

REPORT ON THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS OF THE USAID/TANZANIA GENDER AUDIT

May 2006

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SUMMARY

As part of the on-going USAID/Tanzania Gender Audit, six Focus Group meetings were held from May 10-12, 2006 with staff members representing every office in the Mission. This report briefly describes the methodology used and the main themes that emerged.

The Focus Group discussions suggest the following:

- A majority of Mission staff, regardless of job position, feel they have a role to play in contributing to gender equality.
- The Mission's leadership, including not only the Mission Director but also the senior staff, is perceived as critical to making gender integration a core value of the Mission.
- While people generally believe that gender relations in the Mission are good, they also believe that more can be done to improve understanding of gender equality among their families and communities.
- Very few individuals across the Mission have had either formal or informal training sessions on gender or in gender analysis. Many want to know what "gender" really means and why it is important.
- Many staff, particularly the administrative and non-SO technical staff, would like more information and regular gatherings discussing gender issues.

Continuing challenges for greater gender integration included:

- Finding an appropriate allocation of time and resources for gender integration;
- Addressing gender issues early in program design and identifying meaningful indicators for tracking progress in reducing gender inequalities;
- Helping technical staff access relevant information on gender issues;
- Identifying best practices in gender integration;
- Improving reporting on activities that are achieving successes in gender integration.

Many suggestions were offered for future action. They have been categorized into five topical areas: Demonstrating Leadership, Formulating Policy, Providing Training, Improving Programming, and Improving Communication and Outreach. Each of these themes reflects different areas for action that are discussed below in section V of the report. Some of the actions that are of greatest priority include:

- I. Establish clear roles and responsibilities in carrying out gender integration across the Mission.

¹ Suggestions for revisions were provided by Wanjiku Muhato (REDSO/ESA), Ken LeuPhang, Asukile Kajuni, Maggie Hiza, and Beatrice Nalingigwa, members of the Gender Working Group (USAID/Tanzania).

2. Articulate the shared commitment in a Mission vision statement on gender integration
3. Develop a training plan to increase staff members' ability to implement gender integration across both programming and management.
4. Strengthen the leadership and gender integration skills of the Gender Working Group.

Additional efforts to strengthen programming, to revise human resource policies, and to improve community outreach will be easier to implement with the strong foundation built by taking these four steps.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report describes the process and findings of the Focus Group discussions held from May 10-12, 2006 as part of the Gender Audit undertaken by USAID/Tanzania beginning in February 2006.

The Gender Audit is a tool to review how well an organization is encouraging and achieving gender mainstreaming in its programming, organizational structures, and procedures. It begins with a series of interactive presentations and discussions to explain the purpose and process of a Gender Audit, and is followed by distribution and analysis of a formal survey that asks questions about an organization's political will, technical capacity, accountability, and organizational culture.²

In introducing the Gender Audit to the Mission, presentations were made to staff members and were followed up by interviews with various groups. Several basic concepts relating to gender were reviewed, particularly the important difference between gender and sex. **Sex** refers to the biological characteristics that define males and females primarily (but not exclusively) according to reproductive capabilities or potentialities. By contrast, **gender**³ refers to both men and women, and the relations between them. The definition of gender insists that the situation of men and women must be analyzed in relationship to each other, and not in isolation.

² These terms were chosen in the Gender Audit process developed by its Commission on the Advancement of Women (see Patricia Morris' *The Gender Audit Questionnaire Handbook*, Washington, D.C., InterAction, 1995, page 2). Each term is defined as follows:

Political Will – the ways in which leaders use their position of power to communicate and demonstrate their support, leadership, enthusiasm for and commitment to working toward gender equality in the organization.

Technical Capacity – Level of ability, qualifications and skills individuals in an organization need to carry out the practical aspects of gender integration for enhanced program quality and level of institutionalization of gender equitable organizational processes.

Accountability – Mechanisms by which an organization determines the extent to which it is "walking the talk" in terms of integrating gender equality in its programs and organizational structures.

Organizational Culture – Norms, customs, beliefs and codes of behavior in an organization that support or undermine gender equality: how people relate; what are seen as acceptable ideas; how people are expected to behave; and what behaviors are rewarded.

³ The USAID operation and policy guidance contained in the ADS draws on the definition of gender development by the Gender Working Group of the OECD/DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee): "the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female....The nature of gender definitions (what it means to be male and female) and patterns of inequality vary among cultures and change over time.

Sex describes males or females; it refers to a universal and unchanging set of categories. Gender refers to both men and women and the relationships between them; it differs from sex in that it is defined by social and cultural contexts not by biology and it changes over time.

Gender Integration involves identifying gender differences and inequalities through an analytical process (called a gender analysis) and then addressing them during program or activity design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The inequalities may be experienced by women or by men. Progress in reducing gender inequalities is tracked by ensuring that appropriate indicators are included in project implementation. Since the roles and relations of power between men and women affect how an activity gets carried out, attending to these issues on an on-going basis should both achieve more sustainable development outcomes and also achieve greater gender equality.

Gender Equality refers to the ability of men and women to have equal opportunities and life chances. It does not mean that resources are split 50-50 between men and women. Gender equality is a US government endorsed goal of development and development cooperation efforts. It is Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals: “Promote gender equality and empower women.”⁴

It is important to recognize that

the emphasis on gender equality ... does not presume a particular model of gender equality for all societies and cultures, but reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it.

After providing this introduction to the Gender Audit, a survey was distributed that asked questions about how well a range of gender issues on programming, staffing, and human resources were distributed across the Mission. Sixty-six surveys were handed out and 57 were returned, reflecting an 84% participation rate. Returned surveys were analyzed and key results were disseminated to the Mission in two newsletters and presentations in May (newsletters are available at <http://www.devtechsys.com/publications/gender.cfm>).

As part of the Gender Audit, Focus Groups are commonly used to shed light on and to illustrate commonly held views within an organization. In the USAID/Tanzania Focus Group discussions, many staff members took the time to “ground truth” the results of the survey and to brainstorm possible action steps for the Mission to better integrate gender issues into programming and to achieve a higher degree of gender equality in the Mission’s human resources, procurement, and other operations.

II. FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY

Focus Group discussions are a planning tool. They do not provide statistically valid data, but typically offer a range of material and a perspective on group dynamics that cannot easily be captured in a survey. They are an opportunity to clarify the understanding held by the group and to hear their opinions. In a Focus Group, there are no right or wrong answers. All opinions are valid – the goal is to see which views are more widely held and to clarify their meaning. When well-guided and thoughtfully conducted, the Focus Groups help to create ownership and

⁴ http://www.developmentgoals.org/About_the_goals.htm

engagement among different sections of the organization because they allow participants an opportunity to express their views and to be heard by others.

Facilitation

In planning the Focus Group discussions, the Mission identified the Gender Working Group (GWG) as central actors in providing leadership on gender issues in the Mission. Making the GWG the leaders of the Focus Group facilitation process helped them to be perceived as leaders of the process and also helped to build their capacity in working with their colleagues on these issues. The Gender Advisor of the Regional Economic Development Services Office for East and Southern Africa (REDSO) provided an introductory training in Focus Group facilitation to enhance the skills of the GWG in leading these group discussions.

Drawing on the results of the survey, the team developed a set of questions that would help to confirm and explore the survey data as well as to probe underlying beliefs about gender roles and responsibilities, both in the Mission and in the wider society. Using a draft set of guidelines, training was provided on managing the Focus Group and carrying out the warm-up exercises. With the trainers, the facilitators also reviewed the draft presentation that addressed some highlights of the survey results. There were opportunities to practice the exercise and the suggested questions. The GWG volunteer facilitators gave useful suggestions for improving both the presentation and the Focus Group questions. Their comments helped to shape the final set of guidelines that is presented in Annex A.

The six Focus Groups were each scheduled for two-hour blocks over the three days, May 10th-12th, 2006. Each group was facilitated by two people. In most groups there was also an assistant to record main points on flip charts and a notetaker. The themes and insights that emerged are summarized in section IV.

III. FOCUS GROUP COMPOSITION

It was originally expected that the groups would consist of twelve to fourteen individuals in mixed groups, combining both men and women from the different offices in the Mission, as is usually done in the Gender Audit model devised by InterAction that has been successfully used in many non-governmental organizations. Focus Groups are usually composed of mixed groups of men and women representing a range of staff positions. This has the advantage of introducing people to those they may not know and encouraging people to learn about the opinions of those they may not interact with regularly. A first set of Focus Groups was developed by the REDSO and USAID/Tanzania Gender Advisors based on these principles. In this iteration, the motor pool staff members were not included as they had not participated in the survey.

After further discussion with the consultant, however, the Gender Audit team at USAID/Tanzania decided to change the composition of the Focus Groups. It was proposed to use mostly same sex and same level staff grouping for three reasons:

- I. It was evident from the disaggregation of the survey results that the administrative and non-Strategic Objective (SO) technical staff returned the greatest number of “don’t know” answers. The team wanted the opportunity both to provide this group with additional explanations about gender and to explore their views on the survey questions more easily by grouping them together.

2. The sex-disaggregated survey results had not shown many important differences between men's and women's responses. The team thought that single-sex groups might provide greater clarity as to whether opinions on some topics differed to any extent.
3. The drivers had not been included in the original survey. Including them in a Focus Group permitted them to voice their opinions on the topics covered by the survey. They comprised a separate group so that they could be given the background on the audit process and its purpose that the others had received earlier.

The Focus Groups were formed from a list of approximately one hundred members of the USAID/Tanzania Mission staff. Each group of ten to twelve staff members was grouped according to the following categories:

1. Administrative and non-SO technical staff,⁵ all women
2. Administrative and non-SO technical staff, all men
3. Administrative and non-SO technical staff, mixed men and women
4. SO Technical and Program Office staff, all women
5. SO Technical staff and Program Office, all men
6. Motorpool

A total of sixty-eight people from the Mission participated in one of the six Focus Group sessions (See Annex B). This number constitutes 80% of those who were invited to participate.

IV. FOCUS GROUP THEMES

This section summarizes the responses given by Focus Group participants, with illustrative quotations to highlight key points. In each subsection below, the specific question is given and the responses summarized. The Focus Group discussions were organized into three parts:

- Part 1: Reaction to the survey results
- Part 2: Exploring the meaning of the results
- Part 3: Brainstorming ideas for moving forward

Several questions were asked in each section to check for common views and to explore differences. The questions are shown below in italics.

Part One: Reactions to the Survey Results

What surprised you most about the survey findings?

The Focus Group members thought there were few surprising results from the survey. Most groups were most surprised by the finding that men more than women felt that gender issues were discussed openly and seriously in the Mission.

Another surprise was that the majority of respondents identified management rather than technical staff as having the responsibility for gender integration.

⁵ This category included all the non-SO technical staff, such as secretarial support, financial, procurement, communications, and warehouse staff members.

Several members in the administrative and non-SO technical groups were surprised to learn that gender issues did not refer only to women.

Two of the six groups were surprised that cultural patterns did not top the list of perceived obstacles to gender integration.

One group found it surprising to learn that there are many roles or chores that can be done by both men and women, but they that have been labelled as either men's or women's jobs. It was a surprise, for example, to learn that all the administrative assistants in the Mission are women.

All of these topics are discussed at greater length later in the paper.

Do you think that the survey results give an accurate reflection of the situation in the Mission?

On the whole, the Focus Group participants felt that the survey results accurately portrayed the situation in the Mission. However, many of those who did not directly work on SO programs found the language of the survey difficult and/or confusing. Some noted that a Swahili version would have helped some of the Tanzanian staff in answering the questions.

Which are the key areas of difference that you see between men and women in working together?

Nearly all participants expressed the perception that gender relations in the Mission were generally good. There was no experience of discrimination in hiring or of job segregation. It was pointed out that positions that do have a majority or are universally filled only by men or by women, such as drivers, reflect the composition of the group of applicants who apply for certain jobs rather than discriminatory practices by Human Resources.

There was discussion of the characteristics identified in the survey of a good worker, e.g., what qualities describe a "hard worker" and a "team player," but none of the groups thought that it would be more difficult for men or for women to be recognized for these qualities.

I look at people without respect to these qualities. Both men and women can have problems delivering results. Even if a woman takes maternity leave, you can count on her for her work.

- A woman in one of the SO Technical groups

Some women expressed the idea that men did not yet fully understand the idea that the concept of gender encompasses more than women alone, referring to both men and women and the character of the relationship between them.

As noted above, one of the few differences between men and women in the Mission was the degree to which each group believed that gender issues were "discussed openly and seriously" in the Mission. In exploring this finding, men expressed surprise, because they assumed that gender issues more often involve programs affecting women or women's rights, and they expected women to report that the issues were discussed more seriously. Others thought it was because gender issues may not have been taken seriously until recently, with the arrival of the current Mission Director, and the activities associated with the Gender Audit.

By contrast, one of the women's groups pointed out that the finding could reflect that men find gender integration to have already progressed sufficiently, while women are responding to the question from a position that there is still more to be done.

Men may think that we have already gone 'far enough' [in addressing gender issues] while women may think we have much farther to go.

- A woman in one of the SO Technical groups

There was also a discussion about the different patterns of communication used by men and by women. A short exercise was used to demonstrate that women will often phrase their desires in terms of a request rather than a statement, and risk having it misunderstood.

A woman will say, 'Who's going to the meeting?' when she wants to go, and her male colleague will say, 'Oh, I'll go.'

- A woman in one of the SO Technical groups

There are definitely differences in how they [men and women] communicate – they think differently. Men think hierarchically, they won't put themselves in a lower position [in a conversation], but women would do that.

- A man in one of the SO Technical groups

Who in the Mission is responsible for ensuring that gender equality goals are met?

A lengthy segment of each Focus Group discussion was on the topic of who had the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of gender guidance, and more broadly, whether gender equality goals are met, either in programming or human resources and Mission management.

Overall, there was very strong agreement that everyone in the Mission was responsible for achieving gender equality. Nearly all participants agreed that both management and technical staff should be responsible and further, that each member of the Mission, regardless of job category, has a role to play. Several groups mentioned that staff members all have a responsibility to treat the men and women with whom they work equally regardless of sex.

As an administrative assistant, I have to assist all my bosses equally and in a nice way, regardless of their personal characteristics, and I expect the same from the bosses.

- A woman in an Administrative and other Technical Staff group

At the program level, it involves working well with others, both men and women, and to share what we have."

- A woman in an Administrative and other Technical Staff group

For procurement, it is seeing that gender is addressed throughout the procurement process and making sure that each aspect is dealt with by the person responsible for preparing the statement and following the guidelines.

- A woman in an Administrative and other Technical Staff group

Further probing elicited the position that gender issues have to be in the Mission policy and that management is responsible for making sure others follow the policy.

One group clarified the issue by identifying three domains of responsibility: leadership for defining a vision, technical responsibility for gender integration in programming, and management responsibility for adhering to gender equality principles in human resources, procurement, and other operations. It will be necessary to spell out how gender integration should be implemented in each of these areas and how each staff member understands his or her role in the process.

Part Two: Exploring the Meaning of the Results

During this section of the discussion, the objective was to explore further what the survey results meant on several key topics that had emerged from the survey.

Training and Technical Capacity

How many of the group have had any training on gender, gender analysis, or other aspects related to gender?

The survey results returned confusing responses on the question of training and technical capacity. On the one hand, the Mission scored very high on the staff's perception of its technical capacity in gender integration. Yet the qualitative answers had more recommendations for additional training than in any other area. The team wanted to explore this issue to see what people really thought about the level of technical capacity in the Mission and the need for training.

Very few in the Focus Groups had had any formal, or even informal, training in gender sensitivity or gender integration. The administrative and non-SO technical staff mentioned the session held in February as part of the Gender Audit process as the first introduction they had received on the topics. A few others reported on workshops ranging from an afternoon to several days, but not recently. In several cases the trainings were attended prior to their employment with USAID.⁶

The survey returned high scores on the technical capacity of the Mission on gender integration. One participant suggested that the lack of training made it hard for people to understand that gender might not be as well integrated as they thought:

If staff haven't had any in-depth gender training, they may not recognize the lack of gender integration in the programs.

- A woman in one of the SO Technical Groups

What are the strengths of the Mission's current approach to gender in programming and/or management?

Perceived Strengths in Mission Programming that Reflect Gender Integration

There was near universal agreement that having a Gender Advisor in the Mission was an important step, but that it was not enough to ensure that gender will be mainstreamed in programming.

⁶ Although USAID/Tanzania staff members have attended gender trainings held by both USAID and its partners in the past few years, they have now left the mission.

Many people spoke of the important work that the Mission supports in activities that impact gender relations in the community, and are improving the spread of benefits to both men and to women across the country.

Perceived Strengths in Mission Management Supporting Gender Integration

There was a wide range of comments that reflected a common view that the Mission has already made great strides in the area of supporting gender equality in management. There was great appreciation among the Focus Groups for having a Mission Director who is at the forefront in raising awareness about gender issues all the time.⁷ The Mission was also seen as employing many women, including some in higher levels of management. There was no perception of job discrimination or segregation. The work of the procurement office, in continually ensuring that gender language and gender criteria were included in solicitations, was mentioned several times.

Participants also agreed that carrying out the audit itself should be considered one of the Mission's strengths in that it showed that gender was sufficiently important to devote the time and resources of the Mission. Many people, particularly among the administrative and non-SO technical staff groups, expressed the belief that having sessions in which gender issues were discussed and in which more information about gender was conveyed ("mini-trainings") was helpful to them both in their work and in their relationships on the job.

In one group in particular, people also complimented the Mission not only for having accomplished women (both from the US and from Tanzania) who are excellent role models, but equally important, for having men who can work with accomplished women as role models.

Another area of strength concerned the perception of having clear guidance from the Automated Directive System (USAID's operations manuals). Although there was some need to disseminate and apply this guidance on specific topics, the consensus was that it was a very positive situation that so many people were aware of the existence of the mandate on gender that USAID has embraced.

What are the main challenges facing the Mission in gender integration?

Notwithstanding the advances made by the Mission, one outstanding concern remained on the question of gender training. The two main types of training that were requested were gender-awareness training and gender integration training for the SO teams. It was suggested that these training sessions include both men and women from different levels and departments "so that they can challenge each other and learn from one another."

Another issue that was raised repeatedly by the SO Technical Groups was about ensuring that the Gender Advisor would be consulted and become an integral part of program and activity planning throughout the project cycle:

We [in the Mission] have technical experts because expertise is important in development. But really, although we have a gender expert, she should be involved, and the program office should be involved from the beginning, from planning to implementation. We are pretty good at it but could be better.

- A man in one of the SO Technical Staff Groups

⁷ There was considerable discussion about whether the fact that the Mission Director was now a woman was also a strength. Some believed so, particularly on the point of being a role model, but most agreed that other women Mission Directors did not necessarily make gender a central focus of their work.

In a similar vein, a number of the SO technical staff emphasized the importance of cross-SO communication on gender. It was suggested that currently, SO teams are sometimes defensive about their gender efforts, in part because there are no clear standards for what constitutes “good practice.” While one team may believe it has embraced attention to gender as a core value, others may believe that they are doing a good job by simply counting male and female participants who come to training sessions. One person, expressing a position that many others supported, stressed the need to move beyond a simple counting exercise as adequate in addressing gender, but called for a more systematic and analytical approach at identifying and removing gender inequalities through USAID programs.

Some groups dealt at length with the question of whether time and the availability of resources were a constraint to better gender integration. The groups were divided on this point. On the one hand, many people felt that saying there was not enough time to address gender was simply an excuse. If accounting for gender were truly integrated into one’s work and daily life, then it would not involve any additional time. On the other hand, an equally vocal group argued that there is always too much to do at USAID and that attending to gender was often presented as a late-stage add-on, at which point the time and resource constraints were real. Several suggestions for how to deal with these problems are presented in the following section. Nor was there agreement as to whether resources for gender in programming should be earmarked or whether gender-related activities should be paid for from the SO teams’ regular budgets. Some felt that earmarking would be disastrous; others argued that designated funds were sometimes helpful in permitting a focus on a particular topic or sub-population. No consensus was reached on this point.

A similar division in thought surrounded the topic of incentives. Some did not feel that incentives for doing a good job on gender were appropriate. If it were an acknowledged part of the job, then it should not be singled out. It is, one said, a mandatory component of programming work, as spelled out in the ADS, so it should simply be done, as one does all the other parts of one’s work.

Others challenged this view and offered the need for both positive and negative incentives. Awards for gender successes would give recognition to good work and help to set an example. Negative incentives, such as having work returned for not including gender, also help make the lesson clear: include attention to gender issues or your work will be considered incomplete.

Finally, there were a number of stimulating discussions about the way that socialization into the cultural patterns of Tanzania can be a challenge to achieving gender integration in programming. A few people took a position that traditional cultural practices should not be dramatically changed to favor, for example, changes in the division of labor between men and women. Most people, however, quite strongly supported the need to change gender inequalities and emphatically argued for that change to occur within this generation, with the teaching of today’s young children, e.g., on the need to encourage girls to get out of the kitchen or on the need to include more young men in health and HIV/AIDS programs.

Part Three: Ideas for Moving Forward

The Focus Group discussions brought out many different ideas for action that could be taken by the Mission to advance gender integration in programming and gender equality in Mission operations. The suggestions can be broadly grouped according to the five themes indicated

below. These action suggestions will form the background for the development of the Mission's Action and Capacity Building Plan on gender.

A. Demonstrate Leadership

- Give awards for gender successes
- Identify how SO team leaders can facilitate and provide more leadership on gender
- Identify women-owned businesses for procurement solicitations

B. Formulate Policy

- Develop a gender vision statement for the whole Mission
- Identify criteria that would help determine what level of gender integration the Mission has reached and when it would have achieved its goals.

C. Provide Training

- Hold annual off-site trainings on gender for administrative/financial and other staff
- Hold "mini-training" meetings on specific gender-related topics or skills
- Hold formal trainings either in-country or identify off-site training programs as needed for different groups within the Mission
- Clarify the types of trainings needed by different groups within the Mission

D. Improve Programming

- Enhance knowledge sharing about gender issues and integration practices, such as:
 - Send regular emails on relevant gender topics among staff and to partners
 - Send the gender expert to speak with partners and provide guidance
 - Expand the documentation center and send notices to staff to let them know what is there
 - Encourage all SOs to share their experiences, positive and negative, on gender-related activities
 - Make gender analysis tools available

E. Improve Communication and Outreach

- Hold regular meetings open to all staff to raise awareness about gender issues. It was stressed that future meetings should encourage both men and women to participate and should involve people from all departments. Many suggestions were offered about the types of meetings that people would enjoy or find informative, such as:
 - Sessions to share the results of the Focus Groups and the Gender Audit
 - Sessions with people from USAID partners/supported organizations as well as other donors or local groups with gender expertise
 - Sessions at the sites of the other organizations mentioned just above
 - Sessions with community members affected by USAID to learn about the programs' impact on gender relations
 - Showing videos and films that relate to gender issues and having discussions about them
 - Hold an annual "Gender Awareness Week" with T shirts or caps, and to which staff could bring spouses and families, to promote interest and further understanding about gender issues.
 - Send home flyers about gender issues (in English and Kiswahili versions)
 - Continue with the newsletter and develop issues on best practices, synthesize key reports, to keep gender "alive," "on the map," etc.

- Have more social events between Tanzanian and US staff.
- Develop a checklist for field visits for gathering information about the impact of programs on gender inequalities.
- Improve understanding about gender relations among both Tanzanian and US cultural groups

V. DISCUSSION

As noted earlier, holding the Focus Groups are an important part of the Gender Audit process. In the USAID/Tanzania case, most of these guided conversations provided rich and nuanced information about the meaning of the audit survey data. The Focus Groups both confirmed many of the results of the survey and provided clarification on ambiguous results. In particular, they *confirmed* two important and very positive findings from the survey.

First, that there is a wide general awareness and acceptance of USAID’s mandate for gender integration across the Agency’s programs and operations;

Second, that the employees at USAID/Tanzania, both US and Tanzanian, feel comfortable with the working environment and feel that they are respected and valued members of a common team, regardless of their sex. Their ease in voicing their opinions is a reflection of the already high level of comfort between men and women existing in the Mission and of their trust in Mission leadership.

These findings underscore the Mission’s excellent position for implementing a program that addresses the expectations that emerged from the Focus Group discussions, the survey, and the initial assessment interviews. Unlike in some other cases, it will not be necessary to unlearn serious discriminatory behaviors or to overhaul prejudicial policies. At the same time, it is important that actions be taken to reinforce a commitment to gender equality and to revise or reframe some existing conditions.

There are several initial steps that can be taken to build this common commitment to gender equality across the Mission:

First, the Focus Groups expressed a strong need to better understand their roles and responsibilities in helping to achieve gender equality. To achieve this understanding, the Mission should complete or initiate several things:

- Finalize the draft charter for the Gender Working Group
- Confirm membership in the Gender Working Group, replacing those who are soon leaving the post and expanding its membership to include an additional representative from the non-SO technical staff.

Second, in parallel to this clarification process, a vision statement⁸ can be developed. The Gender Audit report can and will provide a draft statement constructed from the Focus Group statements and the survey results, but the final version needs to be vetted by the Mission itself

⁸ There are always debates surrounding the meanings of these terms. As used here, a vision statement describes the shared goals of an organization. It is used here as essentially synonymous with a policy statement; others may prefer to introduce some distinction between the two. The vision/policy is followed up by a strategic planning process to articulate how the organization will achieve the stated goals. Again, this can be termed variously – strategy or plan. The activities of the strategy are then organized into a workplan to put deadlines and responsibilities against each task. The draft action plan prepared for the audit combines elements of both the strategy and the workplan.

to be sure that there is concurrence and that it accurately captures Mission needs. The vision statement will help to clarify the expectations for each staff member while also offering a way for Mission management to demonstrate leadership in the gender integration process.

Third, it is clear that training is a critical component to improving attention to gender. The Focus Groups were perhaps most helpful in clarifying this issue. The survey results revealed a puzzling situation: while the Mission was perceived as being technically competent in gender integration, many of the individual responses requested more training. Several participants offered the explanation that the Mission was probably seen as having technical competence because it has had a series of gender assessments, it has hired Gender Advisors, and it has significant aspects of its program that focus on women. In contrast, the staff members currently in the Mission said they had had little to no specific training on gender and noted that other staff who had received trainings (such as that offered by the WID office and the Africa Bureau in March and April, 2004 or earlier WID office trainings for WID officers had either left the Mission or were now holding different positions. As the Gender Audit process moves forward, it would be helpful to consider how to better institutionalize knowledge received by individuals so that the Mission benefits more broadly from those investments.

There was still significant confusion over the meaning of the concept of “gender” and how it is different from sex. In the warm-up exercises, this confusion was not limited to the non-technical staff. For example, one of the exercises asked participants to agree or disagree with the statement “Women are naturally better managers than men.” On the one hand, there were several very articulate statements among those disagreeing with the statement, explaining that management skills are learned rather than biologically determined and it was therefore not accurate to state that either men or women would be “naturally” better at this task. On the other hand, there were a surprising number of people agreeing with the statement and it was not clear that they were distinguishing between biological characteristics or socialization practices. Yet, the ability to make these distinctions is a critical part of designing effective interventions so that both women and men can be empowered to enhance their productivity and personal power by taking on new roles.

Developing a training plan to meet the needs of different segments of the Mission therefore should be a priority. As expressed by the Focus Groups, a wide range of activities can be considered under the rubric of training, from brown-bag lunches to reports from partners to more formal workshops and multi-day training programs. The training plan would demonstrate how these different activities would be related and which audiences would be targeted.

There are other resources available through some centrally funded programs⁹ and perhaps regionally based programs, that if they were possible to access, could offer greater depth on a particular topic than could be obtained from the Mission’s technical staff and which might share some of the costs with the Mission.

⁹ Both the WID IQC (CTO is Mary Knox in the WID office, mknox@usaid.gov) and the InterAgency Working Group on Gender (IGWG) (CTOs are Diana Prieto and Michal Avni, dprieto@usaid.gov and mavni@usaid.gov) have been providing trainings on gender analysis and integration that are sectorally or topically focused. They have in the past provided these trainings both to mission staff and to partners, either along or together. The new Global Health Initiative project also has a training component that can be accessed for topics related to gender aspects of health and HIV/AIDS (Note: One of the CTOs is Mai Hijazi, mhijazai@usaid.gov, but there is another person as well and I not sure which one would consider training requests - DSR).

Another aspect of training that emerged was the need to enhance the skills of the Gender Working Group, both in gender analysis and in leadership. The brief training provided by the REDSO Gender Advisor initiated this process, and the practice facilitating the Focus Groups also boosted their abilities. Additional training for this group—as a group first and also individually second—will certainly enhance its confidence and effectiveness to lead gender integration efforts in the future.

With the process initiated for a common vision, clarified responsibilities, a training plan, and a stronger Gender Working Group, the second phase efforts can be strengthened. Some are already on-going and should continue, but their effectiveness will continue to be strengthened as the activities described above are implemented.

In the second phase, it will be critical to enhance the skills of SO teams in gender integration in programming. This will be achieved, in part, by the clarification of responsibilities noted above and strengthening the Gender Working Group, so that the GWG representative is in a better position to provide assistance and/or know when and where to look for additional support from the Gender Advisor and/or from other resources. Additionally, targeted trainings, identified through the training plan, can be organized for SO teams by topic.

A second element of the second phase will be the institutionalization of gender expertise noted above. Building ways to share knowledge, across SO teams, and after individual trainings is one component of this effort. Supporting the expansion and organization of the documentation center is another. Continuing the gender newsletters and improving communication about gender through emails, seminars, and meetings is another possibility.

Although not a strong element in the Focus Group discussions, another component to improving gender equality will involve reviewing existing personnel and human resource policies. It is important that performance evaluations do not inadvertently encompass gendered characteristics in negative ways, perhaps by penalizing a person for taking maternity or paternity leave or for leaving precisely at closing time instead of staying late because of other care-giving responsibilities. If there are benefits for travelling on TDY and taking young children, are these provided equally to men and to women? When these issues are fairly addressed, it increases transparency and often morale as well.

Finally, it is necessary to think about how to expand the good working relationships between men and women in the Mission into the wider community of family and friends, as well as in programs. The Focus Groups were very clear on this point: that people wanted to share their learning and experience on gender with their families and with their neighbors, particularly with the younger generation. As noted above, many suggestions for community outreach were offered. A community involvement plan would help to organize this effort.

FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

I. Introductions of the team (5 minutes)

The Focus Group opens with formal introductions of the facilitators and additional observers and notetakers. This establishes the roles and responsibilities among the group and helps the participants see the facilitation leadership from a different perspective than as a colleague or a friend.

II. Warm up exercise

The purpose of the warm-up exercises is to ensure that the Focus Group discussion begins in a non-threatening environment and that the participants are at ease with each other and with the facilitators. The exercises are designed to elicit divergent views by using provocative statements to engage the group members in discussion. The comments that are made by the members are then used to illustrate that different people bring different perspectives to any discussion, based on their backgrounds and their experiences.

A. An example of a “Vote with your feet” exercise (5 minutes)

Choose among the following statements and ask the group to move to one side of the room if they agree with the statement and to the other if they disagree with the statement. Tell them that they must choose a side and that they cannot argue about the wording. Once they have moved, ask someone to explain his or her reasoning; then ask someone from the other side to do the same. You may continue this until several people have spoken. Provide a debriefing to indicate that different people will see the same issue in different ways; that they bring their own experiences and biases to a new topic; that we can agree to disagree, but that it is also important not to impose one's views due to personal perceptions on others.

- Women are naturally better managers than men.
- In rural Tanzania, women are expected to work harder than men.
- Women are less reliable employees than men.
- Working on gender issues is a woman's job.
- It is harder to change gender roles than it is to change other aspects of social behavior.
- It is better to have a boy child than a girl child.

B. An example of the “Ideal Man or Woman” exercise

Ask the participants to divide into two equal groups. Ask one group to list the characteristics of an ideal man and the other to list the characteristics of an ideal woman. Ask a member of one group to present their findings. Ask a member of the other group to present their findings. Ask who agrees or disagrees. Discuss.

III. Clarification of ground rules: (5 minutes)

Take a few minutes to clarify the ground rules of the session to establish expectations for the group behavior. It is important to stress the issue of confidentiality, in particular, so that people can feel comfortable expressing themselves without concern that there will be individual repercussions. Common ground rules are:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Participate as much as possible
- Ask lots of questions
- Try not to interrupt
- Respect other peoples' opinions
- Turn off cell phones/pagers

It is also helpful to ask if there are other rules that the group wants to suggest and to add them to the list.

IV. Review of the Gender Audit process thus far using PowerPoint slides (15 minutes)

Despite distributing information on the Gender Audit survey results through newsletters, the Gender Audit team decided to have a short presentation of the highlights of the information as well as a quick review about the audit process so that everyone in the group would be on the same level and able to speak freely by referring to common information.

V. Discussion part 1: Reaction to the summary results (20 minutes)

Question 1:

- What surprised you most about the survey findings?
- Do you think that the survey results give an accurate reflection of the situation in the Mission?

Question 2: Which are the key areas of difference that you see between men and women in working together?

- The survey results suggest that women believe gender issues are taken less seriously than do men. Do you think that is an accurate reflection of the situation in the Mission? Why or why not might that be the case?
- Being a team player and a hard worker were ranked as very important characteristics of a "good worker" in Tanzania. How do you understand the definition of a hard worker? How do you understand the definition of a team player? Is it harder for women or for men to work in these ways?

Question 3: Who in the Mission is responsible for ensuring that gender equality goals are met, whether in 1) programming or in 2) other areas such as human resources and Mission management?

- Half the Mission staff thought the management should be responsible for implementing the guidance on gender integration, about one-third thought it should be the technical staff. More women than men thought it should be the responsibility of the technical staff.

VI. Discussion part 2: Follow up on the meaning of survey results related to obstacles and challenges (20 minutes)

- How many of the group have had any training on gender? In gender analysis? On other aspects related to gender?

Question 4: What are the strengths of the Mission's current approach to gender in 1) programming OR 2) management (some groups will be asked to speak to both points) e.g., for programming, follow up with:

- The survey showed that over two-thirds of the Mission believed the Mission has the technical capacity it needs (men thought this more than women), yet many people also recommended additional training.
- Do you think that having a Gender Advisor is enough to ensure technical capacity or do other staff also need to have skills in gender integration?
- E.g., for admin staff, follow up with:
- Increasing training opportunities was one of the most common recommendations for further action.

Questions 5: For SO teams only: Half of the respondents said gender equality goals and objectives were included in activity design. Elaborate on what this means to you, e.g., what steps do you currently take to include gender issues in activity design?

Question 6: What are the key challenges of the Mission's current approach to gender in 1) programming OR 2) management (depending on the group – some will be asked to speak to both points)

- Lack of resources, incentives, and time were all mentioned as obstacles to achieving gender integration. Let's address each one in turn: do you agree it is an obstacle and what can be done to address it?
- Nearly half of those responding said that cultural patterns in Tanzania are an obstacle to achieving greater gender equality. What are some of the most problematic aspects? How can they be addressed 1) in programming OR 2) in management?
- Some people also said the cultural patterns of the USA were an obstacle. What are the most problematic aspects? How can they be addressed 1) in programming OR 2) in management?

Question 7: What might happen if these challenges are not addressed?

VII. Discussion part 3: Working together to achieve more (20 minutes)

Question 8: Based on what we have discussed, what actions do we need to take to deepen our commitment to achieving gender equality in programming and Mission management?

- What actions do we need to take to increase technical skills?
- What actions need to be taken to improve gender equality in the management of the Mission other than in programs?
- What are the most important of these actions?
(Goal would be to develop a prioritized list)

VIII. Wrap up (10 minutes)

- Review key points that came up during the discussion using notes from flip charts.
- Ask if the wrap up accurately reflects the group's statement
- Ask if there are any more comments
- Thank everyone for their participation.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS AND FACILITATORS

Focus Group Participants			
Name	Dept/Office	Name	Dept/Office
1. Alberastine, Teresita	Controller	37. Mlilapi, Abdallah J.	EXO
2. Allman, Jim	Health	38. Mmile, Shafii	Comptroller
3. Appiah, Rob	EXO	39. Mnyawami, Judy	SPPS
4. Baratanda Jennifer	EXO	40. Monaghan, Susan	HIV/AIDS
5. Bwire, Michael	EXO	41. Msaki, Jimmy	SPPS
6. Cengel, Dennis	NRM	42. Mushi, Carolyne	Controller
7. Chale, Mary	Health	43. Mushi, Geoffrey	EXO
8. Crane, Charles	Controller	44. Munthali, Gombe Todd	Procurement/Shipping
9. Crubaugh, Tom	Program Office	45. Mwakatobe, Martha	Controller
10. Diminoff, Cecelia	DG	46. Mwasandube, Juster	Warehouse
11. Gindo, Monica	EXO	47. Myenzi, Efrem B.	EXO
12. Hiza, Maggie	DG	48. Nethemiah, Kimaro	EXO
13. Kahendaguza, Justine	EXO	49. Ngalowoka, Zavery	EXO
14. Kajuna, Gilbert	NRM	50. Ngibwa, Patrick	HIV/AIDS
15. Kajuni, Asukile	NRM	51. Nagunwa, Polcrato	Controller
16. Kavira, Filoteus	EXO	52. Omary, Azzah	Warehouse
17. Kayoka, Arthur	EXO (C&R)	53. Osman, Noorie	Controller
18. Khalifa, Amina	Director's Office	54. Osman, Shahina	Procurement
19. Kigalu, Vincent	Procurement	55. Saidi, Makau	EXO
20. Kikuli, Laura	DG/Education	56. Salehe, Vitendo M.	EXO
21. Kiranga, Samuel	Procurement	57. Saulanga, Robert	Controller
22. Kombe, Bridget	HIV/AIDS	58. Simon, Rose B.	EXO
23. Krekamoo, William	Health	59. Swai, Patrick	HIV/AIDS
24. Liganga, Zainab	EG	60. Tairo, Peter	EXO
25. Luanda, Peter	EXO	61. White, Pamela	Director's Office
26. Lusekelo, Absalom	EXO (C&R)	62. Wylie, Kim	SPPS
27. Luvanda, Joseph	Controller		
28. Machume, Specioza	NRM		
29. MacNestor, Damas E.	EXO		
30. Majebelle, Flora	SPPS		
31. Malekela, Erasmo	HIV/AIDS		
32. Maulid, Rashid	Controller		
33. Mbarama, Hosea	EXO		
34. Mbengo, Timothy	IT		
35. Mbuya, Hedwiga	SPPS		
36. Melamari, Sophia	HR/EXO		

Focus Group Facilitators

Name	Dept/Office
63. Hiza, Maggie	DG
64. Kajuni, Asukile	NRM
65. LuePhang, Ken	Procurement
66. Missokia, Elizabeth	SPSS
67. Msaki, Jimmy	SPSS
68. Muhato, Wanjiku*	REDSO/ESA
69. Nalingigwa, Beatrice	HIV/AIDS
70. Rubin, Deborah (notetaker)*	Cultural Practice, LLC

* These two people are not counted as participants in the summary as they are not staff members of USAID/Tanzania.