



Report on UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Consultancy

I. Assessment of UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Approaches and Activities

In January 2007, the Kyrgyzstan UNDP Country Office (CO) hired an international Gender Mainstreaming Consultant to work with its Gender Team to assess its current gender mainstreaming approaches. The mission took place from January 22 – 26th and involved the holding of:

- A series of 16 consultative meetings and round tables with UNDP staff from its line programmes, as well as its Operations and Administrative personnel.
- A consultative meeting with the UN Gender Theme Group (UNGTG)
- A training of trainers session with the local gender consultants hired to work with the line programmes under a TTF grant (refer to Appendix A for mission agenda).

During the mission, the consultant worked closely with the UNDP Gender Programme Coordinator and the CO Gender Focal Point. The consultant assessed the UNDP Kyrgyz CO's approaches to gender mainstreaming from the perspective of both internal organizational issues and programming. The following report summarizes the conclusions of this assessment.

II. Policy Background

The normative framework upon which the UNDP Kyrgyzstan CO has based its gender mainstreaming programming and operations stems from the "Agreed Conclusions on Gender Mainstreaming as a Resolution 1997/2". This resolution established gender mainstreaming as a strategy throughout the UN system and stated that:

"In order to ensure effective implementation of the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action [from the Fourth World Conference on Women] the United Nations system should promote an active and visible policy for mainstreaming a gender perspective."

It also provided the following definition:

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation,

monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” (Conclusion 1997/2)

The UNDP Administrator’s interoffice memo (16 August 2001) to all Resident Coordinators reaffirmed that gender equality remains a core commitment of the agency. In 2002, the Bureau of Development Policy issued a Gender Equality Policy Note that:

- described the effective entry points for gender equality
- the relationship between gender and the UNDP’s six practice areas
- the resources to be allocated for gender mainstreaming
- the responsibility of senior management and all staff members for ensuring that gender mainstreaming was implemented effectively.

In the UNDP’s 2000-2003 Business Plan gender shifted from being an area of focus and became a crosscutting issue in the UNDP’s practice areas. This did not mean that the UNDP’s gender mainstreaming mandate was no longer a priority. Instead it put onus on each UN Country Office to ensure that gender was integrated throughout all of its programming. The Multi-Year Funding Framework (2004-2007) also reinforced the idea of integrating gender in all UNDP work and established gender equality as a “driver of development effectiveness cutting across all service lines. The MYFF also noted that: “the commitment to mainstream gender does not ... replace the need for targeted, gender-specific initiatives and affirmative actions, which will continue. (para. 58)”.

In response to a 2004 ECOSOC Resolution re-affirming importance of gender mainstreaming, UNDP’s Executive Board asked the agency to prepare a corporate gender strategy and action plan. In 2005, the Executive Board adopted the draft plan submitted by the Gender Unit and urged UNDP to:

“further expand its work on gender mainstreaming, including the increase of financial and human resources to support the implementation of the action plan and requesting that the Administrator “develop” the gender action plan through 2007.”

This normative base is further reinforced by the fact:

- The UN system’s Millenium Development Goal # 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women.
- The UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination System approved a system-wide policy on gender mainstreaming in October 2006.

III. Strengths of the Kyrgyzstan UNDP CO

The UNDP Kyrgyzstan CO has responded to this set of policy frameworks by developing a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2003-2004 and hiring a Country Programmes Gender

Coordinator to facilitate the implementation of this strategy. They are currently in the process of revising and finalizing their 2005 – 2010 Gender Mainstreaming Strategy.

The consultancy found that the particular strengths of the UNDP Kyrgyzstan CO related to gender mainstreaming are that:

1. There appears to be a strong commitment to gender mainstreaming on the part of senior CO management.
2. Kyrgyzstan programmes have access to strong technical expertise in gender mainstreaming through its Country Programmes Gender Coordinator.
3. The CO has interpreted gender mainstreaming to refer to both its internal operations and its programmes.
4. The programme staff generally appear open to new ideas and have increasing awareness of importance of integrating gender equality approaches in their work.
5. The UNDP has a set of human resources policies in place that are highly supportive of work-life balance and the protection of its personnel from sexual harassment.
6. The CO has a generally good working relationship with UNIFEM and is open to this collaboration.
7. Several Kyrgyz line programmes have already developed innovative approaches to gender mainstreaming in their areas of responsibility.
8. The CO has recently focused increased attention on gender mainstreaming processes in its line programmes and within the CO with the assistance of funds from the UNDP's Thematic Trust Fund (TTF) on Gender.

All these factors form a solid basis on which the Kyrgyzstan UNDP CO can further strengthen its approach to gender mainstreaming.

IV. Gender Mainstreaming Issues within the Kyrgyzstan CO

A. Organizational Gender Mainstreaming Issues

The UNDP Kyrgyzstan CO has interpreted gender mainstreaming to include internal personnel issues. A review of the key organizational issues that have gender implications identified the following as key areas of concern.

A-1. Gender and Work-Life Balance Policies

Globally the UNDP has existing human resource (HR) policies that are outstanding from a gender perspective which benefit both male and female staff. They include breastfeeding and maternity/paternity leave and a wide range of flexible working arrangements that can help staff ensure a greater degree of work-life balance. The latter policy is strongly supported by the CO Resident Representative. The CO staff are aware of the policies and their entitlements and related responsibilities.

The main challenge identified is that in some HR policy areas, there is a significant gap between policy and practice. Some staff, for example, have not felt supported by their managers when they requested breastfeeding leave and, consequently, decided not to take

the full extent of the leave to which they were entitled. Staff also noted that they felt it would be difficult to actually implement flexible working hours given their considerable workloads and the results expected. The Deputy Resident Representative also noted that due to this workload issue that in her experience when she had worked in an office with a compressed work schedule, this actually led to her working longer hours. Consequently, the main challenge that faces the CO is how to find an effective and fair balance between workload demands and adherence to work-life balances policies.

Recommendations

- 1.1 Discussion of work-life balance policy challenges at the upcoming staff retreat to determine the level of demand for them and of potential solutions to ensure a fair balance between the need for work coverage and work-life balance arrangements.
- 1.2 Reiteration by senior management of the staff right to negotiate work-life balance schedule arrangements with UNDP managers and of need to work-life balance issues into account in the scheduling of evening meetings, staff travel, etc.

A- 2. Staff Accountability for Gender Mainstreaming

A key to any successful gender mainstreaming process is the building in of staff accountability for each aspect of it. Therefore it is significant that currently staff job descriptions do not include reference to the need for staff to integrate gender (and other cross-cutting issues) into their work, nor do they specify what is their specific area of responsibility for gender mainstreaming. Therefore there is no formal internal institutional mechanism to assess their job performance in this area.

In addition, the role that management play in highlighting the fact that gender is a cross-cutting issue for which each UNDP CO staff and programme staff is responsible is critical. Currently management's support for staff accountability is not consistent, with some managers taking this issue quite seriously and others according it less importance.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Conduct a review of staff job descriptions and the annual performance review process to determine an appropriate way to add explicit responsibility for gender mainstreaming to job descriptions and to discuss staff performance in this area as a part of the annual performance reviews.
- 2.2 Organizing a briefing or mini-training for UNDP CO and programme managers on:
 - how to negotiate increased integration of gender equality in programming and operations with staff and counterparts;
 - What is expected of them in their work in terms of gender mainstreaming; and
 - the types of results and reporting related to gender equality for which they should be holding staff accountable.

A-3. Gender Differences in Global Staff Survey Results

There were significant differences in male/female staff responses in several areas in the 2005 Global Staff Survey. Most notably 47.4% of female staff indicated that they would not be comfortable reporting discriminatory situations or incidents of sexual harassment. This is in stark contrast to just 5.9% of male staff who felt this way. Female staff also consistently reported their achievements at work at a lower level of success than the male staff. This is likely a difference in self-perception as opposed to a reflection of their actual performance. It is also of concern that a significantly more male staff do not feel that men and women are treated fairly by the UNDP and that they have concerns about not being rewarded fairly as compared to women for exceptional service. These results indicate that there are some clear differences between male and female staff's perceptions of their work environment, how they are treated at work and what their career expectations are. If the causes and effects of these differences are not examined more in depth they could possibly lead to situations in which the currently general positive relationship between men and women in the CO could be undermined in the future.

Recommendations

- 3.1 It would be valuable for the CO to conduct a gender analysis of the results of the Global Staff Survey and then to use the results of this gender analysis to set up separate, confidential discussion groups in a safe environment with its male and female staff about the key issues identified.
- 3.2 Based on the results of the gender analysis and these discussions with staff, for the CO's Human Resources staff to develop an action plan to address any of the gender differences identified that appear to need particular attention.

A-4. Gender Imbalances in Staffing

The Kyrgyzstan CO appears to be generally fairly gender-balanced in the programme staff area, but men are underrepresented in Operations and Administration. This is in part due to the fact that these jobs tend to be perceived more as women's jobs in the Kyrgyzstan context. However, the Human Resources staff felt that the CO could benefit from there being greater diversity in these areas of work. Consequently, they would like to actively recruit more men to help establish a greater gender balance. In this process, they would need to be conscious of what the existing labour supply is in the operations and administration fields in Kyrgyzstan and to set guidelines for male staff recruitment in this area that is proportionate to this labour supply. For example, if only 25% of graduates from these fields are men, it would not be reasonable to expect that the CO would be able to readily recruit much more than 25% male staff for these positions.

Recommendations

- 4.1 Future ads for administrative and operations positions could include the phrase "men are encouraged to apply".

A-5. CO Gender Team

The CO currently has a Gender Focal Point. The programmes are served by the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator. The Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points also indicate that it is the expectation of UNDP Headquarters that each CO should have a

management level Gender Focal Point. The Kyrgyzstan CO currently does not have a member of management fulfilling this role. Given the need for increased staff accountability for gender mainstreaming, the CO could strengthen its Gender Team and gender mainstreaming approach considerably by appointing one of its managers to play this role (refer to Appendix B for the TORs for this position).

To date, the Gender Focal Point role has focused on programme-related gender mainstreaming issues. As there appears to be a growing need for the CO to pay more attention to operational and staff-related gender issues, the CO may also find it useful to divide the Gender Focal point role into two, with one staff member serving as the liaison for programming and the other for human resource issues. While having a CO gender team of three persons will require more coordination, it would distribute the workload for this work more evenly and make the tasks involved more achievable. It would also allow for the appointment of staff with relevant expertise in each role (e.g., a human resource specialist and a project management specialist). It would be useful for this expanded CO Gender Team to meet on a regular basis to discuss the development and implementation of the CO level gender mainstreaming strategy. To ensure coherence of approaches it would also be useful for the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator to attend these meetings.

A-5.1 CO Gender Focal Point

The CO Gender Focal Point appointment changed recently due to staff turnover. Both the past and present Gender Focal Points were/are expected to carry out this function in addition to their other full time responsibilities. In this case, the current Gender Focal Point also serves as a Programme Associate and the CO's Learning Manager.

The general job description for the Gender Focal Point role outlines a comprehensive set of responsibilities that require substantive technical knowledge about gender and which, if implemented as written in the generic job description would constitute a full time job (refer to Appendix C). Since this is not a viable option, given the existing CO staffing allocations, it became clear that there is a need for further discussions to determine what specific role the Gender Focal Point should play in the Kyrgyzstan CO.

To date, the Gender Focal Point has not been given clear direction about what the responsibilities of this role should be. This stemmed in part from the fact that the Gender Focal Point was not given a copy of the Gender Focal Point job description upon her appointment. It is also of note, that while having considerable knowledge about project management, the Gender Focal Point does not have a technical background in gender.

Discussions between the Gender Focal Point, the International Gender Mainstreaming Consultant and the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator led to the conclusion that the Gender Focal Point could play a pivotal role in reviewing the existing programme management processes such as annual reporting formats, the MYFF, UNDAF, etc. to determine strategic entry points for gender inputs and make recommendations regarding potential revisions to these processes and formats. This would make good use of her particular skills and knowledge, would also serve to help systemize the gender

mainstreaming process at the CO level, and help create greater awareness of each staff person's responsibility to mainstream gender as a part of their work.

A-5.2 Role of Country Programmes Gender Coordinator

The Country Programmes Gender Coordinator has a high level of technical skill. However, her current job description indicates that this position is responsible for providing technical expertise in gender to all the line programmes, amongst other duties (refer to Appendix D). This has led to her being called upon to be all things to all programmes. This has led to her services being stretched too thinly.

While the line programmes need access to technical advice related to gender equality, having one person be responsible for the gender mainstreaming inputs for all of the line programmes is counterintuitive to what the core operating principle of a gender mainstreaming process in which responsibility for gender integration is supposed to rest with each staff member. Therefore, the responsibility for gender mainstreaming should rest with each programme and not with the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator. What has happened instead is that several line programmes have ceded their responsibility for taking action on gender to the Programmes Gender Coordinator. This reinforces the idea that gender is an add-on as opposed to an integral part of their core programming. It has also inadvertently slowed down the process of each programme developing a sense of ownership for their own gender mainstreaming processes.

What is needed instead is for each programme to develop their own internal technical capacity in gender, either through training their own personnel in gender analysis techniques or else by their hiring local gender experts to provide on-going gender analysis services as needed from their own budgets. Ideally the line programmes should be responsible for the daily requirements of the gender mainstreaming process. To do this effectively the project coordinators and programme managers would need to have access to on-going support and expertise of local gender consultants or staff to help them integrate relevant gender issues and activities in their workplans and project reports, to make sure that the project proposals to donors include a gender component and develop gender-sensitive indicators, etc.

Once the line programmes become more responsible for their own internal gender analysis and gender mainstreaming processes, the time freed up for the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator could then be focused more on coordinating:

- i) Development of a more coherent approach to gender mainstreaming in the line programmes;
- ii) The team of local gender consultants;
- iii) UNDP support and liaison with government partners on national level gender issues and approaches; and
- iv) Gender mainstreaming approaches and issues with other agencies and the UNGTG;
- v) Managing the development and implementation of national level gender specific projects including resource mobilization to support these initiatives;

- vi) Tracking the implementation of the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy;
- vii) Providing gender-related capacity building support the CO staff, and support the CO Gender Focal Point(s) in their roles in the CO.

Recommendations

- 5.1 That the CO seriously consider appointing a management gender focal point.
- 5.2 That the CO managers concerned review the roles of the CO Gender Focal Point and Country Programme Gender Coordinator to streamline their respective responsibilities and clarify how their respective roles could complement each other's work..
- 5.3 That the CO managers determine if it is viable to add a Human Resources Gender Focal Point and Managerial Gender Focal Point to the CO Gender Team. In this model, the initial work of the Programme Gender Focal Point would be to serve as a catalyst to ensure that gender mainstreaming of programme/project documents, the CDP, MYFF, and related progress reports. The initial work of the Human Resources Gender Focal Point would be to follow-up on the gender analysis of the Global Staff Survey and related action plan and to serve as the catalyst for organizational gender mainstreaming processes within the Kyrgyzstan CO.
- 5.4 All members of the CO gender team should be supported in their work through the provision of relevant gender-related training when possible.
- 5.5 At the programme level, the primary role of the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator in the future should increasingly concentrate on coordinating gender mainstreaming efforts among the programmes combined with serving as the project manager of the national level gender-specific projects as opposed to providing on-going technical advice on gender issues for each of the line programmes.

A-6. Staff Gender Training

To date, only 30% (12 people) staff have taken the mandatory on-line course, "Gender Journey". Of these 12 people, 5 were managers. This means that 55% of the Kyrgyzstan CO managers and only 22.5% of the regular staff have taken the course. These low figures, particularly compared to higher rates for other mandatory on-line training courses such as sexual harassment, would seem to indicate that CO staff has allocated a relatively low priority to gender training. It is positive, however, that at least half of the CO managers have made time to take the course, and are thus leading by example.

Recommendations

- 6.1 Given that "Gender Journey" is a mandatory part of staff training, CO managers need to hold their staff accountable for taking the course.
- 6.2 That the CO senior management indicate to the four managers who have not yet taken the course that they allocate give priority to doing so over the next three months.

B. Programme-Related Gender Mainstreaming Issues

Overview

The Gender Mainstreaming Consultant met with UNDP personnel from the six line programmes. These included:

1. Poverty Reduction Programme
2. Democratic Governance Programme
3. Environment Programme
4. Disaster Reduction Programme
5. HIV/AIDS Programme
6. Peace and Development Programme

A meeting was also scheduled with Mr. Leonid Komarover, Senior Policy Advisor and the staff of BOMCA/CADAP Programmes. However, no one from this programme attended the scheduled meeting. In a follow-up call by the Gender Focal Point and Country Programmes Gender Advisor, they indicated that one person was out of town and that another was sick but had also chosen to attend another meeting at the same time that he considered a greater priority. They did not reschedule another time for this meeting during the mission.

The consultations with the line programmes focused on finding out what their understanding of gender mainstreaming is, what they have identified as the key gender issues in their programme areas, the specific challenges they face in implementing a gender mainstreaming approach and a summary of the actions they have taken related to gender.

7. Understanding of Gender Mainstreaming

A key issue that the Kyrgyzstan CO will need to address with its programme staff is that there does not appear to be a common understanding of what gender mainstreaming means and how it should be applied. Two of the programmes, HIV/AIDS and the Peace and Development Programme, appear to have a good grasp of the main principles of gender mainstreaming and have applied these to their programmes effectively. For the other programmes their understanding of the gender mainstreaming process was mixed.

For some programmes there is also some confusion as to the division of labour between UNDP's work in gender and that of UNIFEM. Some staff confuse gender mainstreaming with hard line feminism. Others know that they should be doing something, but are at a bit of a loss as to what the key issues are or where to find relevant resources. One staff member from the Poverty Reduction programme felt that gender mainstreaming was diverting funds from the core issues it was supposed to be addressing and had not yet made the link between enhanced programme results and increased gender equality. Despite the variance in viewpoints, the International Gender Mainstreaming Consultant found that the UNDP Programme Staff were generally quite open to accepting new ideas related to gender and were interested in having guidance on how to implement a gender mainstreaming approach more effectively.

To help develop a more common vision of gender mainstreaming, it may be useful for the CO senior management to discuss the following definitions and processes with the programme staff in collaboration with its Gender Team.

Gender mainstreaming:

- i. Refers to the integration of a gender focus in the mainstream of an organization's processes and work;
- ii. Is a strategic and integral process that affects the centre and not only the periphery;
- iii. Is the process of integrating both women and men's needs and viewpoints in all aspects of development planning and implementation; and
- iv. Means ensuring that the impact of development is equally positive for **both** sexes.

At the Country Office level this means that:

- Each line programme is responsible for ensuring that a relevant gender perspective is integrated into their programming and that sufficient resources are allocated from its own budget to achieve the gender equality objectives identified as a priority for their programme.
- Each line programme needs to conduct a gender analysis of the key gender issues in their sector as close to the beginning of their programme planning as possible.
- The results of this gender analysis should be taken into account in the planning of all programme components and to help formulate an overall programme gender equality objective.
- Each programme needs to review all its activities, outputs and outcomes to determine if they need to be adapted in any way to help achieve the programme's gender equality objective.
- To achieve this gender equality objective the programme may also need to include some gender-specific activities, outputs and outcomes.
- Programme performance indicators for all programme components should be gender-sensitive, explicit about the number and type of male and female programme beneficiaries and about whether there is any kind of differential impact of the programme on the men and women, and girls and boys it affects.
- Planning for the collection of baseline data needs to include the identification of sex-disaggregated data needs to be collected to measure programme impact on gender equality and the necessary processes put into place to ensure that this data is collected.
- Monitoring processes should include monitoring for programme impact on the specific aspects of increased gender equality identified as a priority by the programme, as well as for unintended impacts on gender equality.
- Programme evaluation should also assess programme impact on the specific aspects of increased gender equality identified as a priority by the programme, as well as for unintended gender equality impacts. These should be documented as part of a lessons learned process for future reference.

To date, the CO and its line programmes have implemented gender mainstreaming processes that fall into either of the two following categories, with the majority following into the second category:

Start-up mainstreaming – a process in which a systematic gender analysis has been done prior to the project/programme design, but there is little or no evidence that the results of this analysis has effected how the institution(s) involved operate or the actual project/programme design and implementation.

Semi-Integrated mainstreaming – a process in which the findings and results of the gender analysis are evident in some aspects of project design and in institutional resource allocations and decisions, but have not been applied at all levels possible.

In keeping with the UN Reform process and the shift towards the full integration of Results Based Management, the ideal approach to gender mainstreaming to which the UNDP CO needs to be working towards is:

Results-Focused Gender Mainstreaming - in which gender analysis is used to identify priority gender equality results needed in all interventions and actions and resources to achieve these results are integrated into the project's design. Clear results indicators and baseline information are also established at the beginning of the process and are monitored throughout the implementation stage and are evaluated at the end of the intervention to determine the actual results achieved. Finally, the implementing organization and staff concerned are held accountable for the achievement of these results.

It is also important for each programme to understand that integrating gender considerations and objectives in their programme is not an add-on to their main focus which will divert funding from the core thematic programme outcomes. Instead they need to develop the understanding of how it will actually enhance the achievement of each programme's core results and that it is a priority issue for the UNDP.

It is also commonly thought that gender mainstreaming processes focus solely on women. This is not the case. While women and girls face significant disadvantages and therefore are often the main focus of gender mainstreaming initiatives, there are also situations where men and boys face disadvantage due to their gender roles and contexts. In Kyrgyzstan, this includes the deteriorating state of men's health, high levels of male unemployment in the rural areas and increased risk of violence for men and male youth due to escalating ethnic conflict in some areas. Therefore there is a need for any gender mainstreaming process to be inclusive of men – both to address any male-based areas of disadvantage, and to ensure their participation and cooperation in any efforts to support disadvantaged groups of women and girls. Another important factor to stress in this process is that many gender mainstreaming efforts often have a positive impact on the men and boys involved – even when the main target of the initiatives are women and girls.

Recommendations

7.1 There is a need for the CO and programme managers to develop a consistent and systematic approach to gender mainstreaming in the line programmes. To do this, it would be useful if the Gender Focal Point and the Country Programmes Gender

Coordinator could develop an outline of the different steps and actions required to mainstream gender at the programme level and what the expected outcomes of this process are. A useful process to introduce could include a sign off form to be signed by either the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator or the programme local gender consultants to indicate that the programme design documents have effectively integrated gender equality concerns prior to their being submitted for funding approval.

- 7.2 To help develop a common understanding of and approach to gender mainstreaming in a programme context, the CO could discuss the approach developed by the GFP and Country Programmes Gender Coordinator at the next CO retreat.
- 7.3 Once a clear outline of what gender mainstreaming entails for each staff member is in place, the CO senior management and programme managers could also strengthen staff accountability for gender mainstreaming by indicating that staff performance in this area will be one area of discussion in their annual performance evaluations.
- 7.4 Each line programme needs to assume the full responsibility for integrating relevant gender issues into their work effectively using their own resources. Thus they would need to build in the cost of on-going technical assistance related to gender into their 2008 budgets. One mechanism they might consider is to hire the local consultants they are currently working with through the auspices of the TFF project, to provide 3 to 5 days a month of gender equality services to each programme.
- 7.5 As a part of their TTF TORs, the local gender consultants could work with the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator to develop a strategy to increase the sense of ownership of the programmes for their own gender mainstreaming processes.
- 7.6 That the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator work in collaboration with the local gender consultants hired under the TTF project to work with the line programmes to identify the key gaps in terms of programme staff capacity in terms of gender mainstreaming processes and develop a related capacity-building workshop for each programme. The role of the Country Programmes Coordinator would be to coordinate these capacity building efforts and ensure that they include a review of UNDP gender mainstreaming policies and practices, as well as to ensure coherence in the approaches to gender mainstreaming taken by each programme.

8. Innovative Programming Approaches

Despite the inconsistent approach to gender mainstreaming in the line programmes, several programmes have developed innovative initiatives that could serve as best practices for other UNDP programmes.

Recommendation

- 8.1 Time permitting, the TTF-funded local gender consultants could work with programme staff to identify and document best practices to share with other programmes in Kyrgyzstan and throughout the UN system.

9. Establishing Specific Gender Equality Objectives and Outcomes

There are two key areas where the Kyrgyzstan CO could begin to incorporate specific gender equality objectives and outcomes. The first is at the more national level in the MYFF and the other is in the line programmes.

Currently the MYFF for Kyrgyzstan lists 12 specific outcomes anticipated as a result of the UNDP's programme support. None of the 12 outcomes include a specific outcome related to increased gender equality. In the process of streamlining Kyrgyzstan's outcomes anticipated in the near future, it would greatly enhance the results of the gender mainstreaming process if the MYFF could include a specific gender equality outcome for Kyrgyzstan. This gender equality outcome should be phrased in a way that would facilitate it being applied to all the programmes, in keeping with its cross-cutting nature.

Given the lack of women's formal representation in Parliament and in the country at many different levels, serious consideration could be given to focusing the gender equality outcome on "increasing underrepresented women and men in decision-making processes at all levels". This would readily cover a wide range of programme activities. It would also allow for the inclusion of male and female youth and specific groups of particularly disadvantaged men at the same time as addressing the key issue of women's limited access to power in the country.

It would also be a useful exercise and practice to have each programme identify a specific gender equality objective that they would like their programme to achieve. Using this as a base the programmes could review all of the other programme components to determine how they can contribute to the programmes specific gender equality objective. They could also assess how working towards increased gender equality throughout the programme will enhance the achievement of their overall outcomes. For example, the environment programme might decide that their gender equality objective would be "to build women's capacity in natural resource management". This would then require the programme to look at how it could achieve this both at the community and government levels and to integrate a gender perspective into any programme components and activities that are focused on capacity-building in natural resource management.

In general, there is an increased need for the line programmes to work towards increasing government and counterpart capacity to integrate gender into the specific sectors in which they are working. Otherwise, the tendency is to simply hire consultants to do this work or for the UNDP to do this work themselves. This, in turn, does not foster a sense of ownership by the government for these issues and does not lead to an increased understanding of how increased gender equality is relevant to each sector.

Recommendations

- 9.1 That the CO include a specific gender equality outcome in the development of its next MYFF.
- 9.2 That each programme be encouraged to develop a specific gender equality objective that can be applied to its entire programme.

10. Reporting on Gender Equality Results

While current UNDP reporting formats provide space to report on gender-specific initiatives or drivers, they do not necessarily require consistent and systematic reporting on gender as a cross cutting issue in the MYFF, and other regular UNDP reports. In some

cases the existing formats provided by UNDP Headquarters do not readily lend themselves to a more gender-integrated reporting process. The MYFF format and content, for example, cannot be changed until 2008, the section that reports on drivers appears to be more process than results-focused and has not integrated gender equality as a cross-cutting issue, but primarily as a stand alone driver. An example of this can be found in Part II of the “2006 Results Reporting” where the section on drivers of development effectiveness asks the CO to report on “Advocating for and fostering an enabling policy environment”. To integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue in this driver it might be possible to phrase the driver as follows: “Advocating for and fostering a gender-sensitive enabling policy environment” so that the results being reported on are more comprehensive in nature and integrate gender considerations.

These set formats in some UNDP’s reporting mechanisms does not preclude the Kyrgyzstan CO programme staff from reviewing the existing reporting formats to determine areas where they could enhance their reporting of gender equality results in the immediate future. The CO could also potentially provide feedback to UNDP Headquarters on areas where revisions to reporting formats would contribute to more specific and effective reporting on gender equality results for the global system as a whole.

Recommendations

- 10.1 There needs to be a review of the reporting formats for the CO’s regular reports at the programme, national and global levels to identify the strategic entry points for reporting on gender equality results in a systematic way.
- 10.2 There is also a need for the CO and programmes to develop a consistent approach to identify specific gender equality results for each programme, develop relevant gender-sensitive indicators and report on these results from a gender perspective.
- 10.3 UNDP programme staff could benefit from capacity-building supports about how to express a gender equality result at the outputs and outcomes levels and how to measure and report on their achievement.

11. Gender-Specific Programme/Projects

A gender mainstreaming approach implies the need to integrate gender issues into all relevant aspects of the UNDP’s line programmes. However, it also supports the need to support gender-specific projects and programming. As a part of their gender analysis and planning process, the line programmes will likely each be identifying some gender-specific projects and activities that they need to support to achieve their programmes’ specific gender equality objectives. There are also some gender-specific projects needed at the national level that will not fit readily into the line programmes outcomes, but which still are essential to contribute to the UNDP and Kyrgyzstan’s commitment to the achievement of MDG #3.

Some projects that would fall under the gender-specific programme line include targeted gender research to fill in critical gaps in knowledge that can be used to inform public policy, support for the development of an Alternative CEDAW report by civil society organizations, advocacy initiatives with the media, and capacity-building support for the national women’s ministry. The idea is that these programme supports should be strategic

in nature and contribute to changing the underlying structures that contribute to gender inequality in the country. These areas are distinct from the gender mainstreaming responsibilities of the line programmes and, as such, will require their own LFA and results matrixes and related management processes. The logical staff person to supervise their design and implementation would be the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator. Since this is an additional area of responsibility for the Programme Gender Coordinator, it underlines the need to have the line programmes take increased responsibility for conducting their own gender analysis in the future.

Recommendations

11.1 That the CO recognize the group of gender-specific projects currently planned at the national level as the equivalent to a line programme and assign responsibility for their management and implementation to the Country Gender Programmes Coordinator.

12. UNDP Collaboration with UNIFEM

In 2001, the UNDP asked UNIFEM's Executive Director to work with them as a "Gender Champion for the UNDP". The idea was that UNIFEM was to develop catalyst programmes and work with the UNDP at the country level to foster either joint or complementary programming based on the comparative advantages of each organization. The problem has been that this understanding has remained at a fairly generic level and that the two agencies have not developed any formal terms of reference to delineate more clearly how gender-related work should be divided between them. This has meant that how effective this relationship is in each country is often highly dependent upon the personalities of the staff from the two agencies.

In Kyrgyzstan this relationship has worked more effectively than in many other countries, but still has encountered some challenges. Presently UNIFEM and the UNDP are working together to strengthen the Kyrgyzstan UN Gender Theme Group. There appears to be agreement by the two agencies regarding the optimum way this process should proceed and a positive spirit of collaboration.

Recommendations

12.1 In the absence of a set of global terms of reference from UNDP and UNIFEM Headquarters regarding the division of labour between the two agencies, that the CO Gender Team and UNIFEM document what has worked well about this relationship in Kyrgyzstan, as well as some of the challenges encountered, to share as a lessons learned report for their respective headquarters. The CO could also use this report as a means to advocate for greater clarity of direction about the global relationship between the two agencies from their respective headquarters.

14. UN Gender Theme Group

The UNGTG functioned well when it had a major activity on which to focus. That interest seemed to diminish somewhat when the group was simply meeting to exchange information. In general, the group members observed that not all Country Team members take the UNGTG seriously or participate to the same degree. However, the UNGTG members

that do participate reported that they find their agencies get significant benefits from their participation, particularly with regard to resource and information sharing. They also felt that it was critical that a Head of Agency continue to serve as a Chair for the Group.

The UNGTG decided on several additions to their annual workplan which they will revise in time for presentation to the UNCT. The main new activity proposed is a gender review of the UNDAF as a part of the mid-term review process. The Group was also interested in ensuring multi-agency support for gender-integration into world celebration days such as International Labour Day, etc.

The UNGTG has an on-going need for technical support to support its work that goes beyond the \$10,500 budget that to be allocated to it in 2007 from the Resident Coordinator's budget. It also needs to be clarified with the UNGTG members that it is not the role of the UNDP Country Gender Programmes Coordinator to provide technical support to the Group and that she is attending the meeting primarily as UNDP's representative.

There are currently discussions underway to create a UN Gender Advisor position to provide technical support to the UNGTG. The position would be funded by UNIFEM and report jointly to UNIFEM and the UN Resident Coordinator. The position would be at a fairly senior level to help establish credibility for this work and to ensure a person who would be able to take a proactive approach to the work that needs to be done. The UNIFEM representative and the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator have some reservations about the pool of qualified candidates for this position in the country, but also felt that it is possible that once it is advertised, it might attract someone from outside the current circle of gender expertise in the country. UNIFEM is also provisionally considering backstopping this position themselves on a temporary basis should it prove difficult initially to find a qualified candidate. There is no question, however, that the provision of full time technical support for the UNGTG would greatly enhance its effectiveness and the coherence of the UNGTG's approach to gender mainstreaming. This, in turn, should help strengthen the UNDP's gender mainstreaming approach.

In general, the UNGTG needs to look at the need for its different members to contribute regular funds to support the Group's workplan and not simply to fund specific activities on a limited ad hoc basis. The most effective UNGTG's are jointly funded by its members on an annual basis.

Recommendations

14.1 That the UNGTG members be asked to contribute to an annual joint budget to support the implementation of the UNGTG's workplan and discuss this issue at the upcoming Country Team meeting.

Conclusion

“If a gender focal point is seen as having sole responsibility for ensuring that gender issues are fully reflected in country office activities, gender mainstreaming by definition will not take place¹. Working in a gender-informed and gender-committed manner is the professional responsibility of **all** staff, and all must assume that responsibility, with the full and active support of management².”

This same principle applies to gender mainstreaming at the *programme level*. In the Kyrgyzstan CO the primary gap between the UNDP’s gender mainstreaming policy and practice lies in the fact that the bulk of the responsibility for gender mainstreaming currently rests primarily on one person, the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator. While she is quite skilled at her job and has accomplished a great deal in this role, as long as it is perceived by the lines programmes that most of the gender equality work will be done by the Gender Coordinator, it is not likely that all programmes will become fully engaged in the gender mainstreaming process. Instead this process will depend upon the individual will, interest and gender knowledge of each programme manager. This formula, even with the best possible access to gender-related technical expertise, will generally lead to an uneven implementation of UNDP’s gender mainstreaming policy.

To shift towards a more results-focused gender mainstreaming approach, the Kyrgyzstan CO needs to clarify what is the exact role of each staff member for gender mainstreaming at the programme level and establish a coherent set of gender mainstreaming processes and procedures across the programmes. These could start with an outline of strategic entry points for gender inputs in the programme cycle and be based on the expectation that each programme will:

- i. incorporate the results of gender analysis into project and programme design;
- ii. identify specific and explicit gender equality objectives relevant to their work;
- iii. identify clear gender equality results that programme activities will support;
- iv. collect relevant sex-disaggregated baseline data;
- v. monitor for programme impact on gender equality; and
- vi. report on each programme’s gender equality results.

A procedure that could facilitate the systemization of the Kyrgyzstan CO’s gender mainstreaming process would be to introduce a gender equality sign-off form for all programme/project documents at the design stage. This would be signed by the Country Programmes Gender Coordinator before the projects or programmes can be forwarded for funding approval and serve as an institutional indicator that the project/programme design has taken gender equality into account effectively.

To support the design process, the line programmes will also increasingly need to develop their own internal gender resources, either by building internal staff capacity in

¹ *Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming*. UNDP February 1997. Page 1

² See the *UNDP Staff Competency Profile for Gender Mainstreaming*, January 1999.

gender or hiring local gender consultants to provide them with the expertise they need to support their gender analysis and project/programme design work.

To support the CO in the implementation of a more comprehensive gender mainstreaming process, there would also be some benefit in expanding the size of the CO Gender Team from the current Gender Focal Point and Country Programmes Gender Coordinator to include a Management Gender Focal Point and a Human Resources/Operations Gender Focal Point. The role of the existing CO Gender Focal Point would then focus solely on programme-related issues and processes.

At the *operations level* the UNDP CO has a comprehensive set of gender sensitive human resources and work-life balance policies in place. Heavy staff workloads have made it challenging for staff to take full advantage of these policies and in some instances pressure has been placed on staff to curtail their right to breastfeeding leave for the same reason. Therefore there is a need for the CO to discuss how it might be possible to facilitate the implementation of work-life balance policies without sacrificing work results.

The results of the 2005 Global Staff Survey also have raised some potential areas of concern as there are significant differences in the responses of male and female staff in several key areas. There would be merit, therefore, in the CO conducting a gender analysis of the 2005 GSS and discussing the results of this analysis with the CO staff.

Overall, despite the uneven approach to gender mainstreaming at the programme level and the challenges of implementing work-life balance policies, the Kyrgyzstan CO has a fairly solid foundation on which to further build its gender mainstreaming process. The challenge that remains is to move more systematically from a semi-integrated gender mainstreaming system to one that is strongly results-focused.

**Appendix A: List of Meetings for Gender Mainstreaming Consultancy,
22 – 26 January 2007**

1. Orientation meetings with **Ms. Jyldyz Moldokulova**, UNDP CO Gender Focal Point (GFP) & **Ms. Anastasia Divinskaya**, UNDP Programmes Gender Coordinator (PGC)
2. **Mr. Neal Walker**, UN Resident Coordinator and the UNDP Resident Representative in the Kyrgyz Republic and **Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu**, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
3. **UNDP Kyrgyzstan CO staff** to discuss organizational issues related to gender and gender mainstreaming
4. **Ms. Saltanat Dospaeva**, Operations Manager, and human resources unit staff
5. **Ms. Tuya Altangerel**, Assistant Resident Representative and Head of Economic and Social Unit and key staff of Poverty Reduction Programme (manager, advisor and component coordinators)
6. **Mr. Alexander Kashkarev**, Programme Officer and Head of Governance Unit and key staff of Democratic Governance Programme (International Programme Manager, Parliamentary Reform Cluster Advisor and Component Coordinators)
7. **Mr. Zharas Takenov**, International Senior Programme Officer and Head of Environment Unit and key staff of Environment Programme (managers and component coordinators)
8. **UN Country Team**
9. **Mr. Leonid Komarover**, Senior Policy Advisor and staff of BOMCA/CADAP Programmes (International Programme Manager, Advisor and Component Coordinators) [Meeting cancelled due to unavailability of Mr. Komarover]
10. **UNDP Management Team**
11. **Ms. Ainura Alymbekova**, UN Disaster Reduction Advisor and key programme staff
12. **Ms. Janyl Rakhmanova**, Associate Programme Development Unit, and key staff of HIV/AIDS Programme (manager and component coordinators)
13. **Mr. John Lewis**, International Advisor, and staff Peace and Development Programme (Manager and Component Coordinators)
14. **Ms. Sagipa Jusaeva**, Programme Specialist, UNIFEM, Kazakhstan
15. **UN Gender Theme Group (GTG)**
16. Wrap up meeting with **Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu**, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
17. Wrap up meeting with GFP and PGC

Appendix B:

Excerpt from UNDP Resource 10: Terms of Reference of Management Gender Focal Point

The specific responsibilities of the management gender focal point can be summarised as ensuring the appropriate enabling environment in the office, advocating for the issue, and ensuring staff capacity for gender mainstreaming. The tasks include:

Programme

- ensure that gender issues are raised appropriately and with force in policy dialogue with Government. Here new developments in the gender implications of economic modeling and planning may be especially useful;
- take a lead in promoting inter-agency dialogue on gender equality themes, especially as an opportunity for joint advocacy activities;
- promote and advocate gender equality through speaking at meetings and inaugurations, in senior-level contacts of all kinds, press encounters, mission briefings, etc.;
- ensure that the gender equality dimensions of UNDP activity are consistently included in all periodic reports, including the quarterly Resident Representative report and the Resident Coordinator Report;
- ensure that women are consulted equally with men in setting country programming priorities;
- ensure team-work and appropriate division of labour between UNIFEM and UNDP staff, in accordance with local priorities;
- make clear to all project and programme managers their accountability with regard to gender mainstreaming, providing appropriate guidance if necessary, and the expectation that this accountability will be exercised. Make it clear that projects and programmes must be implemented in a gender-sensitive manner even if these issues are not specifically mentioned in project documentation;
- ensure that the gender dimensions of each project are discussed at monitoring visits, tri-partite review meetings and evaluations, and included in all project and programme reports even where this issue is not included in the agenda, or in reporting forms;
- insist upon gender balance in all training, workshops, conferences and seminars supported by UNDP.

Office Management

- take a lead in ensuring gender-informed decision-making within the country office;
- in addition, seek to ensure that women take part in decision-making equally with men. Where there is no gender balance among the decision-making group explore creative ways to ensure that the views of both women and men are taken into account in decisions;
- appoint an operational gender focal point with the capabilities and commitment to undertake the responsibilities of the assignment effectively, and encourage programme and project managers to do the same;
- provide this staff member with active guidance and support, including capacity development where this is needed;
- recognise that the responsibilities of a gender focal point require extensive networking, and support the staff-member in this aspect of the task;
- require all staff members to mainstream gender considerations into their work: if necessary identify the necessary external expertise to ensure that this takes place, and to build the capacity of UNDP staff;
- contribute to the sustained establishment of a working environment in the country office and all UNDP-funded programme and project offices that promotes mutual respect, support and creativity among the staff, and eliminates fear and intimidation as management tools;
- in particular, be alert to the fact that it may be more difficult for female staff to voice their views freely in meetings and other fora, and provide active encouragement and support to the elimination of any barriers that may inhibit the attainment of their full professional potential;
- be fully aware of UNDP policy with regard to sexual harassment, and management responsibility in this areas, pro-actively ensuring that the country office and all UNDP-funded programmes and projects are completely free from sexual harassment of all kinds, whether expressed towards staff or project beneficiaries or members of the general public;
- ensure that gender considerations are reflected in inter-agency coordination matters, such as staff transport, crèche and nursing facilities and flexitime;
- review gender dimensions of staff performance, especially management staff, in the PAR process, including the MRG;
- encourage a strong staff association, and dialogue regularly with it, specifically ensuring that differences in the views and priorities of male and female staff are identified and addressed;
- set appropriate targets to achieve gender balance in all categories of staff, recognising that an incremental approach, if actively and consistently applied, will in most cases be the most appropriate;
- review the country office administrative budget from the perspective of the impact of local disbursements on gender equality - for example in the recruitment

of local consultants, and in procurement from companies that practice gender equality and observe international conventions regarding women's employment;

Appendix C: Excerpt from Resource 10: UNDP Gender Focal Point Responsibilities

General

It is suggested that the gender focal points take a lead role in preparing the following documents:

1. **A Gender Mainstreaming Strategy document;** setting out policy and strategy to guide country office staff, and as an instrument for resource mobilisation.
 2. **A Gender Mainstreaming Briefing Kit;** For the orientation of new arrivals and missions. Indicates sources of gender related information and key contacts in the country
- A national gender profile.**
3. An analysis of the social, economic, political and cultural structure of the country from a gender perspective, as a basic resource for all programming activities.

In addition, gender focal points should work with local NGOs and experts to ensure that the National Human Development Report reflects a gender perspective in each chapter, and also includes a chapter giving the overall picture with regard to gender relations and the rights of women in the country concerned. The national gender profile would be an important input to a gender-sensitive national Human Development Report.

UNDP has adopted a strategy to ensure the appropriate inclusion of gender issues in major conferences, meetings and workshops. This has been tested effectively at headquarters, and is recommended for programme countries. The strategy involves ensuring that fifty percent of chairpersons, panelists and participants at the meeting are women. In addition, there should be a specific item on the agenda to discuss relevant gender issues. Gender balance should be observed in the composition of the panel/speaker's list of this session. This strategy has been shown to increase the chances that gender dimensions of each discussion will be raised, and that they will be included in the report of the meeting³.

The Gender in Development Programme has developed a Guideline/checklist on the actions that may be required to mainstream gender considerations throughout country office activities. This can be used to monitor the extent of gender mainstreaming in the

³ A strategy to achieve gender balance should involve an incremental approach, setting targets which take the situation closer and closer to full equality. The ultimate objective is the equal (i.e. 50:50) involvement in dialogue and decision making of women and men. However, a lower target may initially be more strategically appropriate, and it has been found that one-third participation of women in meetings and conferences provides a critical mass, which ensures that any distinctive view that they may have can be put with sufficient vigour. This is a challenging area of activity to which there is often much opposition, a fact which signifies its importance. Even where targets are not fully achieved, discussion around this issue can be a significant vehicle for advocacy.

country office. This guideline is also given as an appendix to the *Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming*.

Responsibilities of the Operational Gender Focal Point

These responsibilities can be summarised as acting as a clearing house for information on women's advancement and gender mainstreaming issues, supporting colleagues in their efforts to include gender equality considerations in their work, supporting senior management in their overall accountability for gender mainstreaming in the office, and advocating for gender equality. The tasks include:

- analyse, collect and disseminate information on gender relations in the country;
- act as catalyst to colleagues as they include gender considerations in their own work. In particular seek to support colleagues before they go to meetings, identifying the gender issues that could usefully be raised. (NB. It is not the responsibility of the gender focal point to review all programme documents for their gender sensitivity: this is the task of the programme officer concerned. However, the Gender Focal Point should be able to provide information, offer guidance on the relevant gender analysis and suggest contacts or consultants who could help).
- network actively to build close professional relationships with all gender focal points in the development assistance community, and, most importantly, with local organisations of women, ideally on the basis of regular systematic meetings;
- identify means to support the formation and strengthening of national networks of women's organisations;
- maintain a roster of regional and national consultants who can provide gender-sensitive expertise on a range of topics to the country office;
- be fully informed as to the gender equality policies and strategies of all members of the development community, and ensure that management is fully informed on these to facilitate policy dialogue and resource mobilisation;
- provide management and colleagues with briefings as appropriate (either written or verbal) on gender-relevant matters in the programme country;
- ensure that UNDP speakers at events such as document launchings, workshop openings, receptions and press conferences are aware of any gender equality points that should be raised;
- ensure that the press corps is regularly provided with concrete stories on how UNDP is supporting the issue of gender equality in national life. Work closely with UN communications/information personnel to encourage dissemination of such information;
- network actively (by electronic means, and to the extent possible at regional and global meetings) with other country office gender focal points, and with headquarters;

Appendix D:
TERMS OF REFERENCE:
UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAMMES GENDER COORDINATOR

Under a direct supervision of the UNDP CO Gender Focal Point and in close liaison with the Managers of the relative UNDP Country Programmes the Gender Programmes Coordinator is working with programmes in order to support Programme Management Units to implement gender mainstreaming activities; is acting as a programme policy advisor in planning and monitoring the programme activities and is responsible for implementation of day-to-day substantial tasks assigned within UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and the programmes' objectives.

Responsibilities:

- Undertake operational management of the gender activities of the programmes;
- Prepare the Annual and Quarterly Work Plans and Progress Reports on the Gender Mainstreaming activities;
- Assist the Managers in compiling the Quarterly Work plans and Progress Reports on the level of the Programme Management Units;
- Work with Managers on the technical aspects of the gender mainstreaming implementation;
- Assist the Managers in formulation, implementation and evaluation activities from substantive point of view on issues related to gender mainstreaming and the general ones of the PMUs;
- Monitor regularly the programmes work plans, undertake necessary preparatory actions for the planned activities, liaise with relevant parties, if needed. Ensure timely and proper implementation of the tasks within the approved work plans;
- Ensure planning and delivery of the assigned programme resources against approved budgets;
- Keep a filing record system of Gender Mainstreaming programmes matters;
- Handle overall correspondence with external Government and third parties related to the programme matters;
- Ensure that gender aspects are taken into consideration within all activities of the Programmes in cooperation with the respective coordinators of available components and programme managers;
- Ensure effective exchange of information on gender issues between the PMUs and oblast based PIUs (Programme Implementation Units) for the purpose of knowledge sharing and information access.