Gender as a Tributary: Some Problems with Mainstreaming

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Gender Mainstreaming (GM)

GM became official policy for the UN and many gov’ts after the 4th World Conf on Women in Beijing in 1995.
We now have almost 20 years of experience and the results in the NRM/agriculture area are disappointing.
If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30%. This could raise total agricultural output by 2.5–4%, and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17%.
HAS GM Helped Women?

- The proportion of agricultural development assistance focused on gender has actually declined since the 1990s (Ranson and Bain 2011).

- As GM became more common in agricultural development agencies, resources dedicated to gender work declined.
Why these results?

- Perhaps due to the stop and start nature of the institutionalization of GM or even of gender analysis in agricultural development organizations
- Many different approaches tried and cast aside
- There have always been supportive individuals but mostly they have worked within indifferent and sometimes hostile environments
GM in FAO

- FAO has given attention to gender issues since at least the 1980s and adopted GM as overall policy in the late 1990s.
- But in practice, gender work done by the Economic and Social Development Dept.
- No systematic attempt to ensure gender work was done by the technical divisions.
- This was not for lack of trying by ESWD.
But

- From 2000-2011 only 13% of FAO work in the field had a gender component
Gender Audit, 2011 found:

- Lack of leadership and political will for gender equality at senior levels and inconsistent support at lower levels
- Weak enabling environment
- No accountability system for GM and gender-related results.
- No clear policy or action plan with concrete objectives and an adequate M&E
- Inadequate financial resources
- No one responsible for overall GM coordination
Since then:

- Gender Equality Policy adopted with targets for increasing effectiveness in addressing gender imbalances
- Will incorporate sex-disaggregated data into all major FAO statistical databases by 2015
- Will allocate 30% of operational work and budget at the country and regional levels to targeted, women-specific interventions by 2017
- New human resources policy will aim for 50% female representation among internationally recruited, professional staff worldwide.
Most importantly

- All professional and managerial staff will have to demonstrate minimal gender analysis competency
- All departments will have to screen projects and other work for gender equality
- Gender equality work will be part of performance evaluation
CGIAR: 1991-2011

- 1991 Gender and Diversity Program established to help centres become more gender sensitive
- Promoted use of gender analysis in research and technology development, training and policy research and recruitment, advancement and retention of women scientists and other professionals
1997

- New G&D prog set up to deal w/ gender staffing plus culture, race & ethnicity
- Research folded into the Participatory Research and Gender Analysis program w/ mandate to dev. methodologies, build capacity and mainstream participatory gender-sensitive approaches
- Both programs did excellent work but the vast majority of CG research remained gender neutral
2011 New Consortium Level Gender Strategy

- focusses on “deliverables” rather than equity but also commits to “improving recruitment, retention, training and support to careers and promotion to improve the gender balance in research and decision-making”
- Each of the 15 Centre-wide research programs now need to include gender and they are held accountable
- No gender = no money
Why has GM been Problematic?

1. Often a conflation of organizational objectives and programmatic objectives so it becomes very complex. Also there has been tendency to fit GM into a western model.

2. Managers tend to see GM as an end rather than a process. Give attention and support at the beginning but expect that when capacity building has happened, GM will be automatic.
Problems

3. GM often relegated to one social sciences group who take corporate responsibility for “mainstreaming”

4. Often no concrete GM goals and indicators for technical divisions, inadequate budgets and no accountability criteria.

5. Even when GM occurs in different parts of the organization there is sometimes no central focal point or office to ensure that similar types of objectives are being pursued.
Problems

6. Gender work tends to attract primarily women, often young with little decision-making authority or influence.

7. GM not part of the management structure. The organization does not judge its institutional success or failure in relation to success with GM.