



Gender Assessment for USAID / Guyana

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The Women in Development (WID) IQC

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	Automated Directives System
APA	Amerindian Peoples Association
CAFRA	Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
CARICOM	The Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
D&G	Democracy and Governance
ERA	Equal Rights Act
FY	fiscal year
GAWL	Guyana Association of Women Lawyers
GEO	Guyana Economic Opportunities Project
GWLI	Guyana Women's Leadership Institute
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IPED	Institute of Private Enterprise Development
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRDC	National Resource and Documentation Center for Gender and Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSP	Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RFA	request for assistance
RFP	request for proposal
SO	Strategic Objective
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization

Executive Summary

The Gender Assessment for USAID/Guyana was completed in May 2003, as part of the preparation of the new Country Strategic Plan for 2004-2008. USAID requires both the assessment and the integration of gender considerations in the strategy design. The identification of gender issues in the strategy is the first step in the process of mainstreaming gender in Mission programs and activities, focusing on the effects of gender differences on program results and of the program on the status of women. Gender integration involves an understanding of the relationship between men and women, in terms of the roles they play, which are interdependent, and of the relationships of power between them and their differential access to resources.

The report includes an overview of factors affecting the status of women in Guyana, key gender issues in the country, and government, NGO, and donor resources directed to these issues. It then focuses directly on USAID/Guyana strategic program areas, identifying gender issues specific to these programs and making recommendations for the process of gender mainstreaming in the strategy and subsequent activities. The report is intended as a working document for the Mission, serving as a starting point and a reference in the mainstreaming process. The more important task for program results is to move forward on the recommendations, incorporating gender considerations into activity design, contract award, and program implementation, and then using the monitoring data to adjust and refine these activities.

In Guyana today, gender issues are subsumed within the broader context of social, economic, and political dysfunctions and problems. The relations between men and women in terms of roles, access to resources, and power are circumscribed by the conditions of political instability, governance issues, crime and violence, and divisiveness. The disenfranchisement felt by the population cuts across all societal divisions, including gender. Indications are that the responses to the situation also are similar for men and women – protest, emigration, and general lack of “ownership” in the public sphere.

Both men and women are affected by these conditions but, in general, women carry a disproportionate burden relative to men, in economic and social terms.

- Women are more likely to be living in poverty, and increasingly carry sole responsibility for household maintenance and childrearing.
- In the formal sector, public and private, women are in lower paying jobs and less likely to be in decision-making positions. With the contraction of the formal sector, increasingly women have moved to the informal sector at a subsistence level.
- The decline of social services places additional burdens on the household and on women. In addition, women usually are responsible for care of the sick. However, both men and women are afflicted by the HIV/AIDS virus.
- The phenomenon labeled “male underachievement,” indicated most clearly by boys dropping out of secondary school and spurning tertiary education, seems to be, at least in part, a response to these same social and economic conditions.

Institutionally, attention to women's rights and to gender issues has been bolstered by a nascent women's movement linked to regional Caribbean organizations and international conventions and UN conferences. Donor support, particularly from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Equity Programme, has been an important stimulus for improving the legal foundation for gender equality and building programs to deal with gender issues.

USAID has successfully targeted women, youth, and Amerindians in its programs to strengthen civil society organizations and democratic institutions. Specific efforts have been directed to increasing women's participation in local government. At the same time, in the past, the Mission has not taken an explicit gender perspective in developing its portfolio. The gender assessment includes a baseline overview of gender analysis by sector.

Economic Growth: The Mission's current economic growth program focuses primarily on institutional and macro-level policy support to strengthen the private sector to facilitate increased exports and trade. It does not directly address key economic structural disparities between men and women, which are principally issues related to workforce, employment, and poverty. The recommendations for incorporating gender considerations in the new economic growth strategy are built around two key points. First, in developing the institutional and macro-level policy support, USAID should take an affirmative role in increasing women's representation in key decision-making organizations and consultations, and in involving the product areas in which women predominate. The segregation in the labor market between "men's work" and "women's work" means that men and women face different constraints and see the market differently. If women are not included in decision-making, half of the picture is missing. USAID also can work to increase women's access to information and training to ensure informed participation.

The second point deals with the impact of macro-level institutions and policy on the poor, and on the operating environment for micro- and small businesses. A series of recommendations are offered to explicitly take account of the effects of the policy agenda on employment, emigration, business development, and supply chain links with micro-enterprises, in order to increase the positive effect on women's status and to develop policies that support poverty reduction.

Democracy and Governance: Recognizing the primacy of improved governance for all aspects of life in Guyana, the Mission has developed a spectrum of activities in this area. Although women have been targeted in some activities, gender analysis and gender training have not been a part of implementation. The assessment recommends the use of gender analysis in the formulation of the program, and of gender awareness training for participants to increase program effectiveness and sustainability, and to provide a potential opening to break through the overriding social and political impasse that has paralyzed the government. In Guyana, where race defines party loyalty, issues, and interests, the program could explore the possibility of expanding its activities with

women, organized around the common problems they face as women, to bridge these divisions in society.

The assessment recommends that the Mission take steps to facilitate linkages between urban-based women's organizations (i.e., organizations that focus on issues related to women's rights and the economic, social, and political empowerment of women) that have a 'geographic reach' and a focus on issues related to the strategic interest of women, to community-based women's groups that focus on the practical needs of women at the local level. In the past, women in Guyana, across racial and ethnic groups, have worked together to prepare, for example, the platform for the World Conference on Women in Beijing and to advocate for new legislation and amendments to existing laws on women's rights. Addressing particular gender-based issues that women face as women may be a means by which issues can be taken out of the individual realm and delinked from race, party, or government.

HIV/AIDS: Reduction of risk of HIV/AIDS transmission will be the largest program to be implemented by the Mission during the next strategy period. Because of the attention directed to gender issues by the HIV/AIDS assessment and design team, it is treated with less depth here than would otherwise be expected. Gender roles and relations are key variables in understanding both transmission and treatment in the epidemic. A youth organization currently working to prevent transmission said that, in their experience, the principal gender issue in the HIV/AIDS program is the case of young men, devoid of opportunities for employment or achievement and with low self-esteem. The young men not only consider themselves to be invincible but also are reluctant to seek information or advice. At the same time, the risk for young women of contracting the disease is increased by their limited capacity to negotiate sexual activity because of differences in power between men and women and women's economic dependence.

In general, women have more contact than men with the health system, in large part in their role as mothers. Women themselves, as adults, are traditionally underserved. The emphasis in HIV/AIDS programs on mother-to-child transmission brings women into the system in the same way. There is a concern that, although women are more likely than men to be tested in order to stop transmission, inadequate attention may be given to treatment for the women who are sick.

A third point concerns the importance of tailoring the messages and approaches to influence behavior that increases risk for transmission to difference by race, religion, and gender, and particularly to the intersection of culture and gender. Messages designed for men should not be offensive to women – and vice versa.

Summary: Overall, two general observations can be drawn from the assessment. First, gender roles and relations are a factor across all three Mission program areas, and gender analysis should be a part of subsequent design and implementation. Second, as the Mission seeks to maximize the impact of their programs by building links among them, gender analysis may point to important intersections. Gender relations cut across sectors

and programs and the relations among the sectors and activities are highlighted under this lens.

Finally, the assessment offers several recommendations for the Mission in continuing the process of mainstreaming gender considerations into the program cycle. Internally, the first step will be to identify a focal point for implementation of the requirements related to gender and to provide technical assistance in field activities. Training in gender analysis for Mission staff and project implementers would be useful to provide tools for mainstreaming. Reiterating a requirement in the Automated Directives System (ADS), the Mission should develop gender-based indicators to monitor the impact of gender mainstreaming. Externally, by working with partners and implementing organizations in developing their capacity for gender analysis and requiring attention to gender issues as a criterion in selection of contractors, USAID will not only improve gender mainstreaming in its activities but also may serve as a catalyst for attention to the importance of gender by government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

I. Introduction

USAID/Guyana is in the process of reformulating its strategy for the period FY 2004 to 2008. In support of this process, the Mission carried out an assessment of the intersection between gender as a factor in development and the proposed strategy. The assessment was developed during two weeks in May 2003, by a team of two consultants, Virginia Lambert from Washington, DC and Patrice LaFleur from Georgetown, Guyana.

A gender assessment is a required element of the USAID strategy preparation process. Its purpose is to provide an overview of key gender issues and to make recommendations about how the Mission may deal with these issues and achieve greater gender integration in its programs. Gender integration in USAID programs focuses on two main factors: the impact of gender relationships on program results, and the impact of the program on the status of women.

The assessment involved a review of documents from the Mission, other donors and the government, as well as interviews with government officials, donors, NGOs, and project implementers. The team also benefited from discussions with members of the design teams for two of the three strategic objectives (SOs), who were working in Guyana during the same period. The Scope of Work for the assessment is found in Annex A. Individuals interviewed for the assessment are listed in Annex B. Annex C lists documents consulted.

The team acknowledges with gratitude the collaboration of the Mission staff and numerous other individuals contacted, who gave generously of their time and information. The report first reviews the concept of and requirements for gender integration and mainstreaming in USAID. This section is followed by a brief overview of contextual factors affecting the status of women and gender relations in Guyana. The report then reviews each SO and provides recommendations for gender integration in the program. Finally, it outlines next steps for implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Mission program.

II. Gender in Development

In its current ADS, USAID has instituted specific requirements to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to gender as a factor in development. The integration of gender considerations in development involves an understanding of the relationship between men and women in society, in terms of the roles they play, which are interdependent, and of the relationships of power between them and their differential access to resources. Both aspects of the definition of this relationship are important in applying gender analysis to development – different and interdependent roles, and relations of power and access to resources between men and women.

Gender refers to “the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female.”¹

From the point of view of development programming, the concern with gender integration focuses on **the impact of these relationships on program results**, and on **the impact of the program on the status of women**. The point is to look for the implications of any program or policy for men and women, and to incorporate the needs and experiences of women and men as an integral part of the design, implementation and monitoring.

Gender integration, or gender mainstreaming, usually – but not always – involves a focus on women because women almost always are in a subordinate position in society. USAID pays attention to gender not only because gender affects program results but also to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

Gender Integration means taking account of both the differences and the inequalities between men and women in program planning, implementing, and assessing. Experience has shown that sustainable changes are not realized through activities focused on women alone.

Gender Mainstreaming is the term adopted by the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing to designate the methods and institutional arrangements for achieving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming goes beyond accounting for gender considerations in programs. Rather than regard gender issues as special interests to be taken up separately, gender mainstreaming is an approach that treats gender as a critical consideration in policy formulation, planning, evaluation, and decision-making procedures.

Like gender integration, gender mainstreaming refers to the practice of taking account of the differential roles of men and women and of the relationship and balance between them, but it also confronts the institutional structures that support

¹Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-operation. OECD: Paris. 1998.

this relationship. Gender mainstreaming involves the analysis of gender-based constraints and effects at all levels and the incorporation of this information into policy-making, decision-making, budgeting, and program design and implementation.

Basically the ADS requirements involve:

- Technical Analyses & Strategic Planning (ADS 203.4.11);
- Performance Monitoring Systems for SOs and Intermediate Results (ADS 201.3.4.13);
- Activity Design and Activity Approval Documents (ADS 201.3.6.3);
- Issuing RFPs (ADS 302.5.14) and RFAs (ADS 303.5.5b).

The present report deals with the first item, Technical Analyses and Strategic Planning. The ADS states, “gender analysis is a required component of technical analyses done for strategic planning and development of results frameworks.” The Gender Assessment is not a stand alone document. Gender integration means that gender analysis is a part of each sectoral assessment. This report is intended to provide the Mission with a baseline and reference document, a broad overview of the status of women in Guyana and key gender issues.

Gender analysis refers to the socio-economic methodologies that identify and interpret the consequences of gender differences and relations for achieving development objectives. An examination of gender differences and relations cannot be isolated from the broader social context.

Differential access to and control over resources (land, labor, capital, produce, tools, knowledge, institutions, social networks) is an essential component of the analysis, as is the comparative participation of men and women in the exercise of power and decision-making. Collection of sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data provides the empirical foundation for assessing potential impact of gender relations on the program, and the relative benefits to men and women.

III. Overview: The Context for Gender Integration in Guyana

In Guyana today, gender issues are subsumed within the broader context of social, economic, and political dysfunctions and problems. The relations between men and women in terms of roles, access to resources, and power are circumscribed by the conditions of political instability, governance issues, crime and violence, and divisiveness. Both men and women are affected by these conditions. According to women's rights activists, dealing with the broad societal conditions and the social and economic environment is part and parcel of improving the status of women.

Population and Household Structure

The population of Guyana, approximately 766,000 in 2001², is 48 percent Indo-Guyanese, 33 percent Afro-Guyanese, and about eight percent Amerindian and other ethnic minorities. Ninety percent of the population lives in a narrow strip along the Atlantic Coast.

Guyanese society is characterized by diversity - race and ethnicity, urban/rural residence, class, and religion. Such diversity is the reference point for explaining political affiliation, economic activities, and cultural practices. It is exploited politically and is a significant source of tension. The stagnation and conflict born of this situation have contributed to a general sense of disaffection and a high level of out-migration (11 per thousand), reflected in a population growth rate of half of one percent per year. Gender relations cut across these divisions, shaped in part by them but also transcending them.

Both interviews and literature point to a commonality of gender issues across ethnic and cultural groups – women's household and childcare responsibilities and poverty, employment options and occupational segregation, emigration and shifts in household structure, power and access to decision-making positions, health services and HIV/AIDS vulnerability, and the issues of youth – teenage pregnancy, male underachievement, crime, violence. At the same time, racial, cultural, and religious divisions also affect the response to these issues. Family expectations, community structures, local institutions, and personal resources influence the perceptions of gender roles and the options available to individuals for dealing with them.

In August 2002, the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) sponsored a National Indigenous Women's Conference, involving 60 women from six of the ten administrative regions of the country. For the first time, indigenous women came together to identify issues of concern to them and to propose solutions. Some of the issues are common to all Guyanese women (employment, health care, violence and rape, participation in decision-making), and are exacerbated by their isolation and poverty. In other cases, the issues are the gender aspects of problems specific to indigenous communities, such as pollution and environmental degradation resulting from logging and mining activities, land rights, and border relations. Investment in mining, tourism, or roads may provide new opportunities for indigenous communities and for Guyana, but may be exploitative and harmful to indigenous women (prostitution, rape, etc.).

² World Bank, Country Brief.

Resources in Research and Statistics

An issue throughout the assessment is the dearth of reliable social statistics in general, and more directly of sex-disaggregated information. Data collection for the most recent national census was done in 2002 and the Bureau of Statistics is in the process of compiling and analyzing the data. These data are expected to be fully disaggregated by sex. However, information from the last census which was done in 1991 has not been 'officially released' but can be obtained with some difficulty. (Censuses have been done every ten years with a time lag of one/two years.)

Resources for research also are limited. The Women's Studies Center at the University of Guyana, founded in 1987, has lost much of its financial support, and the university is considering a plan to fold it into the Institute of Development Studies. As a research and teaching center, it has had important links with the Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies and Dalhousie University in Canada.

As noted below, however, both CIDA and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) are supporting small scale research on gender issues. In addition, Guyana benefits from Caribbean regional research activities through organizations like the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), University of the West Indies (UWI), and Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA). The National Resource and Documentation Center (NRDC) (see below) is a valuable library facility for research on women's rights and on women in development.

In 1996, the Government of Guyana, with assistance from the Carter Center, undertook a major research and consultation process to put together a National Development Strategy (NDS). Women's groups were active in the consultation process and gender-based concerns are reflected in the final document, which was sent to parliament for approval in 2000. The Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), developed by the Government of Guyana in collaboration with the World Bank, was based on the NDS. It was completed in October 2001, and is expected to serve as the strategy document for support from donors (2002-2005). Both the NDS and the PRSP are sources of analytical and to some extent, statistical information. (Unlike the NDS, however, the PRSP is largely devoid of gender considerations.)

Poverty

Guyana is one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere, with an average per capita income of US\$770 in 2000.³ Since the late 1990s, Guyana has faced an extended period of economic stagnation with real per capita income at approximately the same level as in the mid-1970s. According to the 1999 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, approximately 35 percent of the population lives in absolute poverty; 19 percent are classified as facing critical poverty. Poverty conditions are more extreme in rural than in urban areas, and are most pronounced in the hinterland regions, populated mainly by indigenous peoples. In comparing the 1999 survey to the 1993 survey, the level of

³ Unless otherwise noted, data in this section are extracted from the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002.

poverty in Georgetown decreased over the six-year period but poverty in rural areas increased. As in most countries, women tend to be affected by poverty more than men. According to the survey, 50 percent of Guyanese women are living in poverty, and nearly 30 percent of the households headed by women are characterized by absolute poverty.⁴

According to the PRSP, the poor are largely self-employed in agriculture or manual labor. In urban areas, poverty is highest among the unemployed. However, due to low salaries in the public sector, the Household Income and Expenditure Survey classified public sector employees as being in absolute poverty. Nearly two thirds of such employees are women concentrated in the social sectors, especially education and health.⁵ Despite high levels of education and professional status they face poverty conditions. Since 1999, as a result of arbitration, public service employees have been granted two salary increases, so that the minimum salary of US\$84.26 per month in 1999 increased to US\$105 per month by 2002. Women have clearly benefited from the salary increases, but public sector reform, supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), is likely to have the effect of a two-edged sword, since salary increases are accompanied by reductions in the public sector workforce and a loss of jobs for women.

Both poverty and the conditions of public sector employment are factors in emigration. Despite the increases in the salaries of teachers and nurses in Guyana, these professionals can realize 10-fold increases by moving elsewhere in the Caribbean or to North America. Remittances from family members living abroad are an essential safety net for many households.

Employment

The most recent employment statistics (1999)⁶ showed a labor force participation rate for men of 76 percent, and a rate of 39 percent for women. The rate for men had fallen from 81 percent in 1992 while the rate for women remained constant. At the same time, the unemployment rate dropped between 1992 and 1999, from 12 percent to 9 percent. The unemployment rate for women in 1999 (14 percent) was more than double the rate for men (6 percent).

Employment and unemployment figures can be misleading in a country like Guyana, with high rates of emigration and apparently a high incidence of economic activity in the informal sector. The drop in unemployment may simply mean a decrease in activity in

⁴ The number of single parent households, especially female-headed, and even “sibling households” is relatively high, reflecting both emigration and “visiting relationships.” Current statistics were not available. The 1999 Living Conditions survey (cited in the CEDAW Report) found 29 percent of all households headed by women. A 1995 survey indicated considerable variation across ethnic groups and rural/urban communities. Thirty-five percent of Indo-Guyanese households, 51 percent of Afro-Guyanese households, and 3 percent of Amerindian households were reportedly female-headed, and as many as 45 percent of the households in Georgetown were headed by women.

⁵ In 2000, 82.1% of primary school teachers and 62.8% of general secondary teachers were females (CEDAW Report).

⁶ The data from the 1999 Survey of Living Conditions are cited in the CEDAW report. Information on the informal sector and on the occupational and sectoral distributions of employment is not available. Data from the 2002 Census that have not yet been published purportedly will provide more complete and sex-disaggregated information on employment.

the formal sector, since it measures those who are actively seeking formal employment. Although statistics are not available, anecdotal evidence gathered from interviews with NGO activists suggests increased movement into the informal sector, as women especially rely on the traditional role of higgler to gain subsistence income. The Ministry of Finance estimates that 145,000 to 185,000 persons, or about 50 percent of the working age population, are engaged in micro-enterprise⁷. Likewise, it is assumed, based on experience elsewhere, that a substantial proportion of women's economic activity is unreported because women work as unpaid family workers, particularly in agriculture and other family businesses. None of the statistics takes account of women's labor in household maintenance and child rearing.

By law, women and men receive equal pay for equal work, and equal pay for work of equal value. Job segregation, with relatively clear lines between what is considered to be "men's work" and "women's work," is a factor in average earnings. Women's employment "preferences" are re-enforced by the educational system. In general, occupations that employ mostly women tend to be lower paid. Because women are concentrated in lower paying jobs and in the informal sector, average earnings of women are lower than average earnings of men.⁸ For example, within the public sector in 2001, 56 percent of the female employees are in the lowest three of the 14 salary bands, compared to 41 percent of male employees.

Education

The gender issues in education in Guyana mirror those of many other parts of the Caribbean. Enrolment rates are high for both boys and girls in the primary and elementary levels, but boys are more likely to drop out, and girls outnumber boys in secondary and tertiary education. Yet educational achievement rates are relatively high. The population is literate (1.5 percent illiteracy), and in 2000, 95 percent of the girls and 89 percent of the boys completed at least sixth grade. Education is free through secondary school and compulsory through age 15. Physical infrastructure is generally in better condition and access to education beyond the primary grades is higher in urban than in rural areas. Access to public and private vocational and continuing education facilities are limited beyond the urban areas and such opportunities are particularly limited for rural women. Career choices tend to be gender stereotyped, with girls focused on the service sectors. Girls comprise only a third of the students in the Government Technical Institute, a technical-vocational training institution, but make up about 60 percent of the student body at the University of Guyana.

Perhaps the most prominent gender issue in education is "male underachievement," which has received considerable attention throughout the Caribbean. Very little is known about why large numbers of young men are abandoning the formal education system and eschewing professional and technical careers. The results are clearer than the causes. Unemployment, idleness, marginal and illegal economic activities, violence, and the spread of HIV/AIDS are fed by the lack of skills and opportunities. While some popular

⁷ Quoted in an unpublished CARICOM document from the Daily Chronicle, August 13, 2001.

⁸ Again, although this fact was cited in reports from the Women's Affairs Bureau and in the NDS, we were not successful in locating statistics to back up the assertion.

critics have attributed this trend to the women's movement and the focus on girls' achievement, it is clear that achievement and self-esteem are not a zero sum between men and women. CARICOM and other donors and NGOs are supporting research to decipher the reasons for male dropouts from school.

A second gender issue concerns the disparity for women between schooling and employment. In spite of higher achievement than men in formal education, women continue to face low wages in low status jobs, higher levels than men of unemployment and poverty, and low representation in decision-making positions. The schools in their structure and curricula reinforce the cultural constraints placed on women through stereotypical career choices and gender role behavior.⁹ Enrolment data from the University of Guyana clearly demonstrate the occupational segregation in education and the labor market.¹⁰ Eighty-one percent of the students in education and 70 percent of the students in social science are women, compared to eight percent of the students in technology and 44 percent of those in agriculture.

Finally, the continuing emigration of teachers particularly from the primary and secondary levels, poses a significant threat to the education system within Guyana, threatening the quality of education offered and undermining the significance of education as a mechanism for poverty reduction and economic growth. In addition, while workforce training is cited as an issue for private sector growth and foreign investment, additional training is often seen as preparation for emigration. As a result, Guyana does not benefit from the training in terms of increased competitiveness in the global market; the country gains only in remittances.

Health

The overriding health issue in Guyana and the Caribbean today is HIV/AIDS. The growing threat is intimately intertwined with the economic, social, and political issues facing the country. In spite of gaps in statistics on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, Guyana is purported to have the second highest prevalence rate in the Caribbean (after Haiti), with equal rates for men and women.

Gender relations, in terms of the power relationship between men and women, contribute to the spread of the disease. Women, particularly young women, are unable to negotiate sexual relations and the use of condoms. The expectation of male dominance and power within the context of poverty and the fluid structure of many households lead to multiple and often exploitative relationships for both young men and women. The frequently cited case is that of "teenage prostitution," where young women have sex with older men in exchange for financial gifts. At the same time, social proscriptions against women's sexuality may interfere with seeking both information and treatment. These same issues contribute to a high rate of teenage pregnancy (and consequent school dropout).

Likewise, expectations related to male gender roles may place barriers that contribute to the rate of infection among young men. Lack of achievement in academics and careers

⁹ See NDS.

¹⁰ CEDAW report

and low self-esteem give added importance to sexual prowess and dominance over women. At the same time, Guyanese men, particularly Indo-Guyanese, are reluctant to seek information, assistance, or testing, and it is difficult to reach them with educational campaigns. Issues of health and education are seen as women's responsibilities.

Beyond HIV/AIDS, health services are associated more with women than with men. As mothers and bearers of children, women have more contact with the health system and have been more directly affected by the quality and availability of health services. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey conducted by the Bureau of Statistics in 2000, 86 percent of pregnant women were attended to by skilled personnel, and the infant mortality rate was reduced from 28 per 10,000 in 1997 to 21.9 in 2001.¹¹ On the other hand, a majority of the women do not use contraceptive devices. Abortion was legalized in 1995, but must be performed by a licensed physician in government approved facilities, and a woman must pay for the procedure.

While women have considerable contact with the health system as mothers, little attention is given to women's health problems *per se*. For example, cancers specific to women (breast, cervical) are severely under-diagnosed and treated. In the same way, the emphasis in HIV/AIDS programs on prevention of mother to child transmission gives minimal attention to treatment of women who are infected, or to support for women who are responsible for care of family members who are ill.

Domestic violence and gender-based violence, in general, are social, criminal, and health issues. It is difficult to gauge the severity of the problem in Guyana relative to other places. Research on sub-populations suggests that as many as two-thirds of all women will face abuse at some time. The crimes are under-reported and victims often do not seek assistance. Cultural differences across ethnic groups may be a factor in reporting, but our interviews suggested these differences are not a factor in the existence of abuse. Help and Shelter, an NGO with both government and donor support, provides counseling, temporary shelter, and legal assistance to victims of abuse, many of whom are children. The Domestic Violence Act, passed in 1996, has been limited in impact because of lack of awareness and inefficiencies in both the police and court systems. The Guyana Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL), Help and Shelter, and CARICOM have been engaged in training programs (largely supported by CIDA) for the judiciary and police.

The availability of and access to health services in the hinterland and for people who cannot afford private doctors remain key issues. Further, the emigration of health professionals, especially nurses and principally women, has contributed to an overall decline of the quality of service in Guyana.

Organization and Political Participation

Political parties in Guyana have been as much a part of the problem of poor governance as a part of the solution. Through the "racialization" of politics¹², the overriding definitions of party loyalty, issues, and interests are on the basis of race. Racialization

¹¹ Cited in CEDAW report.

¹² USAID D&G Assessment, May 20, 2002.

coupled with centralization leave little room for local government, special interest groups, or NGOs to organize, articulate issues, and be heard. Disenfranchisement within the population means actions are self-serving, organization is parochial, and people do not act or consider problems in terms of the common good.

Given this context, the success of the women's movement in the articulation of issues and in moving its national agenda is notable. The small core of activists in Georgetown, with a focus primarily on national level legislative and constitutional issues has been supported through links into Caribbean regional and UN-supported international organizations, events, and agreements. In addition to the governmental and quasi-governmental organizations discussed below, NGOs focused on women's issues include Red Thread, GAWL, and Women across Differences. Each political party has a women's committee, as do ethnic and religious organizations. Although many of the organizations have overlapping memberships, there is no recognized network of women's groups.

As a signatory of the 1979 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Guyana is required to report every five years on progress in meeting the terms of the convention. CEDAW, and the preparations for and follow up to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing have provided an important impetus to organization and legislation around women's issues.

Legislation

Key pieces of legislation passed since 1990 include¹³:

- Married Persons' Property Amendment Act, 1990 and Family and Dependents Provision Act, 1990, which recognize the rights of married and common law spouses to marital property.
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1995, which legalizes abortion conducted in state and state-approved facilities.
- Domestic Violence Act, 1996, which seeks to provide legal mechanisms for persons who are physically and psychologically abused and hurt.
- Equal Rights Act, 1990 and Prevention of Discrimination Act, 1997, both of which address requirements of CEDAW. The 1980 Constitution states that women and men have equal rights and the same legal status in all spheres of political, economic and social life. It also specifies that women and men shall be paid equal remuneration for the same work or work of the same nature. The main function of this ERA is to make the forms of discrimination specified criminal offences.
- Prevention of Discrimination Act, 1997, focuses on indirect discrimination in employment training and recruitment, and in membership of professional bodies, and the promotion of equal remuneration to men and women in employment. The prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, sex, religion, color, ethnic origin, indigenous population, national extraction, social origin, political opinion, disability, family responsibilities, pregnancy, marital status or age (except for

¹³ Report on the Legal Status of Women. An Assessment of Legislation Relevant to Women, prepared by the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers, commissioned by the National Commission on Women, March 1998.

- retirement) and any characteristic which appertains generally, or is generally imputed to, persons on these grounds.
- The Maintenance Act, 1997, which places responsibility for maintenance between married persons and on behalf of their children, whether born in or out of wedlock, parents and grandparents, and spouses or other persons who are in a hospital or home for destitute persons.
 - The Termination of Employment and Severance Pay Act, 1997.

Major remaining gaps identified by the GAWL include provision for maternity and paternity leave, and recognition of the value of women's unwaged work in the household and in family business (for calculation of benefits like social security, access to health service, inheritance, etc.). A second issue is enforcement of provisions in law. For example, security guards, who are mainly women, are very low paid with poor working conditions, and without advocates. They are routinely dismissed, particularly when they become pregnant even though this practice is illegal. Generally, many existing pieces of legislation make adequate provisions to protect the citizenry. However, mechanisms for enforcement are non-existent or weak. In particular, training is needed for lawyers, judges, and police so as to equip them with a better understanding of the legislation. At the same time, there is need for the provision of legal aid services to disadvantaged persons. At present, such services are provided by an NGO, Legal Aid. Ninety percent of its clients are women. However, it is not functioning effectively.

Institutions

At the level of central government, the Women's Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security is the focal point for national, regional and international agreements and programs. The office was established in 1981 following the World Conference on Women in Mexico City, but its activities and effectiveness have been limited by budget and staff shortages. According to the Acting Administrator, the placement of the Bureau within that Ministry gives it a welfare rather than an advocacy platform. The Bureau is considering the establishment of Regional Women's Desks in the ten administrative regions to report to the Bureau and work in conjunction with Regional Women's Affairs Committees. A second initiative involves the formation of an inter-ministerial committee, with representatives of the Permanent Secretaries, to reach agreement on gender mainstreaming in all ministries.

The UNDP supports the Bureau in two key activities, the National Resource and Documentation Centre (NRDC) and the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLII). The NRDC functions as an information center and library for issues pertaining to gender and women and development, locally, regionally, and internationally. The leadership institute supports the development of the personal and public leadership skills of women. Between 1999 and 2001, the Institute trained 582 women in areas such as gender and development, leadership, business management, organizational skills, personal development, interpersonal skills, computer skills and job skills.

The National Commission on Women, a ten-member group representative across political parties and appointed by the President, serves as the advisory council for the Bureau of

Women's Affairs. It also has been the leading organization in developing the Guyana and Caribbean Plans of Action for Beijing, and the National Plan of Action for Women, 2000 to 2004. After a period of uncertainty, it has been recently reappointed.

A new governmental instrument, the Women and Gender Equality Commission, emerged from the Constitution Review Commission in 1999 as one of four commissions under the umbrella of a Human Rights Commission. Women's organizations sought the formation of this commission as a permanent mechanism authorized by the constitution, with staff and budget. Primary functions will include receiving complaints and seeking alternative resolution through mediation and negotiation. It is not expected to replace the National Women's Commission. In May 2003, the President had not yet named the members of these commissions.

The number of women in Parliament increased from 12 (18.5%) in 2000 to 20 (31%) after the 2001 elections. This increase followed from pressure from women's organizations to have women in a third of the positions on the electoral plank of each party. (This quota would increase to 50/50 for the next election.) The effectiveness of this electoral mandate is the subject of continuing debate among women activists.

According to the CEDAW report for 1998 - 2002, some increases are evident in the representation of women in government decision-making positions but significant gaps remain. "There are now four female ministers in comparison to 2 in 1997. The Deputy Speaker of the House is a female. The highest ranking position in the Judiciary, that of Chancellor, is held by a woman. One of the three Justices of Appeal is a woman. At present, there are three female judges out of a total of 8 judges. Female magistrates account for 31% (5) of the existing 16 magistrates. Even though between 1998 and 2002 the number of female Permanent Secretaries increased from 3 to 4, they are still largely under represented compared to their male counterparts, accounting for no more than 27% of the Permanent Secretaries. A similar trend exists at the level of Deputy Permanent Secretary. The Governor of the Central Bank is a woman. Between 1998 and 2001, there were no female members of the Public Service Commission and the Police Service Commission."

Donors

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is the primary donor organization for activities related to gender and women's rights. The Guyana Gender Equity Programme is a part of a Caribbean-wide CIDA program for gender equality. Although the amount allocated to Guyana is not large (Canadian \$250,000/year, 1999-2005) it is locally managed and flexible enough to respond to multiple local initiatives. The fund has provided support to the Women's Affairs Bureau, the National Commission on Women, Red Thread, a rural women's network, research studies, a research and training program with Amerindian women, training for police on domestic violence, etc. It has been a very effective relationship that grew out of the preparation of the Caribbean Platform for Beijing.

Other donors funding women's programs include UNDP, and recently, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and IDB. Donor coordination around gender issues has been minimal, although USAID made some efforts in this direction in the past. The CIDA Gender Equity Programme coordinator feels that this type of coordination is valuable in leveraging resources (e.g., gender and HIV/AIDS), and stressed the importance of pressure and support from foreign donors for gender mainstreaming locally.

Discussion

Several key points emerge from this overview. First, gender is a key element affecting the results of development programs, particularly in terms of social indicators related to health, education, and poverty reduction. Second, women's organizations at the national level are one of the few examples of reform efforts that have cut across the multiple divisions of race, religion, and ethnicity to demonstrate concrete accomplishments, at least in legislative reform. Both the crosscutting nature of gender issues and the organizational achievements suggest the potential to build on these efforts to create a mechanism to articulate and confront issues de-linked from race, party, and government. Third, in interviews, numerous individuals discussed the debilitating effects of emigration not only in economic but also in organizational terms. The continuing departure of leaders, with education, training, and experience, drains the capacity of the NGOs as well as of government services and the private sector.

IV. Gender Issues and Recommendations by Strategic Objective

A. Improving the economic policy environment to foster and expand trade.

Gender analysis of the economic issues in Guyana points to several key structural differences between men and women. Women are less likely than men to be in the formal labor force, are a majority of the workforce in the public sector, are more likely than men to be unemployed, and, because “women’s” jobs pay less than “men’s” jobs, on average, employed women earn less than employed men. A high proportion of women are economically active, but increasingly, with the contraction of the public sector workforce and the depressed conditions in the formal, private sector economy, women are forced into the informal sector. Most women enter the informal sector as traders and higglers, traditionally female roles throughout the Caribbean. The informal sector often implies subsistence activities because of barriers in access to credit and services. Inefficiencies in the business and regulatory environment lead to prohibitive costs in time and money that make licenses and services unavailable to micro-entrepreneurs.

USAID’s current economic growth program, centered in the Guyana Economic Opportunities (GEO) project focuses on institutional and macro-level policy support and does not directly address these issues. At the macro-level, and particularly in private sector development, gender is a factor primarily in terms of participation and lack thereof. The legal framework for business development and access to resources like property, information, and credit appear not to present any barriers specific to women in business, although, as noted above, barriers in the business environment are more onerous for micro entrepreneurs than for larger, established firms. Family businesses are an important factor in the private sector, and women may take an active, but not always visible, role in business operations.

In Guyana, as elsewhere, micro-enterprises in the informal sector of the economy are associated to a large extent with women; donor support for micro-enterprise and micro-finance programs is seen as a tool for poverty alleviation and for improving the status of women. The Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED), an NGO founded by a group of businessmen in 1985, is the principal source of funding for micro- and small businesses in Guyana. In 2001, IPED made 4,352 loans for a total of G\$669.80. Of these loans, 1,411 went to men, 1,833 went to women, and 1,108 were joint loans to men and women. IPED has four different loan windows. The largest loans, primarily one-year loans for agriculture (average G\$700,000), were dominated by loans to men (41 percent) and to couples (53 percent). (Only six percent of the loans went to women.) The loans for micro-enterprise (average of G\$55,000 for six months) were dominated by loans to women (42 percent for women, 32 percent for men, and 26 percent joint).

Loans are available for all types of businesses including commerce and trade. Most of the loans for small and medium businesses (about a third of all loans and 77 percent of the total amount loaned) were for agriculture and fishing. The Micro Business Sector accounted for two-thirds of the loans and 23 percent of total funds. IPED does not lend

for business start-up. To be eligible the business must be in existence for at least six months, and there are no requirements for licensing or for a fixed location. Collateral (e.g., household items) is only a part of the approval process. Other considerations include character, credit rating, and business plan. IPED also offers courses and business development services for a fee to IPED clients and others. IPED is focusing now on outreach and marketing to expand its loan portfolio. It has neither a particular gender focus in its marketing nor any attempt to respond to gender-based constraints facing women in business.

IPED has received support from various donors, including USAID. Funding from USAID has come through PL 480, with additional technical assistance and training in the past, through the GEO project. Currently, GEO support has shifted away from IPED, since it is now financially self-sustainable, and toward programs to develop the export capacity of small enterprises. The focus in the GEO project on small and medium enterprises, and its activities to develop local business associations, has meant that a very high proportion of the beneficiaries are men. An explicit gender analysis and awareness of gender constraints will be required to achieve more equity in programming, because of the gender divisions in the private sector.

Women are proportionately less likely than men to be included in key decision-making bodies involved in policy development and trade negotiation. Participation of women at this level is important because men and women tend to be involved in different sectors of the economy, and therefore will be affected differently by the policies and trade agreements, and may have different policy priorities. In this context, an important voice and potential resource for USAID program implementers is that of women's advocacy groups (e.g., Caribbean Association of Feminist Research and Action – CAFRA, and Women's Environment and Development Organization - WEDO) that articulate the potential impact of trade agreements on the service sector, and on women as consumers. Organizations such as the women's arms of Trade Unions may also be included in consultations to set priorities for the trade and policy agendas.

Explicit attention to the process through which macro-level policies and activities affect the operating environment for micro- and small businesses, and the impact of change on those living in poverty, is important in the current environment in Guyana, where most citizens feel marginalized and ineffectual. Increasingly, the response to this feeling is withdrawal (i.e., “nobody cares anymore”) or protest, violence, and confrontation. Taking account of the environment for the informal and micro base of the economy will be a step toward curbing this disaffection. Reduction of violence and improved governance are cited as key preconditions for investment and growth. Improved economic conditions for the poor will contribute to effective democratic participation.

Recommendations include:

- USAID should take an affirmative role in increasing women's representation in key decision-making organizations and situations, and consultations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Private Sector Commission, Guyana Manufacturers' Association, parliamentary committees, etc). (This is a Democracy and

Governance (D&G)-type activity, since such organizations fall into the civil society category. It is an example of building linkages across Mission SOs, based on gender analysis.)

- Provide support to women’s organizations and women leaders in training about the macroeconomic environment, so that they can participate effectively. (This is a D&G-type activity. Such organizations fall into the civil society category.)
- Support product areas in which women predominate (e.g., food processing, crafts), in terms of best practices, export possibilities, market information, and regulations.
- Direct attention to potential links between USAID activities at the macro level and the impact on the poor, and on the operating environment for micro and small business. For example:
 - Include potential for employment generation and employment benefits, as well as backward and forward linkages between micro/small and medium/large businesses, as criteria in identifying sub-sectors for investment.¹⁴
 - Consider support for legislation (e.g., Cottage Industry Act) and/or enforcement of existing laws to set standards for and eliminate corruption in provision of public services for micro/small businesses. One aspect of this process would be to carry out an assessment to identify barriers in the transition from the informal to the formal sector. Licensing to enforce standards and quality (e.g., sanitation, pesticide use, size, packaging, etc.) may be a particular barrier for micro/small businesses to enter the export market.
 - In a potential link to the Democracy and Governance Program, consider support to alternative business structures in small communities, such as group production. This type of capacity building could be incorporated into community-based organizational strengthening activities, although full implementation would require concurrent attention to factors like access to credit and market development that fall outside traditional D&G programming.
 - Consider including representatives of the Trade Union Council, and particularly the Women’s Advisory Committee, in USAID-supported organizational capacity-building and leadership strengthening activities. The unions are an important stakeholder in the social and economic development of the country and lobby for a significant proportion of the working population. (This is a D&G-type activity.)
 - Emigration places a strain on government services, civil society, and the private sector. Increased earnings and incentives related to quality of life

¹⁴ This recommendation would not necessarily result in increased investment in sub-sectors where women dominate (e.g., public sector teaching and health care, trade and commerce, etc.). The rationale is to be aware of and influence the impact of macro-policy on the informal sector and the poor by focusing on employment generation in the formal, private sector and by increasing the market for micro/small businesses. With greater employment options, fewer women (and men) will be forced into the informal subsistence economy. Examples of subsectors that may both generate employment and have linkages to micro/small businesses, and which often employ large numbers of women, are tourism and agro-processing.

(e.g., access to housing, education) may be more effective in reducing the rate of emigration of professionals and skilled artisans than the current use of disincentives. USAID should consider including this important human resource development issue as a part of the macro-economic policy agenda. For example, USAID may want to support direct investigation and drafting of policy designed to increase retention. At a minimum, all items on the USAID macro-economic policy agenda should be examined in terms of potential impact on emigration.

- From the point of view of gender analysis, the underachievement of young men is a serious issue that contributes to poverty, emigration, and probably to violence in general, and violence against women, in particular. Less is known about the causes of this phenomenon than about its results. USAID should collaborate with CARICOM and other donors in research on this issue, as a part of its efforts in gender mainstreaming.

B. Consolidation of democracy/governance.

The issues of governance, violence, race-based politics, and political instability are among the most salient for women activists. As the Mission develops the new strategy in this area, particular attention could be given to two points related to gender. Firstly, since women tend to be disproportionately affected by the current depressed conditions, women's NGOs (i.e., organizations that focus on issues related to women's rights and the economic, social, and political empowerment of women) are potentially activist partners in support for change, particularly at the local level. Secondly, going beyond the role of women as community activists, both the interviews in Guyana and experience in other countries suggest a potentially positive role for women in bridging the seemingly immutable divisions in Guyana today.

Recognizing the primacy of improved governance for all aspects of life in Guyana, USAID/Guyana has given consistent support to a broad spectrum of activities to strengthen democratic processes and the functioning and responsiveness of government institutions. Women and women's organizations have been one of the target groups for these activities. (The other target groups are youth and Amerindians.) The Mission can point to programming and results for women on a number of different levels. In all these activities, a specific effort has been made to take racial and party considerations out of the definition of issues and activities. In a National Democratic Institute (NDI) activity, 300 women from 10 regions of the country have received multiple training sessions and mentoring to prepare them as candidates for local elections. A third of these women report that they intend to run for election; in addition, the program has generated leadership and activism around local community issues.

A second activity has focused on strengthening civil society, again at the local and regional level. The Carter Center has worked with 26 local NGOs to build their capacity organizationally and as advocates and watchdogs. Ten organizations have received small grants to advocate for specific issues. Most of these organizations are women's groups –

women only or women and youth. (The Amerindian organizations have both male and female members.) According to the project implementers, in local level civil society organizations, unlike national level organizations, women tend to be in leadership roles, and women are, in general, more active than men in their communities.

The USAID Mission also has supported activities at the national level in election reform, rule of law, and judicial reform, through technical assistance, training, and consultations. Women's issues have not been an explicit focus of activities at the national level, but attention has been given to enforcement of the domestic violence law with both the courts and the police.

Although the Democracy and Governance program has had women as a target group for its activities, gender analysis and gender training have not been a part of the implementation of the program. Participants in the NDI local election program specifically requested gender awareness training. Project implementers commented on the benefits they observed from working with a woman-only group in terms of the openness of the women to discussion and assertiveness. Gender awareness training would build on this openness and provide an additional tool for the conceptualization of interests, issues, and strategies. This same comment applies to the work with women's NGOs. The staff noted the need for networking and for links between local and national organizations for more effective advocacy. Building gender awareness and skills for gender analysis into the training programs could support this effort.

At the national level, the women's movement and the organizations built around it have defined and acted upon issues that cut across race and class. Some of these organizations are linked into regional and international networks and attempts also have been made to link downward into rural and peri-urban communities. Facilitating linkages between urban-based organizations that have a 'geographic reach' and a focus on issues related to the strategic interests of women, to community-based groups that focus on the practical needs of women at the local level (water, health care, schools, violence, jobs) could be a vehicle for moving toward a more inclusive and responsive system. National level organizations provide a potential base for influencing public policy while community-based organizations deal with the problems that most directly affect women's lives and provide a base for leadership development and empowerment.

A key element to building these linkages will be the recognition of a commonality of problems and interests among women. This approach in no sense implies excluding men or being anti-men since the problems women in the community face as women are not exclusive of or opposed to the problems faced by men. Likewise, the approach does not assume that all women are alike – differences of class and ethnicity, for example, are important in shaping women's lives. This approach does argue, however, that addressing particular gender-based issues that women face as women is a means by which issues can be taken out of the individual realm and delinked from race, party, or government. Training and public education programs that include gender awareness as well as skills in leadership and organization can be one of the areas in which USAID can provide support.

Recommendations include:

- Gender analysis should be incorporated in activities of the annual work plan for the Democracy and Governance program. In particular, capacity building programs should include modules on gender analysis.
- Efforts should be made to promote the participation of both men and women in across the spectrum of community-based organizations and activities. Anecdotal discussions suggest that women tend to be more active than men at the community level. It is equally important that men are engaged in the schools and that women's interests are addressed in efforts to improve economic conditions. In addition, there is the view on the part of some men that because of the emphasis on women, they will soon become disadvantaged as a group.
- USAID's program activities should support national level organizations in Guyana to extend their reach to the community level, in order to create sustainable links for moving the grassroots localized problems to the national level. A community-level focus is key to building citizenship and empowerment, but a link to national level organizations is essential for influencing public policy and building sustainable networks in general, and for women, in particular. Community issues, often based on practical needs, should be voiced in terms of critical national socio-economic and political issues in order for women/community leaders to influence decision-making. The process of abstracting from practical needs to national policies also may be important in building links across the strategic objectives. At all levels, it is important to recognize that the benefits will not be realized by simply incorporating women. The capacity for analyzing both practical and strategic issues from the point of view of how they affect men and women is critical.
- The issue of developing methods and structures for alternative dispute resolution was identified as a means of dealing with community-based issues outside of the endless and ineffective litigious process.

Gender relations and gender issues cut across all aspects of society and all parts of USAID programming. There are clear ties between the recommendations for organizational strengthening and networking under the democracy and governance program and the focus on representative participation in private sector organizations and decision-making bodies in economic growth programs. Gender is defined not only in terms of roles but also in terms of relationships of access to resources and power. Organizational participation that fosters access to information and to decision-making is an important aspect of increasing equality and improving the status of women.

C. Reduction of risk of HIV/AIDS transmission.

The large team of experts involved in design of the Mission's expanded HIV/AIDS strategy brings considerable experience in gender analysis as it relates to programs for HIV/AIDS prevention and care. The coverage of the topic as a part of the gender assessment, therefore, is minimal. Three principal points were discussed in interviews:

- Differences among people by race, religion, and gender create a need for different messages and approaches in seeking to influence behavior that increases risk for HIV/AIDS. The message should be sensitive as well to the intersections of culture and gender. Messages designed for men should not be offensive to women – and vice versa (e.g., the recent message, “Bat with a condom.”).
- An effective prevention strategy requires an integrated approach to the individual. HIV/AIDS is the result of a complex of gender-related issues for both men and women (e.g., self-image, self-esteem, economic needs and empowerment).
- Women are more likely than men to use both public and private health services and are more likely to be tested for HIV/AIDS. As a result, within the community, where HIV/AIDS is a more visible problem for women, they tend to be “blamed” for spread of the disease. This image may affect the willingness and capacity to access care and other services.

Differences in power between men and women, coupled with poverty and economic dependence, limit women’s capacity to negotiate sexual activity and preventative behavior. Negotiation skills, as well as access to economic resources and economic empowerment, may be important components of an effective message and approach for young women.

On the other hand, young men, devoid of opportunities for employment or achievement, may have few options for bolstering their self-esteem besides sexual conquest. Young men tend to see themselves as invincible. This attitude coupled with reluctance to visit doctors or clinics provide special challenges in reaching them with preventative messages and with testing and treatment. Members of the youth organization implementing the present USAID/Guyana HIV/AIDS prevention program identified the circumstances of young men as the primary gender issue they have confronted in their activities. The recommended research on underachievement among young men has direct application in the HIV/AIDS campaign.

Although HIV/AIDS is stereotypically seen as an Afro-Guyanese problem, various people commented on cultural issues among the Indo-Guyanese that contribute to undercounting of prevalence in this population. Both sexuality and HIV/AIDS are treated as private matters within this community. HIV/AIDS positive individuals, both women and men, tend to be isolated and hidden within the family. They are likely to visit private physicians who make no reports to the Ministry of Health. The intersection between cultural and gender factors may be particularly important to understand within this sector of the population.

Finally, gender analysis applied to the design of HIV/AIDS programs points to an issue identified above in terms of women’s relationship to the health system. As noted, women generally have much more interaction with the health system than men, but this contact focuses on women as bearers of children and as mothers, rather than as individuals. The funding for control of HIV/AIDS transmission has the same focus – attention is given to women as mothers in minimizing mother to child transmission, or as sex workers in heterosexual transmission. Women who are tested to protect their children also need

services as people who are ill (e.g., counseling, medical treatment). Sex workers need information to protect themselves as well as their customers.

The clear analytic ties at the individual level between HIV/AIDS vulnerability, economic opportunities and inclusion and participation in decision making processes suggest potential links among USAID strategic objectives and would require consideration during program design and implementation. Under an integrated approach to young men and women at the community level, training programs sponsored under the Democracy and Governance program also could focus on negotiation and other skills that build individual capacity, self confidence, etc. These skills in turn may be applied in other situations like small business development. Explicit consideration of gender roles and relations is an essential underpinning in the design of such cross-sectoral activities.

V. Next Steps for the Mission

The ADS requires gender mainstreaming in USAID programs and activities when gender relations are likely to have an impact on the results achieved and/or when the program will affect the status of women. The purpose of the assessment as a part of the strategy development process is to identify potential gender issues and to set the baseline for gender analysis and mainstreaming in subsequent activities.

It is important to recognize that the Gender Assessment is only the first step in an on-going process. Mainstreaming gender means that gender considerations are built into each step in programming. Under the new ADS requirements, the Mission must address gender in the strategy first, and then in the design, contracting, and monitoring and evaluation of Mission activities. Gender is not an element added to the rest of the program but a fundamental consideration in the program itself – because it affects results and/or the status of women. While gender mainstreaming cuts across all programs, someone (or a Gender Working Group) in the Mission should be assigned the responsibility for oversight of the implementation and monitoring of these requirements.

USAID will work with its implementing partners in meeting the gender mainstreaming requirements. By extending these requirements to program implementers, USAID and other donor organizations can provide key support to gender mainstreaming and improving the status of women in government and private sector initiatives, as well as in donor-funded programs. USAID cannot address all the development issues facing Guyana, but it can potentially extend the impact of its strategic programs, first, by building links and synergies among the SOs, and second, by focusing on the social impact of its activities within the population. Gender analysis and indicators are important tools for achieving both of these ends.

Recommended methods for expanding the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming include:

- using capacity for gender analysis and attention to gender issues as one of the criteria in selection of partners;
- providing training for implementing partners and beneficiary organizations in gender awareness and gender analysis;
- monitoring program implementation in terms of gender issues (and not merely participation of men and women).

Other donors, especially CIDA, have used these methods effectively in Guyana for some time, essentially telling potential partners, across all CIDA-funded activities, that they must take a gendered approach in order to receive funds.

Recommendations for implementation of gender mainstreaming within the Mission, and compliance with the ADS requirements include:

- Identification of a focal point for implementation of requirements related to gender and to provide technical assistance to the field activities. The ADS requires gender mainstreaming in all Mission activities and in the performance

monitoring plan. In addition, particular attention should be given to ensure that gender is appropriately integrated into all Mission training activities.

- Training in gender awareness and particularly in gender analysis for staff and project implementers to provide them with the tools for mainstreaming.
- Development of gender-based indicators to monitor the impact of gender mainstreaming in the programs.

VI. Conclusion

The initial gender assessment identifies areas where gender roles and relations may affect the results achieved in USAID programming, and/or where USAID activities may have an impact on the status of women. This assessment provides a baseline scan of issues, and illustrative recommendations that flow from gender analysis. To the extent that gender analysis is a part of the sectoral analysis for the strategy development, the activities that flow from the strategy will respond appropriately to gender issues. The progression of steps to achieve gender mainstreaming in USAID programs is laid out in a series of requirements in the ADS 200 and 300 series.

In Guyana, social division and governance issues are paramount and seem to overshadow or at least constrain all other issues, including economic growth and health. Women's rights activists are clear that women's issues and gender relations must be understood and treated within this broader social, economic and political context. At the same time, the gender assessment makes three key points. First, gender relations are a factor in Mission activities across all three strategic objectives, and gender analysis should be a part of the subsequent design and implementation. A second important observation of the assessment is the potential role that attention to gender and work with women's organizations may have as a part of the solution to the overriding social and political divisions. Finally, the assessment also suggests that, for USAID, attention to the ways in which gender issues cut across social divisions and program sectors could point to links and synergies among the strategic objectives.

SCOPE OF WORK: GENDER ANALYSIS, USAID/GUYANA CSP

Background

USAID/Guyana is currently developing a new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2004-2009. The Mission's Concept Paper for this CSP, recently approved in Washington, proposes a streamlined and integrated sustainable development program that builds on the current Transitional Strategy. The new program will be implemented through three strategic objectives in the following areas:

- Improving the Economic Policy Environment to Foster and Expand Trade;
- Consolidation of Democracy/Governance; and
- Reduction of Risk of HIV/AIDS Transmission.

USAID/Guyana is required to conduct a gender analysis as part of the set of technical analyses and assessments necessary for its strategic planning process. Recognizing that the dynamics of gender relations is both socially and culturally variable, Agency technical guidance states: "Strategic Plans must reflect attention to gender efforts to improve the status of women by taking into account not only the differential roles of men and women, but also the relationship and balance between them and the institutional structures that support them. Specifically, analytical work performed in the planning and development of Results Frameworks should address at least two questions: (1) how will gender relations affect the achievement of results; and (2) how will results affect the relative status of women. "Gender" is not a separate sector to be analyzed and reported in isolation. Instead, gender mainstreaming requires that gender analysis be applied to each set of issues that is considered in the development of the Strategic Plan."

Objectives

Given the Agency requirements and the Mission's own interest, the proposed Gender Analysis will address the following objectives:

- Identify the critical gender-based constraints to equitable participation in and access of men and women to programs and services in the sectors in which USAID/Guyana implements its program;
- Identify strategies and approaches USAID/Guyana can use to increase the accessibility and equitability of its programs, to both men and women;
- Analyze the potential impacts of the Mission's proposed strategic approaches on the relative status of men and women in Guyana, taking into consideration ethnicity, class, religion, and other key variables; and

- Assess key GOG policies and programs relating to gender and identify opportunities for collaboration and mutual strengthening of gendered approaches between USAID and GOG.

Approach

1. Comprehensive literature review of pertinent documents including: (a) studies and assessments conducted by donors, NGOs, GOG, and the academic community, and (b) USAID documents including but not limited to the existing USAID/Guyana Strategy, annual reports, the Concept Paper, strategic implementation plans, situation analyses, sector assessments, evaluations and proposals.
2. Discussions and interviews with key donors, NGOs active in gender, and GOG officials. The consultants will be expected to develop a list of key contacts and to provide the list to USAID;
3. Meetings with USAID implementing partners (contractors, grantees, PVOs/NGOs) and each SO team; the SO teams will assist with identifying the most important partner contacts;
4. Site visits to project activities, if feasible and appropriate.

Deliverables

1. Workplan/schedule: Within three working days after the starting date of the consultancy;
2. Draft Gender Analysis Report: Upon the completion of 21 working days, in hard and electronic versions. An oral debriefing to the Mission and Embassy will also be scheduled prior to consultant's departure from Guyana.
3. Final Gender Analysis Report, including comprehensive annotated bibliography: Within five working days after receipt of written Mission comments.

Timing

The task will commence o/aApril 2003 and will be completed approximately four weeks later.

INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED

USAID

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Dr. Peter de Groot, Chairman
Grace Perry, Research Associate
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Bal Persaud, Executive Director

Help and Shelter

Margaret Kertzious, Administrator

President of WEDO and business woman

Jocelyn Dow
Sharle Rodrigues – local indigenous consultant
Gaulert Stanford – Male nurse

Red Thread

Andaiye – Founding Member of Red Thread and Women’s Rights activist
Karen De Souza – Founding member of Red Thread and Women’s Rights Activist

Amerindian People's Association

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Volunteer Youth Corps

Kenroy Roach, President

Goldie Scott, Secretary

PNC/R - National Congress of Women

Cheryl Sampson, Chairperson

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Amerindian Peoples Association. Empowering Indigenous Women – The Way Forward. Report of the National Indigenous Women’s Conference. August 2002.

Summary of the presentations, discussions, and recommendations from the first conference of indigenous women, sponsored by the Amerindian Peoples Association, with funding from IDRC, Oxfam, and CIDA.

Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action and Alternatives (Guyana Chapter) and Communication Network for International Development (Montreal, Canada).

Report on Workshop on trade Liberalization and its Impact on Women. April 26, 2002. Proceedings of the workshop, including addresses and panel discussions.

CARICOM in association with the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Regional Coordinating Unit, the University of the West Indies. Gender Issues in Caribbean Education. A Module for Teacher Education. 2000.

In late 2000, CARICOM adopted a new approach to gender mainstreaming with a focus on three principal strategic areas: education; health (especially HIV/AIDS); and poverty and the economy (especially trade and globalization); with education selected as the starting point for the process. Incorporating gender issues into teacher trainings will have an impact on the broad spectre of educational institutions. The CARICOM approach to gender mainstreaming is discussed in a draft document prepared by the Gender and Development Unit, not yet available to general distribution.

Chemonics International, Inc. Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report. Guyana Economic Opportunities (GEO) Project, January 1 to March 31, 2003. April 2003.

Report of activities carried out during the second quarter of FY 2003 under the USAID/Guyana strategic objective for economic growth.

Government of Guyana, Ministry of Finance. National Development Strategy (2001-2010). A Policy Framework. “Eradicating Poverty and Unifying Guyana. A Civil Society Document.”

Based on a broad participatory process under the guidance of the Carter Center and the initiative of the Ministry of Finance, the first draft was prepared in 1996. The second and final draft was prepared in 1999 and presented to Parliament. It has the status of state policy. The objectives of the Strategy are summarized as:

- The attainment of the highest rates of economic growth that are possible, by the year 2010;
- The alleviation of poverty;
- The attainment of geographical unity;
- The equitable geographical distribution of economic activity;
- The diversification of the economy;
- Chapter 25 deals with Gender Affairs and specifically, the Situation of Women in Guyana.

Government of Guyana, Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. National Plan of Action for Women, Year 2000 – 2004.

Following from the Beijing Platform for Action and the Caricom Plan of Action, the National Plan of Action for Women was developed, through a consultative process, to “encourage action at all levels in our society through the integration and mainstreaming of women and the inclusion of gender and development issues in our goals, objectives, policies and programmes.” It outlines a series of actions and responsible actors within key economic and social sectors.

Government of Guyana. Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). March 2002.

The paper, prepared in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, outlines a strategy to reduce poverty by 50 percent by 2015. It draws heavily on the National Development Strategy (NDS) and a Business Summit convened by the Government of Guyana in 2000. Unlike the NDS, gender issues are not considered and there is minimal reference to sex disaggregated data.

Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED). Annual Report 2001.

National Democratic Institute. Quarterly Report for January 1 to April 30, 2003, More Responsive and Participatory Governance and Rule of Law in Guyana. April 2003.

A review of activities and results undertaken by NDI, IFES, and The Carter Center for USAID/Guyana D&G strategic objective, during the second quarter of FY2003.

Report of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1998-2000 [cited as CEDAW report, 1998-2000]. Prepared by Women’s Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. May 2003.

Report prepared more or less every four years by the governments that are signatory to the convention, reporting on progress by Article of the Convention. Appendices include sex disaggregated data.

Article 1: Definition of Discrimination

Article 2: Policy measures

Article 3: Measures to Ensure the Advancement of Women

Article 4: Temporary Special Measures to Accelerate de Facto Equality

Article 5: Sex Role Stereotyping and Prejudice

Article 6: Prostitution

Article 7: Women in Politics and Public Life

Article 8: Representation

Article 9: Nationality

Article 10: Education

Article 11: Employment

Article 12: Health

Article 13: Economic and Social Benefits

Article 14: Rural Women

Article 15: Law

Article 16: Marriage and Family Life

Report on the Legal Status of Women. An Assessment of Legislation Relevant to Women. Commissioned by the National Commission on Women as a requirement of the project “Status of Women in Guyana: Monitoring, Research and Policy.” Funded by the Canada Caricom Gender Equity Fund. Prepared by the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL), Roxane George, Coordinator. March 1998.

The report addresses concerns relating to the following pieces of legislation:

- Constitution of Guyana, 1980
- Married Persons Amendment Act, 1990
- Family and Dependants Provision Act, 1990
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1995
- Equal Rights Act, 1990
- Domestic Violence Act, 1996
- Prevention of Discrimination act, 1997
- Maintenance (Amendment) Act, 1997
- Criminal Law (Offences) Act, Cap 8:01 – Sexual Offences
- Guyana Citizenship Act, Cap14:01

USAID/Guyana. Guyana: Developmental Challenges and Opportunities. A Review of the Current Strategy and Future Direction. October 15, 2002.

Mission concept paper as background for the development of the new strategy. Minimal discussion of gender, although women and youth are cited as explicit target groups under the programs for strengthening civil society.

USAID/Guyana. Sector Assessment for Economic Growth. No date.

Primarily a desk study review of economic performance by sector, 1991 – 2002, to the extent data are available. Discussion of budget structure, constraints on trade and investment, and program recommendations.

USAID/Guyana. Guyana Democracy and Governance Assessment. May 20, 2002.

Review of governance issues in the country, USAID D&G programming, and recommendations for future programming. Cites the “racialization” of politics as principal dynamic underlying present problems in democratic participation and governance. Notes the presence of women’s organizations as an important component of emerging civil society. Updated in April 2003 in a short paper entitled “Democracy, Governance, and Conflict.”

World Bank. Guyana Country Brief. June 2002.

From the World Bank web site. Overview of recent economic development, policy issues, World Bank programs in the country, and a comprehensive data profile.

Listed below are illustrative research papers available through the **National Resource and Documentation Centre for Gender and Development** (Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, Women's Affairs Bureau). Started in 1999, with funding from UNDP, the Centre is a premier resource for access to information on gender issues and women studies. It includes an electronic database of research in three regional universities (Jamaica, Cave Hill, and St. Augustine) and the University of Guyana, internet access, and the capacity to access documents from outside the country, as well as hard copies of 12,000 studies and a reading room. The Centre has also produced a directory of women parliamentarians, and maintains an archive of clippings on women's issues. (These documents were not consulted for the Gender Assessment.)

Danns, George K, Basmat Shiw Parsad. "Domestic Violence within Black Families: A Study of Wife Abuse in Guyana. Presented at the International Conference: Genesis of a Nation II. July 1988.

Das, Maitreyi. National Report on the Situation of Violence Against Women and Girls. 1999.

Dr. Beckles, Frank. Incidence of Suicide in Guyana. Executive Summary. 2000.

Jackson, Janice M. "In Their Own Right: Three Women Politicians in Guyana." July 1995. Prepared for the Commonwealth Secretariat.

National Commission on Women. 1998. A series of Issue Papers, prepared as a requirement of the Project, "Status of Women in Guyana: Monitoring, Research and Policy," funded by the CIDA Gender Equality Programme.

Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development. Paulette and Mark Byoe

Women and Human Rights in Guyana. Beverly Braithwaite-Chan

Poverty and Women. Donna Danns

Women and Health. Geraldine Maison-Halls

Women, Emigration and the Family. Janice Jackson

Women with Disabilities: The Guyana Situation. Julie Lewis

The Girl Child. Marlon Mentore

Indigenous Women. Laureen Pierre

Parsad, Masmat Shiw. "Domestic Violence: A Study of Wife-Abuse among East Indians of Guyana." Paper presented at Conference on the Genesis of a Nation: Origins and Development of Indo-Guyanese. May 1988.

Patterson, Sybil A. "The Economic and Social Situation of Women Heads of Household in Guyana. UNESCO and Women's Studies Unit of the University of Guyana. 1990.

Woolford, Hazel, editor. "An Introductory Reader for Women's Studies in Guyana." A CAFRA Guyana Chapter Reader of Women's Studies. March 2000.