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Assessing the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Promoting Sustainable Agriculture in Borno State (PROSAB)

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Assessing the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Project:

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Promoting Sustainable Agriculture
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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Objectives

The assessment of the outcomes of the gender mainstreaming strategy for the project Promoting Sustainable Agriculture in Borno State (PROSAB) was conducted in June and July 2008. The specific objectives of the assessment were as follows:

•   Review PROSAB's gender mainstreaming strategy, assess processes, approaches, achievements, and challenges and establish the existing status of gender mainstreaming in PROSAB
•   Identify the major steps for developing a Plan of Action for enhancing and sustaining gender mainstreaming by the national partner Organization and other stakeholders once the project has ended. The Action Plan is considered to be an important component of PROSAB's exit strategy as it will serve as a gender handover plan to the partners
•   Conduct a workshop on findings and develop future recommendations
•   Develop a simple Gender Mainstreaming Guide

Approach

The assessment was conducted by a team of participants from the following Organizations: Promoting Sustainable Agriculture in Borno State (PROSAB); (Borno State Agricultural Development Programme (BOSADP); Community Research for Empowerment and Development (CRED); the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID); and an external consultant, Dr. Barun Gurung from Women Organising for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN).

The assessment was conducted in three stages:

1. An Organizational assessment with 12 participants from the four Organizations
2. Extensive interviews and focus group discussions with selected community groups in the three agroecological zones of the project target area
3. A review of the findings of the assessment with all the staff of PROSAB and invited participants from the partner Organizations. This included a SWOT analysis, followed by the development of an Action Plan for gender mainstreaming

Background Information

The key priorities for the project were based on several considerations: the continued occurrence of drought, low levels of soil fertility, and the high incidence of Striga spp. There were other issues including the poor access of farmers to farm inputs, such as fertilizers, high vulnerability to price changes, high transportation costs, and poor commodity markets. These existing problems were compounded by environmental concerns exacerbated by deforestation, over-grazing' and bush fires, as well as increases in the amount of time spent by women in searching for fuelwood and water. Finally, there were the issues of restricted access by women to land and other resources, property rights, conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, and the lack of financial capital.

In the light of these priorities, identified in consultation with project stakeholders, the PROSAB project team developed an implementation plan with the following purposes:

- Improve agricultural production in south and central Borno State through the transfer of improved agricultural technologies and management practises to farmers
- Improve access to markets by male and female farmers
- Provide a more enabling policy environment for
- Enhance the capacity of agricultural stakeholders

In 2003, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) signed a Contribution Agreement with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) to implement PROSAB, in collaboration with the following partner Organizations: BOSADP, UNIMAID, the International Livestock Research Institute, and Community Research for Empowerment and Development, a Borno-based NGO. The duration was 5 years and the total value was estimated at C$7 million. The project was launched in February 2004, and Stakeholder planning workshops were conducted in February, May and July 2004.

2. Assessing transformations in the project communities

Methodology

The gender assessment was conducted in selected communities in three agroecological zones that constitute PROSAB's target area. During the assessment, 27 groups were interviewed, women's group (11), men's group (12) and 4 were mixed groups of women and men. The interviews were conducted over 4 days and used focus groups, followed by discussions and interviews with selected members.

Group selection for interviews was based on random sampling conducted jointly between the assessment team and the project extension staff in a one day meeting. The assessment team consisted of six members: two from PROSAB; one from BOSADP; one from UNIMAID; one from CRED; and one external consultant from WOCAN.

Empowering women and men farmers as equal partners

Gender Equality Wheel

The assessment adopted a framework called the Gender Equality Wheel with the aim of analyzing the outcomes that were generated as a result of the adoption and application of the skills and knowledge the farmers groups received from project interventions. The processes of adoption and application of skills and knowledge are measured against the following four stages, where each stage is recognized as a step towards gender equality:

- *Empowerment* refers to those resources, such as ideas, knowledge and skills, that become available to the community as a result of collaboration with the project. Such resources are the cornerstone of social capital because they build self-confidence in people as they explore new ways of seeing and acting
- *Engagement* refers to the stage at which people (especially women) come out of isolation, discover new possibilities for their lives, and begin to build mutual support
- *Enhancement* refers to the process when women and men begin to apply the new ideas, knowledge, and skills to enhance the lives of family and community members and provide household and community gains
- *Emergence* refers to the process when women and men move onto the public stage, to social and political action that transforms their social, cultural, and political environment

The status of women in the project area: background

An estimated 48% of the population in Borno State are female. Although they contribute significantly to the welfare of households through involvement in reproductive as well as productive activities, they are constrained in a number of ways by social and culturally prescribed norms that, among other things, limit their mobility and participation in development activities.

Although, in general, most of poor farmers have limited access to services and inputs

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Men's amusement at women's agricultural knowledge

such as fertilizers and agrochemicals, women farmers, in particular, face additional constraints such as limited access to markets and credit services, and lack of access to suffrage and participation in the development of new legislation (Oxfam 2000, cited in PROSAB 2004). Moreover, the traditionally elected representatives for rural women, known as Magiris, are from the higher classes within the community and, therefore, do not sufficiently represent the interests of their poor female constituents (PROSAB 2004).

Women are also confronted with the consequences of institutional "gender blindness". For instance, although there are progressive institutional mechanisms in place to improve the status of women at the national and state levels, rural women have little representation in, or access to, service bureaucracies. Institutional "gender blindness" which is characterized by low gender awareness in planning and implementation processes, is often compounded by an absence of technical capacity to conduct gender analysis and by the low numbers of women professionals represented in such bureaucracies. For instance, it is estimated that in the seven government bodies established to deal with local communities in Borno State, women account for only 1% of all the professional staff.

Assessing transformation in gender equality
The following analysis focuses on the skills and knowledge that were generated in the groups through their participation in the various initiatives for training and capacity development organized and implemented by PROSAB. An outline follows the social processes through which the groups' apply their acquired skills and knowledge to

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increase on-farm productivity, incomes, and forms of social capital, such as confidence, mobility and leadership follows.

Increased skills and knowledge
PROSAB's focus on training women and men's groups in improved farm management practices, effective land utilization, improved livestock management practices, improved postharvest practices, knowledge of land rights, and effective engagement with markets has produced enormous benefits for the communities.

Women and men, members of all the groups interviewed outlined the skills and knowledge they had received from the numerous training events they had attended. However, what was encouraging was how the knowledge and skills had been applied by the majority to useful and meaningful outcomes to generate improved yields, on farm productivity and increase incomes.

Many groups prioritized most highly the knowledge and skills associated with soybean production and utilization. They reported the improvement in soil health resulting from the nitrogen-fixing quality of the crop, while also acknowledging the income generating potential of soybean in the markets. Some groups were involved in the production of seeds and soy products (tofu) for sale to other members in the community as well as to larger markets in the area. They also prized soybean for nutritional benefits in the form of milk and roasted snacks, particularly for growing children.

With the knowledge and skills imparted through the training organized by PROSAB, there has been an increase in farm production and incomes. There has also been the largely "unintended outcomes" that can be associated with the generation of social capital, particularly for marginalized groups such as the very poor, the youth, and women.

Some men went to great lengths to ensure that their wives acquired the necessary skills and knowledge without having to break the Islamic tradition of women's segregation. They used a proxy system of acquiring the knowledge for their women either by attending the training sessions themselves or sending their sons who, in turn, taught the skill to the women at home. This was especially true for soybean processing skills because of its income generation potential through sales of tofu and milk, and its association with culturally sanctioned "women's" work inside the home.

Increased mobility
Marketing activities also imply increased mobility, particularly for women. While most Muslim women in Borno State have generally been free from strict segregation practices, increased marketing activities have increased both the frequency and range of mobility for women in project areas. In the words of one woman in a Muslim community, their men "….are agreeable for my travel, even outside the community, to train others or to market our products, as long I can bring home some money…"

Special Attention to women.
Photo by Bernard Haven, CIDA Development Office, Nigeria Programme.

Training activities have also increased women's mobility. In the early stages of the project, women usually travelled outside the community to attend training workshops. However, as these women have acquired farm management and postharvest skills, their travel has increased both outside the household and the community as they train other groups beyond their own communities. Women from Tum, Guwal, Tilla and Mbulatawiwi all reported travelling outside their communities to attend meetings and training.

Many women expressed confidence in their ability to train both women and men from their own or other communities as well. When asked if they would be prepared to train only men, one woman responded that she would "avoid looking them in the eye."

All the women's groups reported training activities as one of the ways of generating income, both in cash and kind (though mostly the latter). One group reported the activity of training others with the skills they had acquired was done more in the service of the community than for profit. This was in stark contrast to a male group that made loans at an interest rate of 35%.

Increased Leadership

Women have also begun to increasingly exercise leadership, both within the household and their communities. The platforms and opportunities for leadership by women are evident in the following:

In several of the mixed groups (women and men), women were present in leadership positions such as treasurer, secretary, or in one case, even as the president. For instance in a mixed group in Mbulatawiwi, the group treasurer, public relations officer, and secretary were all women. Most of the men in these groups reported that they were comfortable deferring to women's leadership, particularly if they had skills and knowledge they did not themselves possess.

A second arena is political leadership. In one community (Bergimbuti), a member of the women's group has been the elected official for a prominent national political party, although this was cited as an exception rather than the rule in the State.

Women as trainers are a third, and more generally witnessed arena of leadership. All the women who had acquired the skills and knowledge through attending training courses reported that they trained others, either in their own groups, other households within their community, and to a lesser extent, others in outside communities relatively further away

Land ownership

The inheritance laws in Borno State vary widely amongst communities. Under Islamic law, for instance, women, while generally allowed to inherit land, do not always have control of properties. In Christian communities, there are no governing inheritance

practises and patterns depend largely on members of the family (PROSAB 2004). However, it was common practice for people not to register their land in their names, leaving them open to exploitation by corrupt outside interests, or by power interests embedded in socially and culturally legitimated practices that are not always consonant with gender equality.

One important outcome of the knowledge acquired through attending the land rights training workshop was the increased level of awareness among community members about the need to legally register their lands. Women from several groups reported officially registering land in their own names, particularly if they were heads of households (where husbands had died) to prevent potential acquisition by their husbands, relatives. This trend was evident even with male members who, prior to the training, reported being unaware of the need to register their lands with the State.

3. Organizational assessment of PROSAB

Methodology
An Organizational gender analysis was conducted with PROSAB and partner Organizations in two stages. In stage one, a three-day workshop was conducted with selected participants from PROSAB, BOSADP, UNIMAID and CRED to introduce the Organizational assessment framework presented below. All the participants conducted gender analysis within their own Organizations. This was followed by a second stage workshop where the assessments of each Organization were shared with a larger group of participants that included all the staff of PROSAB and selected members of the partner Organizations. This was followed by a SWOT analysis which identified the major opportunities and constraints for sustaining a mainstreaming process beyond the estimated project life in 2009. An outcome of the workshop was the development of an Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming.

The Organizational Framework
The Organizational framework employed in the workshop is used both as a tool to analyze and assess the opportunities and constraints as well as to develop action plans for gender mainstreaming.

The framework views the Organization as composed of both tangible and intangible dimensions. More specifically, it conceptualizes the Organization as composed of the following three dimensions, and made up of nine Organizational elements.

The three dimensions of an organization
1. The first is the technical dimension. This is the most visible and tangible aspect of the Organization and can be through printed publications, policy statements, public relations manuals, and the like. The technical dimension is the public face

of the Organization, usually represented in the organogram. It has three elements: the policy or mandate; the tasks and responsibilities; and the human resources or expertise.

2. The second is the political dimension of an Organization. This aspect of the Organization is less tangible and is also referred to as the sociopolitical dimension. It represents those aspects of an Organization that are more "hidden" from both public scrutiny as well as from some members. The "hidden" nature of this dimension suggests that it is well defined and has subjective arena in which decisions are made, policies are formulated, and individual members negotiate "spaces" in which to manoeuvre and innovate.

3. Then there is the cultural dimension, which is the intangible aspect of an Organization. It represents those often unquestioned but embedded Organizational elements that influence the norms and values underlying the running of the Organization; the way in which work relations between staff and outsiders are

organized; and the way members feel and think about their work environment and about other members. This dimension is comprised of three elements: Organizational culture, cooperation, and attitudes.

Taken together, the three dimensions and the nine elements are contained in a framework, where they cannot be viewed as separate and distinct aspects of an Organization but rather as an axis of meaning that runs across and down the elements (see Organizational matrix below).

TECHNICAL	Policy	Tasks and Responsibilities	Expertise
POLITICAL	Policy influence	Decision making	Room to innovate
CULTURAL	Norms and Values	Cooperation	Attitudes

Adapted by Groverman and Gurung 2001 from Tichy 1986

Organizational Framework (see Annex 1)

Background: understanding gender and the organization

Definition
Gender mainstreaming as a prescribed course of action emerged as an enormous agenda for transformation and change after the World Conference on Women held in

Beijing in 1995, giving impetus to a process that had started with the earlier conference in Nairobi in 1975. As a process, gender mainstreaming contrasts and competes with earlier praxis and modes of thought that focused generically on women, such as the Women in Development framework and on separate measures for compensating women for the disadvantages and discrimination experienced in development processes. Since the Beijing Conference, gender mainstreaming has gained momentum, particularly at the higher levels of national and international policy making.

At the meetings and negotiations of the forty seventh Session of the UN subsidiary body, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2003, a resolution was adopted concerning the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programs of the UN system. Likewise, a similar resolution was proposed for adoption by the meetings of the UN Economic and Social Council in 2003 and 2004. The forty ninth Session of the CSW in March 2005 marked the tenth anniversary of the Beijing Conference. The ministerial outcome document from "Beijing + 10" reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action, as well as gender mainstreaming as the global strategy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. This reaffirmation was echoed in the outcome document from September 2005 World Millennium Summit issued by 180 Heads of States and Government.

These resolutions, declarations, and outcome documents from the highest policy levels globally define gender mainstreaming as a prescribed course of action. Generally, it is an accepted strategy for the promotion of gender equality, which provides indications of how it should be implemented. Examples of measures include formulating and implementing policies and strategies for gender

Interlink between gender, improved nutrition and health

equality; developing and using data disaggregated by sex; gender-specific studies and information; gender analyses of budgets where relevant; establishing or strengthening institutional mechanisms, such as gender units or focal points, networks and task forces; and strengthening staff skills and capacity to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programs.

More specifically, the agenda for influencing the "mainstream" includes the following:

1. Altering public policies

2. Improving implementation and delivery policies through clear program for change in administrative systems

3. Directly benefiting women through targeted actions and program

Approaches to mainstreaming: integrationist versus Transformative
There are two ways of viewing mainstreaming: integration and transformation. The aim of integration is to ensure that gender equality concerns are integrated in the analysis of the problems faced by a particular sector; that specific targets are set for outcomes, and that monitoring and evaluation of policies and program capture the progress made in the achievement of gender equality. The integrationist approach is also referred to as the "technical' approach to mainstreaming. Much of its focus is on institutions and involves improving the technical processes in development. Gender advocates have had to make a case for the integration of gender issues by demonstrating how this would benefit the Organizations involved by meeting their official priorities. To do this they often rely on frameworks, checklists, and tools for gender integration in policies, program and by training people in gender awareness and planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

The aim of transformative approaches is to introduce women's concerns related to their position (strategic interests) into mainstream development agendas, so as to transform the agenda for change. One way of ensuring that gender equality concerns are integrated into agricultural R&D practise for instance, is to make sure that extension services address both women and men and that technological packages are appropriate for the roles of both women and men in agricultural production. However, the issue might be that women in their own right, and not as wives or dependents of men, have no rights over land. Advocacy for women's land rights is thus necessary to set the agenda for a change of mainstream program addressing gender inequality in agriculture.

It is critical to combine the two approaches as they work at two different institutional levels. While integration involves working within development institutions to improve the "supply" side of the equation, a transformative agenda requires efforts to create constituencies that demand change. The latter requires an understanding of the nature of political society, State-society relationships, and the extent to which, in particular contexts, the policy making institutions are autonomous or dependent on the influence of international development and financial institutions. Integration depends for its

success on transformation. The creation of the demand for the democratic, accountable and just governance has to go hand in hand with building the accountability of policy making institutions and the public, both men and women, they are supposed to serve, (Mukhopadhyay 2007).

Gender Assessment in PROSAB

The technical dimension
The Technical Dimension comprises of the following: policy for gender; tasks and responsibilities for gender; and existing expertise or capacity for gender mainstreaming.

Gender Policy
A specific gender policy exists for PROSAB in the form of a strategy document that clearly outlines how gender issues should be integrated into all program activities. According to the gender strategy document (2004), gender is an integral component of Project implementation. It evolved as an outcome of the initial gender assessment in Borno State which identified concerns about gender inequality that needed to be addressed. The strategy was developed with the aim of developing a long-term vision for reducing gender inequalities through the implementation of agricultural interventions under PROSAB, and aims to achieve the following:

- Identify relevant and appropriate entry points and strategies for achieving gender equity results, by establishing a thorough gender baseline and through constant iterative participatory planning with the selected participants and communities
- Plan gender-specific activities, such as working with groups to set up sustainable postharvesting processes and woodlots to reduce women's time spent in fetching wood, and identify or allocate resources for their implementation as part of the agreed community Action Plan s
- Develop gender-sensitive expected results, such as the increased productivity and increased participation by women in agricultural decision making, and appropriate performance indicators (based on development, enabling or management results) to measure their achievements, such as increased productivity and indicators developed with women on increased family welfare (pp:3)

The strategy also aims to ensure that the project will ensure equitable access to resources and enhanced participation of women in influencing development, so as to obtain equal distribution of benefits to women and men.

The gender strategy for PROSAB was developed with the input and collaboration of all PROSAB partner institutions: BOSADP, UNIMAID; and CRED. However, these partners reported that they did not have a defined gender policy within their respective institutions.

Tasks and responsibilities

With the development of a gender strategy, PROSAB has assigned the gender mainstreaming responsibility to a Gender Mainstreaming Unit (GMU). The unit is headed by a gender focal person, who is a national consultant tasked with coordinating the various service units within PROSAB as well as the partner Organizations (BOSADP, UNIMAID, and CRED).

However, the gender coordinator reported weak linkages with other service units within PROSAB. The discussions of the assessment workshop revealed that other service units were relatively unaware of their responsibilities in carrying out the gender objectives, beyond targeting women's and men's groups for project implementation.

Among partner Organizations, BOSADP has a Women in Agriculture (WIA) unit that was established in 1989. However, not much could be assessed about its efficacy in assuming responsibilities for gender issues within BOSADP. The two other partner Organizations, UNIMAID and CRED, have no gender or women's unit.

Gender expertise and capacity

PROSAB and all the project partners reported their attendance at two "gender mainstreaming" workshops conducted during the course of the project. However, on further discussion, and analysis of the workshop contents, it was apparent that these workshops were focused on developing gender awareness. The participants lacked technical capacity for gender analysis, planning and implementation. Moreover, much of the prevailing views about what constitutes gender mainstreaming can at best be described as the adoption of an "integrationist approach" with the emphasis on separate targeting for women and men during project implementation. There is little understanding of gender mainstreaming as associated with the development of enabling Organizational environments, such as accountability mechanisms, increased gender skills, and increased numbers of gender-sensitive professionals.

All the participants at the assessment workshop agreed that capacity development for gender analysis and mainstreaming was a gap that needed to be addressed urgently.

The political dimension

Policy Influence

There was general agreement among all members of PROSAB and partner Organizations that the adoption of a gender policy was greatly influenced by donor requirements. The absence of internal support for gender issues and concerns is demonstrated in the absence of matching funds for gender, particularly within BOSADP.

Policy advocacy is an important objective of PROSAB, with the aim of contributing to the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable agriculture. Among the 12

policy briefs that were developed, one focused specifically on gender mainstreaming in agriculture. However, there has been little progress in government buy-in of PROSAB in general, to guarantee that the policy issues will be adopted and sustained beyond the life of the project (see First Monitoring Mission Report 2007). This absence of government buy in was identified by the participants as one of the major reasons for the decision by the donor (CIDA) decision to discontinue funding for another phase of the project, even though most of the stakeholders in the target communities had made repeated requests for its continuation.

Additionally, some members at the workshop attributed the State's reluctance to "cooperate" and fully support PROSAB as motivated by religious considerations. It was felt that the government viewed PROSAB as working against the interests of the majority religious population of Borno State. However, these views were difficult to verify.

Decision Making

Decision making was considered at two levels of participation: project management in terms of participation by various members of staff within PROSAB and of the participation of community members in the project's agenda setting and decision making.

At the level of the PROSAB project, there was consensus that decisions were made through management meetings, where all the service sectors were present. However, further analysis revealed that gender issues were largely sidelined. The GMU was subsumed when the larger socio-economic unit thus denying it independent and 'equal' status. The discussion of senior managers superseded those of the GMU. This speaks largely about the position of the gender facilitator relative to other sector managers.

In terms of community participation in project decision making, many members of PROSAB and its partner Organizations cited field days and agricultural shows as venues for farmer input into project decision making. However, there are no established Organizational mechanisms to ensure that horizontal information flows are employed, nor any structures to provide incentives for project members to incorporate farmer feedback. In other words, it was left to project members' sense of volunteerism rather than any organizational practice of accountability.

Room to Innovate

There was very little input into the Organizational element that focused on the room to innovate.

The cultural dimension

The cultural dimension contains three Organizational elements: norms and values, cooperation, and attitudes.

Norms and Values

An important concept in Organizational analysis is that of "cultural traffic". It is a notion that describes how the cultural practices of an Organization closely reflect those of the larger society in which it is embedded (see Alvesson 2002). In other words, an Organization does not exist in a cultural vacuum but instead, many of the cultural practices of the larger society are reproduced within the Organization. This concept of "cultural traffic" is particularly relevant to assessing the extent of societal norms or values regarding gender that are reproduced within the Organization.

In PROSAB, many of the participants in the assessment workshop discussed how the larger social norms and values regarding gender reproduce themselves in the work practices of their Organization. For instance, it was reported that segregated practices in PROSAB's extension delivery were determined by social norms:

"Culture of the people dictates that male and female extension workers be separated in extension delivery"

"The norms and values of the society are respected and accepted by the Organization, that only female E/As visit female farmers on their farms"

There was also the view from women professional staff in PROSAB and the partner Organizations that they were not taken seriously by male members. This was particularly evident in the way in which they were viewed by male members lower in the bureaucratic hierarchy.

"When you need a support staff (male) to do something for you, being a woman, he does so rather reluctantly. Whereas, this same man would respond differently if asked by a male staff member who is higher than he is."

Cooperation and learning

Cooperation refers to the level of information flows, both formal and informal, that exists among the various sections within an Organization. In gender terms, the extent of information flows reveals the status accorded in the cultural practices of Organizational members.

Some members of the assessment workshop reported that it was normal for the different sections within PROSAB to share information, and this practice was formalized through the management team meetings. For instance, it was reported that there was good exchange and mutual information sharing between the Socioeconomic unit and the Crop Division.

However, this exchange was less evident between the Gender unit and the other two

sectors. The gender mainstreaming strategy of targeting women and men's groups for project implementation was a guiding principle for all sectors (and embedded in the logical framework), but otherwise there was no discussion of gender issues between the sectors.

There is an absence of cooperation (informal or formal) on gender issues between the various sections, beyond what has been established in the project logical framework. First, one there is limited, or narrow, understanding about what gender technical capacity means within the project as well as with partner Organizations. Secondly, there is no recognition that gender mainstreaming needs to go beyond disaggregating women's and men's groups to include a more sophisticated application of gender analysis, planning and implementation. Thirdly, the prevalent understanding of gender mainstreaming is limited to field activities (implementation) and does not extend to changing existing Organizational practices.

Attitudes

Attitudes refer to the ways that men and women in the Organization talk about gender issues and their implications for practice. The general observation among participants in the assessment workshop was that gender issues are often considered as "women's issues". Hence, it was not uncommon to think of work on gender being performed only by women.

Sensitivity & respect to existing gender norms and values

Women professionals from PROSAB and the partner Organizations reported the prevailing stereotypes for women associated with gender issues. Typically, men characterize women associated with gender issues as "iron ladies", or "frustrated women" who cannot be "controlled" by their men at home. One consequence of such attitudes is that women professionals feel the need to "comply" and resist opportunities to put forward their opinions and views publicly.

Some male members also reported that there were social pressures for them to comply with dominant attitudes on masculinity. Being perceived as "gender-sensitive" men who actively sought to affect change in attitudes could potentially lead to problematic social relations. For instance, one male member felt it likely that he would be "blackmailed" by others if his actions were perceived as being too gender "radical" and not consistent with normative cultural practise.

4. Assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats for mainstreaming gender in PROSAB

Methodology
A SWOT analysis was conducted with PROSAB staff and selected members of BOSADP, UNIMAID, and CRED. The objective was to develop an Action Plan for mainstreaming gender, based on the results

Background: challenges to mainstreaming
Often, gender mainstreaming approaches are undermined by the following challenges:

Low threat and low opportunity
Gender equality is a low threat and low opportunity issue and hence, does not generate an appropriate response from Organizational leadership. Bureaucracy does not change through lessons (best practices) that are replicated. It does not easily tolerate fifth columns or change agents. And it is not easily tolerate cross-cutting issues; they pose a dilemma: Who is in charge? Where are their budgets to be housed? How can they be assigned a budget line? Where do they fit in the command hierarchy?

Positioning
The major weakness of mainstreaming is that the programme charged with mainstreaming is often excluded from decision making venues that set up to influence. It happens to "gender units." It is because they are a "unit" rather than a department or a thematic area, they do not sit on management committees. The pervasive positioning of gender equality in the lower ranks of the hierarchy and bureaucracies sends a clear message to colleagues: it is not important.

Bureaucracies and change

Bureaucracies operate like armies; there are complex chains of command in which rank is a key determinant of what gets prioritized and becomes actionable. When challenging problems are posed, when an internal or external constituency arises to demand responses to an issue not formerly defined as a concern, when the failings of the bureaucracy are exposed, the response will depend on the level of threat or opportunity. The level of threat will be determined by the extent to which the challenge can undermine the funding base or public image. The opportunities are likewise measured in terms of the resources in physical or human capital or public relations gains that any response to the new issue brings.

Hence, when it comes to gender equality and women's rights, both the threat and the opportunity are low. To a large extent, fear and powerful lobbies are what too often motivate a bureaucratic response to a high threat or high opportunity issue.

Gender equality in the absence of an institutional mandate for promoting equality

To what extent is it possible to enforce gender equity commitments in institutions and within policy agendas whose main objective is not necessarily the promotion of equal rights and human rights?

Innovative approach to reduce feminization of poverty

The main lesson is that in instances where the bureaucracy has the explicit policy goal to achieve gender equality (e.g., access to education in the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia (Mukhopadhyay 2007), it was relatively easy for equality programs to generate support from the leadership. However, where there were no explicit policy directives (as in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia), the political space became more limited and there was no support from the leadership for gender equality. (See Whitehead 2003 for similar arguments).

Gender mainstreaming in the absence of accountability becomes merely a technical exercise without political outcomes and reinforces the powerlessness of gender advocates and the gender equality agenda.

The strategy for effective gender mainstreaming will need to consider the following:

•   Treating gender as a sector, which would face the challenge posed by bureaucratic ways of thinking

•   Build a power base for women's rights

•   Building numbers

•   New openings. For aid flows to increase, countries or programs will have to meet certain standards of "good governance"

•   Solidarity. Collective action is critical to build an effective mass for change. In other words, gender equality must make sense to others beyond members of feminist groups (Goetz and Sandler 2007: 161-173)

SWOT analysis

Strengths

The participants were agreed that the major strength for mainstreaming gender was the existence of the gender policy at both the national and State levels. Participants were of the view that this created an enabling environment for carrying the existing lessons from gender mainstreaming in PROSAB to BOSADP as part of the exit strategy. Two senior members of BOSADP, who were participants in the assessment workshop, stated their commitment to continuing the mainstreaming process, even when the project comes to an end in 2009.

An additional strength that was identified by participants was the supportive environment in PROSAB that is created in a large part by the support of the senior management. There is a strong commitment in PROSAB management to explore strategic ways that will ensure that the gender mainstreaming process is central to the exit strategy and that it becomes part of the normative practice within BOSADP.

Participants pointed out the institutional mechanisms that are in place to specifically

address the status of women in Nigeria. For instance, in July 2000, the Nigerian Government announced the approval and adoption of a new National Policy on women, with the aim of incorporating women as full partners in national development (National Policy on Women 2000 cited in PROSAB 2004). The policy aspires to "…eliminate the negative aspects of Nigerian culture which serve only to harm women and it aspires to challenge the patriarchal status quo.." (Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke 2003 cited in PROSAB 2004).

At the State level, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development was established in 1997, with a Commissioner of Women Affairs. The Ministry is able to facilitate certain activities for women, such as the sourcing of subsidized fertilizers for women.

Weaknesses

The most critical weakness that needs to be addressed is the absence of gender technical expertise, both within PROSAB and among partner Organizations. Existing capacity needs to move from simple gender awareness and "targeted" project implementation, to enhanced skills in gender analysis, gender-sensitive planning and implementation, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, and concepts and skills for Organizational change. Moreover, analytical skills essential to capture the social capital ('unintended' outcomes) (Gurung and Biggs 2008) that are generated from the project's interaction with local communities is, particularly in enhancing the ability to respond in innovative ways to their changing needs and demands.

Opportunities

Many participants described the existing partnership between PROSAB, UNIMAID, BOSADP and CRED as a strategic opportunity that is an important basis for lobbying the State for financial support for gender, as well as seeking additional support from external sources. Specifically, this would involve discussions with existing donors in the State, such as IFAD and UNDP.

The outcomes that have been generated in the local communities, particularly the development of social capital in the women and men's groups are an additional opportunity that can be built upon through the State extension services.

Threats

The most urgent threat that was identified is the withdrawal of funds by CIDA at the end of the project term in 2009. CIDA's decision not to go forward with a second term of funding is considered to be a real blow to the project, particularly given the very real improvements in terms of narrowing the gender inequality gaps and the milestones reached in empowering women with technologies, and economic and social capital that have been generated at the level of the communities in the project area.

An additional threat is that there is no allocation by the State of a core budget specifically for gender activities. When CIDA funds stop at the end of the project period in 2009, the predominant view of the state government that gender issues are considered only in-as-much as there are funds provided by external donors is likely to govern what happens to gender mainstreaming.

This is closely tied to the "poor policy environment", both for PROSAB activities in general and for gender in particular. There was general agreement among participants that unless a concerted effort was collectively made to seek additional funds from new donors, and effectively lobby the State government to improve the policy environment, the continuation and implementation of "best practices" achieved by the project would be in question.

5. Gender mainstreaming Action Plan: proposed actions

Introduction
The gender mainstreaming Action Plan is based on the Gender Integration Framework. The framework combines four major areas in which activities are outlined. At the root of the process are activities needed to generate political commitment, which is to seek the involvement of top-level leadership, both within the organization as well as externally, in processes of gender integration. This would require them to commit staff time and resources and ensure that policies and procedures are put in place so that it becomes the foundation for all other dimensions of mainstreaming.

This is followed by the development of Technical Capacity, which would entail changing organizational procedures, as well as building individual skills. Individuals can take their skills with them when they leave the organization, but new procedures and systems become basic to how an organization operates.

It also becomes critical to develop systems of Accountability to encourage and reinforce new behaviors and practices; it ultimately requires building responsibility for gender integration into job descriptions, work plans, and performance assessments.

Finally, there is the Organizational Culture. To be successful, the gender mainstreaming strategy must take into account all the four dimensions, including designing activities that deal with the informal norms and embedded attitudes of an organization.

Mainstreaming gender: Action Plan

Overall objective
Enhancing and sustaining gender mainstreaming by BOSADP after PROSAB has ended

Sub-objectives

1. Generate commitment for gender mainstreaming Action Plan from State and BOSADP management

Activity No. 1: Realign BOSADP's policy/mission statement for social inclusion viewing this as integral to poverty reduction.

        Output: - Lobbying

                       - Seminar

Activity No. 2: Facilitate discussions among BOSADP staff on gender mainstreaming (Action Plan)

        Output: Workshop on gender awareness and mainstreaming (Action Plan).

        Outcome: Increased awareness about gender issues and mainstreaming (Action Plan).

        Indicator: Acceptance of Action Plan for gender mainstreaming.

2. To build technical capacity for gender analysis among BOSADP management and staff and State

        Activity No. 1: Organize gender trainings to increase staff capacity at all levels ensuring that gender is integrated in project planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and implementation.

        Output: - Workshop content

                       - Number of people attending workshops

        Outcome: Senior-level managers are aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming in the project cycle

        Indicator: - Disaggregate data according to gender

                       - All units of BOSADP will integrate gender mainstreaming in project cycle

                       - All new proposals by BOSADP will include gender mainstreaming

Activity No. 2: Identify partnerships for capacity building

> Output: - WOCAN will assist in training, curriculum development, etc.
>
>   - Identify local partnership to support BOSADP
>
> Outcome: Sustainable partnership

Activity No. 3: Build up the capacity of the Gender Coordinator to be accountable for assessing the progress on gender plans

> Output: Develop Terms of Reference (ToR) to assess performance by the Gender Coordinator and others involved in gender issues
>
> Outcome: Qualified Coordinator leading the process of a gender mainstreamed working environment
>
> Indicator: - Changes in behavior
>
>   - New project developed for women

Activity No. 4: Implement systematic changes in policies aimed at adoption of gender -sensitive approaches

> Output: Revised policies and procedures for gender equity
>
> Outcome: Development of a gender-friendly organization
>
> Indicator: Friendlier and more frequent interaction and cooperation among male and female staff; more teamwork.

Activity No. 5: Disaggregate project data according to gender

> Output: Data and research studies contain gender-disaggregated data and analysis
>
> Outcome: More visibility given to women's knowledge, work, and other contributions to households and communities
>
> Indicator: More studies that demonstrate that gender issues are mainstreamed in the project cycle.

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Annex 1: The 9 box Organizational Framework

ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS		
	MISSION/MANDATE	STRUCTURE	HUMAN RESOURCES
TECHNICAL DIMENSIONS	**POLICIES AND ACTIONS** The guiding policy and its operanalization in action plans,strategies/ approaches, and monitoring and evaluation systems	**TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** The way people are positioned and the way tasks and responsibilities are allocated and related to each other through procedures, information and coordinating systems	**EXPERTISE** The number of staff and the requirements and conditions to allow them to work, such as job description, appraisal, facilities, and training
POLITICAL DIMENSION	**POLICY INFLUENCE** The way and extent management, people from within the organization and people from outside the organization influence policy and the running of the organization	**DECISION MAKING** The patterns of formal and informal decision making processes. The way diversity and conflicts are dealt with	**ROOM FOR INNOVATION** The space and incentives provided to staff to shape to their work, such as rewards, career possibilities, variety in working styles
CULTURAL DIMENSION	**NORMS/VALUES** The symbols, rituals and traditions, norms and values underlying the running of the organization and the behavior of the staff. The social and economic standards set	**COOPERATION** The way the work relations among staff and with outsiders is organized, such as working in teams and networking. The norms and values underlying these arrangements	**ATTITUDE** The way staff feel and think about their work, and the working environment and about other (categories of) employees. The extent to which staff stereotype other staff. The extent to which staff identifies with the culture of the organization

Whitehead, A. 2003 Failing Women, Sustaining Poverty: Gender in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Report for the UK Gender and Development Network. May.

First Monitoring Mission Report 2007

Annex 2: Survey questions from 9-box Organizational Framework

1. Policies and activities
- Is there a policy on gender analysis?
- Is there a policy for participation?
- Are these policies actively implemented in programs, projects, training?
- Is there sufficient budget allocated for gender analysis and/or participation?
- Is gender analysis used in project programs?
- Are indicators developed and used to measure the outcome of the activities related to gender analysis and participatory approaches?

2. Tasks and responsibilities
- Have the level and position at which gender analysis and participatory issues are dealt with in the Organization been clearly indicated?
- Are tasks and responsibilities related to gender analysis and participation clearly outlined within the Organization?
- Does everyone in the Organization know about the tasks and responsibilities of staff concerned with gender analysis and participation?
- Are information flows about issues related to gender analysis and participatory approaches within the Organization existing and operational?

3. Expertise
- Are existing staff adequately trained in gender analysis and participatory approaches?
- Are there sufficient staff who can deal effectively with gender analysis and participatory approaches?
- Are new staff selected on the basis of their experience in gender analysis and participatory approaches?
- Are new staff members adequately familiarized with gender analysis and participatory approaches?
- Are staff members adequately trained to keep up their expertise in the field of gender analysis and participatory approaches?

4. Policy influence
- Are people who decide about policy formulation and implementation (e.g. board members, management) sensitive to gender analysis and participation?

- Are the opinions or requirements of external stakeholders (women farmers, male farmers, donors, etc), taken seriously by management? If so, whose opinions are taken most seriously? And if so, how?

5. Decision making
- Are farmer's voices (at both the community and Organizational levels) represented in the decision making by management? If so, how?
- Do staff at all levels and rural community groups have access to information about the Organization and its activities?
- Do rural communities have a role in decision making?
- Is a consensus among staff sought in decision making or is it in the hands of a few people? If so, who?

6. Space to innovate
- Does the space exist for those interested in gender analysis?
- Does the space exist for those interested in participatory approaches?
- Does working on gender analysis and participatory approaches have status?
- Is it rewarded or discouraged?

7. Norms and values
- What are the values and norms in relation to gender and participation?
- To what extent do the Organization's image, values, and standards reflect those of the local political and cultural context?
- Is there openness to communicating and working with rural women and rural women's groups? If so, how?
- Does using gender analysis and participatory approaches fit into the image of the Organization?
- Are ideologies related to gender analysis and participatory approaches reflected in the symbols of the Organization?
- Is high quality work also associated with gender analysis and participatory methodologies?

8. Cooperation and Learning
- Do staff support one another in work and solving common problems? If so how?
- Is attention paid to team building? If so how?
- Are new ideas, such as those of gender equality and participatory approaches, communicated and integrated in the different sectors. If so how?
- Is there a willingness to cooperate with external Organizations that are involved in gender analysis and participatory approaches? If so how?

9. Attitude

- Who demonstrates commitment to gender equality and the participation of poor or disadvantaged stakeholders? In what ways?
- Do some members of staff accept responsibility for adopting gender analysis and participatory approaches in their individual activities? In what ways?
- Who are the members of staff who demonstrate positive attitudes towards change for gender equality (workplace issues) and how?

Glossary of Gender Terms

Gender: refers to the social (as opposed to biological) differences between women and men. These differences are acquired, they are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures.

Gender Relations: refers to the relationships and power distribution between women and men which characterize any specific gender system.

Gender Analysis: refers to the study of differences in conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources, and development, control of assets, decision-making powers etc. between women and men in their assigned gender roles.

Gender Disaggregated Data: refers to the collection and separation of data and statistical information by sex to enable comparative analysis.

Participatory Research and Gender Analysis: also referred to as PR and GA.

Gender Equality: refers to the means that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles: that the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally.

Gender Equity: refers to the fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. It often requires women-specific programs and policies to address existing inequalities.

Gender Mainstreaming: refers to the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all development policies, strategies and interventions at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved. Considering both men's and women's needs and experiences in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and efforts.

Women's Empowerment: refers to women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate discrimination and inequality.