

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Gender

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**Background Paper for the Conference on Sustainable Poverty
Reduction and PRSPs – Challenges for Developing Countries
and Development Cooperation**

Berlin, May 13-16, 2002

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Why Must PRSPs Mainstream Gender?

To achieve their poverty reduction goals, PRSPs must mainstream gender.

Mainstreaming Gender and Engendering Development: Terminology

Two terms used interchangeably in this paper are "mainstreaming gender" and "engendering". Mainstreaming gender aims to ensure that both women and men are involved in development design, planning, implementation and follow up and that development projects promote equality between men and women. Mainstreaming gender requires analysing the potential impact on women and men of all development interventions. Engendering also means mainstreaming gender. This use of engendering was popularised with the publication of the World Bank's 2001 flagship Policy Research Report, Engendering Development (World Bank 2001a).

Although women and men share many of the burdens of poverty, they frequently experience poverty differently, have different poverty reduction priorities and are affected differently by development interventions. These gender differences are insufficiently captured in conventional poverty analyses, designs and monitoring systems. This deficiency weakens the chances of success of poverty reduction interventions. Addressing the gender dimensions of poverty and creating gender responsive interventions enhances the likelihood of success of poverty reduction strategy efforts (Bamberger et al 2001). Thus PRSPs must be engendered to effectively reduce poverty.

PRSPs must be also be engendered because research compellingly correlates greater gender equality with greater poverty reduction and economic growth (World Bank 2001a). Although women's status has improved in most countries in the last half century, gender disparities persist everywhere and remain most acute in the poorest countries. Across and within countries, gender disparities in education, mortality rates, health and other social and economic indicators are greatest within poorer income groups. Gender inequalities impose large costs on the well-being and health of the poor, diminishing productivity and the potential to reduce poverty and ensure economic growth. In most societies women have more limited opportunities to improve economic conditions and access services than do men.

Usually women and girls bear the brunt of gender inequalities. Identifying and redressing these inequalities tends to have high economic and financial returns. Nevertheless, as this paper demonstrates, PRSPs have hardly acknowledged gender inequalities.

WID vs GAD Approach. The majority of PRSPs produced to date weakly apply an obsolete women in development (WID) approach -- mentioning a few female problems in isolation such as girls not attending school and women's reproductive health problems. They fail to apply a gender in development (GAD) approach -- analysing inequalities between males and females and proposing programs to eliminate these inequalities. A GAD approach mainstreams

gender by analysing women's and men's roles sector by sector and issue by issue. This is the essence of the engendering approach that is essential for reducing poverty.

Consequences of Producing Unengendered PRSPs. Unengendered PRSPs become national development strategies that do not promote gender equality. The consequences of implementing unengendered development strategies are to slow development and perpetuate and deepen gender inequalities. Implementing unengendered national strategies reinforces unequal gender patterns that hinder development.

Sector Examples of Why PRSPs Must Mainstream Gender

Sector examples of why PRSPs must mainstream gender to reduce poverty are provided in Box 1 (Zuckerman 2001):

Box 1: Examples of Why PRSPs Must Mainstream Gender to Reduce Poverty

Agriculture. Women are significantly more active in African agriculture than are men. Women comprise over 70% of total African agricultural labor and up to 90% of the labor engaged in food production (Blackden and Bhanu 1999). But men have much greater access to farm inputs and earn much more farm income than do women. Blackden and Bhanu estimate that more equal control of inputs and farm income by female and male farmers in countries such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Kenya, could raise farm yields by as much as a fifth of current output. PRSPs need to analyze men's and women's structural roles in agriculture, their respective control of agricultural resources and promote women's access to and control of farming inputs and income. They need to ensure that agricultural research and extension institutions recognize and respond to gender-differentiated roles. This might alter research priorities, selection and development of agricultural technologies, prioritization of crops and tasks, and extension messages that are developed and delivered. As gender experts have long advocated, the tiny proportion of African female extension agents needs to be vastly increased in countries where customs dictate that male extension agents cannot easily mingle with women farmers. PRSPs could create monitoring indicators on the proportions of males and females controlling production, the amount of income each garners, and the proportion of agricultural extension agents by gender.

Credit: Because microcredit programs targeted to poor women have gained deserved fame, it might appear that women's access to credit is more substantial than the reality suggests. In African countries, women still receive less than 10 percent of all credit reaching small farmers and only 1 percent of the total credit reaching the agricultural sector (Blackden and Bhanu 1999). When females access credit, average loan sizes are smaller than those loaned to males. PRSPs should promote expanding poor women's access to microcredit and create a monitoring indicator on the proportion of credit loaned to men and women. Monitoring should continue until accessing credit is no longer gender-discriminatory.

Social Capital. Compared to men, women generally have more limited social and business networks of the type that facilitate access to financial services and income (Bamberger et al.

2001). PRSPs could promote mentoring programs and public-private partnerships to support the establishment of networks involving women.

Time Burden on Women and Children. Women worldwide have heavier time burdens than do men due to simultaneous productive, reproductive and community roles. Women's multiple roles limit their ability to benefit from poverty reduction strategy interventions unless women are especially targeted. Even where women have equal education and experience to men, their heavier domestic work burden reduces their opportunities for economic participation and income generation. The combination of visible paid work time and invisible unpaid work time results in women being overworked. For example, time use studies demonstrate (Bamberger et al 2001):

- ◆ In Uganda, women work 12-18 hours per day and men 8-10 hours per day.
 - ◆ In Kenya, women work 50 percent more hours than do men on agricultural tasks.
 - ◆ In Tanzania, women have two hours leisure per day while men have 4.5 hours leisure per day.
- Children also are closely integrated into household production systems in poor households. Sometimes boys are disadvantaged but more often it is girls. While girls perform essential household tasks like carrying water, agricultural production and other economic tasks, boys usually go to school. Domestic chores, notably fetching water, are a major factor limiting girls' access to schooling. African girls spend four times more time on productive tasks than do boys (Blackden 2001).

PRSPs need to address women's and children's onerous time burdens. They need to design interventions to expand women's time for income-earning activities and leisure, and children's opportunities to attend school and obtain better long-term income-earning opportunities.

Technology. A major reason for poor women's and children's excessive time burden is the almost total absence of basic technology in rural areas of the poorest countries. For example:

- ◆ Few African rural households have access to piped water. Women and girls often walk several hours per day to fetch (often contaminated) water.
- ◆ Women spend hours collecting firewood, often several times weekly, in some cases daily because low-efficiency cooking stoves necessitate frequent trips to collect wood.
- ◆ Almost all domestic transport tasks are performed by women in Africa (Malmberg Calvo 1994). But women lack access to basic transport technology -- to bicycles, wheelbarrows and pull-carts. Men frequently have access to such vehicles although their carrying burden is much smaller than women's. In Zambia, 96% of domestic travel time is attributed to women, only 1% to men and 3% to children. African women carry most domestic loads, usually on their heads, while walking.
- ◆ Limited availability or affordability of simple hand grinders or shellers makes manual food processing, especially of hard grains such as maize and rice, another time-consuming chore for women and female children.

PRSPs should prioritize targeting appropriate technology to women and children to reduce their time-burden and weight loads, including providing piped water to households and/or improved access to means of transport for carrying water and wood and labor-saving technologies for household tasks. PRSPs also need to promote greater gender balance in domestic work and ensure school-aged children attend school.

Structural Adjustment. Poor men and women suffer the consequences of structural changes differently, for example, when they lose their traditional sources of livelihood or migrate to inhospitable cities or mines in search of new employment (Bamberger et al 2001). Structural transformation of economies, demographic changes and informalization, redefine working conditions for both women and men and modify gender roles in the labor market. Women tend to be more vulnerable, finding themselves in the least-protected sectors of the economy, often the first to be laid off and the last to be hired because of cultural norms valuing men as the main breadearners. With the growth of female-headed households, the insecurity of women's employment more directly affects children and other dependents.

When men lose jobs during structural changes and can no longer make an important economic

contribution to the household budget, their frustration and depression often results in family conflicts and domestic violence (Hahn 1999). Although domestic violence is a leading cause of injury and death to women worldwide, many states ignore or even condone it on the grounds that it is a private matter (Shrader 2000).

Education. Gender disparities in education increase acutely at successively higher levels of schooling. These disparities are a drag on economic growth and poverty reduction. It is estimated that had Sub-Saharan African countries closed the education gender gap at the rate achieved by East Asia from 1960 to 1992, their income per capita could have grown by more than 0.5 percent higher per year, a substantial increase over actual growth rates (Klasen 1999). A worldwide analysis concluded that if the share of women in secondary schooling increases by one percent, per capita income increases by 0.3 percent (Dollar and Gatti 1999).

Many studies demonstrate that better-educated women contribute to the welfare of the next generation by reducing infant and child mortality, lowering fertility, and improving the nutritional status of children (Hill and King 1995; Klasen 1999; Smith and Haddad 1999). Both better educated women and men command higher earnings. Although women's earnings remain lower than men's, women invest more in their children (Birdsall and Sabot 1991). To attain their poverty reduction and growth objectives, poverty reduction strategies must prioritize reducing gender gaps in education.

Health. Although women have different health needs and priorities than do men including distinct reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention needs, health services often are not as accessible to them. This is seen in the enormous gender differential in Africa's sexual and reproductive burden of disease. For example, data for Uganda indicate that the AIDS incidence is six times greater among young girls aged 15-19 compared with boys of the same age (Bamberger et al 2001). PRSPs should target health interventions according to gender needs.

Voice and Empowerment. With few exceptions, poor women, even more than poor men, do not participate in decision making on matters that directly affect their lives, whether these relate to public institutions, civil society organizations, or the household. Gender inequity and powerlessness are learned from early childhood around the world. Women lack power to influence resource allocation and investment decisions in the home, community and nation. Although the need for beneficiary consultations is now widely acknowledged and is a required process every PRSP preparation, experience demonstrates that socially and economically weak and voiceless groups are frequently marginalized or excluded in the consultation process. In societies where men speak for the whole family, often women are voiceless in development projects. For example, social funds are frequently praised for their community demand-driven project selection. However, in many countries, women hardly participate in community meetings selecting social fund projects (Zuckerman 1998). Focus group interviews with women make clear that the opinions of men rarely represent the interests of all household members. PRSP consultations need to take measures to ensure women's and men's voices are heard equally.

Rights. In numerous countries, women lack rights to own land, manage property, conduct business or even travel without their husband's consent. Although legislation granting women these rights is a critical step forward, often such legislation is not implemented (Gopal and Salim 1998). Men often resist losing their old privileges and women often remain ignorant about their new rights (Zuckerman 2000). PRSPs need to include measures, including information campaigns, to promote gender-equal laws.

Poverty. The essence of the PRSP analysis concerns poverty. Poverty is multidimensional, yet traditional poverty analyses rarely acknowledge that different household members experience poverty differently. Many PRSPs analyze households, the poor, poor people, poor households, vulnerable/disadvantaged/at-risk groups, communities, etc., but rarely poor women and men, girls and boys.

Typical poverty analyses use generic household consumption and welfare data which do not disaggregate intra-household income and resource distribution. Household level poverty analysis is based on the false assumption that households pool income and allocate resources for consumption, production and investment equitably. In many countries intrahousehold distribution is unequal but traditional survey data do not reveal if men or women and girls or boys receive more or less access to education, nutrition, health care and other needs.

Average household or average per capita estimates of consumption and expenditure often underestimate poverty among certain household members, particularly women and girls. Some household members suffer deprivation within households with average per capita incomes above the poverty line.

PRSPs should carefully analyze sex-disaggregated data to distinguish how poverty and its component elements affect men and women and boys and girls differently. Sex-disaggregated data analysis is a part of gender analysis necessary for targeting the poor to reduce poverty.

National Budgets. PRSPs contain national budget or "costing" data for priority interventions. In determining PRSP budgets, it is important to ensure that 1) both women and men are involved in the budget development process; and 2) resources are allocated for priority investments that respond to the needs of both women and men. To achieve these goals, increasing numbers of countries are undertaking gender budgeting exercises (Esim 1999; Budlander 2000). PRSPs should incorporate gender budget analyses to achieve their goals.

Mainstreaming gender into PRSPs is a straightforward process. There is nothing unusually challenging in terms of technique.

The main tool available for demonstrating how poverty affects men and women differently is gender analysis and it is suitable for PRSPs. Gender analysis examines the access and control that men and women have over resources. This includes analyzing the sexual division of labor and the control women and men have over labor inputs, and outputs or benefits. Gender analysis also systematically determines men's and women's differing development needs and preferences, and the different impacts of development on women and men. Ideally, it takes into account how class, race, ethnicity, disabilities and other diversity factors interact with gender to produce discriminatory results (Bamberger et al 2001).

PRSPs can use a range of data collection methods to address the gender dimensions of poverty. No single method can cover all of the issues, and it is important to combine quantitative and qualitative methods. Conventional poverty research and analysis tools can address most gender issues. Sex-disaggregated data can be collected through standard data collection methods including household and labor market surveys, focus groups, direct observation, clinical records, anthropometric studies, time use records and diaries.

All data collection methods, whether quantitative or qualitative, participatory or non-participatory, can be gender-sensitive. When gender issues are not addressed in poverty analyses, this is likely more due to lack of awareness of the importance of gender than to limitations in data collection methods. Absence of gender analysis tends to signify a lack of knowledge or recognition by policy makers and planners of the importance of gender as a key development issue. Suggested questions to ask to conduct gender analysis are proposed in Zuckerman 2001. In the latter paper, using the Rwandan example, Annex 1 provides a broad chapter and sector analysis overview while Annex 2 provides an in-depth example of a PRSP macroeconomic chapter gender analysis (Zuckerman 2001).

The PRSP Mainstreaming Gender Experience to Date

Few PRSPs to date have applied a GAD approach by mainstreaming gender issues. This conclusion was reached through analyzing several PRSPs and interviewing PRSP stakeholders. Most PRSPs at best have applied a weak WID approach, typically mentioning a few female problems inconsistently. Most PRSPs include few sex-disaggregated data even if they are available.

This conclusion was reached despite enormous investments in trying to mainstream gender into PRSPs. The payoff of these investments has been low. This paper tries to answer why by examining the type of investments made so far to engender PRSPs. Then the paper describes techniques that have worked to mainstream gender into the Rwandan PRSP.

Table 1 presents an overview of the extent to which five IPRSPs and PRSPs have addressed gender issues. Although a sample of five is small, it builds on and reinforces the findings of earlier analyses of about 20 PRSPs and IPRSPs which reached the same conclusions (Bamberger et al 2001; Zuckerman 2001).

Table 1: Gender Treatment in Select PRSPs - Synthesis Table
Elaine Zuckerman, President, Gender Action 2002¹

Country PRSP Interim (I) or Full (F) and Date	I/F PRSP Gender Treatment
Armenia I: March 01 F: Expected by fall 2002	Gender is not mainstreamed. Contains earnest gender statements including the need to pay special attention to women's full scale participation in economic and social life and a concern that more women than men lost jobs since independence contributing to greater poverty among women than men. But these statements hang by themselves rather than being mainstreamed. Macro analysis including public expenditure, debt, WTO/trade and the financial sector, as well as agriculture, civil service, health care, education, social protection, environment etc compose a shopping list of needs that neglect gender roles. The sector by sector policy matrix addressing health care, labor policy etc is remarkably devoid of gender. Men including PRSP writers believe Armenia does not have gender inequalities because there are gender-equal laws and they believe gender refers only to women. CSOs expect the PRSP will address gender more fully.
Nicaragua F: June 2001	Does not mainstream gender and missed many opportunities to address it eg macro, trade, property rights, monitoring. Does contain a paragraph on each of gender, ethnic groups and the disabled and occasional references to more girls than boys in school, women's reproductive health problems and domestic violence harming women but these are in freestanding paragraphs. The section on cross-cutting themes includes environment, decentralization, and social equity for the poor and the vulnerable including indigenous people, orphans, the handicapped and abused women but gender itself is not a cross-cutting theme. Indicators are not engendered.
Rwanda F: March 2002	Gender is mainstreamed with only a few gaps. Gender is singled out as one of several cross-cutting issues which "must therefore be mainstreamed into sector strategies..." and the Ministry of Gender and the Promotion of Women offers to assist sector ministries with engendering know-how as needed. Sex-disaggregated data are presented wherever available but much more sex-

¹ This table synthesizes information collected by both reviewing PRSPs and interviewing PRSP stakeholders in the countries listed in the table.

	<p>disaggregated data need to be collected. Poverty monitoring indicators require using any available gender-disaggregated data. Poverty, water, education, HIV-AIDs, education and other sectors contain strong gender analyses. The gendered analysis of reproductive health impacts is powerful. Gender sensitive participatory process are analyzed creatively and usefully.</p>
<p>Uganda F: March 2000 Update expected by fall 2002</p>	<p>Gender is lightly and implicitly addressed but not at all mainstreamed. Contains a handful of gender references, eg education for girls, but they are inconsistent and few. Macro, trade, health, rural/agriculture/land, vocational education, water, etc. discuss the poor generically without mentioning male and female needs. Lacks gender specific indicators. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development writing team lacked gender-aware expertise and neither the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development nor women's CSOs contributed to PRSP formulation despite highly intensive gender inputs into the participatory, capacity-building and other preparatory activities. Uganda's costly, gender-inclusive participatory process (UPPAP) is hardly reflected in the PRSP. A second UPPAP is underway and CSOs are trying to ensure the next PRSP is better engendered.</p>
<p>Vietnam I: March 2001 F: Expected spring 2002</p>	<p>Gender is mentioned in only a few instances and not at all mainstreamed. Repeated discussions about poverty, macroeconomic issues, state-owned enterprise equitization (a euphemism for privatization), and trade liberalization neglect gender ramifications. A wish list matrix featuring these and other themes like the environment and urban poor also is gender blind except for promoting gender equity in leadership. Although a Gender Working Group and Gender Task Force promoted PRSP gender mainstreaming, nevertheless the PRSP is not expected to address gender inequalities systematically because the drafting team consists of gender unaware male government officials. They believe Vietnam does not have gender inequalities because there are gender-equal laws and they believe gender refers only to women. There are few sex-disaggregated data available although recent gender analyses exist that the PRSP neglected to use. The PRSP budget is expected to be gender blind. Although the PRSP will not be strong on gender, it will treat gender better than do other official documents.</p>

Analysis of the above PRSPs and previous more extensive PRSP analyses combined with recent stakeholder interviews demonstrate that very few PRSPs mainstream gender. Most merely contain a couple of WID references, typically mentioning a few female problems.

Except for Rwanda, participatory inputs including gender issues have not fed into PRSPs. Rwanda's PRSP exceptionally mainstreams gender better than do other PRSPs. This reflects a major effort and commitment by various Rwandan sectors to engender the PRSP.²

Why so few PRSPs have been engendered and why Rwanda succeeded in engendering its PRSP are examined in more detail below.

Why have so few PRSPs been engendered?

The Role of the Participatory Process. One reason so few PRSPs have been engendered is because they were prepared based on the assumption that participatory processes would feed into PRSPs. Thus CSOs and governments in many countries placed considerable effort into ensuring participatory processes were gender inclusive and flagged key gender issues. But often engendered participatory processes have not fed into PRSPs.

Uganda provides the best example of such effort. Ugandan women's groups played a key role in the participatory process. Uganda's extensive 1998-2002 gender-aware Participatory Poverty

² Kenya's PRSP which included considerable gender planning is expected to mainstream gender.

Assessment Programme (UPPAP www.uppap.or.ug) consulted the poor including women to ensure their voices would be integrated into the national planning process.³ UPPAP included gender training on what gender means, how gender influences people's vulnerability to poverty and how to collect sex-disaggregated data and it convened women's focus groups to overcome reluctance to speak publicly. However, when it came to the national participatory synthesis workshop, gender was diminished. Previously disaggregated data was aggregated, obscuring gender differences and inequalities. A similar aggregation of sex-disaggregated data also occurred in Ghana following its participatory process thereby undermining the potential to challenge gender-blind policies (Debyshire 2002). Uganda, in preparation for its next PRSP, is undertaking another participatory effort which is even stronger on gender issues than was the first.

Other countries had weaker participatory exercises, especially former state-administered transition economies. Some countries restrict PRSP participation to a very short list of government-recognized NGOs.

Even if women's groups are integrated into participatory exercises, women generally remain marginalized from government, civil society and grassroots decision-making and women's organizations feel removed from macroeconomic debates central to PRSPs (Derbyshire 2002).

The Role of PRSP Writing Teams. Even engendered participatory processes did not result in engendered PRSPs because there has usually been a disconnect between participatory processes and writing teams. In most cases, PRSP writers have scarcely integrated participatory inputs into PRSPs. This reflects their lack of commitment to reflect citizen's inputs and mainstream gender into the PRSP.

PRSP writers have consisted mainly of government finance and economics ministry staff. Often these staff include men who are insensitive to gender issues. In a few countries external consultants have played key PRSP writing roles. In former socialist countries there tends to be a misperception that gender equality exists because there are gender-equal laws. Also there is a misperception that gender refers only to women.

While writing teams need to be more respectful of citizen's participatory inputs and more gender-sensitive, gender advocates also need to identify and promote gender mainstreaming into key PRSP entry points such as writing teams.

Lack of Gender Mainstreaming Skills. A number of interviewees stated they think gender mainstreaming is a "mysterious" process and they need to learn gender mainstreaming techniques. Similarly, interviewees said they find gender discussions tend to be conceptual rather than practical.

The PRSP Sourcebook. The World Bank spent an enormous amount of resources on producing the PRSP sourcebook to guide PRSP country writers (World Bank 2001b). Originally conceived as a toolkit, the PRSP Sourcebook is supposed to provide practical tools to PRSP writers. However, the hefty four-volume Sourcebook is impractical to use. The detailed chapter on how to mainstream gender into PRSPs alone is almost 100 pages. The gender chapter is very strong on diagnostic and monitoring indicators and tools but does not discuss critical needs like gender advocacy and barely mentions the need for gender analysis of macroeconomic issues including the national budget so central to the PRSP. Education, the environment, health and transport and other chapters include gender mainstreaming approaches. Nevertheless, stakeholders

³ This paper does not provide background details about why the UPPAP was undertaken since another Ugandan Conference participant is presenting the Uganda PRSP gender case.

interviewed confessed they did not use the Sourcebook. Some questioned why a supposedly country owned PRSP would use a World Bank guide.

Why Did Rwanda Succeed in Engendering its PRSP?

Rwanda succeeded in engendering its PRSP because it initiated a series of deliberate steps described below:

First, the Ministry of Gender and the Promotion of Women (MIGEPROFE) hired an external gender expert to facilitate the process. The expert analyzed in detail how the IPRSP was not engendered and suggested how it could have mainstreamed gender.

Second, the consultant worked with the PRSP writing group at the Ministry of Economics and Finance (MINECOFIN) to ensure its members were committed to mainstreaming gender into the PRSP.

Third, PRSP stakeholders including MIGEPROFE, CSOs and PRSP writing team members tried to persuade the participatory exercise facilitators, also headed by an external consultant, of the importance of ensuring women's as well as men's views were solicited.

Fourth, MIGEPROFE and MINECOFIN co-sponsored a Workshop to promote engendering the PRSP for some 50 representatives from a broad range of sectors. Two dynamic civil society activists co-facilitated the Workshop. The MIGEPROFE and MINECOFIN ministers opened and closed the workshop giving the Workshop a high profile. Presentations focused on the importance of integrating gender into the PRSP in order to achieve poverty reduction, and tools to engender the PRSP. Participants practiced using these PRSP engendering tools through a teamwork exercise to engender IPRSP sectors. Teams formulated recommendations on how to engender the IPRSP text using tools provided.

Fifth, an inter-agency PRSP Engendering Committee was established to promote PRSP gender mainstreaming. Committee members consisted of the PRSP writing team Director, the MIGEPROFE Gender and Development Department Director and a representative of Pro-Femmes – the women's civil society groups umbrella organization.

It helped that the PRSP writing team Director was previously the MIGEPROFE Director of Administration but this was not sufficient to ensure the PRSP would be engendered evidenced by the unengendered IPRSP. All of the above steps contributed to producing an engendered PRSP.

Lessons for Improving Gender Mainstreaming in PRSPs

The PRSP experience to date demonstrates that countries have hardly used the PRSP Sourcebook and have rarely incorporated participatory process inputs, engendered or not. Many PRSP writers have not been gender-aware. While engendering the participatory process and ensuring participatory inputs feed into PRSPs is important, it is also critical to convince writing teams of the importance of mainstreaming gender to achieve poverty reduction goals. Writers need training on how gender inequalities exacerbate poverty.

Rwanda proved the validity of this approach. Rwanda showed that an effective way to transmit gender mainstreaming techniques to PRSP writing teams is through workshops where participants practice engendering PRSP contents sector by sector and issue by issue.

Rwanda and Uganda provide two contrasting models of how to and how not to mainstream gender into a PRSP. In Rwanda, the engendering steps were organized a priori, paying off in the

most engendered PRSP to date. In Uganda, despite the intensively engendered participatory process the PRSP was hardly gender sensitive. This outcome has mobilized the citizens' sector including women's groups to ensure the next PRSP mainstreams gender. The proof will be in the pudding but there is good reason for optimism. But the learning process has been much costlier than in Rwanda.

It is strongly recommended that all future PRSPs mainstream gender through methodical planning. An action plan to mainstream gender into PRSPs should be formulated and backed by resources. Without planning to engender every step of the PRSP process, PRSPs are unlikely to become engendered. Unengendered PRSPs not only reinforce gender-unequal relations but deepen them to the extent that project benefits accrue more to males than to females. Moreover, without engendering PRSPs, development is perceived as a process which does not have to alter unequal gender relations.

Strategizing Beyond PRSPs. Beyond PRSPs, gender equality has to be promoted at other levels. Besides engendering PRSPs, it is also critical for countries, civil society advocates and development cooperation agencies to concentrate on mainstreaming gender into all development investments. In the new PRSP framework, Bank Poverty Reduction Support Credits (PRSCs) -- a new name for SALs, and IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facilities (PRGFs) – ESAF reincarnations, must also be engendered. Since mandatory PRSPs legitimize borrowing from the Bank and the Fund, while PRSCs and PRGFs are the lending instruments for implementing economic, financial and trade liberalization regimes, all three as well development projects must mainstream gender in order to achieve poverty reduction goals.

While mainstreaming gender into PRSPs, PRSCs, PRGFs and other instruments is necessary to promote gender equality, implementing these engendered policy and project instruments is what counts for poverty reduction, development and growth. For example, if all PRSPs incorporated gender budget analyses as recommended above, the critical follow up would be financing interventions targeting men and women as necessary to achieve gender equality. Implementing such programs to improve poor women's and men's lives is a long way down the line from PRSPs.

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