

GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES IN UPGRADING OF RURAL PROJECTS IN KARATINA, NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Gender mainstreaming is a concept that addresses the well being of women and men. It is a strategy that is central to the interests of the whole community and a concept that has received much attention in literature on project management. This paper aimed at examining the application of gender mainstreaming strategies in upgrading of Karatina market, a rural-based project in Nyeri County in Kenya. It sought to assess how gender policies were adhered to in the project. The study used descriptive survey research design and document desk review of relevant research literature. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as instruments of data collection. The resultant data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive data analysis was done using measures of central tendencies. For qualitative data, content analysis was applied. Findings indicated that the plan for the project was designed in a way that met women's and men's needs. 58% of the respondents maintained that both men and women were included in decision-making organs engaged in project development. However, findings revealed reluctance by women to undertake construction work. 58% of top management team maintained that some regulations in the gender mainstreaming guidelines were difficult to comply with. The article argues for gender mainstreaming strategies such as application of the one third rule of affirmative action in favour of women during recruitment of project team members and gender-responsive consultation with project beneficiaries. This paper concludes that gender mainstreaming strategies should be integrated in all phases of the project cycle.

Keywords: *Gender equality, Gender mainstreaming, Gender strategies, project cycle, project management, rural projects*

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1. Introduction

The quest for development has led to a consensus that participation by both men and women is essential for sustained development interventions. Development initiatives can be significantly improved through greater awareness on the part of government counterparts, project management and beneficiaries on gender mainstreaming and its practical implication. It is widely acknowledged that promoting gender equality is an essential component of an effective economic and human development strategy (GOK, 2007). *The Kenya Vision 2030* was formulated as the long-term development blueprint for the period 2008–2030 and envisions creating ‘a globally competitive and prosperous country with high quality of life for its citizens by the year 2030’. *Vision 2030* strives to achieve its aims through initiation and implementation of sectoral projects (GOK, 2007). Kenya is one of the countries which ratified the Millennium Development Goals. Goal number 3 on Gender equality necessitates integration of gender issues in planning and development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in the political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally. The World Bank (2007) recognizes gender equality as a core development issue and a development objective in its own right because it strengthens countries’ abilities to grow, reduces poverty and increases opportunities for effective governance.

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality (Moser & Moser, 2005). Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for ensuring that the concerns of both women and men form a fundamental aspect of project management and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that they can benefit equally. Women and men exhibit distinct differences in their perspectives, and priorities concerning environmental quality, use of natural resources, project activities and benefits and access to services. Experience with best practice cases across projects highlights the importance of including a gender analysis, as part of social assessment or as a stand-alone exercise, at the onset of a project. The *Status of Women-Canada* (2001) report, points out that undertaking gender analysis is critical, because all policies and activities have a gender perspective or implication. The book further explains that policies and programs become more effective when the impact of gender is considered and addressed during

conceptualization and finally, it contributes to the rectification of systemic gender-based discrimination.

Gender equality is not solely a women's issue as it seeks to tailor activities to the beneficiaries of the project from both sexes (GEF Report, 2008). In most developing countries, gender inequality is a major obstacle to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (GoK, 2005b). According to the Government of Kenya, achieving this goal is rather difficult because of the eminent gaps between women and men in terms of capacities, access to resources and opportunities, and vulnerability to violence and conflict. MDG Goal 3 focuses on the historical disadvantages affecting women and girls and identifies men and boys as strategic allies in transforming the factors causing this disparity. The gender equality goal also incorporates indicators which address persistent gender differences in labour market opportunities, legal rights, and the ability to participate in public life and decision making (GoK, 2005b). A people-centred agenda must work to ensure the equal rights of women and girls, and empower them to participate and take on leadership roles in public life. Women across the world have to work hard to overcome significant barriers to opportunity. These barriers can only be removed when there is zero tolerance of violence against and exploitation of women and girls, and when they have full and equal rights in political, economic and public spheres (Yudhoyono, Bambang, Sirleaf & Cameron, 2013).

To realize the MDGs, governments and their partners must seriously and systematically 'engender' efforts to achieve all the goals (UNDP, 2006). In the past decade, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has put in place a number of policies and strategies to mainstream gender throughout its programmatic activities. Failure to understand and address gender dimensions within programs and projects, risks wasting of development resources and negative effects on household welfare, women's equality, and environmental sustainability (ADB, 2009). For a project to realize its intended goals, measures must be put in place to safeguard it against reproducing or generating gender disparities (Wendoh and Wallace, 2005). Gender mainstreaming should not only be regarded as a factor requiring attention in infrastructure projects but rather must be considered as a critical factor in ensuring the project's success and sustainability by ensuring that

women do not become worse off both absolutely and in relation to men (World Bank, 2008).

2. Statement of the Problem

Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development. Gender mainstreaming includes all aspects of project management. Despite efforts at the policy level and a growing awareness of the crosscutting gender issues in development programs, gender mainstreaming has been slow to translate from policy into action. Gender issues continue to be viewed by many development practitioners as separate and unrelated to programmatic issues (Tiessen, 2005). For many male programme implementers, gender issues are irrelevant to the development problems they seek to address. There are cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality within communities, organizations and institutions. Gender inequality is produced and reproduced at all these levels on a daily basis through the sanctioning of norms, behaviors and practices, which reinforce women's subordinate position in society.

There is also the challenge of overseeing and integrating gender strategies in all programs and project activities (Wendoh & Wallace, 2005). Programme implementers responsible for gender mainstreaming are seldom in positions of power which enable them to make decisions about, and modifications to, other personnel's programs. In a study on gender mainstreaming, Wendoh et al (2005) explain that government officials dealing with gender mainstreaming in African countries reported a resistance at implementation level where senior officials give higher priority to other activities and grade gender issues at a lower level. A study conducted by Ebila (2004), reported that although Uganda was known for having a gender-sensitive approach to development, there were no clear guidelines on how to mainstream gender in the water and sanitation policies, despite the fact that gender cannot be divorced from effective water management and use.

Mainstreaming approaches have the potential to alter societal norms and practices. A study by Souza (2003) of Brazil on "Conscious Fostering of Women's Leadership: 'Water Women' project in Brazil" reported that a couple of

women who started in the project left because of the lack of support from their husbands. Similarly, Majekodunmi of Nigeria in his research on “Using Gender Mainstreaming Processes to Help Protect Drinking Water Sources of the Obudu Plateau Communities” observed a major obstacle that the traditional village system was patriarchal, and endowed men with all decision-making powers (Majekodunmi, 2006), indicating a need for sensitization of men on gender issues and education of all on importance of gender mainstreaming. In a study titled “Empowering Women’s Participation in Community and Household Decision-making in Water and Sanitation” carried out in Egypt by Hammam (2004), it is clear that existing power structures hinder women’s empowerment, particularly at the management level. Poku (2006) reiterated that although women are the key players in implementing changes in hygiene behaviour, the contribution and roles of rural women are often overlooked or under-utilized in the drafting of water and sanitation policies.

Despite all the positive gains made in the last few years, gender mainstreaming efforts in government projects are still facing serious challenges. There is an apparent lack of common understanding within government departments on what gender mainstreaming entails (Sedibelwana, 2008). In Kenya, in a study by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) on “Gender Differences in Community Water Management in Machakos”, 85% of respondents in the survey said women are victims of harassment by men and attacks by thugs when they go out to draw water. The research further pointed out that few women sat on water management committees, since they were afraid of expressing themselves in front of men and many more women were too busy with household chores. The report also revealed that women were not consulted during the design of the water supply system hence no provision was made for making facilities available for use of the water (IDRC, 1997).

This paper, therefore, sought to examine gender mainstreaming strategies in a rural market project with a view to identify best practice for effective gender integration in the context of project management.

3. Development of Gender Mainstreaming Strategies in Project Management

Alston (2006) traces the historical development of gender mainstreaming to the 1975 International Women's Year, which culminated in holding of the World Conference on Women in Mexico, sponsored by the United Nations (UN). At this conference, women recognized the fact that despite their differences, they share commonalities with regard to their unequal treatment by society. Furthermore, the conference sought to raise awareness on the fact that international and national development depends on the participation of both women and men.

In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. In 1980, halfway through the "Decade of Women", the UN adopted a Program of Action, which emphasized equality, development and peace. At the end of the decade of women, the UN held a conference in Nairobi in 1985 to consolidate the organization's efforts in the area of gender equality. At this conference, the "Forward Looking Strategies" were adopted. The strategies called for sexual equality, women's autonomy and power, recognition of women's unpaid work, and advances in women's paid work (Alston, 2006). Alston further stated that women activists progressively changed their direction from focusing on women's issues to the advancement and empowerment of women. This change of direction was instrumental in that by the time the Beijing Conference was held in 1995, the emphasis had changed to ensuring that a gendered perspective is included in all policies and programs, thereby, leading to the beginning of the gender mainstreaming approach.

Overall, these international conferences reinforced the need to ensure that gender mainstreaming is operationalised at all levels. The change was also brought about by criticisms of a women-focused approach, which occurred in the run-up to the Beijing Conference. These criticisms ranged from the dangers of viewing women as an indivisible category, to focusing attention on women in one small area of organizational structures (thus, ignoring the organizational cultures), to the complex gender relations and ideologies that perpetuate women's disadvantage, to the lack of significant change in gender disadvantage

over time (Chant and Gutmann, 2000, in Alston, 2006). De Waal (2006) argues that Gender mainstreaming has developed over several decades, and has its roots in the Women in Development (WID) approach, which emphasised the need to integrate women into the development process. The second approach was Gender and Development (GAD), which examined the social differences between women and men and the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations (De Waal, 2006). International agencies pursued the WID and GAD models at the expense of gender equality and women's empowerment, and accordingly measured the impact of development according to WID and GAD, rather than gender equality and women's empowerment.

In view of the above historical trend, gender mainstreaming has emerged not only to focus on the gender equality situation within an organization, but also on equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, advancement, conditions of work, norms, attitudes, values, organizational culture, management style, and others. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is not only concerned with increasing equal opportunities and gender balance within an organization, but also with incorporating attention to gender perspectives and the goal of promoting gender equality in the substantive work of an organization (Hannan, 2000).

Project undertakings, especially in rural settings, face distinct challenges associated with gender inequalities. This is mainly due to the gender stereotypes that exist. Cultural norms deeply entrenched in communities' traditions strongly militate against equal regard for men and women. In some communities, the woman is supposed to remain at home and is not expected to go out and seek wage labour hence have limited opportunities for paid employment and lack control over house-hold resources. In such cases the man is the sole breadwinner and he can work on the family farm or seek wage labour outside the home. The nature of work a woman can do is also biased in most societies. In many cases, the society expects women to assume subordinate positions not only at home but also outside home (UNDP, 2002). Therefore, although gender mainstreaming strategies have largely gained root in urban and peri-urban settings, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) indicates that in the rural areas, a lot still needs to be done to sensitize and empower women to arise and contribute to development on an equal basis with men. Gender relations in Kenya have been

molded by a combination of factors that include customs and cultural practices, awareness and education levels, economic conditions, traditional and modern laws and emerging patterns of social organization (Mwatha, 2009).

4. Gender Mainstreaming in Public Policy in Kenya

Kenya has ratified various international instruments which oblige the government as a duty bearer to promote and protect women's rights. In the same breathe, too, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 domesticates international human rights instruments into Kenyan law and commits the state to align its legislation, policies and practices to conform. These instruments and conventions include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS), Beijing Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals, Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women (1993), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR, Banjul Charter), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) and the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 (GOK, 2008d).

This paper recognizes the importance of international and regional treaties, conventions and agreements/instruments and their role in promoting gender equality. In 1984, Kenya signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Subsequent to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, Kenya adopted the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS). Kenya also committed to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in 1995 and in November 1996, the National Assembly adopted a motion for the implementation of the BPFA. Other commitments include the Millennium Development Goals, which were signed in September 2000; the Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa made during

the African Union Summit (July 2004) on employment creation and poverty alleviation; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989; the United Nations Declaration on Violence against Women (1993); and the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 (GOK, 2008d).

It is instructive to note that international treaties have continued to inform legislation and policy in Kenya. According to the National Policy on Gender and Development (GOK, 2000), the need for a national policy arose from the government's realization that without a coherent and comprehensive overall framework for guiding gender mainstreaming within different sectors and ministries, enormous resources may continue to be misplaced. Kenya's participation in the first UN Conference on Women in 1975 in Mexico set in motion the process that led to the establishment of the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services in 1976. The Women's Bureau was given the national mandate to support the advancement of women in social, economic and political development. It's continuing role entails policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as coordination of government initiatives and programs for women, collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and information, and support to and liaison with non-government organizations (NGOs), women's organizations, and other stakeholders (GOK, 2006b).

The commitment of the Government of Kenya to mainstream gender into national development for equitable growth and poverty reduction is also evidenced by the establishment of different national machineries with distinct but complementary roles. The establishment of the now defunct Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services in 2003 marked the beginning of a focused consideration of the situation and status of women and their participation in various spheres of life in the country. Within the ministry, the Department of Gender was set up in December 2004 and assigned the task of providing technical support for promoting the range of mechanisms in gender mainstreaming. This includes aspects of policy, plans, programs and law. The Devolved government has further entrenched gender mainstreaming in its policies. In this case, all public institutions are required to implement Government policy on gender mainstreaming, including

compliance with one third rule on appointments, promotions and employment in the public service, as per the Constitution (GoK, 2014).

The National Commission on Gender and Development (NCGD) was also established in December 2003. It was mandated to coordinate, implement and facilitate gender mainstreaming in national development and to advise the Government on gender concerns (CEDAW Report, 2009). The Commission's core mandate is to undertake lobbying and advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and oversight for legal reforms on issues affecting women and girls. Gender desks have also been set up in every ministry to sensitize ministries on gender and push for gender mainstreaming in policy making, planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A gender database was also officially launched by the former Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development in 2009. In addition to the creation of national machineries, several policy documents relating to gender have been developed and adopted. Among these are the National Policy on Gender and Development (GOK, 2000) and its plan of action for 2008–2012 (GOK, 2008), Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development (GOK, 2006b), and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Gender Mainstreaming (GOK, 2009b).

The Constitution also identifies areas of focus in the process of promoting equality and human rights of women, enhancing the effective participation of women, and integrating a gender perspective into development. The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, ensures that women and men will have the right to equal treatment and opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres without discrimination. Article 27 of the constitution provides for equality of rights and freedoms including equal political, economic, cultural and social opportunities and outlaws discrimination on any grounds. Article 59 entrenches the proposed Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission to protect gender, human rights and freedoms. Further, gender rights are reinforced by Article 2 (6) which requires that any treaty or convention that Kenya has ratified, become part of Kenyan law, including those on women's rights. The Bill of Rights also provides for legislation to give full effect to the principle of Affirmative Action (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The Policy on Gender Equality and

Development establishes institutions as well as programs and activities through which the specified government objectives would be met. The former Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development supported gender mainstreaming in all government ministries, advised on the impact of all government policies on women, monitored the situation of women, helped formulate policies and implement strategies to eliminate gender-based discrimination (CEDAW Report, 2009).

These documents emphasize the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and enhance equity between men and women. They promote gender equality in opportunities, gender inclusion and empowerment and they set goals and targets to be achieved. Several milestones have been attained in Kenya in an effort to create policies to guide and track gender mainstreaming strategies. To this end, a Training Manual on Gender Mainstreaming has been developed to co-ordinate and harmonize gender mainstreaming initiatives by various government and non-state actors. Similarly, a monitoring and evaluation system is in place to track gender mainstreaming in the country, alongside a National Plan of Action to Implement the Gender Policy (2008 – 2012). The training manual is also meant to guide lobbying by both government and non-governmental organizations for gender mainstreaming, promote women's participation in various development activities as well as improve equality between men and women in socio-economic and cultural sectors. The manual also seeks to inform the implementation of a Presidential Executive Order issued on 30th October 2006 requiring that at least 30 per cent of new employees recruited or appointed into the public service be women (CEDAW Report, 2009).

5. Strategies for Effective Gender Mainstreaming in Project Implementation

Gender mainstreaming strategies are vital in all project phases as women need to be given fair representation as men. *Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development* expresses the government's commitment to advance the status of women. The overall objective of the policy is to ensure women's empowerment and mainstreaming of their needs and concerns in all sectors of development in the country so that they can participate and benefit equally from

development initiatives (GOK, 2006b). The policy paper outlines how gender should be integrated in all the planning phases: that is from problem identification (situational analysis and needs assessment), through design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to the end-line evaluation. To this end, deliberate steps have to be taken to encourage women to participate in planning and all project activities, such as sitting on management committees (Lorber, 1994). Enhancing women's participation in project work would also require the project management teams to assess and address gender differences and inequalities in planning and implementation, of projects. Lastly, the project management teams would need to support and sustain gender perspectives in the recruitment of staff. (WHO, 2009).

Operationalising gender in policy analysis has been a critical element in Gender and Development (GAD) discourse (Boserup, 1989). Unlike the WID approach, Boserup posits that GAD approach seeks to challenge multiple forms of women's disempowerment and subordination (including gendered structures and institutions). She argues that projects should include gender-sensitive strategies in the project framework and associated project description. She avers that the project team should assess whether appropriate strategies have been defined to address the gender issues within project component activities of the proposed project and whether the gender issues relating to the project would be effectively addressed by either a targeted intervention or activities mainstreamed in the project component activities.

According to the African Development Bank (2009), project teams should verify whether all the quantifiable and non quantifiable, gender and social related direct and indirect benefits have been defined, and if they are realistic. In the same vein, too, projects must assess whether the proposed project has a relocation site selection in the design and if this has taken into account both women and men's concerns such as safety of the sites and proximity to viable sources of livelihoods and access to basic social service. A relocation site is crucial to allow continued sustainability of livelihoods. It is also pointed out that an assessment of how time is used locally along gender lines (informed by socially-constructed responsibilities) is critical at the preparation stage, as it should guide the design

of the project activities. Such knowledge helps to eschew the possibility of increasing the burden on women or forcing them to pass over some of their responsibilities to their daughters, whose schooling may then be negatively affected (ADB, 2009).

6. Methodology

This article draws on numerous documents and reports as well as a set of primary data collected in July 2012 using a descriptive survey research design. The aim was to collect information from respondents on their experiences, attitudes and opinions in relation to gender mainstreaming in upgrading of Karatina market in Nyeri County. Participation in this study was limited to adults working in, and those affected by implementation of the project. Efforts were made to find an equitable representation of male and female participants by convenient or purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Convenient sampling allowed selection of cases or units of observation as they became available to the researcher while snowball technique helped to locate individuals who were difficult to trace. The target population of the study consisted of 150 stakeholders who included project management team members, project workers and project beneficiaries/market traders. These included 10 members of Karatina Municipal Council, 10 members of the contractor's team, 10 members of the site committee, 60 project workers and 60 registered prospective stall owners (traders) with Business Permits. For triangulation purpose, both primary and secondary data was gathered. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews and a closed and open-ended structured questionnaire. Secondary data was obtained from project manuals, journals and books. Semi-structured interviews were used because of the flexibility they allow in the interview process as well as the standardization of research questions. Face to face interview was also used to clarify any ambiguities in information gathered using the instruments. Questionnaires were used since time was limited and information needed could be easily described in writing and clarification obtained from the respondents without restricting their responses.

The qualitative approach was adopted because it allows discovery and identification of new ideas, thoughts, attitudes and perceptions. Data was analyzed

using descriptive statistics with the aid of Microsoft Excel software. Measures of central tendency - mean, mode and median were analyzed. For qualitative data, content analysis was done to identify patterns, themes and biases. Finally, data was presented on frequency distribution tables and stored in soft and hard copies.

7. Discussion of Findings

7.1 Gender Policy in the Project Framework

The study used data to present and interpret the findings which revealed that 54% of the respondents across the board were aware that policies and regulations existed on gender mainstreaming. 67% of respondents explained that there was a gender policy that was operational. This aspect of gender mainstreaming is being fronted in all public and private organizations. The existence of a written policy is an indication of the effectiveness of the government's attempt to implement its own commitments to gender equity and equality. Almost all engaged in this study were aware that gender mainstreaming efforts were being implemented in all units. More than half (54%) of the project workers and market traders indicated that they adequately knew issues of gender policy, an indication of growing awareness.

Findings indicated that project implementers managed to comply with the gender regulations and policies, as both men and women were given equal opportunities for all the jobs and that 1/3 of either gender was maintained during each recruitment drive. Information obtained revealed that top management team consisted of 14 men and 6 women. This is in line with the constitution, the National Gender Policy (2000), the Presidential Directive of 2006 on at least a 30% minimum representation by women in all positions of leadership and employment across the public sector. Specifically, the constitution as the supreme law of the land, in Article 27, provides for equality of rights and freedoms including equal political, economic, cultural and social opportunities and outlaws discrimination on any grounds.

To establish further the strategies applied in gender mainstreaming within the project, the study sought to find out whether both men and women were included in most of the decision making panels throughout the project cycle. From the

findings, 42% of the respondents disagreed, which implies that there was a fair representation of women and that gender equity was an important component in the project management structure. This concurs with the views of Lorber (1994) that women have to take part on an equal basis with men in all the planning and project activities, such as sitting on management committees.

The project implementers made efforts in gender mainstreaming largely through sensitizing the stakeholders, offering equal opportunities to both gender and allocating specific positions to the disadvantaged gender. Stakeholders were informed of the need to ensure participation of both men and women in decision making throughout the project cycle. In addition, the views of the market traders as the key beneficiaries (most of them were women) were taken into account during the planning and implementation stages of the project). Indeed, 77% of the respondents indicated that both women and men were fairly represented at the planning stage of the project. Gender policy was not a document known to 44% of the respondents which implies that perhaps gender mainstreaming is still a preserve of management and they do not sensitize other organizational levels. This concurs with Hannan (2000) who stated that a number of serious misconceptions around gender mainstreaming do exist, hampering the effective implementation of project strategy. These are sometimes linked to the lack of understanding of basic concepts such as “gender” and “gender equality”.

7.2 Gender Concerns in Terms of Reference

The study further found that the majority of the respondents confirmed the project Terms of Reference (TOR) clearly specified gender issues and that majority of the implementing unit was aware of the gender mainstreaming strategy in place, as required by the constitution. 67% of the respondents indicated that gender concerns were factored and spelt out in the TOR of the project. This concurs with ADB (2009) that a key element for the success of a project is having clearly spelt out TORs to ensure gender concerns have been taken into consideration in the project plan and ensuring that there are linkages to policies and commitments to the gender equality strategy.

Allocation of facilities is meaningful to all only if it is done on the basis of sex as learned and understood by all members of a given society. While 73% of

the respondents indicated little concern for needs specific to men and women, a much smaller, 27% indicated that much was done towards taking specific needs separately for men and women in project undertakings. This may imply that needs specific to each gender were not adequately provided for. ILO (2002) stresses on the need to take into account both women and men's concerns such as safety of the sites and proximity to viable sources of livelihoods and access to basic social service. The same idea has been embraced by the African Development Bank (2009), which states that project costs and financing arrangements should always be assessed to determine whether adequate resource allocations have been made for the implementation of the gender mainstreaming actions in the project budget estimates of any proposed infrastructure project.

7.3 Gender Disaggregated Performance Indicators

Developing a set of gender disaggregated performance indicators, with gender disaggregated data, is *sine qua non* to facilitating monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring performance is also a key component of building accountability into every project (Touwen, 2001). 75% of the respondents indicated that gender – disaggregated data was not monitored in the project's monitoring/supervision plan and reflected in the monthly reports. This reflects low level of awareness on the tracking of gender specific performance indicators in the project. While it is essential that projects should include gender specific project performance indicators such as gender-specific monthly or quarterly reports in their monitoring and evaluation process, monitoring and evaluation is largely hampered by the lack of such crucial sex disaggregated data. In terms of evaluating the practice of gender mainstreaming, the findings are in line with the view taken by Moser (2005) that the ultimate test of whether gender mainstreaming has either succeeded or failed lies in the rigorous monitoring and evaluation tools. Gender-specific project performance indicators are a necessary component of a project's monitoring and evaluation framework. The study, however, found that gender issues were well addressed during the process of project evaluation. It was noted by half of the respondents that gender issues raised after the evaluations were well addressed by the management. The other half failed to agree that the concerns were addressed. This ratio is an indication of lack of a clear mechanism to address gender issues after project evaluations.

Tanja (2000) expressed the view that when those planning or implementing programmes, projects or policies act on the evidence of gender-differentiated impact, they end up promoting equal access and benefits to both men and women. This concurs with Wendoh et al (2005) who pointed out that government officials dealing with gender mainstreaming in African countries reported a resistance at implementation level where senior officials give higher priority to other activities and grade gender issues at a lower level. Addressing gender issues after project evaluations is a vital element of the project cycle which was found to lack in the project.

7.4 Challenges Hindering Effective Gender Mainstreaming

Despite the existence of the policies, legislative reforms, plans and programmes, gender disparities persist in legal, social, economic and political levels of decision making, as well as access to and control of resources, opportunities and benefits (GOK, 2008). The Plan of Action attributes the slow implementation process mainly to gaps in the laws, delayed enactment of gender-related legislation and lack of comprehensiveness in the content of some laws. More so, affirmative actions are selectively implemented without a grand plan for gender equity in all facets of human life (GoK, 2005).

Other challenges include weak coordination, harmonization and networking among actors at all levels, inadequate resources (human and financial), limited technical capacity and capacity consistency resulting from deployment/transfers. Socio-cultural issues, misinterpretation of the concept of gender as applying only to women rather than to women, men, boys and girls, and a lack of gender sensitivity in the development of core sector indicators and targets are also well entrenched barriers. Finally, despite the ambition of the gender action plan, sector and national budgetary allocations are lacking to support targeted gender activities at all levels.

The debate on gender mainstreaming, its theoretical concepts, and the manner in which it is implemented is highly complex and contested. People-centered approaches do not always ensure that gender perspectives are taken into account. As a result, one observes a different and inconsistent approach in the implementation of gender mainstreaming across some government projects. Moser (2005) states

that in many projects, there is no reliable and systematic evaluation of gender mainstreaming outcomes and impacts. For Moser, the biggest challenge lies in identifying correct indicators, which would require four interrelated indicators measuring inputs; outputs, effects and impacts.

Other challenges observed during the research included the lack of a gender specialist in the project, the absence of women engaged in actual construction work, ignorance by project beneficiaries on gender concerns in project implementation and inadequate resources to provide required facilities for each gender. Resistance by women to undertake construction work was reported to emanate from societal norms that place heavy manual work on men (owing to their masculinity). During the interviews, one respondent stated that the few women who attempted to participate in the construction soon abandoned the work claiming it was very exhausting while another one argued that women abandoned the project site due to their additional household responsibilities. The only woman available at the construction site was an elderly lady who sold simple meals to the construction workers. According to Tiessen (2005), women are more likely to feel the burden of additional community responsibilities and work. The findings clearly point out the complexities associated with gender roles as dictated by culture.

8. Recommendations

Integration of a gender dimension into a project's analytical work is important and an understanding of gender issues is a necessary prelude to gender-responsive project design. For successful implementation, there should be tracking of whether gender analysis of projects has been conducted for improvement of performance and achievement of quality which would result in gender balance that is necessary for development.

Training of project managers and project team members is of paramount importance. To assist project managers in mainstreaming gender issues into operations, The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services should work with project partners to add gender and development content to project management. The National Commission on Gender and Development should continue to create and disseminate adaptable operational tools and good practice examples for use in project operations.

There is need for capacity building of project implementers. The National Commission on Gender and Development and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services should work with project partners to add gender and development content to project management. The National Commission on Gender and Development should continue to create and disseminate adaptable operational tools and examples of good practice for use in project operations. Accountability and responsibility of project staff for gender mainstreaming should be clarified. Project managers should be held accountable for integration of gender issues in project management.

9. Conclusion

This paper concludes that gender mainstreaming strategies are vital in all phases of the project cycle. If well executed, gender strategies would help to enhance gender responsiveness among policy makers as they will re-focus their energies to incorporate a gender perspective in project processes and to mitigate against gender stereotypes and gender-based discrimination. Gender strategies will ensure bringing on board all men and women as equal development partners thereby yielding synergy and greater output in economic development. Women can be effective agents for change if empowered, this can be done through analysis of their status, priorities, contributions and needs relative to men's. Resultant data can be used in planning for access and control of resources for decision making. Monitoring and evaluation of institutionalisation of gender is necessary for appropriate and context-specific indicators that capture the impact of interventions to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

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