all development programmes.

With the benefit of hindsight, critiques of gender mainstreaming emerged, noting that the emphasis on mainstreaming took away funds and resources for gender focal points and advisors and gender-specific projects, and led to a disappearance of gender issues and concerns in many organizations. The main conclusion was that integrating a gender perspective must have the support and involvement of senior management, who must also be accountable for the results of their development initiatives.

Gender budgeting

In stressing the politics of development and who controls it, feminist advocates helped bring pressure and influence for governments to include women's constituencies in participatory planning and budgeting processes, with the view that it would lead to more gender-aware budgets in the different departments, at all levels of government. Gender-aware budgets would, it was hoped, generate practices where public spending would consider the impact of budgeting decisions on gender-relations and not (in)advertently reinforce gender inequalities. However, while gender budgeting could potentially have advanced the practice of democracy and more equitable redistribution of state resources to social programmes, it has ended up as technical exercises performed with the participation of gender experts within government and little political engagement with women and men in civil society. As a consequence, gender budgeting has not had any particularly profound social outcomes.

Advancing a human development approach: Seeing development as freedom, agency of women

The feminist critique shows how mainstream development discourse and practice responded positively to a gender agenda - sometimes by only paying lip service and appropriating the

languages of change - and yet diluted its capacity for deeper and more profound social transformation. Many argued that feminism became conscripted into and diluted by neo-liberal discourse and that the feminist struggle - as one against unequal gender relations - was diluted and lost its political bite. Behind this dilution is the growing gap between “gender” and “feminism,” and the proliferation of statements like “I am a gender expert but not a feminist.” The growth of “gender training” is identified as one of the key culprits in the de-politicisation of gender mainstreaming. The post-Beijing era, with its need for reporting led to the professionalisation and bureaucratisation of the gender equality struggle, creating many “gender experts”, “gender specialists” and “gender consultants,” swallowing up any notion of a “gender activist” under the de-politicised rubric of “expert” and “consultant.” On the other hand, the use and proliferation of gender concepts also placed strain and pressure on old patriarchal norms and values, and today larger numbers of people are confronted by questions about discriminatory social practices, gender identity and gender inequality.¹⁷

The feminist debate and critique of how “gender” has been domesticated within mainstream development discourse and practice has led some feminists to call for a return to a rights-based approach to development and a call for “women’s rights” and “women’s empowerment.”

In the post-2000 period the works of Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen has led to a re-visioning of the concept of development as “human development,” in which “economic growth” becomes its servant. The human development approach has become the leading alternative to the conventional economic frameworks for thinking about poverty, inequality, social justice and human development. Human development is regarded as synonymous with the increased capabilities of what people can be and can do in order to live a “good life” From a gender perspective, the human development approach stresses the enhanced capabilities and agency of women. The expansion of women's capabilities - especially the increased ability to claim rights (or “entitlements”) from the state as well as other actors like family members - enhances women's own freedom and well-being as well as the lives of others. Women are seen to have the greatest stake in advancing human development.

Feminist philosopher Martha Nussbaum embraces the human development approach and takes a strong stand for gender justice within the family, which is seen as a key source of gender oppression.

17 See Josephine Ahikire, 2008, “Vulnerabilities of Feminist Engagement and the Challenge of Developmentalism in the South: What Alternatives?” in IDS Bulletin 39, No 6, pp28-32

Furthermore, in the interest of gender equity, she insists on the importance of specifying a list of capabilities that would constitute a good life and that would foreground the human development goals.

The main success of the human development approach is its adoption by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the design and use of the Human Development Index (HDI) to annually rate governments' and nations' progress in advancing human development in their countries. These HDI ratings are increasingly influencing governments responses to the development needs of their respective populations.

In the next section we examine more closely the human development approach - and specifically the capabilities notion - and the extent to which it may or may not be a development approach that advances gender justice.

A human development approach: Building people's capabilities

Speaking in Cape Town in 2001, feminist economist Diane Elson argued for a shift in approaches to measuring economic policy success away from the pre-occupation with "optimality" - that is, maximising output - to one that is more directly focussed on *distribution* and people's access to the things that constitute "a good life." She made a plea "For an Emancipatory Socio-Economics," noting:

As is now abundantly clear, neither the project of national development nor the neoliberal project of global consumer choice has adequately fulfilled the hope for the substantial reduction of poverty and inequality. There is accumulating evidence that things got worse in the neoliberal era of the 80s and 90s, compared to the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Growth rates were lower and inequality widened. But even in the golden age, wealth and power were concentrated in the hands of a few; women were treated as dependents of men; and indigenous people were marginalised."¹⁸

18 Elson, D, 2001, "For an Emancipatory Socio-Economics," Draft paper prepared for the discussion at the UNRISD meeting on **The Need to Rethink Development Economics**, 7-8 September 2001, Cape Tow, South Africa, p4.

Elson argues for a fundamental rethink of “the economy” to include the social reproductive aspects of life – the reproduction of life itself – which conventional economic frameworks routinely take for granted while they focus on production and how to “measure it, increase it, optimise it.”¹⁹ In essence, what Elson and other feminist economists call for is a gendered approach to understanding the way the economy works, one that takes proper account of the interlinkages between reproductive spaces of unpaid work - e.g. in the home where women take care of children and the elderly, and the community work - and that of the productive space where work is paid - and where men predominate and women’s work is undervalued. A proper account is important for two reasons:

“The first is that the inputs of unpaid work and outputs of care are very important for human well-being. Too much unpaid work and too little care both jeopardise the possibility of living a good life. The second is that though the unpaid care economy is outside the production boundary, its operation has implications for what goes on inside the production boundary. Its operations affect the quantity and quality of labour supplied to production and the quantity and quality of goods demanded from production. Its operations affect the stability of the social framework in which market and state are embedded.”

From diverse contexts, development experience shows that **not** taking account of the role and impact of gender will most likely produce economic and social policies - and shape development strategies and practices - with the undesired effect of reinforcing existing unequal gender relations.

Drawing on human development and feminist approaches, Elson argues for a *different* development project, one less focused on the abstract idea of the “national economy” or even the “household” and instead more concerned with the “individual” and his/her rights . This different development project should be about the “emancipation of individual human beings from the constraints that prevent them from living a 'good life.’²⁰ Fundamentally then, such a different development project would be alert to the impact on women as well as the relations between men and women, taking care not to create new or reinforce existing inequalities between men and women - including in the home - and preventing women from “living a good life.”

The guiding principle of human development is that *people come first*. A human development

19 Elson 2001, *ibid*, p5.

20 Elson, *ibid*.

approach is therefore, by extension, a gender-aware approach to development practice. Proponents of this approach recognise that women are historically the most disadvantaged and have the strongest stake in human development. Thus, only when the lives of poor women - predominantly in the global South - has improved significantly can we judge human development as adequate.

Further, as noted earlier, economic growth must become a means for achieving human development. Economic growth should be in the interest of furthering human development, and not the kind of growth that serves the rich and further impoverishes the poor.²¹

Thus, the key principles of human development are that it:

- must develop people's capabilities to lead creative and fulfilling lives;
- should be the primary goal for economic growth processes;
- must transform gender, class, race and other power relations that pose barriers to the human development of all people;
- must not damage the environment; and
- must ensure adequate and sustainable livelihoods for the poor, especially women.

From "human rights" to entitlements" and "capabilities"

Advocates of the human development approach stress the need to develop human capabilities and empower people to use those capabilities to participate fully in the development process. Human development covers all aspects of human need, from production processes and the need to create jobs, to political freedoms and the ability to participate in the political process and methods of government, to basic and non-basic human needs, and applied as much to people in developing and developed countries - or, the global south and north - respectively.

Amartya Sen's capabilities framework has become the leading alternative to the conventional economic frameworks for thinking about poverty, inequality, social justice and human development.²² Social justice is understood to mean the achievement of a "fair" society where past injustices, rights violations and social inequalities are redressed.

21 United Nations Development Programme, 1997, "Human development to eradicate poverty," in Human Development Report 1997, pp2-12.

22 Sen's ideas have their conceptual roots in varying places, among others: in Adam Smith's notions of "necessities," Marx's preoccupation with human freedom and emancipation, as well as in Aristotle's analysis of "human flourishing." See David Clarke 2006.

However, the women's movement and feminists argue that social justice struggles have often overlooked the specific and wider gender injustice or discrimination faced by women. They highlight the need ensure that efforts to address injustice - through human rights measures, or economic and social policies - are informed by an understanding of gender inequalities.

At the core of the capabilities approach is the argument that people have fundamental entitlements – or human rights. In Sen's formulation, these rights are comprehensive and cover both claims against the state as well as legally sanctioned claims against fellow citizens, including (i) rights to inherited and acquired assets (like health, strength, skills, and property), (ii) rights to use these assets to produce for one's own consumption or for sale, and (iii) the rights to goods, services and financial transfers from the state.²³

Entitlements are the bundle of goods a person can end up with, depending on how he/she exercise his/her rights. Entitlements are independent of what people may express as their (life-style) preferences, as life style "preferences" can be adaptive preferences or choices that people settle for within the context of unequal social conditions. In too many cases, women's life-style "preferences" are distorted expressions that result from living in socially unjust circumstances - households, communities, societies - and where women have learnt to downscale their expectations. Hence, human rights entitlements provide better bases for social justice claims, including claims for gender equality.

Sen's notion of "entitlement failure" allows one to grasp the factors that may impede people's claims to entitlements (which would have increased their capabilities). Thus "entitlement failure" occurs when people cannot gather the resources necessary to live a well-functioning human life because they could neither produce it for themselves or buy it from the market, nor exercise a claim against their families and communities or - fundamentally - against the state to provide the resources they need.²⁴

The capabilities approach challenges us to help create environments that build people's

23 Elson *ibid*, p.11.

24 Capabilities can refer both to a person's ability to achieve a particular "functioning" - where a "functioning" is described as an achievement of that person or what he/she manages to do or be - and, more broadly, to indicate the combination or collection of achievements that a person can realise in a lifetime. Thus "a functioning is an achievement, and a capability is the ability to achieve. Thus, the functionings are directly related to the kind of life people actually lead, whereas capabilities are the opportunities people have to lead lives of their choosing." See Nanak Kakwani (2006) "What is Poverty?" UNDP International Poverty Centre. Available at <http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCOnePager22.pdf>

capabilities – that is, their opportunities to lead the lives of their choice and elevate their functionings (or, what they can be and can do, including exercise claims against the state) - as a development goal. It allows us to examine the individuals' capacity for exercising choice - of what to do and how to be - within a context of real or substantive choice. This approach also recognises people as active agents in shaping their ideas of a good quality life, and claiming that as a right. In recognising people's agency, Sen does not endorse a particular list of capabilities, arguing instead that through democratic deliberation, citizens should decide the core capabilities that would for them constitute a dignified life and just society:

"The problem is not with listing important capabilities, but with insisting on one predetermined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning. To have such a fixed list, emanating entirely from pure theory, is to deny the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included."²⁵

26

Gender equality, social justice and the capabilities approach

Feminist philosopher Martha Nussbaum argues that Sen's approach does not go far enough²⁷ and that - if we are serious about advancing social justice and gender justice - we must set out what these fundamental entitlements and freedoms may contain. She sets out a list of 10 capabilities that she regards as central to "living a good life" and asserts that any society that does not guarantee all its citizens these minimum capabilities, cannot claim to be a fully just society, irrespective of its level of material wealth. She further argues for a *hierarchy* of freedoms,²⁸ as some freedoms - like the freedom of industry to pollute the

25 Sen 2004: 77, quoted in Clarke 2006.

26 Clark (2003) applied the approach to investigate perceptions of well-being - a good life - among the urban and rural poor in South Africa. These studies showed that most people have a common vision of a good life that correlates with that proposed by Nussbaum and - indirectly - by Sen.

27 Other critics of the CA argue that Sen goes too far in insisting that certain capabilities are core rights or entitlements in light of disagreement on what constitutes a "good life," and the potential for differences at the interpersonal level in the weighting of one capability against another. Further, the information requirements of the capability approach are high and in some cases the data/indicators will not be available.

28 Nussbaum(2000: 17-18) sets out a list of 10 capabilities which she regards as central requirements for a life lived with dignity:

1. Life - being able to the end of the expected length of a human life;
2. Bodily health - being able to have good health;
3. Bodily integrity - being able to move freely from place to place without the threat of violence, and have opportunities for sexual pleasure;
4. Senses, imagination and thought - being able to imagine, reason and think with freedom of expression and religious exercise guaranteed;
5. Emotions - being able to have attachments to people and things, to love those who love and care for us, without fear and anxiety;

environment - will need to be constrained for the greater good. She sees public participation and deliberation as important for setting out a central list in *more precise terms*, and for deciding a strategy for *implementation* of such a list in specific national contexts, societies or social groupings:

"I shall argue, however, that the capabilities approach will supply definite and useful guidance, and prove an ally in the pursuit of sex equality, only if we formulate a definite list of the most central capabilities, even one that is tentative and revisable, using capabilities so defined to elaborate a partial account of social justice, a set of basic entitlements without which no society can lay claim to justice" (2003:36).

For Nussbaum, the capabilities approach is superior to other approaches to social justice - including the rights-based development approaches - particularly when one considers the problem of addressing gender-based inequalities. Adherents of the capability approach argue that while the human rights and capabilities approaches are closely related, the capabilities approach takes a firmer stand about how rights can be secured for people - rather than seeing an abstract right that might be recognised but is not implemented.

Adherents of the capabilities approach highlight its focus on the state as well as the private, non-state spheres, which is especially pertinent for advancing gender justice and equality between the sexes in contexts where women may suffer discrimination within the family as well as within (cultural and religious) communities. For Harcourt, the capabilities approach gives deeper insight into what is needed for women to build their fundamental capabilities within the family, community formations and society at large:

"The capability of poor women to function requires not only individual freedom to act and to know and to seek justice, but also the supportive social, cultural and political environment. Conversely, it is this environment that determines the capacity to act. Well-being for women is only possible if all conditions of combined capabilities are met, within themselves, the family the community and the larger environment" (2001:4).

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6. Practical reason - being able to engage in critical reflection and conceptualise what is good ;
 7. Affiliation - being able to engage in social interactions, live with others, form friendships, and being treated with dignity and regarded as a human being of equal worth to others;
 8. Other species - being able to express a concern for nature;
 9. Play - being able to laugh and enjoy recreation;
 10. Political and material control over one's environment – being able to exercise political choice, being able to hold property, and seek employment on an equal basis as others.

Nevertheless, while it has historically neglected the private sphere from scrutiny, the human rights discourse continues to play an important role as: (i) it asserts that we have justified claims to be treated with dignity and respect (especially where we have not been); (ii) that such claims are based on a call for justice and may be especially pertinent where some individuals do not have a political voice; and (iii) it highlights the individual's right to independence and freedom of choice.

Conclusion

The review of the feminist debates on development is clear on the need to include a gender perspective and - more importantly - to implement development programmes that recognise - and draw on - women's agency to develop solutions to address the inequalities they face. Rather than treating women merely as victims in need of assistance, women (and men) must also be subjects who participate actively in bringing about social change and gender equality. Women's agency and their increased capacities to claim their rights is key to any strategy to advance social justice and gender equality.

While the feminist critique laments the dilution of the initial political and transformative agendas there is nevertheless evidence that some gains having been made as a consequence of the increased exposure to gender-related concepts. Internationally, there is increased recognition of:

- the centrality of gender equality to development
- women's rights as human rights
- gender violence as a human rights issue

These issues gained recognition in large measure as a consequence of being raised by feminists in debates about the development process and exchanges about what constitutes development from a feminist perspective. However, what the feminist critiques of the engagement with development discourses also makes clear, is that the scope for more profound social transformation is huge and largely unmet still.

Development projects no matter how large or small are challenged to not only address the gender agenda as a category for data collection and analysis, but to also press forward on the political issues of gender inequality and social practices that are oppressive not only to

women but also the men (who often enforce them). As both the human development and feminist advocates insist, development must be about bringing about transformed societies in which men and women have increased capacities - to live a life of dignity and one in which they have higher capacities in what they can do and what they can be, including being empowered to claim their rights from the state as well as their more immediate communities and household members.

Part 2: Integrating Gender Awareness as part of the Striving towards Excellence in ICT Development Research Practice

Introduction

ICT4D research is approached in this paper as a specific form of Development Research. Whilst the nexus between ICT, gender and development creates specific dynamics and challenges, ICT4D research is part of the project of Development Research and hence part of the project of Human Development. As argued in Part I of this paper, integrating Gender Awareness in Development Practice is an expression of the striving for development excellence and hence, the striving towards gender equity in and through ICT4D research is part of the striving towards excellence in ICT4D research.

ICT4D research that is not gender aware will lead to a lack of gender awareness in ICT4D development efforts and hence compromise the premise of social justice that grounds the concept of human development and lead to development efforts that will be less effective than they could be.

Integrating gender awareness in development research will also lead to better research, as gender blindness or sexism are serious threats to the reliability, validity and objectivity of research designs, research processes and research findings.

Lack of gender awareness in ICTD research can be remedied in two different yet complementary ways:

- Concerted efforts to avoid gender blindness or sexism (the 'via negativa');
- Concerted efforts to include gender goals (the 'via positiva').

Researchers would ideally commit to both ways in order to successfully integrate gender awareness in ICTD research.

ICT4D research projects differ greatly in terms of research focus and purpose, research methodology and pragmatic constraints. ICT4D researchers differ greatly in terms of paradigmatic stance, research capacity, passion and experience. Efforts to integrate gender awareness in ICT4D projects will thus mean different things for different researchers and will result in unique journeys with fundamentally different opportunities and challenges. To facilitate an understanding of such journeys and their opportunities and challenges, the two different ways for integrating gender awareness will be discussed in conjunction with a distinction between ICT4D research projects that is relevant in relation to each particular way. In other words, including gender goals in ICT4D research calls for a different typology of ICT4D research projects than avoiding sexism.

This second part of the paper comprises three sections.

The first section starts with a discussion on sexism in ICT4D research and the need to overcome this as part of a project's regular strategy towards striving towards research quality. The use of this 'negative approach', or 'via negativa', necessitates a typology of research projects in terms of their paradigm because the potential for sexist mistakes is paradigm specific and so are the remedies.

The second section discusses the inclusion of gender goals within ICT4D research in a way that is coherent with the research process of the various types of projects. The use of this 'positive approach', the 'via positiva', is grounded in a typology of research projects in terms of their purpose: technical, social or gender purpose because these three types of purposes offer very different challenges and opportunities for the inclusion of gender goals.

The third and last section discusses the integration of these two ways by offering a schema that will allow researchers to design their own project – specific gender awareness strategy.

The Via Negativa: Overcoming sexism in ICT4D research

Gender awareness speaks to the commitment to become aware of gendered thinking patterns, their accompanying customs and behaviours and the effects these have on women, men and their lived realities and their environments. For researchers, gender awareness speaks to the commitment to become aware of how our gendered thinking patterns impact particularly on our professional research practice. As Margrit Eichler states: “...none of us has ever lived in a nonsexist society: Moving toward nonsexist scholarship is comparable to trying to comprehend a dimension that we have not materially experienced. We can describe it in theoretical terms, but we cannot fully appreciate its nature until we are able to lift ourselves out of our current confining parameters. This involves becoming aware of sexism and starting to eliminate it (Eichler 1988: p3).”

A first step in becoming gender aware would thus be to start recognising and acknowledging the inevitable sexism in our ICT4D research practice. Margrit Eichler distinguishes seven different types of sexism in research: the four primary types are 1) androcentricity; 2) over generalization, 3) gender insensitivity, 4) double standards. The derived problems are: 5) sex appropriateness 6) familism, and 7) sexual dichotomism. She emphasises that sexism in research is a multi-dimensional problem rather than a unidimensional problem and suggests using this distinction as a tool to recognize and correct sexism in research rather than view this as “an ultimate system of categorization” (Eichler p.4).

Eichler’s Sexism Typology

Androcentricity reveals itself in the view of the world from a male perspective and it manifests itself when ego is constructed as male rather than female. As the problem is so overwhelmingly biased in the male direction, Eichler has chosen to label this problem as androcentricity rather than as “andro-gynocentricity” which would, theoretically speaking, be more correct (Eichler p.5). But because it would be misleading and inaccurate to treat possible gynocentricity as comparable to actual androcentricity, she suggests using the concept of androcentricity whilst realising that gynocentricity (viewing the world from a female perspective) would not be acceptable in scholarship either.

Over generalization or over specificity occurs when a study deals only with one sex but presents itself as if it were applicable to both sexes. This is often the result when women or men are excluded from a study sample without acknowledging this in the research language. Whilst there is often overlap between androcentricity and over generalization, they are distinct problems: studies can be androcentric without being over general and studies can be over general without being androcentric (Eichler p6.) In quantitative studies in health, women are often excluded from randomised controlled trials, whilst the drugs or interventions that are being tested are meant to be used by women as well as men. This completely disregards the fact that women may have different physical biological responses and live in different social – psychological environments, which may impact their health differently.²⁹

Gender Insensitivity consists of ignoring sex as a socially important variable, often to such a degree that the presence of over generalization or androcentricity cannot even be identified. If a study fails to report the sex of its respondents, or if a policy study ignores the different effects of an ICT policy on the two sexes, we can speak of a gender insensitive study (Eichler p6).

The concept of **Double Standards** refers to the problem of evaluating, treating or measuring identical behaviours, traits or situations by different means (Eichler p 7). Identification of double standards is difficult to detect when there are no sex-free instruments available (when for instance a woman's social status is measured differently than that of a man, which reflects the male dominated nature of our world) or when a condition is confined to one sex only, such as for instance Female Genital Mutilation, or the restriction to move freely in public spaces which impedes access to Internet Cafes.

Sex-Appropriateness is a particular instance of a double standard that is so accepted within general and scholarly thinking that it is not questioned (Eichler 8). Truly sex-specific attributes such as 'bearing children' would not be problematic, but attributing 'child rearing' capacities as natural and sex appropriate to women, reflects a perspective that is conditioned by one's society and not capable of reflection on it.

Familism consists of taking the family as the smallest unit of analysis whilst the situation of the individuals within these households may be totally different (Eichler 8). It is a very accepted practice in social science research to engage in familism: the concept of the

29 'Unequal, Unfair, Ineffective and Inefficient. Gender Inequity in Health: Why it exists and how we can change it.' Women and Gender Equity Knowledge Network - Sen, G., Ostlin, P. & George, A. Final Report to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health.

household is still considered totally legitimate.

Sexual Dichotomism is another aspect of the use of double standards that leads to an exaggeration of sex differences of all types at the expense of recognizing both the differences and the similarities between the sexes (Eichler 9). It seems to occur as a reaction to or a 'cure' of gender insensitivity.

Female sexism

Eichler's categorization of sexism can be extended by a special form of sexism, that, although it is of a different order than the seven types discussed above, warrants explicit discussion. Although it is not mentioned (yet) in research methodology discourse, feminist or otherwise, female sexism in research is very real and a very real threat to research quality.

While male sexism has received a fair share of attention in women and gender studies, female sexism (women being sexist towards other women) has entered mainstream feminist discourse only recently (Chesler, P., 2001). Female sexism seems to be related to a country's mean sexism rate and expresses itself predominantly indirectly -- in the form of shunning, shaming, judging, and even stigmatizing and less as open hostility towards other women. Even being feminist does not seem to guarantee a lack of hostility towards other women (Chesler 2001). Most female sexism is so-called 'benevolent'. 'Benevolent female sexism' idealizes traditional female stereotyped images and so 'elicits women's cooperation in their own subordination' (Glick and Fiske as quoted in Chesler, P. 2001: 138).³⁰

Fear of identification with other women and with the plight they find themselves in, seems to be the shadow force behind female sexism. In other words, female sexism (in the form of judging, shaming and shunning) is a distancing mechanism that helps women cope with being confronted with female realities that would otherwise be too painful to acknowledge and accept. Especially when these other women find themselves in vulnerable situations because of gender discrimination, it is easier to blame these women's unfortunate fate on their individual behaviour and disposition than to consider the possibility that the gendered 'social order' in which they find themselves too, would be an important factor in these women's misfortune.

30 Glick, P. et al (2000). Beyond prejudice as simple antipathy: Hostile and benevolent sexism across cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70 (5).

For female researchers engaging female respondents in research projects, this dynamic means that the ‘judgment’ trap has been set for them from the onset and that they would have to pay extra attention to themselves and their attitude towards their respondents to prevent falling into it. Ironically this is even more so in research that has a purpose of gender equality and / or women empowerment. Judging research respondents would give female researchers ‘short-term’ relief of the painfulness of identification but would add on the other hand an enormous stress: emotional judgment closes the ‘doors of perception’ and closes down the processes of data analysis prematurely, preventing the researchers to bring maturity to their data analysis and hence interpretations and recommendations (Buskens 2009).

Sexism by Neglect

Because men and male perceptions and perspectives have become so much the norm, not only in daily life conceptualisations but also in professional research thinking, Eichler suggests, when discussing the problem of androcentricity, to put for a while “special emphasis on women rather than men, to start redressing the current imbalance. It also implies looking at both men and women from a female rather than a male perspective. Both sexes must be understood as gendered people” (Eichler p. 45).

But there is more to avoiding sexism in research than researchers admitting to their ‘gendered socialisation’, their implicitly androcentric perceptions and perspectives and gender insensitivity. Research participants do play their own role in the knowledge construction processes that form the research project; they have also undergone a “gendered socialisation”, entertain implicitly androcentric perceptions and perspectives and can be gender insensitive. Gender aware researchers understand that their research respondents’ lived realities are gendered; that their research respondents’ perspectives on these realities are gendered and that these perspectives are often geared to wards maintaining the gendered status quo, without the research respondents necessarily being aware of this. Furthermore, research participants could on the one hand fully embrace a particular project’s purpose whilst on the other hand hold on to the gendered conceptualisations and thinking patterns that would make it impossible for such a purpose to become a reality. Failing to realise such ‘contradictions’ and contest, when appropriate,

respondents' gendered thinking patterns that keep them from reaching that purpose, could be framed as 'sexism by neglect'.

Power differentials and social hierarchy are important dynamics within the contexts in which knowledge is constructed. While Amartya Sen “does integrate rights and freedoms into his analysis, he does not locate the origin of rights and freedoms in social relations of dominance and subordination, and he does not discuss the benefits to, or incentives for one group to constrain the freedoms of another.”³¹ Feminist thinkers such as Martha Nussbaum and Marianne Hill have commented on the fact that women's (and men's) perceptions and perspectives have been formed within male dominated environments and that this should be taken into account when constructing knowledge about and with women and men for purposes of gender equality and gender justice. Hill states “the viewpoint of the dominant groups, which permeates the common knowledge of how society should function, has obscured the true interests of other groups.” (Hill; p 130).

Nussbaum argues that the concept of 'reasoned agency' needs to be placed in perspective by using the concept of 'adaptive preferences'. People's behaviour, behaviour choice and general choices or preferences are influenced by their conditioning and socialisation. People may have grown accustomed to certain practices and experiences that are detrimental for their well being, self esteem and health. For Amartya Sen's capabilities approach to be instrumental for gender justice and hence for human development in its truest sense, Nussbaum suggests listing fundamental or basic capabilities: “I shall argue, however, that the capabilities approach will supply definite and useful guidance, and prove an ally in the pursuit of sex equality, only if we formulate a definite list of the most central capabilities, even one that is tentative and revisable, using capabilities so defined to elaborate a partial account of social justice, a set of basic entitlements without which no society can lay claim to justice.” (Nussbaum 2003).

Development researchers that aim to contribute to enhancing women's and men's choices and opportunities for exercising their reasoned agency are thus faced with the need to understand the margins of choice within contexts of social and institutionalised power; the way how respondents get socialised into their cultural and social forms of “adaptive preferences” in an interplay between their environments and their mind sets.³² This is particularly pertinent for female respondents. Women have grown up in male dominated

31 Hill, p 119 2003
32 Nussbaum 2000.

environments and thus are bound to entertain various layers of conflicting feeling and thinking patterns: the ones they are socialised in as ‘good women’ and that will reflect the interests of the dominant male gender and the ones that are closer to their authentic selves. It will be possible for researchers to detect these various layers of ‘personal truth’ when they pay close attention. This means that researchers can take a normative stance and challenge and contest their female respondents’ actual choices when appropriate; when such choices are in direct conflict with their respondents’ dreams, desires and professed purposes relating to the research project. Given the powerful role of researchers in the knowledge construction processes, and the repercussions research results and recommendations might have for the respondents, researchers would have to take their responsibility in this seriously. Failing to do so would make researchers agents of their respondents’ further disempowerment and can also be framed as sexism by neglect. One approaches a fine line here however: not respecting respondents’ free will to choose and construct their lives according to their own design does not make for good research or truly human behaviour either.

Researchers have to realise furthermore, that refusing to take a normative gender stance will automatically strengthen the existing gender – power relations that are imbalanced, which is not desirable from a perspective of gender justice and development effectiveness. Taking a gender stance implies taking a perspective on gender power relations. Much of gender power-knowledge dynamics may be invisible because they are experienced as “natural, normal, part of a culture, a religion, a tradition” and thus so much part of every day life that they seem not questionable, even less changeable. When women in Zambia are killed by their husbands for using their phone to live a social life beyond their husbands’ control, a gender reality that may have always been present but remained “hidden” suddenly becomes starkly visible. Researchers have to realise that refusing to take a normative gender stance will automatically strengthen the existing gender – power imbalanced relations and this can be framed as sexism by neglect also.

Whilst it will not always be possible to question or challenge the sexist nature of research participants’ knowledge construction processes, their thinking and feeling patterns and their actual choices, the least researchers would have to do would be to contextualise these in their research representation. Failing to do so, would make researchers active agents of the sexism that is prevailing in their research environments, whether they want it or not, whether they are aware of it or not.

Women as research participants: methodological considerations

Because women pose specific challenges as research respondents, Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jackson have formulated suggestions for researchers to consider when listening to women (Anderson & Jackson 2006). Although their experience is derived from the discipline of oral history and seems more appropriate for in-depth qualitative research than for other approaches, their reflections merit attention, because in ICT4D research multi-method approaches are prevalent and interactive interviewing as a technique, whether in a one to one conversation or a focus group discussion may be used within all three main research paradigms.

- It will be very important to listen carefully to what is said “between the lines” and observe non-verbal communication.
- The culturally accepted concepts in male dominated societies do not always allow women to express their realities and experiences. The dominant ideology is also often judgmental and denigrating of women.
- Women may believe that as persons, they are less worthy, capable, competent, talented etc. than they really are.
- Women may not even know that the socio-cultural concepts they hold about women in general, speak to their personally constructed female self-image all the time.
- When the concepts women have internalized about themselves sabotage their human journey they will experience tension and conflict between what they inherently know about themselves and what they believe they are capable of.
- Women will often experience frustration and unworthiness in expressing an important part of their essential being as well as in their (potential) contribution to and position in society.
- Women may be very sensitive to what they expect researchers want to hear, because they feel so insecure when they have to express who they think they are and what they are feeling.
- Women often do not have concepts which “feel really right” for them and which represent their experiences fully.
- The concepts women are using may be “concepts in construction” and women may try out different concepts next time. Women will contradict themselves and will speak

between the lines

- Women may measure themselves against the stereotype they hold of “the good woman” and sometimes they do that in conjunction with sharing where “they themselves are really at”. They may speak in “stereo” at times.
- Women may share experiences while critiquing what they are saying simultaneously through meta-statements. Sometimes they use culturally accepted concepts to critique their own life; sometimes they will use their own personal experience to critique culturally accepted concepts.
- Many women have a lot of unfulfilled dreams as well as anxieties and doubts around the fulfillment of these dreams. A depth interview may bring all this up and cause distress. Moments may arise when a woman will be too distressed to continue speaking.
- To go beyond the conventional stories of women’s lives, it is necessary to reveal experience in a less culturally edited form. Researchers may have to hold a “space of not-yet-understanding” for quite a while. It is important not to make sense “too soon”.
- Researchers should listen to themselves while they are listening to women. Our own personal discomfort can alert us to discrepancies between what women say and what they actually feel.

Overcoming Sexism requires Self-Care

Researchers that are willing and able to face sexism in their research practice, their conceptualisations, their techniques, will face themselves on very deep levels. ICT4D research is a social activity that gets its meaning from and within the various contexts in which it plays a role. It is experienced within the frameworks prevalent within these contexts and all these frameworks are gendered and resonate with our gendered “selves” in a myriad of ways. Our gender identity is one of the deepest layers of our socialised selves and the various layers of our gendered selves may only be conscious to us in varying degrees. The willingness to face inherent and implicit sexism may therefore lead to a ‘loss’ of ones (gendered) identity and this may lead to discomfort and even anxiety.

Maintaining an attitude of critical self-directed awareness in such circumstances not only requires a very deep commitment to research quality and a fair amount of courage, it also requires an attitude of care for the self (Buskens 2002). Any general practice of reflexivity is

only sustainable when it is embedded in an attitude of self care. Self-care can thus be understood as a methodological pre-requisite in the striving towards research quality. This is even more so when researchers commit to facing, encountering and overcoming their sexism. Chesler states that self-love is all-important for women to sustain a discipline of sisterhood and overcome their female sexism (Chesler 2001).

A Typology of ICTD Projects according to Research

Paradigm

The various forms of sexism will work out differently in different research approaches and different research approaches will have different opportunities to counter or overcome sexism. Survey research creates a different relationship between researchers and research participants than qualitative in-depth interviewing does. The different research approaches work with theoretical conceptualisations in different ways and at different moments of the research process: whilst survey research will start the data collection process with the theoretical concepts that guide the analysis process, in qualitative and action research, this is not necessarily the case. It therefore makes sense to distinguish ICT4D research projects that aim to avoid sexism according to the typology suggested by Habermas into Empirical-Analytical, Hermeneutic-Interpretive and Critical-Emancipatory approaches, which most often correlate with quantitative research methodologies, qualitative methodologies and action research methodologies (Habermas 1972).

In the following the Research Paradigms are characterised according to their key attributes of the researchers' relationship with their research reality, their approach towards their research participants, their conceptualisation of the concept of truth in research, the research process in terms of design, the framing of the research question, the way how the implementation of the research results is envisaged and the way how the concepts of reliability and internal and external validity are interpreted.

Characterisation of Research Paradigms ³³

KEY ATTRIBUTES	RESEARCH PARADIGMS		
	Empirical-Analytical	Interpretive-Hermeneutic	Critical-Emancipatory
Relationship with research 'reality'	Testing Measuring	Exploring Interpreting Constructing	Changing Creating Transforming
View of researched person	Object to be studied and measured.	Subject to be understood and subjects' interpretations to be interpreted by the researcher.	Actors, emancipators and participants in the research.
Understanding of truth	Correspondence to facts	Coherence within the data	Consensus between participants and pragmatic usefulness of data in alignment with the purpose of the research.
Research Process	Predominantly quantitative measurements; questionnaires, structured observations	Predominantly qualitative techniques; in-depth interviews, participant observations, focus group discussions	Participatory using both qualitative, quantitative and participatory techniques.
Research question	Fixed hypothesis. Set by researcher. "Whether?"	Open-ended question. Set by researcher. "What?"	Part of the research process. Negotiated in dialogue between participants. "How?"
Implementation of results	Recommendations made for action are made by researchers and outsiders (who might have commissioned the research).	Recommendations made for action are made by researchers and outsiders (who might have commissioned the research).	Recommendations (which are often in the form of an intervention) are often implemented as part of the research process and the implementation is monitored and evaluated.
Concept of external validity	Generalisability	Transferability	Transferability
Concepts of reliability and internal validity	Standardisation and control of bias, chance and confounding factors. Statistical analysis	Triangulation Respondent validation Thick description Reflexivity Deviant case analysis Fair dealing	Practical application Alignment with purpose Ownership Group process Documentation Reflexivity

33 Adapted from Habermas, (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, London: Heinemann and Adri Smaling, *Qualitative Research Summer Schools 1993, 1994 HSRC*.

Within every research approach, certain quality criteria are used that are specific to the particular approach. When the quality criteria are observed from an understanding of the gendered realities in which the research participants live, they will not only reveal inherent weaknesses in the research process, but they will also point towards potential remedies that can safe guard the quality of the research. In the following one example per paradigm is given to illustrate this:

Quality criteria observed from an understanding of the gendered realities in which research participants live and think

	METHOD	QUALITY CRITERIA	POTENTIAL SEXISM	POTENTIAL REMEDY
Empirical - Analytical	Survey	Control of bias and confounding factors	Using the concept of household uncritically without realising that in terms of the investigated thinking or behaviour patterns, women and men may have totally different experiences.	Engaging a 'household' study before constructing the questionnaire.
Interpretive - Hermeneutic	Depth Interview	Role taking and empathy	Taking women's perspectives on face value without contextualising it or questioning and even contesting where necessary and appropriate.	Role taking and empathy will have to go beyond the researchers' reflections of what respondents say, but will have to include the understanding of the context what leads them to say what they say. In other words, researchers will have to interpret their respondents' interpretations in the light of the concept of 'adaptive preference', if they do not want to become agents of their respondents' continued disadvantaged positions.
Critical - Emancipatory	Workshop, product development, training design etc.	Dialogical Inter-subjectivity	Using the concept of 'community' without realising that women and women leaders may be quite invisible to outsiders initially. Not taking into account that women because of their triple responsibilities (productive, reproductive and community work) often do not have the same time available to give to	Doing participant observation before engaging the action research process. Wait with engaging 'community leaders' until one has constructed an understanding of the issues women face in relation to the research focus.

			participatory research projects as men have. This is a direct threat to research quality because the dialogical inter-subjectivity will then reflect male perspectives and perceptions more than women's.	
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Gender Sensitive Quality Criteria observed from the Research Time Line

Eichler distinguishes in her Non-Sexist Research Checklist between the various research components of title, research language, concepts, research design, methods, data interpretation and policy evaluations and recommendations (Eichler 170 -175). Because research is a process, a journey so to speak, a schema is offered here that reflects the time line of the Research Journey, which has been simplified to:

the point of Research Design and Conceptualization (Point 1 of the Time Line);
the point of Data Collection or Construction (Point 2 of the Time Line);
the point of Data Analysis and Interpretation (Point 3 of the Time Line) and
the point of Results Dissemination and Policy Recommendation (Point 4 on the Time Line which coincides with point C).

These are pertinent points for researchers to pause and reflect on potential sexism in themselves and their research respondents, as these are important junctures in the knowledge construction process.

The schema shows the conjunction of a point on the research time line with a typical research action that would take place at such a point, the quality criteria that would pertain and the quality criteria observed from a gender sensitive perspective.

	Research Action	Quality Criteria	Gender Sensitive Quality Criteria
Point 1: Research Design / Conceptualisation	Choice of theoretical and methodological concepts	Relevance to research purpose	Checking concepts for androcentricity and sex-appropriateness
Point 2:	Survey, Interview	Reliability,	Including women;

Data Collection	etc	Trustworthiness etc	Women’s voices and stories heard
Point 3: Data Analysis / Interpretation	Grounded Theory Methodology, SPSS.	Emerging categories unlock the data; codes do justice to the data.	Checking concepts for androcentricity and sex appropriateness
Point 4: Results Dissemination / Policy Recommendations	Workshop, product development, training design etc.	Practical and applicable knowledge, packaged in appropriate ways	Gender Power analysis precedes results dissemination and policy recommendation

Comments to Time Line Point 1

When the research design is conceptualised, the concepts that are chosen will form the foundation for the entire research process. It is important that these concepts reflect a male and female perspective and not pretend to refer to both sexes when this is unfounded.

Comments to Time Line Point 2

Access to women as research participants is not always a given and this may cause research to be biased towards a male perspective.

In qualitative community research women are often excluded. Sometimes it is difficult to get access to women because they are kept under control of senior (male) community members or husbands, fathers or brothers. Sometimes, it is unbecoming for decent women to meet with strangers, be they male or female. In focus group discussions that comprise women and men participants, it may happen that men dominate the conversations and that women may feel too shy to speak or only reveal what they think is socially acceptable in their male dominated societies. A facilitator who is gender blind may neglect to notice this, accept this situation as natural and fail to create alternative opportunities for women to share their perspectives.

In participatory community based research, women are often excluded because they do not have time to participate in the often very time consuming participatory research methods or the researchers fail to recompense them for time spent in research participation.³⁴

34 Maguire, P. (1987).

Even when researchers have accomplished access to women, their research questions may fail to reveal women's voices, perspectives or realities.

Comments to Time Line Point 3

Sampling for gender-disaggregated data may fail to take into account meaningful categories of men and women because women and men are treated as homogeneous groups and underlying patterns and differentiations are not understood. Sometimes gender-disaggregated data obscures gendered realities, sometimes there is a failure to analyse this data properly because the relevant gender categories are not clear. Gender as a stratifier intersects with class, education, status, age and wealth. In polygamous households, the seniority position of the woman as wife has to be understood to understand her decision making power and resulting choices. Gathering sex-disaggregated data can be a first step in a gender aware data analysis. But it is also possible to draw the wrong conclusions from gender disaggregated statistics when gender disaggregated data is collected before a gender analysis of the respective population in relation to the research purpose has been done.

Qualitative research yields rich and in-depth data. It has occurred that researchers have captured women's voices without being able to make sense of what they were saying because the reality that the researchers had emotionally embraced – in other words, the prejudice they were entertaining about their respondents – did not allow them to hear the truth of what these were trying to convey. As we “hear with our brain” and not with our ears, it is important to acquire the conceptualisations that allow us to make sense of what respondents try to reveal to us through thorough preparations.

Comments to Time Line Point 4

Especially when the research data does have relevance to women's lived realities and reflects their perspectives, dreams, fears, needs and hopes, researchers need to be careful with sharing research data in the public domain. The public domain is gendered and many prejudices about women prevail. Even well-intentioned and correct data may be “tagged” with discrediting associations that will not benefit the research respondents and may even harm them. The dissemination of research results that pertain to vulnerable groups is a delicate matter and knowledge has always served the powerful well. Research participants

in development research are very often not able themselves to make use of the development research data. The power differential in the gendered world in which they live makes them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. If researchers do not make explicit efforts to make sure that the knowledge they have constructed will not lead to abuse or exploitation, chances are that it may just do that.³⁵

The Via Positiva: Including gender goals in ICT4D research projects

‘Alignment with purpose’ is arguably the single most important quality criterion in Social Research for Change in general and hence in ICT4D research projects also. In ICT4D research projects a research purpose can be distinguished from the underlying development purpose. However, as the research purpose would have to be a direct function of the development purpose, for the purpose of this text, the purpose referred to will be the research purpose. The degree to which a research project can stay aligned with its purpose is an indication of the technical proficiency of the researchers, of their understanding of the research context and of a research process that has kept its course in the highly dynamic, fluid and evolving research environments that ICT4D research projects invariably provide. As a quality criterion, ‘alignment with purpose’ can have an extended ‘time-frame’: the contribution can be logically aligned with the projects’ activities, outputs or outcomes. It is not always possible nor desirable to (have to) show immediate impact in line with the project’s purpose. Yet a causal link between research decisions and the purpose would have to be demonstrable for the research to be assessed as ‘on track’. It is thus understandable that researchers planning to integrate Gender Awareness into their ICT4D research projects, would need to do so within the parameters that are provided by their research purpose. Another factor that provides the parameters in which researchers operate is the research environment. The relationship between Research Purpose and Research Environment creates the operational field for the research process to unfold.

35 For examples of such abuse, see Gonzalez de la Rocha in ‘Gender Myths and Feminist Fables - The struggle for interpretive power in gender and development’. Here she describes how the “myth of survival” (to which her earlier research had contributed) was abused by an international development organization to justify policies that put breaking-point stress on the Mexican poor. She emphasizes empathically that social and economic policies should be designed and implemented with a view to strengthening the resources of the poor, instead of taking them for granted (Gonzalez de la Rocha, p. 62).

ICT4D research projects vary widely in purpose and hence in scope, working philosophy, operational requirements and in the way they relate to their research environment. And as the actual research purpose of the particular project is such a primary factor, it thus makes sense to distinguish ICT4D projects in terms of their purpose. Taking into account the (other) purpose of including gender goals in ICT4D research projects and canvassing the scope of ACACIA's ICT4D research projects, it seems to make sense to divide ICT4D projects in terms of Technical Purpose, Social Purpose and Gender Purpose.

Research is a process and so is the integration of gender awareness conceptualised as 'including gender goals'.

In this context, it has to be remembered that ICT4D researchers operate in a gender imbalanced world, with research team members and research respondents having grown up in gender imbalanced and sexist environments. This means that researchers, (potential) research team members and research participants might entertain gender bias to various degrees. It can also mean that certain research environments will place limitations to the degrees in which local gender norms can be named, challenged or transformed. In other words, the gender issues that ICT4D researchers are faced with are not only residing in their own consciousness and personal environment and that of their team members; they are also a constituting part of the life world of their research respondents and of the research environment. There may be times when the researchers would find their research purpose and their quality strategy to be in contradiction with the purpose of including gender goals.

Graphic Visualization of the Research Journey according to research type in relation to the inclusion of gender goals

Integrating gender awareness in research projects will always have to be a unique and individual creation. Integrating gender awareness in technical projects that focus on the development of open source software will create challenges that will be very different from the challenges that will result from integrating gender awareness in projects that focus on higher education or local governance, or on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. In the following a graphic visualization of the research process is offered.

It has to be noted that the graphic visualizations refer to successful projects that have answered their research question and met their purpose.

The graphic visualisation distinguishes between:

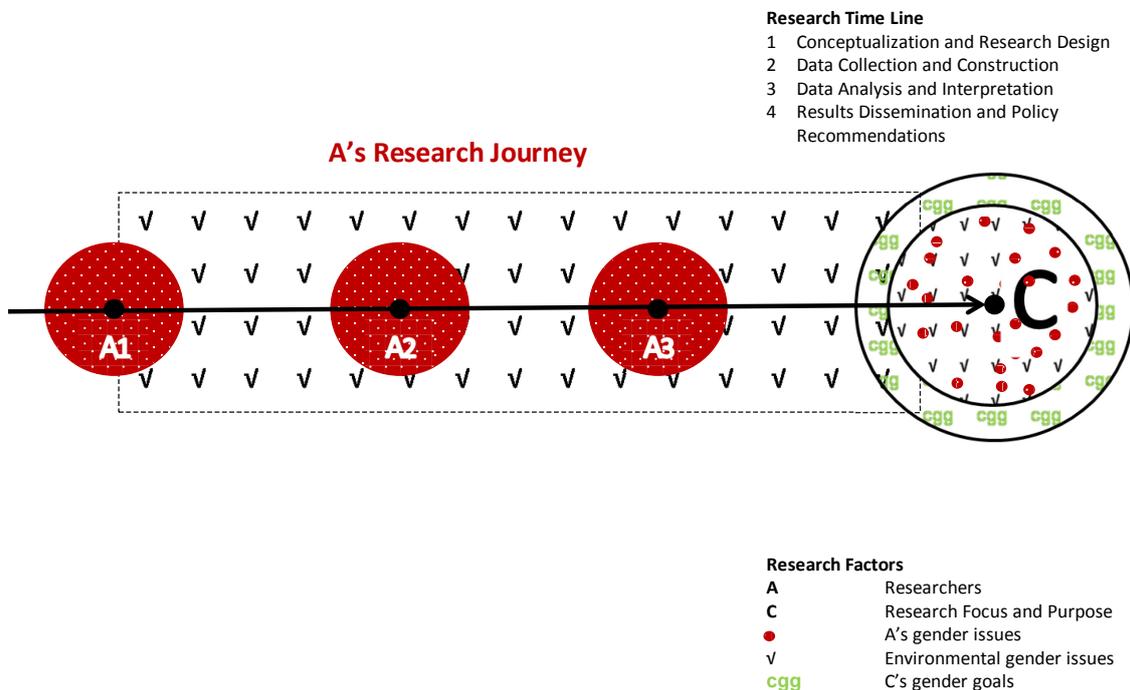
Technical research where no gender goals are met;
Technical research where gender goals are met;
Social research where no gender goals are met;
Social research where gender goals are met.
Gender Research which has met its goal and hence its gender goal.

In the graphics, the following factors are represented:

The researchers and their gender issues;
The research participants and their gender issues;
The research question and / or purpose;
The process timeline, distinguishing between the 4 points mentioned earlier (page 42):
The point of Research Design and Conceptualisation (Point 1 of the Time Line); the point of
Data Collection or Construction (Point 2 of the Time Line); the point of Data Analysis and
Interpretation (Point 3 of the Time Line) and the point of Results Dissemination and Policy
Recommendation (Point 4 on the Time Line which coincides with point C).

The influence of the environmental gender issues will sometimes be difficult to distinguish from the research participants' gender issues. It will happen that research participants reflect the sex appropriateness thinking of their environment uncritically and unreflectively. It would be important for researchers to note this and contextualize their findings in ways that frame their respondents' perceptions as such.

TECHNICAL ICT4D RESEARCH: NO GENDER GOALS



Description:

In this graphic of technical ICT4D research, research participants are not featured as a factor separate from the researchers.

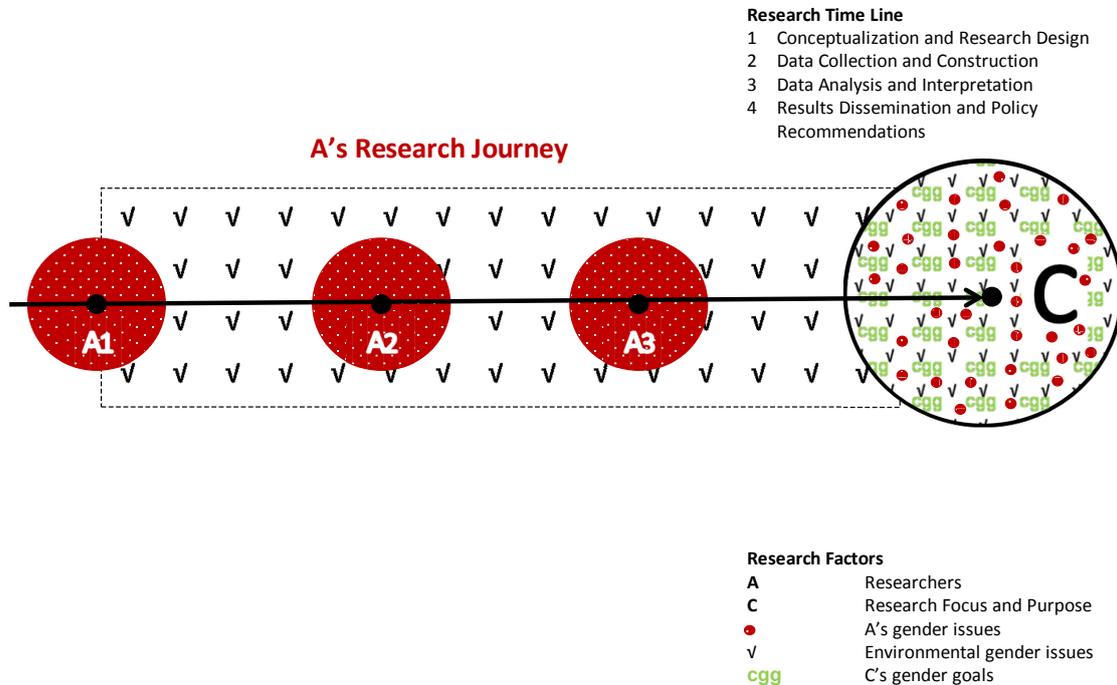
In a technical ICT4D project, where for instance software gets developed to enhance social services, the researchers would normally not construct knowledge in interaction with their research participants but in interaction with their product as it gets developed within a context to meet a specific need. Even when the software development would take place within the context of an action research project and would involve 'others' than the original research team, these partners would become automatically part of the research team because of the nature of the research approach.

In such cases, the environmental gender issues would be more specific to the nature of the professional field than to a cultural, social or religious belief system. For example, some of the gender issues that are particular to the technical ICT4D research would be the fact that in many countries, women are not represented in IT fields to the extent men are. The interplay between the actual IT curricula at universities, the 'hidden curriculum' preventing women from aspiring to professional ICT careers and a career environment that is not

welcoming to women may result in a professional IT environment where women practitioners and researchers are scarce (Ceci & Williams 2007). To make concerted efforts to change this situation and explicitly design programs for recruiting and mentoring women researchers, may challenge a project in terms of the time and the budget that are available. If so, the requirement to integrate women in male only research teams may be perceived as a threat to the project's striving for quality. On the other hand, looking further than the particular time frame of the research project, it can be argued that the field of ICT4D research would benefit greatly from a more balanced gender representation amongst researchers. Whether and how to include a gender goal would however be a choice that the research team would have to make. Such a choice would not only imply facing the sexism in themselves and their environments but also assessing whether a capacity building effort aimed to address the specific professional gender imbalance is feasible given the pragmatic constraints of the project in terms of time and funds.

In this particular visual it is obvious that the research team has decided not to engage the gender issues in themselves and their environment and the potential gender goals have remained unexpressed and unrealized. At the point of results dissemination and policy recommendation, no integration of gender goals with the actual research purpose has taken place.

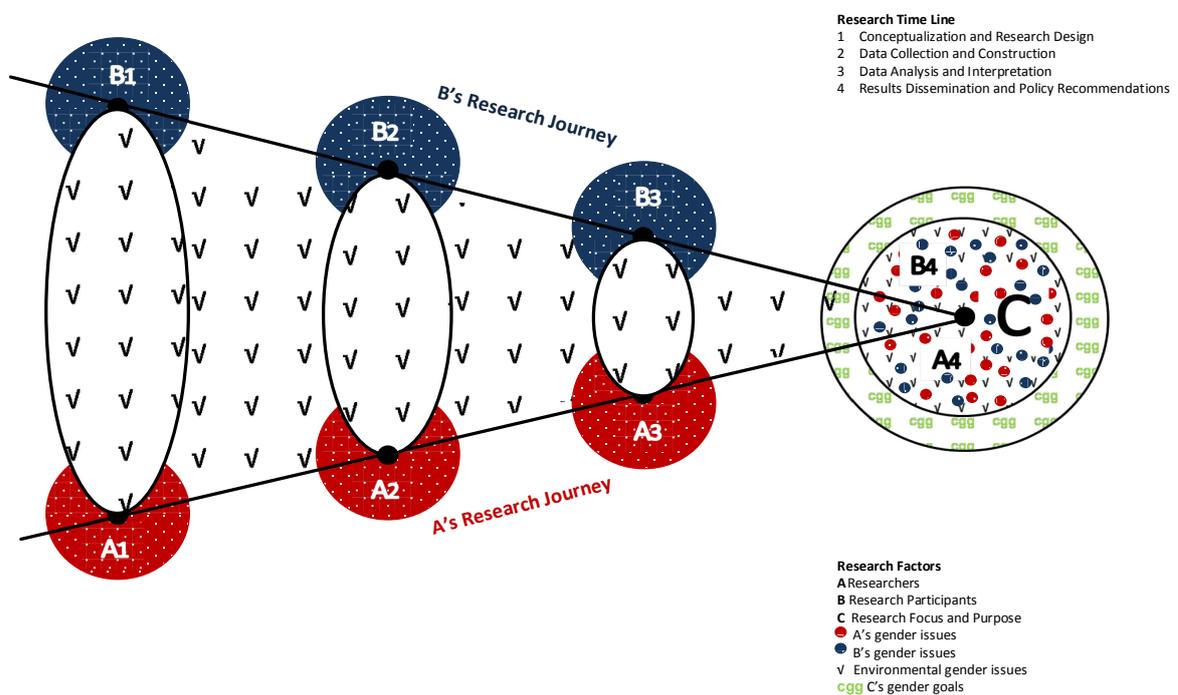
TECHNICAL ICT4D RESEARCH WITH GENDER GOALS MET



Description:

This visual represents a technical project that did accomplish some of the gender goals that were related to the environment they faced and the purpose they focused on. At the point of results dissemination and policy recommendations, gender goals were integrated with the actual research purpose.

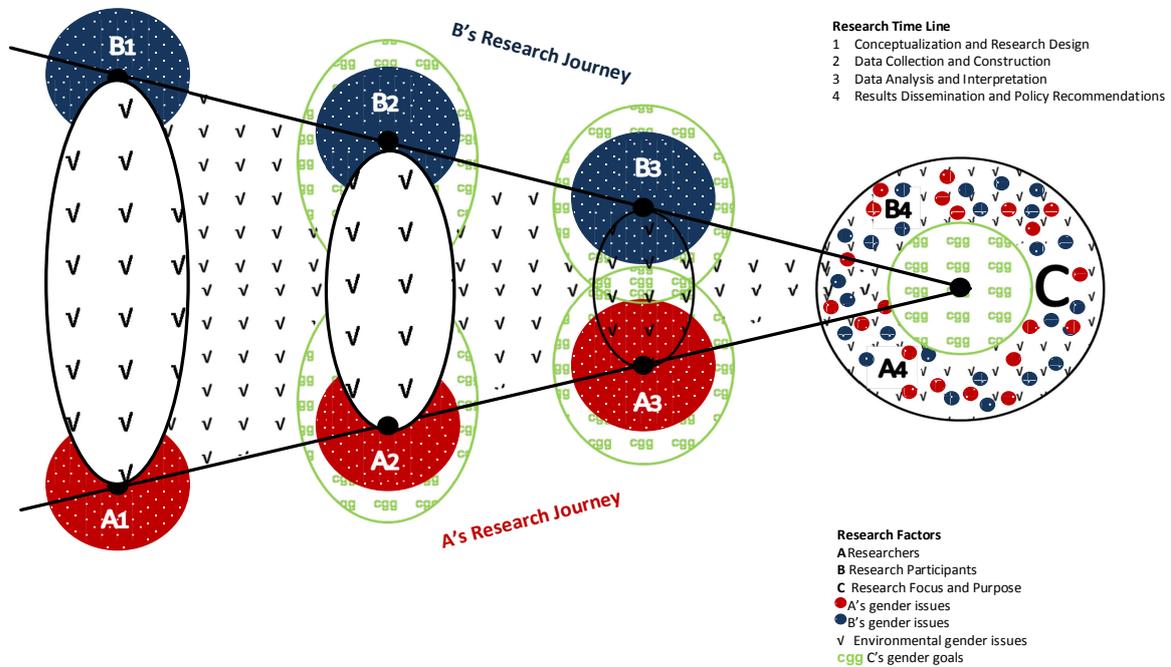
Social Research Without Gender Goals Met



Description:

In ICT4D research that has a social purpose, there is a relationship between researchers and research respondents that provides the field in which the knowledge construction takes place, even when the interaction is minimal, as for instance in survey research or controlled experiments. Because of the respondents' contribution to the knowledge construction process, the gender issues that the respondents will bring with them into the research process have to be acknowledged and contextualized. Research respondents may express "sex appropriate" opinions that are not necessarily what they themselves totally believe in or that are counter productive in terms of the research purpose and the inclusion of gender goals. In this visual, no gender goals have been met. The potential gender goals that are aligned with the project purpose remain unexpressed and unrealized. And the gender issues that have been brought to the process by the researchers, the research respondents and the environment have not been engaged in the process.

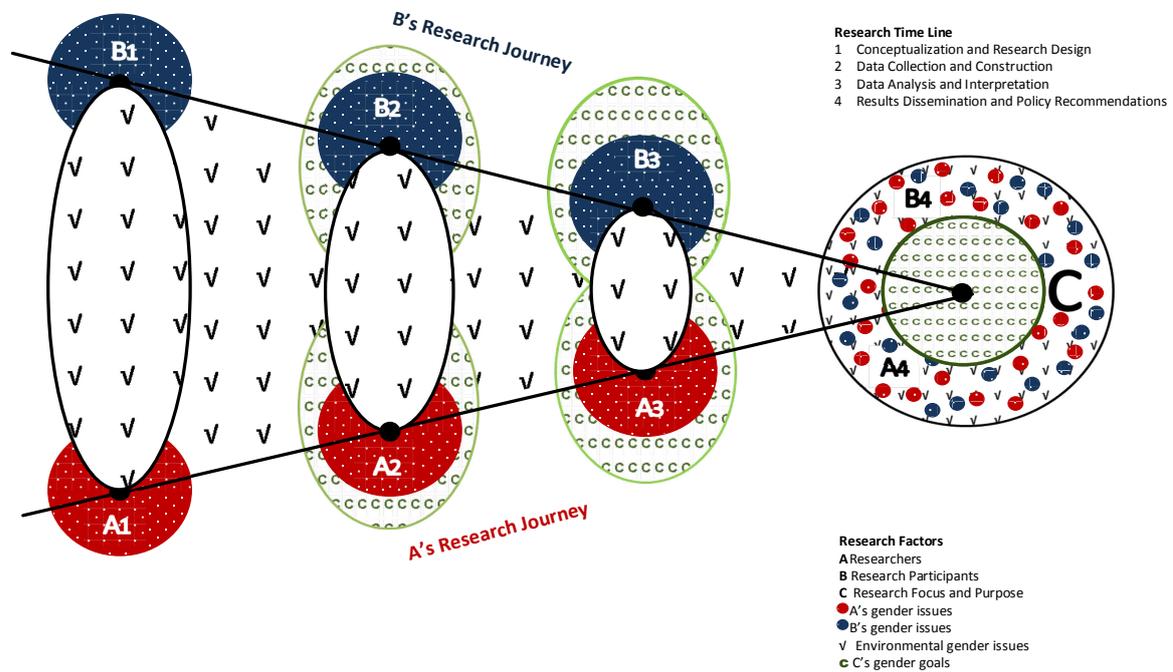
Social Research With Gender Goals Met



Description:

The following graphic visualizes an ICT4D research process that has a Social Purpose and where researchers and research respondents started to acknowledge gender goals at the moment of data collection. Both researchers and research participants have not only brought awareness to their gender issues; this awareness has become a meeting point for them in their relationship at the point of data analysis and interpretation. Whilst not all of those gender issues will be resolved or even engaged at the point of closure of the research process (at point C), in this graphic, there has been real engagement and hence some form of change and transformation for researchers and research participants alike.

Research Where The Purpose Is A Gender Goal



Description:

This visual makes clear that in ICT4D research that has an explicit gender purpose, the choice of research topic, target group and research methodology is a direct function of that gender purpose. With an explicit gender purpose is meant a focus on women empowerment, contributing to gender equality or gender justice. Both researchers and research participants have faced and engaged (some of) their gender issues and in this engagement, the research environment itself got transformed. It has to be noted however that also in research with an explicit gender purpose, unexpected gender issues may come up. Researchers and research participants may encounter gender issues that they were not aware of at the onset of the research and sometimes these issues have to be dealt with in order to bring the project to a successful closure.

Integration of The Two Ways: Avoiding Sexism and Including Gender Goals in ICT4D research

The ability to integrate gender awareness in research is thus just as much about the commitment to understand the sexism brought to the process by researchers, research participants and research environments as about the inclusion of explicit gender goals.

In the following a schema is offered that integrates the two ‘ways’: the via negativa of avoiding or overcoming sexism and the via positiva of integrating gender goals.

The examples given are not exhaustive of potential research processes or options.

They are meant to give researchers an idea how to integrate the striving towards the integration of Gender Awareness *into* their research projects’ strategy for research quality and *enhance* the developmental aspect of their research project (and hence the quality) by adopting a gender goal into their research journey next to and complementary to their research project’s purpose.

	Research Purpose	Research Action	Potential Sexism	Potential Remedies	Gender Goals
Empirical Analytical	Technical Purpose	Product development	Exclusion of women	Approaching women in the respective field directly to get their perspectives on their possibilities for inclusion and participation	Doing no gender harm, in other words not strengthening the existing gender power imbalance in the field.
	Social Purpose	Survey	Familism	Investigating gender roles in family	
	Gender Purpose	Quasi Experiment	Gyno or Andro centric Viewpoints used in design	Using both a male and female perspective in the research design	
Interpretive Hermeneutic	Technical Purpose	Observation	Androcentric observation categories	Work-shopping research findings early in process	Empowering women
	Social Purpose	Focus groups	Taking women respondents’ perspectives at face value	Role taking that involves questioning and contesting of women’s perspectives	
	Gender Purpose	In-depth Interviewing	Becoming judgmental of	Strengthening reflexivity discipline; peer counselling	

			women respondents		
Critical Emancipatory	Technical Purpose	Training Design	Sex appropriate concepts in training design	Researcher self directed critical awareness regarding thinking about gender roles / gender awareness training	Changing the gender imbalanced research environment towards more gender equality
	Social Purpose	Training female community leaders	Androcentric training design	Exploration of women's realities and perspectives before and in early stages of training design.	
	Gender Purpose	Dream workshops	Dichotomism: over emphasising of gender differences	Canvassing participants' perspectives early in process; peer counseling; gender awareness training	

Final Remarks

Critiques of sexism in research and recommendations to include gender goals in specific research projects are difficult to give without very specific knowledge of the particular research project, the academic disciplines they refer to and the particular research environments they operate in.

Furthermore, as research is a personal journey that does not only originate from researchers' professional interests but also reflects their personal passions, hopes and dreams (tacit though they may be), introducing a stream of thought into research processes that comes from an external source, is a delicate matter.

The field of ICT4D research draws people with a drive for innovation and a desire for social change. Both characteristics are grounded in the capacity for independent thinking and holistic analysis.

It is therefore hoped that the strategy chosen in this paper of providing the knowledge, the arguments and the tools for researchers to design their own strategy for integrating gender

awareness will be found useful and empowering.

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Glossary

Access is the means or rights to obtain services, products or commodities. Gender gaps in access to resources and services are one type of obstacle to women's development. Women's achievement of equality of access to resources and services as seen as an objective for women's equality. Women's mobilisation to achieve equality of access is an element of the process of empowerment.

Conscientisation means the process of becoming aware of the extent to which problems arise not so much from an individual's inadequacies, but rather from the systematic discrimination against a social group which puts all members of the system as a whole at a disadvantage. In women's development, conscientisation involves the process by which women collectively analyze and understand the gender discrimination they face. Conscientisation involves the identification of disparities and the analysis of their underlying causes. Through conscientisation, both men and women come to understand the nature of the obstacles they face, and the need therefore to mobilise for collective action.

Control means the ability to direct, or to influence events so that one's own interests are protected. Whereas conscientisation and participation are essential to the process of women's empowerment, it is only gender equality in control which can provide the outcome.

Development is here used to mean both the improved material well-being (welfare) of people and the process by which this improved well-being is achieved. The concept of development also includes an element of equality - that material benefits from the development process should be fairly distributed, especially to benefit those most in need - the disadvantaged and the most vulnerable. Therefore the special interest in women's development arises because women are a majority amongst the most disadvantaged.

Empowerment implies an expansion in women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to themⁱ. It implies people - both women and men - taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having their own skills and knowledge recognized), increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcomeⁱⁱ.

Equality of opportunity means that everybody has an equal chance, especially for equal access. In other words equality of opportunity means that there is no structural discrimination standing in the way of any individual or social group. Equality of opportunity for women would mean ending all gender discrimination.

Gender Analysis provides a systematic way of looking at the different impacts of development, policies, programs and legislation on women and men. It starts with collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the community or population concerned. Gender analysis can also include the examination of the multiple ways in which women and men, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, livelihoods, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of othersⁱⁱⁱ.

Gender awareness means the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not very evident on the surface, or are "hidden" - i.e. are not part of the general or commonly accepted explanation of what and where the problem lies. In other words, gender awareness means a high level of gender conscientisation.

Gender discrimination refers to the systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender – predominantly women - which denies them rights, opportunities or resources.

Gender division of labour evolves from the socially determined ideas and practices which define what roles and activities are considered appropriate for women and men. Unequal gender division of labour refers to discrimination against women in the sense that women get most of the burden of labour, and most of the unpaid labour, but men collect most of the income and rewards resulting from the labour. In many countries, the most obvious pattern in the gender division of labour is that women are mostly confined to unpaid domestic work and unpaid food production, whereas men dominate in cash crop production and wage employment.

Gender equality means that males and females have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development. Thus, society values males and females equally for their similarities and differences and the diverse roles they play. It means that there is no discrimination on grounds of a person's sex in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in the access to services and signifies the long-term outcomes that result from gender equity strategies and processes.

Gender Equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women^{iv} and ensure that, at a minimum, programmes, policies and projects implemented do not leave women worse off than the men in their peer group and families.

Gender is used to encompass the socially defined sex roles, attitudes and values which communities and societies ascribe as appropriate for one sex or the other. In this specific sense, it was first used as a phrase, "the social relations of gender", for which gender has become a kind of shorthand. The social relations of gender seeks to make apparent and explain the global asymmetry which appears in male/female relations in terms of sex roles in power sharing, decision-making, the division of labour, return to labour both within the household and in the society at large. The phrase directs our attention to all the attributes acquired in the process of socialization; our self and group definitions, our sense of appropriate roles, values and behaviours and, above all, expected and acceptable interactions in relationships between women and men.

Gender issues arise where an instance of gender inequality is recognized as undesirable, or unjust. There are three aspects of gender issues, namely: gender gap, discrimination and women's oppression.

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated^v. [7]

Gender planning means taking account of gender issues in planning. In development planning, it means that gender issues are recognised in the identification of the problem and addressed in development objectives.

Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female at a particular point in time, and is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them.

Gender relations refers to Hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women

Gender role stereotyping is the constant portrayal, such as in the media or in books, of women and men occupying social roles according to the traditional gender division of labour in a particular society. Such gender role stereotyping works to support and reinforce the traditional gender division of labour by portraying it as "normal" and "natural".

Gender roles are roles within which are classified by sex, where this classification is social and not biological. For example, if child-rearing is classified as a female role, it is a female gender role, not a female sex role since child-rearing can be done by men or women.

Gender sensitivity is the ability to recognize gender issues, and especially the ability to recognize women's different perceptions and interests arising from their different social location and different gender roles. Gender sensitivity is often used to mean the same as gender awareness, although gender awareness can also mean the extra ability to recognize gender issues which remain "hidden" from those with a more conventional point of view. But here we define gender sensitivity as the beginning of gender awareness, where the latter is more analytical, more critical and more "questioning" of gender disparities.

Gender training refers to a facilitated process of developing awareness and capacity on gender issues, to bring about personal or organisational change for gender equality. At the centre of this learning process is conscientisation, involving the ability to recognise the underlying issues of gender inequality which form a pervasive obstacle to programme progress.

Gender-Neutral, Gender-Sensitive, and Gender Transformative The primary objective behind gender mainstreaming is to design and implement development projects, programmes and policies that: (i) do not reinforce existing gender inequalities (Gender

Neutral), (ii) attempt to redress existing gender inequalities (Gender Sensitive), (iii) attempt to re-define women and men's gender roles and relations (Gender Positive / Transformative)

Mainstreaming of women's development entails addressing gender issues in all development projects and programme, irrespective of sector or type of project. Mainstreaming is therefore the very opposite of a strategy of segregating gender issues into separate "women's projects". The terms "mainstreaming" is currently used in two rather different ways, depending on the user's perspective in women's development. For those who interpret women's development as being merely concerned with improving women's access to resources and productivity, the strategy of mainstreaming may be interpreted in the minimum or weaker sense of integrating gender issues by adding gender objectives to existing programmes. This involves some adaptation, but not transformation of the development process. By contrast, a stronger sense of the term mainstreaming is used by those who see women's development as being essentially concerned with women's participation and empowerment, to address issues of gender inequality. From this perspective, the mainstreaming of gender issues entails the transformation of the development process. UNICEF has an explicit policy on mainstreaming which embraces this stronger meaning of mainstreaming.

Oppression is the use of political power and domination to maintain an unjust system - which is for the benefit of the rulers, at the expense of the ruled. Such oppression may exist at the level of the state, the village, or the household. Therefore women's oppression refers to male domination used for the subordination and domestication of women.

Participation in the general sense, means having a share, or taking part, often to denote having a share in and – more importantly - taking part in decision-making. We are therefore here defining the term "participation" in this active sense of having a say in how things are done, and in how resources are allocated.

Patriarchy is the male domination of ownership and control, at all levels in society, which maintains and operates the system of gender discrimination. This system of control is justified in terms of patriarchal ideology - a system of ideas based on a belief in male superiority and sometimes the claim that the gender division of labour is based on biology or even based on scripture.

Practical Gender Needs Practical Gender Needs (PGNs) are identified by women within their socially defined roles, as a response to an immediate perceived necessity. PGNs usually relate to inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment, and they do not challenge gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate position in society^{vi}. Practical needs are regarded as those needs which do not challenge the unequal structure of gender relations, divisions of labour or traditional balances of power but relate to the spheres in which women have primary responsibilities. [There have been several challenges to this framework].

Self-reliance is the ability of people to improve themselves out of their own resources, by their own efforts. But here the term is given the special - and common - meaning of people's advancement by their own efforts within the existing social structure. This meaning of self-reliance implies that development problems arise from inadequacies in people's present abilities and efforts, rather than from inadequacies in society, or from structural inequality. This definition enables us to make a useful distinction between "self-reliance" and

"empowerment", where the latter means taking power in both the individual and social plans. Where women's development involves overcoming a social system of discrimination against women, it is inadequate to discuss the development process purely in terms of women's self-improvement or increased self-reliance; we need also to discuss women's collective action for increased empowerment.

Sex roles may therefore be contrasted with gender roles, since sex roles refer to an occupation or biological function for which a necessary qualification is to belong to one particular sex category. For example, pregnancy is a female sex role because only members of the female sex may bear children.

Sex refers to the biological characteristics which define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive as there are individuals who possess both, but these characteristics tend to differentiate humans as males and females.

Social justice refers to fairness and equity as a right for all in the outcomes of development, through processes of social transformation.

Strategic gender needs Unlike practical gender needs, strategic needs arise out of an understanding and analysis of women's subordinate situation in society (conscientisation). Strategic needs are actions and strategies which are required to bring about structural change and empowerment. These may also be variously expressed; a need for political and legislative reform to grant constitutional equality to women; reproductive rights; state accession to CEDAW; a political voice; action on violence against women.

Structural gender inequality exists where a system of gender discrimination is practiced by public or social institutions. Structural gender inequality is more entrenched if it is maintained by administrative rules and laws, rather than by only custom and traditions.

Transformatory potential The concepts of transformatory potential takes the discussion of practical and strategic needs one step further. It means that development interventions should be examined to see which intervention will have the most potential to radically transform lives. Thus, transformatory potential can be used as a working tool to assess activities and interventions by the following criteria. Will the activity, programme or strategy under consideration serve to increase the social status of the target group? Enhance their economic or personal empowerment? Increase their decision-making capacity? To effect the above an additional question would need to be asked: What would need to be added to this programme/activity to ensure that the activity was capable of assisting in such a transformation?

Welfare is a term used in a very special way in the Women's Equality and Empowerment framework, to refer to the gender gap between women and men in their material well-being. Like the other levels of the Framework, it is an analytic category, so that the "higher" levels of empowerment are by definition excluded. If a project were confined entirely to this welfare level, this would mean that women would be passive recipients of project benefits, since they are not involved in the higher levels of empowerment which denote more active roles in the development process. Although lacking in any degree of empowerment, the welfare level is arguably the most important level, since narrowing the gender gap in welfare is the ultimate objective in women's development, to which the process of empowerment must lead.

Women in Development Women in Development (WID) projects were an outcome of the realization that women's contributions were being ignored and that this was leading to the failure of many development efforts. WID projects were developed to involve women as participants and beneficiaries of development aid and initiatives.

Women's empowerment: A 'bottom-up' process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it

Women's human rights: The recognition that women's rights are human rights and that women experience injustices solely because of their gender.

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- i *J Kabeer, N. "Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment." In *Discussing Women's Empowerment: Theory and Practice*. Stockholm: Sida Studies No. 3, 2001.*
 - ii *IDRC 1998*
 - iii *J Health Canada, 2003 and ILO 2000 and Gender and Biodiversity Research Guidelines. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1998.*
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 - iv *Ibid. and Gender and Household Food Security. Rome: International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2001.* <http://www.ifad.org/gender/glossary.htm>
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